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**Doctoral dissertation  
The American Voter and Social Media and Celebrities in presidential campaigns**

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# Introduction

## The aim of the research

The main purpose of this research is to track and establish how the use of celebrity politics and social media tools increased over the last 12 years in American politics. The timeframe of the analysis is set up between Obama's first presidential campaign and the end of Trump's tenure, but it also takes into consideration the history of such marketing tactics and the development of such relationships. Modern political marketing relies on the development of new strategies, which help to attract voter's attention. Study examines the current state U.S. politics and its political campaigning, while acknowledging the history of internet and marketing, in order to find patterns that define successful campaigning for the new decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. With every new elections, Congressional or Presidential, politics are becoming more and more entertaining to citizens, also because of the fact that they can obtain political information either from digital news outlets or social media, where they follow feed shared by their friends and people, who inspire them. This allows political actors to reach out to their voters in much easier way than hitherto, as traditional media demand more time and money spent on reaching similar goals. The goal of this analysis is to distinct the best ways to attract the voter in order to create a handbook for future political scientists, which would present the first social media political campaigns in the United States, with their successes and failures.

Although the concept of political marketing was coined by Stanley Kelley in his book *Professional Public Relations and Political Power* published in 1956, the ideas surrounding the academic studies related to this subject have been and are still evolving. The introduction of new media, starting with cable channels and more widespread use of computers as communication channels, allowed to create a potential for a new postmodern public sphere (Villa, 1992). The evolution of internet tools, which became more user-friendly and put emphasis on the user engagement with the content, influenced the way people are communicating with each other. This caused a wave of digital activism and slow transformation of the political marketing, which had to evolve (along with the politicians) in order to maintain people's interest in politics, which from that point also had to fulfill a more entertaining role in the society. As a result, the communication between politician and voter had to become more accessible, because voters want to see more

personal side of them and interact with them as equals. Furthermore, celebrities can act as a bridge between the voter and a politician, simply because of the fact that idols inspire their fans and when they recommend a product to them, fans will be more likely to purchase it. This economical model of endorsement describing the relationship between culture and consumption has been presented by Grant McCracken as a “meaning transfer model” in 1986. In this research, McCracken's idea is ”transferred” to the world of American politics, where the consumption means choosing perfect product – political candidate. Celebrities, who have different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, often inspire people from similar surroundings and have common policy goals with them, so it is easier for them to lobby for their communities, by engaging in relationship with politics. This differs from the idea of celebrity politicians, who also change the way we perceive politics in the United States, with Donald Trump being the latest example. The popcultural aspects of modern politics add very important resources to the development of younger generations, simply because of the fact that it is fashionable now to be interested in politics. This would not become if it weren't for politicians becoming more accessible through Web 2.0 tools, increase in digital activism and groundwork organization and the growing number of celebrities sharing their political knowledge.

## Methodology

Having considered the fact that making experiments or creating surveys in order to collect answers from the respondents would not be this easy and measurable, the study focuses on content analysis and the comparative research. It is worth to note, however, that the content analysis that is used in media communication studies. In order to understand the mechanisms behind social media use and celebrity endorsements, it tries to equalize the scientific sources used in the research. There are few types of sources that are used: from scientific articles and books, to articles on entertainment web portals. Additionally, social media profiles on various platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and many more) are mentioned in order to support the theses. However, from time to time, these sources may expire or be banned, just like in Donald Trump's case, whose ban on social media means that some of them are for now no longer accessible. In order to fully determine which of the materials would be relevant for this research project, some keywords have been created that help to distinct useful data. *Political endorsement, social media campaign, celebrity politics, celebrity campaign rally* or *internet politics* allowed to select the most crucial articles and cases, which allowed to merge them into one book. What is more of comparing two case studies, it was better to present and compare more ideas and political campaigns in order to retrieve what's best from them. This way of conducting methodology allowed to not only take

objective view at the campaigns from the Democrats and the Republicans, but also to tackle the views inside the parties and the ideological shifts that shake modern political programs. Additionally, comparative research helped to examine a huge amount of social media platforms and internet tools, allowing to extract their pros and cons, so the future political marketing specialists could split their marketing tactics into the dedicated tasks. Having earned knowledge about the presidential (and Senate) campaigns between 2008 and 2020 in the U.S., it is easier to distinct what Facebook and Instagram are good for and which of these platforms have advantage, when talking about visual marketing. The analysis also compares the tactics used by the candidates in order to draw conclusions from (both) failed and successful political campaigns. What is the most important, such comparison allows to select main social media tools that would help to get out the vote in the future and tackle voter suppression, by educating through entertaining followers.

This perspective is also important in the analysis of celebrity politics, as comparative approach allows to distinct different types of celebrity endorsers in order to create some segmentation of their interests and then assign them to the roles they could fulfill in the future model of democracy. It also allows to distinct some celebrities, who, (just like Trump or Reagan) could participate in politics, using the outreach they're generating on social media and the influence they have on the communities they come from.

Another approach that was adjusted to this research was the descriptive study, which takes into consideration the content analysis. Instead of collecting surveys, which would not be efficient in this case, the research focuses on the materials collected from the publications, social media posts, books, internet websites and articles, in order to observe phenomenons in celebrity politics and new media development. The collected data allows to apply conditions to specific cases in order to measure the influence both of the variables may have on the voter's decision-making process and his reaction to the content.

This whole analysis would not be possible if it wasn't for methodology handbooks, which helped to understand which methods would work best for the analysis of celebrity politics and social media use in political campaigns. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* by John W. Creswell, *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences* edited by Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating were very helpful to establish what exactly to search for in the research and how to extract the useful data from the sources that were used. Apart from these books, *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods* edited by Nigel G. Fielding, Raymond M. Lee, Grant Blank and *Internet Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social and Behavioural Sciences* by Claire Hewson et. al. allowed to have a fresh look on the analysis of new media tools.

There are two main hypotheses, which are supported by an auxiliary hypothesis and the research questions.

Hypotheses:

H1: Celebrities, who create social reality, have their place in the political anthropology of electoral affairs, therefore their participation is not selfless, since by acting on behalf of the candidates of their choice, they take into consideration their interests

**Research questions:**

**In modern American politics, how did celebrities redefine their role in the society as new actors on the political scene?**

**What is the role of modern political endorsements and can they play more educational than entertaining role?**

The idea of celebrity politics and endorsements relies on the conception that famous people want to use their momentum in order to promote policies and people they believe in. That is why they recommend to their fans to register for voting and choose the right candidate. However, it is needed to take consideration into the fact that apart from the endorsement, which is the transfer of the capital and public trust they earned towards another person, they also can profit from this situation. Having observed the relationships between American celebrities and politicians, it is easy to notice that some patterns are characteristic for the specific periods in U.S. politics. The more the establishment favors one party, the more likely it will be to endorse it and organize actions in order to allow this party to win the elections. Modern mainstream politics favor more liberal (or maybe even progressive) point of view – that is why Hollywood nowadays is more liberal and more likely to support Democratic candidates. The relationship between the endorsers gives profits to both of the political actors, as politician receives a new base to which they can provide content, while celebrity can generate hype around themselves (especially if they are a bit forgotten), which can revive their career or acknowledge their position in the mainstream.

H2: Modern American campaigns involve a new way of influencing not only the mass voter or even the social media voter, but they also focus increasingly on smaller scale target groups with stronger

internal ties and more permanent networking

**Research questions:**

**Does the development of Web 2.0 tools not only allow the campaign staffs to reach out to the voters, but also let the voters influence and shape the political campaign by themselves?**

**Will the increased use of social media in political campaigns in the United States allow politicians to slowly resign from the traditional ways of canvassing?**

The idea that internet revolutionized modern politics is quite young, as before 2008 it was perceived as a quirky innovation that can appeal to young people and tech-savvy voters. However, the development of Web 2.0 tools (especially social media) allowed politicians to interact on a more personal basis with potential voters. Whether it's really them or hired campaign staffs, they can share political information on profiles they set up on private internet platforms, mixed with content showing their more personal side. By creating viral posts or infographics, they can increase their outreach and become more recognizable among internet users. However, internet users can also lay groundwork for campaigns, as through interacting with other potential voters, they can create some buzz for the politicians they are supporting. What is more, users engaged in politics can handle the campaign just like the staff, by reaching out to local communities and creating rallies, forming social media groups in which they can discuss political topics and even by “hijacking” tweets or handling negative campaign by attacking the opponent through social media. Nowadays, more than ever, ordinary people can influence the political campaign process and change its narrative; they can both educate and entertain other users by presenting them political information. The question is, will these information always be honest?

**Auxiliary hypothesis: The evolution of the political campaigns in the United States can also be foreseen on the Senate level**

The development of social media and other internet tools had huge influence on how the elections are covered by the traditional media – growing digital activism, especially among younger generations leads to the increase of interest in politics. Since modern politicians are more accessible and being engaged in politics is perceived as something “cool”, voters no longer only focus on Presidential elections and they take part more eagerly in voting for Congress. Because of that fact, campaigns are becoming more interesting and entertaining; that is why Congressional elections were covered so often in 2018 on a national level and many Americans tracked polls in toss-up Senate races (for example in Texas). This increase of attention towards nationwide election on a

state level, allow voters to have influence on their party through primaries. Additionally, this allows local communities to integrate and have bigger influence on the policies their representatives are pushing in Congress.

### **The construction of research: analyzing the research problem**

In order to fully determine the influence that celebrities and social media have on modern political campaigning, the research has been split into four main chapters and the fifth chapter that describes the current political climate and future scientific perspectives.

The first chapter describes the political marketing theories and specifics of American politics. On one hand, it takes into consideration wider scientific perspective, by adopting theories typical for economic, sociological and cultural studies and on the other hand, in further subchapters it describes the brief history of political activism in the U.S. and the election law and its specifics, in order to create basis for further research. Consisting of four subchapters, first one combines the political marketing models and includes theories based in social, economical and cultural sciences, which can fit the thesis of the research. It also describes the main difference between American campaigns and campaigns in other parts of the world, having considered the fact that the political campaigns in the U.S. have always acted as role models of innovation. Then, the next subchapter describes the evolution of voting rights in the United States, paying much attention to the history of women's suffrage and the acts that shaped the state of the voting rights among African-Americans. In the third subchapter, study focuses how the traditional ways of campaigning started to be replaced by by new means of campaigning, while also trying to set up ground rules on how to adapt the most effective way. The last subchapter describes the specifics of American politics and elections, taking into consideration the state laws and how voting is conducted.

Second chapter describes the history of internet and how users started to interact with each other, also regarding the exchange of political news and information. It also focuses on how the process of obtaining the information from new media started to evolve and how American politicians started to perceive internet as a way of reaching out to the potential voters. Furthermore, it describes the modern relationships between celebrities and politicians, which, in the era of internet, act as equally significant political actors. The emphasis is also put on how American internet users started to interact with each other over the web, to connect, meet new people and exchange the idea. Study seeks for any patterns that could be observed before the modern web was introduced, that led to first forms of digital activism and voter engagement in politics, remembering about the limits the internet of that era had, especially regarding the public access to this tool.

In the third chapter, research focuses on social media theories in order to introduce the Web



2.0 era, which means closer relationships between internet users, as they were finally allowed to interact between each other on a larger scale. After the first subchapter, study describes how social media influenced political campaigning in the United States, browsing through presidential and Senate campaigns and various social media trends that influenced them. It's worth noting that the idea behind this chapter was to show that each of the campaigns added something different to the study, as this trend in internet and political studies is so young that with every new elections in the United States, new tools and platforms emerge that drive attention to the candidates. Research also tackles the issue of fake news and how the internet can be a danger for modern democracies and political communication, as only recently, the biggest platforms have introduced tools that allow internet users to verify the information they are obtaining.

In the fourth chapter, the study chronicles the history of celebrity endorsements and the evolving relationship between American politicians and Hollywood. Over the years, celebrities used different media in order to stress their support for the policies and political parties, starting from radio shows, through the television era, in order to end up sharing content on their social media profiles. The research focuses on trends, during which famous people tended to endorse either the Republican or the Democratic candidates. The analysis of the links between politics and pop culture allows to present how on one hand, Barack Obama was able to get out the vote by earning trust of the celebrities, only in order to show on the other hand, how Donald Trump, who is a celebrity, was able to position himself as an anti-establishment candidate, who had the support of people instead of the elites.

The materials collected in the first four chapters allowed to conduct a further analysis of the 2020 elections and throw into perspective some ideas on how will the politics look in the future and whether the celebrity politics and social media trends affect modern political campaigning that much. The research also focuses on dangers that can emerge during this political process and on the main functions of entertainment politics, which allow political candidates to attract attention and increase the interest in political participation.

### **Framing the title of the research**

Modern American voter can be influenced by many factors, which can shape their opinion. The first signs of such influence can be seen early in their lives, when birth and immediate family influence the set of values they hold, their social sensibilities, and the specifics of the place where they were born. Each of the states in the U.S. has very different cultural and economic conditions that political candidates must take into account if they decide to participate in state-level elections. By meeting new people at the school level, they make new friends, also they meet people from

other social or cultural backgrounds. The size of the city, the specifics of the school (public or private), the level of education and privilege - all this influences a young person's first political choices later on. Or at least it was so until now.

Today's 18-year-olds were already born at a time when the Internet was widely available, and they cannot imagine life outside of it. If they don't have friends who share their views, or if they have opposing views to their family - they can always reach out to social networks, where they can find teenagers who think the same way and will be able to convince them that their beliefs are correct. World wide web is a modern phenomenon that is completely changing the way people communicate with each other; on one hand enjoying the fact that more and more people are interested in politics, on the other hand it has to be stressed that nowadays the Internet is also becoming a field for extremists who are able to catch individuals who feel alienated in their social circles through the network. The magic of social media is hard to resist because when we look for political information, we subscribe to media outlets and people who share our views, thus reinforcing the idea that we are right. This leads to the creation of an information bubble in which most users live today - by not having access to information from the other side of the political spectrum, we isolate ourselves from viewers with opposing views. This is why Web 2.0 is a powerful tool that politicians have been quick to point out - modern segmentation and targeting makes it possible to reach very diverse social groups and encourage them to vote for the right candidate. It is not only thanks to the staffs and people responsible for the spots and commercials - politicians themselves have taken notice of this medium, thanks to which they can interest Internet users in their postulates.

However, it's worth noting that not everyone is interested enough in politics to seek it out on social media. The Internet is also treated as a sphere of rest, where we can talk to friends, listen to music or find out what's going on with the people we subscribe to. This is when celebrities step in and bridge the gap between the voter and the politician. The modern artist is required to be involved in social issues, it could be saving the earth from climate change, involvement in helping the poor people in their community, or the sick for example. Also, such attempts to influence the current state of the world can include a situation in which a celebrity speaks publicly on political issues, supporting a reform, an idea or a particular person. The specifics of endorsement itself can be complicated, given that one celebrity may add a social media post endorsing a candidate, while another may travel the country with them and appear at rallies. That's why it's important to pay close attention to celebrity segmentation, as this will give you a better idea of their motives.

The rise of social media is inextricably linked to the fad of using celebrity endorsements in U.S. presidential campaigns because the more famous a person is, the more reach they make in the social media world. Hence, like it or not, the modern American voter is exposed to this type of political content and has no way of escaping it - whether we are talking about a politician or a

musician. Political actors in the 21st century are constantly looking for new stages on which they can sell their product (themselves, their party, selected projects) and the Internet seems to be the perfect platform for this.

Why the American scene? On the one hand, the US is the cradle of this tool, on the other hand, voters are influenced by a multitude of economic and social factors that shape their behavior. The title itself is also an encouragement for the readers who will be able to answer for themselves the question: who is really pulling the strings in American politics? Who is able to encourage young people to participate in elections? Are they politicians who are increasingly accessible to ordinary people, or celebrities who are committed to social issues but at the same time pursue their marketing interests by creating a buzz around their person and increasing their reach? This work seeks to answer these and other questions.

# **Chapter 1. Modern political campaigning and the analysis of American voter**

## **1.1. Campaigning process. Some theoretical assumptions**

World politics nowadays tend to depend on the new forms of media that allow political actors to reach the citizens in a quicker way. With every new elections, the candidates and their campaign staffs are given newer tools, that can help them to reach their main goal, which is winning the elections. The emergence of Internet 2.0 can be established as the newest stage of the evolution of political campaigning, as nowadays, the role of media does not only focus on being the provider of the important canvassing information (such as political program), but also on the engagement of the receiver of the information in the campaign process. Over the years, authors tried to define the perfect way to win the elections; one may argue, that these studies are outdated, since the candidates create new forms of interaction with the voter as the new media are appearing with every year, but on the other hand, can someone, by merging the theories, create one, that can successfully provide an answer to all the questions asked by the marketing specialists? It is definitely worth trying.

Before focusing on the theories, that describe the campaigns and the relationships between the candidates and the voters, it is needed to acknowledge Max Weber's stance on what should the perfect politician have, in order to attract the voter (citizen). German sociologist created a concept of a "charismatic leader", who is able to control his citizens because of his "virtue", that sets him apart from other men and women, which leads to him being treated as "supernatural" (Tucker, 1968, p. 731). The history of modern politics shows, that nowadays politicians no longer attract the voter because of their bloodline or social status, that was gifted to them during birth; they rely on their social skills and likability, which in the age of social media, often describe the key to the successful leadership (such as the cases of Barack Obama or Justin Trudeau). Weber argued, that when choosing one leader during the mass elections, charisma and the trust in his persona allow him to gain the trust of the voter (Derman, 2012, p. 184). Furthermore, he describes the importance of political strategy during campaign process, as he attempted to foretell the future or the organisation of elections: whereas the role of local notables was supposed to decrease, the party officials and paid election agents would take control of various campaign tasks such as the choice of the candidate or the mobilization of the votes (Beetham, 2013, p. 98).

It is interesting, how Hotelling's location model can be transferred to the field of political science. In his article from 1929, he suggested, that just like the companies, who try to sell the

product to the customer, tend to create it similar to their rival's, political parties often withdraw controversial issues from their political program in order to not scare the voter, which leads to them suggesting slightly different approaches to described issues (Hotelling, 1929, p. 54). Even though he describes the situation on the American political scene in the late 1920's, this campaigning style can be often adapted nowadays, as the progressive views do not attract huge percentage of voters.

This thesis has been further analyzed by Downs, who argued, that political parties compete for the votes just like the companies, who fight for sales in a market (1957, p. 137). According to him, in modern democracy, parties formulate policies in order to gain votes and the role of the government is to maximize their number. In his model, the citizens are rational, therefore they are voting strictly for the candidate or government, that would be the most beneficial for him (1957, p. 138). The model, however relies on an assumption, that each citizen knows what is best for him and as a result, he or she can not be influenced by other voter (1957, p. 139). Downsian model was later argued by Shepsle, who accepted his assumption, that political candidates rather share false information than lie; such tactic may work if the voters like risk, as they are uncertain, whether the policies promised during the campaign would be made after the elections (1972, p. 559). In the article, he further explains how the candidate may feel more ambiguous if the voter is allowing him to do so.

This theory is strongly linked to the specification of the position on the policy by the candidate, if his stance is blurry for the voter, he should not scare him, which he could do if his stance would be more clear and as a result more unpopular. That is why the candidate, in order to win, always needs to reach out to the median voter (Glazer, 1990, p. 238). Glazer describes two types of uncertainty, as "the voter can be uncertain of the position of any candidate, and a candidate may not know the ideal point of the median voter" (1990, p. 328).

According to Robert Wiszniowski, political campaigns can be described from three perspectives, that can be implemented into this field of research. The first scientific concept is simply behavioral, as the specialists, who run the campaigns, focus on the behavior of the voter, as they measure the level of their political participation, the personal strategies and the institutional ones, when talking about the political parties (Wiszniowski, 2000, p. 97). Second perspective is functional; researchers analyse the social communication concept based on how the political actors behave and whether their approach is effective as they measure the role of political advertisements. Third perspective is rational, in this field of research the campaign is described through the decision-making process of the voter (2000). But how to describe a political campaign itself? According to Herbut and Antoszewski, political campaign is a separate part of the electoral process, that is set on a timeline between the announcement of the elections and the voting day (1995, p. 137). Wiszniowski explains what a political campaign is from the political communication point of

research, as he acknowledges, that it is a form of creation of communication with the voter, while engaging in a rivalry; such approach needs to have the biggest outreach possible in order to reach out to all of the voters, while in the meantime being 'sold' to the citizen in an attractive form, so he could become interested in this process (Dobek-Ostrowska, Wiszniowski, 2013, p. 148). In this case, the campaign can be understood as a product, that needs to be sold – what is more, just like in the shop, it needs to stand out from other offers, so the voter would feel he is offered something special and unique.

Denton Jr. relies on the functional theory of political campaigns, as he describes the statements of the candidates as functional – their goals is to gain enough votes to win the elections. In his work he makes assumptions, that lead to a description of the nature of political campaigns.

First of all, he argues, that voting is a comparative act – in order to win the elections, the candidate needs to appear at campaign events and become recognizable, he also has to remember, that he does not have to rely on all of the voters, as only enough number of them allows him to win (Denton Jr., 2017, p. 5).

Secondly, the candidates need to differ from each other; by that the author means, that his program needs to be distinct from the rival on some points of comparison – this is when the communication with the voter begins, as the candidate informs about the issues he is going to tackle and how his approach differs from the opponent.

The third assumption is that the citizen learns about the candidate's political program, through campaign messages, that are shared by him, media and the interest groups he is working with (2017). There are several ways of communicating with the voter, an issue, that is going to be described in the next subchapters, having in mind the evolution of the political marketing and its means of engagement with the citizen.

Fourth assumption tackles the issue of what type of message would the candidate send to the voter. In this theory, politician chooses, how would he like to merge the acclaims, attacks and defences. Acclaims describe the strengths of the candidate, whereas the attacks choose to focus on the opponents' inabilities. Defences are responding to the opponent's attacks. The message depends on the target group, as they have different beliefs and sets of values (2017). For instance, the attack on the opponent may be perceived by the voter as a demonstration of strength, which would set the opponent as weaker in the eyes of the voter, but on the other hand, a person, that is not interested in the specified issue may feel discouraged and create a negative perception of the candidate. A perfect example, that shows these different approaches can be drawn from the gun control debates, as some of the politicians tend to focus on the issue itself, creating proposals on how to restrict the law, whereas others may attack the opponents by stating, that they did nothing to prevent the shootings.

The fifth and last assumption of the functional theory states, that the campaign discourse

addresses the policy and the character. As voter is exposed to various information regarding the elections and the political issues from the sources, they can be influenced, as they develop their opinion about the candidates; their opinion is a combination of the policy perceptions and the character of the candidate. Using the acclaims, attacks and defences, the candidates are creating the impression, that they are the most suitable for the office.

Having described the theory, one may focus on the practices of the campaign process. In his work, G.A. Mauser has described the process of campaign planning and organizing and divided it into three phases.

During the first one, (overview) it is needed to define the campaign goals, while acknowledging the internal and external factors. The leader or his staff need to examine their ability to win, their strengths and weaknesses, in order to be prepared for the confrontation. Furthermore, it is crucial to create an analysis of the opponent and the voter, in order to select the campaign tactics.

Secondly, the strategy needs to be planned. In this phase, the strategy is determined by the information regarding the opponents, voters and the social surrounding. Identification of the potential problems, that the campaign may tackle on the later stages, helps the candidate to choose the right way to interact, which leads to the formation of the target groups, that the campaign is going to focus on. Campaign staff needs to determine what attracts the voter and how can they distinguish themselves from the rival, in order to provide an appealing political program.

Both of the phases lead to the final, third phase, which focuses on the implementation. In this stage, with the information gathered, the campaign strategy is implemented by the organization of smaller campaign staffs in various areas, raising the funds, creating campaign events and the implementation of the marketing techniques – from the traditional ones such as door-to-door campaigning and attending rallies, to the use of new media such as campaign adverts or social media profiles (1983). Even though this model can still successfully function, it is needed to argue, that the campaign process has evolved over the years, not only focusing on the development of various technologies, that allow the politician to interact with their users, but also taking into consideration the fact, that nowadays the campaigns may begin way before their official start. In 1976, Patrick Cadell, in his memo submitted to President Jimmy Carter, described the transformation of the political campaigns as he suggested, that because of the public opinion polls, that influence the decision-making process and governing process, we are living in a state of an on-going campaign, identified as a permanent campaign. This stance has been later revised by Sidney Blumenthal in his book *The Permanent Campaign*, in which he argued, that the emergence of the modern technology, which allows public polling on a much bigger scale, creates a new model, in which campaigning is a form of governing (1980). Many authors agree, that even though this model is successfully functioning nowadays, authors could not predict how big impact the technology will

have on governing. According to Lees-Marshment, the use of polling data has transformed from a general function, that focuses on information gathering, to the strategic marketing applications, which allow to target groups of voters (2012). What is more, Ornstein and Mann argued, that modern governing does not differ much from campaigning, especially when talking about the presidential governing, as the campaign strategies are implemented along the course of the term (Doherty, 2007, p. 750). This situation has become specific especially for American politics. In their book, Ornstein and Mann argue, that the emergence of campaign strategies and tactics have become a crucial part of American public life (2000, p. vii). According to them, "any democratic political system is based on the idea, that what happens in government is related to people's electoral choices" (2000, p. 4). Authors also stress, that in modern political campaigning the "issues" and "debates" exist, but the main concern is being chosen by the hearers instead of engaging in the discussion (2000, p. 13). This concept can be understood as a permanent seek for an approval from the voter; modern politician, in order to keep his office, needs to rely on opinion polls not only in order to be aware of a public trust, but also to see how should he modify his tactics in order to keep the majority of the voters satisfied. Furthermore, such change pressures the politician to focus on short-term goals, which leads to the creation of new function of the campaign – the entertaining function. In order to keep up the interest of the voter in the politics, the governing candidate has to become more public, appear more in the media, so the citizen would perceive him as a person, that does their job on a daily basis – in other case he would turn to the opponent.

Such evolution can be strongly linked to the professionalization of the political campaigns. According to Black, every profession (such as politics for example) has its set of values, that define being professional in the described field (1970, p. 865). These values determine the eventual success, therefore it is needed to obey them and to behave according to them. In politics, the rules, that dictate the ability of being a professional, may vary – depending on the political system or socioeconomic issues. Dahl and Lindblom have pointed three skills, that determine being a professional in American politics, which are bargaining, compromise and negotiation (1953, p. 304). The ability to bargain, allows the politician to seek for alliances – not only in order to form a coalition, but also to seek similar interest with the opponent. Not all politicians, however, may decide to bargain, as they may feel, that they would be seen as weaker by their voters. The compromise, on the other hand, lets the politician to seek for the solution, that would implement his policies, while creating as few damages as possible. Finally, negotiating skills demand from the politician to have social skills and charisma, that set him in the winning position while reaching the compromise.

Over the years, the world of politics has seen the professionalization of the political campaigns, thanks to the technological development and to the emergence of new terms, such as



political advertisement, political image or political marketing (Wiszniewski, 2000, p. 102). As this situation in the field of political science is evolutionary, authors tend to rely on three types of political campaigns:

The stage of pre-modernization (labor intensive), which happened in 1960s and 1970s, relied on local party organization and the low level of the standardization. Since the campaign tactics were decentralized, campaign staff consisted of the members of the party and volunteers. Political campaigns focused on short-term tactics; since the marketing agencies and political marketing specialists were not that common, party and the candidates were highly responsible for the result of the elections. Party leaders had to gather the information about the voters and the campaign events were limited to rallies and public meetings. Politicians targeted identified groups of citizens and reached out to them through party brochures, press adverts and billboards, sometimes leaflets (Wiszniewski, 2000, p. 105).

The stage of modernization (capital intensive), which happened in the 1980s and 1990s, focused on the centralization of campaign tactics, as they were led by a specialist committee, that was often created one or two years before the elections. The volunteers have been replaced by paid personnel, that helped with the organization of the campaign events, such as press conferences, TV debates or public appearances, during which the party leaders were meeting the citizens in schools or at the workplaces. This stage can be also characterized by the catch-all approach to get the vote, as all of their actions focused on attracting as many voters as possible. Television became the most important way of advertising, because of the fact, that with its help the candidate was able to present his political ideas to millions of viewers at the same time. Campaign staffs gathered the information from the public opinion polls, which helped to scientify the research. Last, but not least, the emergence of the party consultants and political advisory agencies allowed to professionalize the campaigns, even though still the candidates and leaders were held responsible for the result of the elections. This development also meant, that the costs of the campaign were much higher, but at the same time, the voters started to engage more in politics, as they were becoming more interested with the elections (2000). According to Farrell, with the development of the technology and its impact on the political scene, the costs of modern political campaigns will only grow.

The third stage, defined by Wiszniewski as post-modernization, began in the 1990s and has been developing until this day. The evolution of the telecommunication and television allowed the candidate to get even closer to the voter. New media, such as computers or cable TV started to become available for the average customer – what is more, citizens started to learn political news from these media. Wiszniewski argued, that the online connection between local campaign staffs and the emergence of information banks, through which the specialists could target specific voting groups became the first innovative techniques, that were in use during the post-modernization stage.

The decentralization of the campaigns became more professional, since the coordination of the campaign tactics became more available on the local level. Paid political advisors provided the researches, that allowed to distinct the groups of voters and divide them into electorate segments, that shared similar social, cultural and economic background (2000, p. 110). Political advertisements began to target specific voters and politicians started to 'flirt' with the internet, through the creation of the websites or subscription e-mail lists, thanks to which the voter could keep up with the campaign plan. Independent image-makers began to take the responsibility from the candidates and the parties, as slowly they also were becoming accountable for the results.

Even though the post-modernization stage is still developing, it is needed to create a fourth stage, which can be adapted, when talking about the politics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The internetization of the campaign can be characterized by the retreat of the political campaign from the traditional media to Web 2.0 and will be wider described in next subchapters. What is interesting, is the fact, that even though the political campaigns in this stage are still getting more and more expensive, it is cheaper to reach the voter through the internet; candidate can share his message through social media channels, which is basically costless. Campaign staffs not only hire PR specialists and political advisors, but also social media influencers, who advise how the politician should present his message to the voter. The decentralization of the campaign is progressing, as the volunteers can organize local events through Facebook and share posts, that target the voters in the specified area. As the voter needs to be entertained by the politician on a daily basis, the permanent campaign is the only tactic, that works if the candidate wants to belong to the political mainstream. Last, but not least, thanks to the internet, voters can engage in the campaigning process; as they influence the citizens in their surrounding, they become virtual members of the campaign staff. The fourth phase has already become a crucial part of American politics and can its implementation can be slowly observed in other countries with well-developed democracy.

Along with the professionalization of the political campaigns, came the development of political advertisements. Wiszniowski argues, that there are two main goals of the political advertisement: creation of a positive image of the party (institutional advertising) and the personal advertising, which focuses on the candidate (2000, p. 116). In 1972, McCombs and Shaw explained, that because of the lack of research on the impact of political advertising on cognitive and information effects hampered a true understanding of the effects of the mass media. Johnson-Cartee and Copeland argued, that the emotional response from the electorate towards the candidate is influenced by communication (1997, p. 151). Swinyard and Coney conducted a research in order to analyse, what kind of elections can be influenced by political adverts (1978). According to their research, it is crucial in low-involvement races, as in high-involvement ones, the voters tend to defend against promotions. Political advertising is expected from the candidate, as it is a campaign

ritual – a politician, that does not appear in television or the internet can not be recognizable on a larger scale. Furthermore this describes the entertaining function of the election – in order to keep the voter interested in the campaign, the candidate needs to create a 'show' and make himself more public. With the emergence of social media, political advertising often tends to focus on the emotions and the candidate's personal life instead of the issues, as the citizens expect a political reality show. In his work called *Political Communication in the United States*, Tuman argues, that some of the academics ironically describe the elections in the United States as a popularity contest. Candidate, that is most liked can rely on the voters, who want to sympathize with him (2008, p. 4). According to him, elections may be limited to a contest that is based on the perceived stance of a candidate on specific issues (2008, p. 5). Diamond and Bates have argued, that campaign advertisement consists of three stages, which can allow the voter to recognize, whether he is manipulated. First of all, the candidates use the bio ads, which help to put their best faces forward (1988). As they describe their background, they try to appeal to the voter, so he could feel, that he is represented by a person from the same community. During the second stage, campaign advertising focused on the issues and programs, that help them to distinguish themselves from the opponent. It is important to note, that when the candidate is in trouble, he may switch the issues. Finally, if the candidate is losing at the polls, he tends to attack his political rival. If the finances of the campaign are looking bad, the attack may start early (1988).

Farrell and Schmitt-Beck have described the typology of political campaigns. First of them is the election campaign, during which the competing actors campaign on a range of issues, while focusing on their image, in order to win the elections (2002, p. 4). Second are the referendum campaigns, which also have competing set of actors, although they tend to focus on only one issue. Furthermore, the third type of the campaign is a single-issue campaign, which is often prepared by government agencies and usually inform the public about the implemented policies. Finally, there are interest-based campaigns, which are formed by pressure groups, that want to influence the decision-makers (2002, p. 5). As it has been aforementioned, losing candidates tend to attack the opponent. But how to determine, when the negative campaign may bring positive effects. Academics argue, whether these tactics are effective. Skaperdas and Groffman predict that in two candidate elections, the front-runner engages in more positive and less negative campaigning than his opponent; and in three-candidate contests, no candidate engages in negative campaigning against the weakest opponent, so that to the extent there is negative campaigning, it is either directed against the front-runner or it comes from the front-runner himself (1995). Candidates may also use the negative campaign as a tool to demobilize the voters, that sympathize with their opponents (Ansolabehere et al., 1994, p. 832). Kahn and Kenney believe, that early negative campaigning may impact the whole campaign, as it would focus only on the attacks (1999).

Furthermore, negative campaigning is a risk, therefore it is used in highly competitive races (Damore, 2002). Modern political marketing specialists should acknowledge the emergence of fake news, which, shared by the political candidates have become a crucial part of the negative campaign. The widespread access to the internet allows its users to spread misleading information, which can be shared by the candidate on purpose, in order to discredit the opponent. Negative campaigning may leave the voter disoriented, lacking trust for both the attacking and defending party and as a result he may turn to the third party.

In order to fully introduce this chapter into American politics, it is needed to specify how the campaigns in the United States are perceived by the academics. Jabłoński and Sobkowiak distinguish three types of political strategies: a) party oriented, which focus on the relationship between the voter and the party he supports, campaign relies on the organizing skills of the party, which allow to gain the funds; b) issue oriented strategy, which seeks for the voters, that concentrate their focus on characteristic policies; c) image oriented strategy, focusing on the abilities and the social skills of the candidate, such as honesty, responsibility and likability (2009).

Candidates may merge these tactics to create an appealing image, that is promoted by the media. Public opinion expects specific skills from the candidate, which he needs to deliver in order to be seen as strong or charismatic – nowadays one can distinguish two types of candidate images, with the first one being carefully created by the PR specialists and the independent, which is based on candidate's characteristic skills, which distinguish him from other candidates. Independent image can be associated with populist politicians, who want to be recognized by their voters as natural. The creation of the political image has strong links to celebrity politics, as in the 21<sup>st</sup> century politicians can not exist without mainstream media, which provide them access to the majority of the voters.

## **1.2 Sociopolitical and cultural conditions of American voter**

Each of the countries has background and specifics, that determine the political behavior of its citizens. United States are especially unique, when analyzing this field, as its history clearly shows, that even though Americans have something, what can be called a national identity, they are also strongly attached to their cultural roots and origins. Although there can not be made a universal profile of the American voter, as 21<sup>st</sup> century political marketing relies on voter segmentation, there can be made few assumptions, that can prove that American citizens during political campaigns are quite characteristic and differ from other voters. First of all, it is needed to briefly do a research on the history of the United States and how the voting rights have been implemented on its territory, in

order to examine the cultural conditions of the voter; furthermore the part on social movements will show how the specific groups of voters started to form interest groups in order to influence the policies. Finally, the analysis will show how the expectations of the voter have changed over the years, thanks to the widespread access to new media, as they allowed the voter to engage more in the campaigning process.

At the very beginning, it is crucial to overview the voting reforms in the United States. In early American republic, voting law depended on state's prerogatives. Voting qualifications were influenced by British law, thus voting was awarded as a privilege, not a right (Garbaye, 2012, p. 231). As the Thirteen Colonies have formed in 1732, their laws have differed, but had one common ground: voting was eligible for taxpayers and property owners. It is worth noting, that in 1737, North Carolina granted the African Americans the right to vote, repealing the law from 1715. From 1737 to 1776, free black males could vote under certain circumstances (Jewett, Allen, 2004, p. 188). The voting restrictions have differed in the colonies, for example the requirements in Delaware in 1763 were to own a land of property that is at least five acres big and is worth at least £40 (Crews, 2007). Researchers estimate, that around 60 percent of adult white males were able to vote under these conditions (Keyssar, 2000). The citizens believed, that the U.S. Conventional Constitution will liberalize the law, but the lawmakers decided, that each of the states will decide which citizens will be eligible to vote. The rules did not change – in order to meet the criteria and vote, they had to be white males, that regularly pay the taxes. Some of the states even had to exacerbate the law, so women would be banned from voting. There was only one state, that did not create such regulation – in New Jersey, women were still eligible for voting. The pronoun "she" first appeared in the New Jersey 1790 Election Law, as the act stated that "no person shall be entitled to vote in any other township or precinct, than that in which *he* or *she* doth actually reside at the time of the election" (Garbaye, 2012, p. 237). What is more, since no specific race has been describe in the act, this meant that African Americans and other Americans of other ethnicities could vote, if they met the requirements. The law granted voting rights in seven counties that were located in West Jersey, but seven years later the act was extended, so it would come into force in the whole state (2012, p. 238). In 1807, women were banned from voting, as politicians discussed that such move will help to avoid fraud (2012: 239).

In 1810, property qualifications for voting have been abandoned in Maryland (Schouler, 1897, p. 668). According to Schouler's article on evolution of the American voter, until 1830 academics may notice a democratic tendency in the liberalization of the voting law. The constitution of Connecticut of 1818 demanded property, military duty or state tax payment qualification (1897, p. 668). Fife divided first thirty years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century into three phases: first wave of democratic reforms occurred between 1801 and 1812, as the property requirements were reduced in New

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Jersey, South Carolina and Maryland (Fife, 2010, p. 4). Second stage started in 1815 and ended when Andrew Jackson was elected president in 1828. At that time, property qualification still was an issue in North Carolina, Virginia, Rhode Island and Louisiana (2010:, p. 4). Third wave of changes occurred between 1829 and 1830, when the democratization of the voting process was implemented in the southern states, such as Mississippi, Georgia and North Carolina.

Citizens, who met the criteria could not vote like today's voters. The institution of a secret ballot did not exist yet in the United States, as the citizens were exercising their political privilege under the supervision of their social superiors (Ratcliffe, 2013, p. 234). Voting was public, as the citizens had to declare orally which candidate are they going to support. Oral ballot was troublesome, as less wealthy men had to declare their political preferences instead of their employers and other influential (for them) figures (2013, p. 324). Ratcliffe argues with the historians that already in the 18<sup>th</sup> century some of the states were using the secret ballot, a conception that started to be used nationwide after the Australians introduced it.

In the 1840s, most of the states have introduced a legislation that ended the property tests for voting qualification. Thomas Dorr was a leader of a movement in Rhode Island that was focusing on universal male right to vote. In 1841 he organized a convention that supported a new constitution – after the event he was arrested and found guilty of treason. The state has implemented a new law that still required the property ownership, but allowed native-born Americans and African Americans to vote (Fife, 2010, p. 5).

At that time, American voter could be described as a free white male that is over 21 years old and no longer needs to own a property in order to vote. Some of the states allowed free males of different skin color to vote, but one thing was clear – women were banned from voting by law. The nationwide emergence of female activists during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a convention that took place in 1848. The Seneca Falls Convention attracted 300 attendees – most of them were female (Hoffberger, 2007). During the event, a "Declaration of Sentiments" has been adopted that demanded a "sacred right to the elective franchise" (Chapman, Mills, 2011, p. XI). This declaration can be acknowledged as one of the breakthrough moments for women suffrage. During 1850s a trend in suffrage has appeared as most of the states demanded the registration of the voters, which banned the foreigners from taking part in the elections (Schouler, 1897, p. 669). The law implemented by some of the states clearly shows the need to limit the number of the voters, as the policy makers feared that the results of the election could be rigged, they lobbied for the voting rights only for the citizens, who were able to read and sign the ballot. These limitations have had a negative impact on a number of Native American and African American voters, who did not have such good access to public schools. Such amendment was implemented in Connecticut in 1855 (1897).

The origins of the specifics of the modern American voter can be described war before the Progressive Era, as the main differences in political behavior between the Americans were the fault of the industrialization. As the northern part of the United States was becoming more developed, because of the rise of the regional railroads development and stock markets (DeCanio, 2016, p. 19). As the society was becoming more integrated and has noticed how capitalism has influenced its level of wellbeing, it was becoming more liberal and open minded on new policies. What is also important – the industrialization created thousands of job offers for skilled workers. As the slaves did not have qualifications for such work, migrants from Europe eagerly arrived to the northern part of the United States. The society became more diverse as the visitors did not really want to settle in the southern states (2016). The Native American parties were becoming more popular, as the Americans wanted to protect their rights against the immigrants. The Know Nothing party, which became the most recognizable organization that represented such views organized around protestant Americans who feared that the visitors from Europe, who often were catholic, would disturb the ideals the country was built on (Anbinder, 1992, p. 3). Apart from that, the Southerners had their own problems that led to the division of the society that can be observed until this day, as richer north started to implement the protective tariffs in order to protect its industry against European products. As a result, European countries have also created similar tariffs, which have hit the southern economy that was based on cotton. Hitherto, the competitive price of cotton relied on the work of the slaves, so the residents strongly opposed any reforms that planned the abolition of the slavery (DeCanio, 2016, p. 19).

After the United States have won the Civil War and the Thirteenth Amendment that abolished the slavery has been implemented, other basic civic rights for African Americans became a hot topic, as it was followed shortly by the Fourteenth Amendment that was focusing on African Americans receiving the citizenship and being equally treated by law (the state of the implementation of this policy is still a subject for discussion in the 21 century). The Fifteenth Amendment was implemented in 1870 and forbid denying the right to vote based on a skin color, race or any other condition (2016, p. 21). This, however, did not mean that all the men in the country that did not have white skin were eligible for voting, as the barriers were being established in order to weaken the Fifteenth Amendment. Policy makers had various ideas, which could make the voting eligibility harder for the African Americans, creating grandfather clauses, literacy tests and poll taxes that decided on the suffrage (Fife, 2010, p. 6). What is more, for instance California has excluded all the Chinese citizens from voting (Schouler, 1897, p. 673). Still, the amendment was perceived as a great success for the male suffrage. The next stop was the extension of the suffrage for women, who still were not able to vote during the elections in the United States.

Fife in his work called *Reforming the Electoral Process in America: Toward More Democracy in*

*the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* reiterates an interesting thesis that describes why the issues regarding women's voting rights started to gain more recognition. The suffrage for women was becoming more and more popular in the West. Wyoming enfranchised women voters in 1869, mainly because of the fact that there was six times more men than women living at its territory (2016, p. 9). This move was supposed to encourage women from the eastern states to move to Wyoming, so the gender ratios would be more balanced, as they were destabilized after the American Civil War. According to other researchers, the implementation of such policies strongly relied on the level of organization between the women and their lobbying and fundraising skills. Women were also getting more recognition in other areas such as higher education or the professions, so male and female gender roles began to blur (2016). In 1878 an amendment has been proposed that would forbid the discrimination regarding the suffrage that was based on sex.

At the same time, the implementation of some other electoral changes was becoming a part of the heated debate. In 1856 the institution of a secret ballot was introduced in three Australian states: Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria; ballot papers were provided by the government and contain the names of the candidates (aec.gov.au). Before the presidential elections in 1892, thirty-two states and two territories had provided for the Australian ballot (Cobb Evans, 1917, p. 19). The ballots were printed by a local government and listed the candidates – this however has led in some cases to a further discrimination of Black voters. In Arkansas, the secret ballot reform that was implemented in 1891, prohibited last-minute changes in the location of polling places (Schaffer, 2008, p. 22). What is more, the resolution forbid the party members to prepare ballots for the illiterate voters, as it was stated that it would allow the politicians to manipulate the citizens, who were not able to read. As the illiterate voters (the majority of them being of African American descent) were supposed to go to the polls, they felt ashamed and degraded, therefore they did not take part in the elections. After this reform, the black vote decreased from 71 percent to 38 percent – meanwhile, the white vote has only dipped from 75 percent to 67 percent (Kousser, 1974, p. 55).

The voter registration became local government's main weapon in order to control the voting behavior of its citizens. The policies targeted mainly poor, black and immigrant voters, by "including provisions that made it more difficult for people who worked long hours or were naturalized citizens to register" (Schaffer, 2008, p. 23). This move was used by the Republican lawmakers in order to decrease the voter turnout from lower classes, which more eagerly voted for the Democrats (2008, p. 23). According to Fife, the northern registration laws targeted the Americans from the working-class and the immigrants from southern and eastern parts of Europe (2010, p. 37). On the other hand, in the south the registration targeted African Americans. As a result a large number of citizens representing their voting groups were successfully kept from the polls.

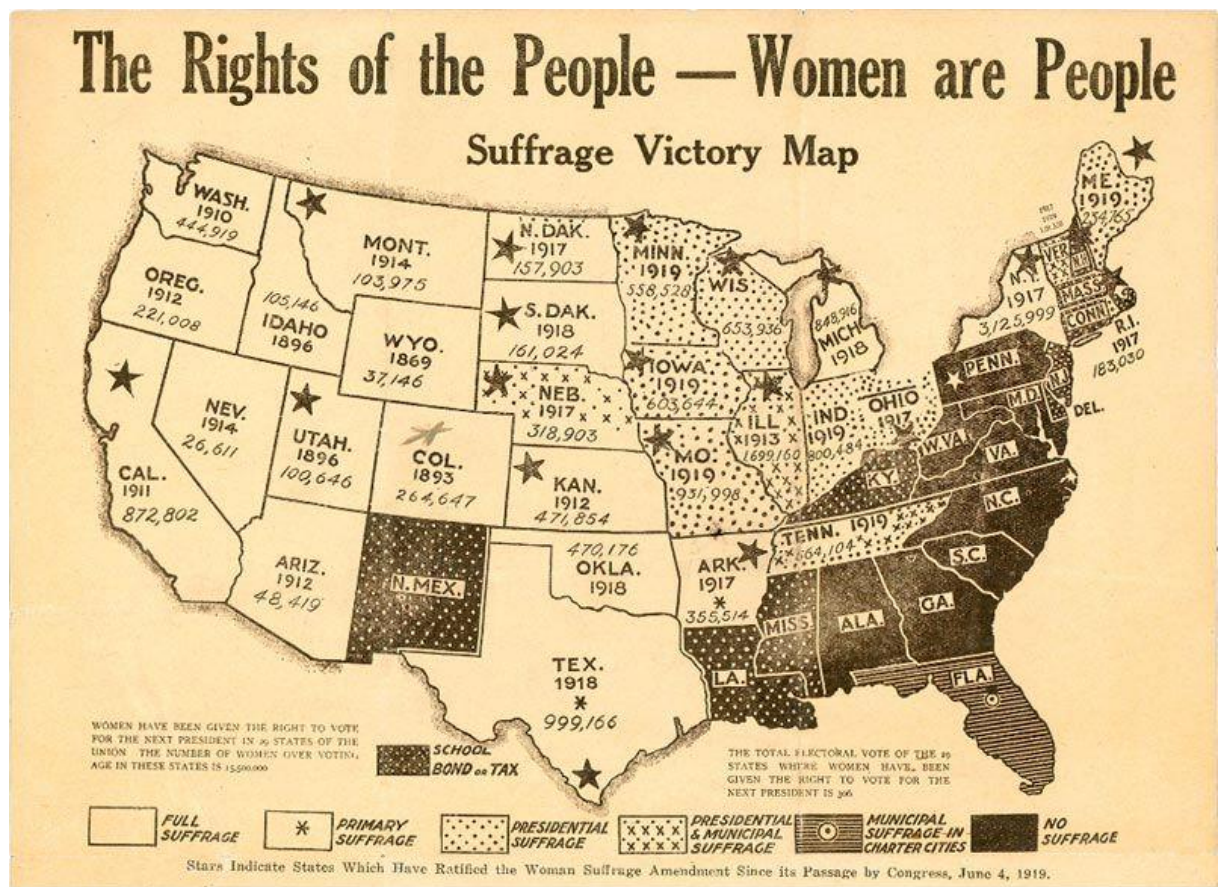


At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this trend continued as the lawmakers still manipulated with the voter turnout through registration acts in bigger cities. In 1911 the Geran Bill has been implemented along with the Corrupt Practices Act in New Jersey: voters were required personal registration in cities over 5000 habitants and the official ballot was due to be substituted for the old part (Link, 2015, p. 258). Corrupt practices were common as they were bought for \$2 in various part of Newark. The registration had to be renewed whenever the voter has changed his address or failed to show at the poll. The voters had only four days for the registration; they needed to identify themselves, give the names of their parents, spouse and landlord and describe the dwelling they lived in – these policies have one again targeted black and immigrant voters (Schaffer, 2008, p. 24). In his book called *The Right to Vote*, Alexander Keyssar provided the numbers showing how the voter turnout has decreased among such groups. He states that in Boston, Chicago or Philadelphia 60 to 70 percent of the voters were registered between 1910 and 1920 with the numbers being much lower in poorer districts (2000, p. 158). In San Francisco only 54% of males, who were eligible for voting were registered and according to the researchers more than one-third of the national numbers can be acknowledged to the implementation of the registration laws (2000, p. 158). Still, at that time, men were in much more convenient situation, as women suffrage was not an issue that was taken into the consideration nationwide. Year 1912 sets an important step on this timeline, as Roosevelt's Progressive Party was the first party in the United States that supported female voting (2010, p. 10). Roosevelt personally believed that the right to vote should be equal, what is more his stance on the equality between the sexes was much broader as not only this case gained his endorsement. Women, however, did not rely on the political promises as the suffragists organized more and more events that spread the word about their causes. National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which was formed in 1890 by merging the already existing rival organizations: the National Women Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association, did an enormous groundwork at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by recruiting members and forming suffrage schools in which the students could get knowledge about the main goal (Marsico, 2010, p. 27). As Roosevelt lost the presidential election with Woodrow Wilson, the group decided to let the public know about their objectives. Alice Paul, who was a part of a Congressional Committee, organized a successful event in Washington on the day that the newly elected president arrived for the inauguration (2010, p. 28). The parade that took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 1913, was widely attended, which stirred Wilson who was surprised that so few citizens attended his event. It is worth noting that there were also groups of conservative women, who opposed the changes, especially in the South. The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, which was formed in 1911, believed that the changes would have disturbed the powers of states – moreover they also refused to support this cause by stating that more black voters would be

eligible for voting if the law was passed (Baker, 2002, p. 14).

It is worth noting, how did women campaign for their suffrage, as they were using innovative methods to campaign for their cause. According to Zagumny and Pulsipher, geography was playing a very important role in school during late 1890s / early 1900s period, as it helped the students understand their and their country's place in the world (2008, p. 413). As suffragists mostly represented middle and upper classes and a higher percentage of women started to attend college or universities, they started to implement their cartographic knowledge into the campaigns (Dando, 2010, p. 224). Besides that, Americans started to get interested more in the geography, especially as National Geographic has switched the course of their content from the academic to more approachable and popular (Schulten, 2001, p. 46). The maps not only acted as a scientific confirmation of the social works women did at that time, but also displayed the influence of their movement in different parts of the United States. A typical suffrage map displayed the states in the US with the white, shaded or black background. The chart legend described each of the tones with the white one showing the states that have already fully acknowledged the women suffrage, black displaying the states in which women were not eligible to vote at that time and the shaded areas, where women suffrage was implemented, but only under various conditions. The colours were used for the purpose of propaganda, as white is associated with freedom and black with slavery and unclarity (Dando, 2010, p. 225). A wide list of maps has been presented over the years as more and more states began to constitute women's right to vote, the one presented in this chapter describes the voting rights that were accomplished by the women suffrage movements in the United States before the implementation of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Fig. 1 Suffrage map, taken from the resources of the Library of Virginia and the Library of Congress



Source: The Library of Virginia <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/destiny/votes/victorymap.htm>

The maps were not only displayed in newspapers, but also in public places, such as state capitals and the halls of power. Dando argues that the maps were supposed to not only motivate the women, who engaged in this activity, but all of the Americans, as it served as an anchor (2010, p. 227). This is an extension of Jacob's theory that states the maps show a visible reality and allow the discourse to be presented as an object, not just an idea (2006, p. 30). The maps were printed on map calendars, baseball programs, drinking glasses or paper fans, which shows a perfect audience targeting during the campaign as it allowed to approach soldiers, railwaymen or sport enthusiasts (2010). A term has been created by a geographer Judith Tyner, called "persuasive cartography", which means a map that is made to influence the opinion of the reader (1982, p. 140). By highlighting the arguments and adding a content legend, one can show their stance to make a point.

Academics usually undermine the works of the suffrage social movements on the West, by forming a "gift theory", which's author GH Mead described the female settlers as middle-class representatives that did not won the campaign by threatening the community and rather follow a belief that male decision-makers were the ones who allowed the suffrage to happen (Tokugawa, 2006, p. 4). This theory, however, while acknowledging that the changes were allowed by the experimental political environment, is not totally correct as male politicians opposed quick changes

and they allowed them to happen only under the influence of the movement.

In the south on the other hand, women activists needed to work on their message to get the support from the nationalists. It does not mean, however, that the group that lobbied on the north was open for African-American women. The Washington march mentioned in this subchapter lacked females that represented this ethnic group, as many white women believed that such move would be against their political expediency. Some of the strategists, who organized the march have encouraged the black protesters to form a quiet group on the very back of the parade. Northern activists excluded African Americans from pro-suffrage movements because of their racial prejudices, but also believed that supporting them would be against the strategy they were developing in the southern states, as it could damage the support for their cause and strengthen the opposition. Because of that fact, African American women lacked support in this social movement.

The southern suffrage movement started to increase its popularity in 1910s, as the industrial sector started to develop in the 1880s, fueled by the northern funds. As new railroads began to be built, the urbanization and the industrialization allowed the cities to grow – for instance the population of Atlanta between 1900 and 1910 grew by 72 percent (Green, 2000, p. 14). The industrialization had also generated a new class structure as the working class, which was segregated, started to move to the cities. The elites started to become powerful because of the profits gained from the economic development. The middle class focused on the trade with the people from urban territories (2000, p. 14). This led to the emergence of a new generation of women, who were higher educated, had economic stability and felt a need for the reforms, just like their sisters from the northern states. Much more can be written about the racism in the southern states, but the main focus of this study should be brought on the case of Georgia, where from the 1890s to 1920 the white supremacist rhetoric has been a very important part of the women suffrage movement. The leader of the suffrage movement, Mary Latimer McLendon complained that the former slaves obtained the right to vote before the well-respected women (Summerlin, 2009, p. 7). This belief represented the views of many women involved in this social movement in the southern states, as the inhabitants believed in the 'Lost Cause' of the Confederacy and tried to develop a new image of a southern woman, but also played on the resentment for the slavery and the period in Southern history before the Civil War (2009, p. 11). Summerlin argues that just like other southern reformers, suffragists in Georgia focused on the progressive reforms that favored white working class (2009, p. 51). What is important, even though these policies did not focus on the improvement of the well-being of ethnic minorities, the General Assembly often prevented their implementation, fearing that black citizens might exploit such laws (2009, p. 52). As the First World War broke out, many Black Americans started to move from the southern states to more industrialized, northern territories to develop new businesses that would focus on help for their community. This also

allowed them to escape southern oppression and as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was created in 1909, many supremacists believed that not only the black community does grown in strength, but also their migration is a part of the plot made by the northerners to weaken the South and deprive their businesses of the workforce (2009, p. 61). Francesca Morgan argues that in the "Jim Crow America", white women developed an Anglo-Saxonist Pride, leading to them supporting the racial segregation, at the same time lobbying for their causes (Morgan, 2006, p. 10). As a result, white and black women tended to engage in social movements separately. Wheeler further explains the behavior of the suffragists as between 1890 and 1920, southerners believed that the women suffrage is an idea borrowed from the liberal North, so they would also fear that the social structure between men and women would be damaged. Because of that fact, female activists, who supported the law changes would often underline that allowing women to vote would not change their role in the society, by supporting men (Wheeler, 1995, p. 39). Wheeler, who specializes in the history of suffrage movement in Tennessee, explains that the southern suffragists did not raise the race issue as they did not want to confront politicians, furthermore clarifying that they do not fight for the suffrage of black women (1995, p. 40).

This brief analysis of the suffrage movement is important to understand the differences in the roles women played in the society between the northern and southern states as American female voters can not be understood as a unity, their political behavior was shaping under different conditions. That is why the black community does not really identify with its icons, as the main narrative in American schools when teaching about this part of the history is focusing the attention on the heroic white women.

The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment does not, however, mean that the fight for suffrage was no longer an important issue, as the law forbid the discrimination when it came to gender, but still did not allow some of the Americans to vote during the elections. As women started to engage in politics and supported progressive reforms, they tended to not care about race issues. As they feared to accept black activists into their groups, white women were still to decide which party would care more about their issues. Both of the parties already knew that women's rights should be important issues in their platforms and as a result more suffragists could serve at the state level (Dumenil, 2007). At that time, the female suffrage movement started to split as some of the activists began to support the Democrats instead of the reformist wing of the Republican Party, mostly because of the fact that in the New York state the Democratic Party was identified as urban liberal. There also, however, was a third group of female voters that supported progressive causes. Many women cared about the maternal issues and infancy protection, but on the other hand believed that the issue of political equity between women and men should only be important within dominant race groups (Blee, 1991, p. 58). At the beginning of the second era of Ku Klux Klan, in 1920s many

women joined the organization to oppose immigration and racial equality. A keyword "pure womanhood" was used during their campaigns to attract females that wanted to preserve their national privilege. A film released in 1915 called *The Birth of A Nation* became a symbol of the movement and played a lion's share in the marketing campaigns of the nationalist organizations. The social environment did not help to overturn racist policies, as the anti-immigration laws that were introduced such as National Origins Act made Italians, Poles, Jews and later on Asians feel unwelcome in the country, by putting limitations on their entries to the United States. There also have been economic issues that influenced the voting behavior of Americans in the 1920s. The creation of so-called liberty bonds allowed the citizens that were not able to join the army during the First World War to financially support the troops (McAdoo, 1931). Acting as an important part of war propaganda, bonds did not only allow the owners to identify more with the cause, but also offered attractive financial profits. According to the latest study by Hilt and Rahn, as the bond prices started to decrease in 1919-1920, millions of people felt betrayed (2018, p. 757). The Republican Party used their disillusionment during the 1920 presidential campaign to attack the Democrats. Their study showed that indeed the counties that subscribed to the bonds at higher rates, turned against the Democratic Party. The citizens did not understand the risks of their investments, therefore as the prices began to decrease, this heavily influenced the political behavior in American households (2018, p. 773).

Another issue that disturbed the political scene in the US was the farming crisis, that was caused after the end of the First World War. At that time around 1/3 of Americans lived in farms, therefore the decrease in prices affected large groups of citizens (Soth, 1983, p. 195). As the high market supply started to flow, farmers that were encouraged by the state to increase the production faced rough times, with overproduction and debts linked to the industrialization of farms being one of the most important factors (Phillips, 2007, p. 36). Rather steady industrial prices and the increase in salaries for workers made the agricultural society think about moving to more urban areas. According to Federico, the agricultural distress played an important role in banking panics that turned into the Great Depression (2005, p. 963). The stock market crash in 1929 was caused by the investors losing confidence, as the stock prices have reached the levels „that could not be justified by reasonable anticipations of future earnings" (Romer, 2003). A huge decline in spending after a very prosperous period in the 1920s led to a decline in production. The bank panics ended in 1933, as Franklin Roosevelt introduced a national bank holiday, by closing banks and letting them open only after the inspection by the government officials. Although these events took place over 80 years ago, they allow the academics to predict how would the citizens react to the financial crisis, as the economic situation can be one of the most important factors that could influence the decision-making process of the voter.

Having acknowledged the political environment that affected (mostly) white voters before the Second World War, it is crucial to note that some of the social groups could not even vote to express their support or disillusionment with the ruling party and the president. Poor voters, either white or black did not meet the voting requirements as they were not able to pass literacy tests of property qualifications. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), formed in 1909, fought against the disfranchisement in the 1920s (Patterson, 2001, p. 84). The problem was, however, that the organization was predominantly middle-class, so it could have affect on the northern policies, but was not really able to help the poor, black community in the South. The industrialization that happened after the First World War, allowed many African-Americans to move to north and west, as they could expect higher wages and even political positions they could have only dreamed of. This led to the increased percentage of black communities in cities like Los Angeles, New York or St. Louis. (History, Art and Archives) Still, NAACP tackled the issue of middle-class black voters, who were prevented from casting the ballot. As the representatives of the organization met with the House Census Committee, they argued that under current law, southern white voters had 4 to 10 times voting power of the white voters from the North. (Stakeman, Stakeman) One of the most important laws that NAACP wanted to secure were efforts to bring justice for black people, who were caught in the South's criminal justice system (Sullivan, 2009). The association did a huge groundwork concerning housing and schools, this led to strengthening of local branches and the increase in recognition among the African-Americans. Lawyers, who helped the organization, fought for the extradition of fugitives to avoid lynching or unfair trials (2009). Although the anti-lynching act was passed by the House of Representatives in 1922, it was stopped by a filibuster by the Senate Democrats. Nevertheless, black community in the North still faced discrimination, as housing associations developed agreements on not selling property to black buyers. New black homeowners faced attacks in urban areas all over the country, such as New York, Boston or Detroit.

It is worth noting, that during the interwar period, there also were white activists that fought for black community's justice. In 1930, Jesse Daniel Ames established the Association for Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. The aim of the group was for white women to openly criticize lynching as an inhuman practice that no longer should be conducted.

Other important problem that the African-American community was facing was the educational inequality, as the unequal schooling was one of the main challenges in the North. For instance, in Indiana, segregation was allowed by local option and Kansas permitted cities that had over 15,000 population to segregate schools. Nonetheless, the efforts of NAACP were often opposed by Black Americans, as they feared discrimination in mixed schools and in some cases supported the ethnically homogenous education.

During the 1920s, NAACP took part in a couple of cases that challenged the White-only primaries. The Texas case *Nixon v. Herndon* became the "focus of voting rights litigation" (Browne-Marshall, 2016, p. 78). In 1924, El Paso, Lawrence A. Nixon was not allowed to vote during the Democratic primary election. Nixon, who was a member of the El Paso branch of NAACP, sent a complaint to the office in New York. As the group represented the doctor in his lawsuit, lawyers worked with the local activists to have the issue accepted for review by the Supreme Court (2016, p. 79). The event was a huge success for the black voters all over the country, as in *Nixon v. Herndon*, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes ruled out the discrimination of black voters by stating that „color can not be made the basis of a statutory classification" (2016, p. 79). This case is one of the most symbolic wins of NAACP before the Voting Rights Act was introduced.

This issue has also been tackled in 1944 *Smith v. Allwright*, as after *Nixon v. Herndon*, the Democratic Party established a law that banned African-Americans from the attendance in primaries. As the Supreme Court argued in 1935 that the Democratic Party is a private organization that determines the membership according to its state convention, NAACP decided to challenge that by helping a black dentist from Houston, Lonnie E. Smith (Smith v. Allwright, 1944, p. 74). Supreme Court overturned the previous decision, which was the first solid win against racist South in Jim Crow Era. After the victory, activists all over the country were called to help register black voters in South.

At that time there were still three limitations that tended to exclude poor Whites and other ethnic groups from voting: grandfather clauses (that mostly targeted African-Americans), literacy tests and poll taxes. These laws were mostly used in the South and some of the Eastern states and openly discriminated huge groups of citizens. Activists started to tackle segregation by challenging racial divides, such as transportation rules. Montgomery became a symbol of fight as Rosa Parks was arrested in 1956 for refusing to giving up her seat to a white person. John Lewis, who later became a congressman was one of the volunteers that protested voting rights in Alabama. NAACP established that even though black community began to secure its right to vote, it was not able to influence elections, as voting districts were established to minimize their impact on the election outcome (Browne-Marshall, 2016, p. 108). Gerrymandering is often defined as favoring one group of interests over another by using the demographic tools in a redistricting process (Crocker, 2012, p. 23). This tactic, commonly used in countries all over the world allows to undermine the influence of ethnic minorities and minimize the competition among the parties, which leads to a one-party dominance (2012, p. 2). A case of *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* has proven such unfair practice, as NAACP discovered that the city Tuskegee of Alabama has been divided into twenty-eight sided figure (2016, p. 108). As the city was previously square-shaped, hundreds of poor voters representing ethnic minorities were excluded. The Supreme Court ruled that the Act 140 setting new

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boundaries, violated the Fifteenth Amendment.

Even though Supreme Court favored changes to the electoral system, black community still had to fight with poll taxes and literacy tests. This weapon for exclusion has been heavily used for generations (Browne-Marshall, 2016, p. 110). For example, in Northampton County, North Carolina, each of the citizens that wanted to be eligible to vote, had to read or write a section of the North Carolina Constitution of US Constitution, if they wanted to take part in the elections (2016). Civil Rights Commission investigated such cases, as in Alabama, from thirty-three witnesses that were not allowed to register, six of them held PhD degrees and four had college degrees (Bullock III et. al., 2016b, p. 12). In 1961 the Commission established that one hundred counties in eight southern states kept African-Americans from voting (2016b, p. 15). The poll tax has been banned in 1962 after the House voted in favour 295-86 (2016b, p. 117).

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 stands as a landmark law that helped to overcome difficulties that were set to prevent Black Americans from taking part in elections. Once again Alabama played a crucial role in campaign efforts, as protests broke in March 1965 in Selma. This county is a part of so-called Black Belt region that used to be famous for the highest number of cotton plantations (Tomaszewski, 2018, p. 6). As the freed slaves made a decision to stay in the southern part of the state, which led to a higher percentage of black community in this area (2018). Aforementioned activist John Lewis, along with other protesters, decided to organize a march from Selma to Montgomery to oppose the discrimination. Series of marches were met with violent attacks against the attendees (2016b, p. 18). As the Voting Rights Act was finally implemented, the federal government could intervene in the election administration of state and local governments (Richomme 2015, p. 2). What is more, the VRA banned literacy tests and pushed for restrictions on poll taxes in state elections (2015, p. 3). It is worth noting that the Twenty-fourth Amendment ratified in 1964 prohibited the states and Congress from conditioning the eligibility to vote on poll taxes and any other taxes.

Since 1965 there have been five major amendments of VRA with the latest from 2006. The latest Supreme Court decision regarding the Act has been made in 2013 in *Shelby County v. Holder*, fearing that the progress that has been made can be wiped out due to political decisions. The Court decided by a 5-to-4 vote that the 4b Section of VRA is unconstitutional, mainly because of the fact that it is based on a rule that was established 40 years ago that is no longer an important issue. Due to this decision, thousands of polling places have been closed, strictly targeting African-American community and according to the latest study by Pew Research Center, elimination of polling places can heavily reduce the voter participation of certain groups and increase the participation in other groups, depending on placing these places in certain neighborhoods (Vasilogambros, 2018). It is historically proven that voting in the United States has always been tied to race, therefore in order to

understand the current political climate and how the American voter has been crafted over the years, a socio-historical approach is crucial. Some of the experts, however, argue that the polling places have been closing because of the fact that early voting is becoming more popular (2018). Possibly, the best option for American democracy and its supporters would be a fair update on the Voting Rights Act, which would allow the biggest number of citizens possible to attend the polling stations. Many academics and politicians have proposed updates that would take into consideration the current political climate, but no particular changes have been made. Such amendment has been for instance introduced in 2015, as the bill would protect the discriminated voting groups from unfair practices, by threatening the state or jurisdiction to be subjected to preclearance (Sensenbrenner, 2016).

Because of that fact and citizen's disillusionment, the voting turnout has been recently decreasing with ethnic minorities being highly underrepresented. The black voter turnout has dropped under 60% in 2016 and the multi-racial turnout has been systematically dropping since 2008 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2018, p. 211). Along with the turnout, the voter registration numbers have been dropping, with the main reason that the citizens were not interested in the elections and not meeting registration deadlines (2018, p. 200). The report, created by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights also tackles if the voter turnout is a fine measure of discrimination. According to NAACP, access to political participation among ethnic minorities is a better measure, taking into consideration the fact that these groups of voters had to work harder to have access to voting polls, or need to spend more time in lines during the Election Day (2018, p. 205).

What problems are modern voters facing nowadays? Partisan gerrymandering is still a huge issue in U.S. politics as both Democrats and Republicans did their best to influence the electoral geography. By having access to data, one can split the constituency into few sections in which only one is won by the opponent, as the votes are concentrated in one area. The New Republic describes Maryland's 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district as the most line-drawn in the nation (Guo, 2012). It is proven that Democrats often divide the ethnic communities to assure the equal growth of support in constituencies as they are often voting against Republican Party (2012). Similar case happened with the Texas 33<sup>rd</sup> District, which was crafted by a court to profit from the Latin-American population in this area (around 67%) (Cillizza, 2017). How did the lawmakers use gerrymandering over the years? There have been four main ways to rewrite the geographic lines: a) malapportionment, which was used by the 1960s and meant unfair division of districts leading to uneven population; b) minority vote dilution – minimalization of the voting influence of the minorities; c) partisan gerrymandering – crafting the voting districts according to one party's support advantage; d) racial gerrymandering – crafting the voting districts based on race. Greenwood and other scientists have

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also established a short gerrymandering vocabulary, which describes actions that are taken to cheat when drawing the district lines. Such terms would be later used in described cases: a) *cracking* means splitting the supporters of a candidate into few districts to lower their influence on the outcome; b) *kidnapping* is a term for redrawing two of the districts into one, so the incumbents would run against each other (Schwartz, 2011); c) *hijacking* is moving the incumbent to another district; d) *packing* is simply concentrating the support in few districts, so the group would not have equal representation; e) *stacking* happens when the low turnout voters from particular minority groups are placed in a district to meet the VRA requirements, but in reality are prevented from choosing the candidate of their choice because of the high number of white voters; f) finally *tacking* is enlarging the district in order to invite the voters from the surrounding areas to influence the results (Greenwood et. al., 2018, p. 6) (Kennedy, 2016) (Pierce et. al., 2011).

But what remedy can be found in order to provide an independent look into such cases? In many states the redistricting commissions have been introduced, which draw the electoral district lines instead of the legislative bodies. Peter Miller and Bernard Grofman have described how do such commissions work in Western States. In opposition to state legislatures that allow gubernatorial veto, current trend is to handle such issues in non-partisan ways (2013, p. 637). There have been proposed three ways of solving the case of drawing the lines to the convenience of politicians. First are the bipartisan or mixed partisan and nonpartisan appointee commissions. The commissions can be also established through a citizen initiative or a referendum (2013, p. 643). Second proposal focused on the creation of various strict criteria on redistricting, which could at least help fight the most obvious gerrymandering attempts. The third one proposes that a supermajority would be needed to pass such law, which would force some kind of consensus between the parties (2013, p. 644). It has been argued that the creation of Independent Redistricting Commission would allow the voters to get more involved in electoral process, as citizens could act as an independent body, in contrary to the legislators (Greenwood et. al. 2018, p. 8).

The 2020 Census allowed the states to re-shape voting districts; 2020 Census Redistricting Data Program consists of five phases:

Phase 1 – Block Boundary Suggestion Project – in this phase, states are allowed to submit their suggestions by designing the linear features to use in the census.

Phase 2 – Voting District Project – this phase allows the states to propose and submit voting districts to be included in the 2020 Census Redistricting Data tabulations. What is more, they will be able to submit updates to geographic areas and legal boundary updates.

Phase 3 – Delivery of the 2020 Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data Files and Geographic Products – for the Data Delivery, the Director of Census Bureau would provide the Governor and state legislative leaders (majority and minority) with the population data that was obtained during

2020 Census for standard census areas, regardless of the state's participation in previous phases.

Phase 4 – Collection of Post-2020 Census Redistricting Plans

Phase 5 – Evaluation of the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Program and Recommendations for 2030 (CRVRDO, 2017).

As the Census is organized every ten years, the decisions and evaluations resulting from the census can influence the voting districts for a decade. Fair approach to district crafting is still one of the biggest challenges for the decision-makers in the country, especially that neither the Democratic Party, nor the Republican Party wants to play by the rules.

Over the years the mentality of U.S. Citizens has been evolving; American society is very specific, taking into consideration the fact that it still is a place where the social revolutions happen and influence people all over the world. Feminist and LGBT movements, by expanding their impact are able to obtain more rights that bring them closer to being equal with white cis male voters. Even though in 1872 Victoria Woodhull was the first female presidential candidate, the community had to wait until 2016 for Hillary Clinton to become the first candidate supported by a major party. Current wave of feminism (fourth one) emerged with the creation of internet and social media, which allowed to gain nationwide attention on topics related to unequal pay, violence against women or sexual abuse. What is mainly important about the wave is the inclusion and awareness of privilege, which slowly allows many groups to cooperate, instead of minding their own business (just like in the case of white suffragettes). This also brings the oppressed communities together, as current feminist movements work closely with LGBTQIA+ groups, for instance by inviting to their groups gender fluid activists. Unarguably barriers are removed as with every elections more minority groups are being represented and even chosen for nation and state legislatures.

The evolution of liberal elites into being more progressive, however, can be seen in reflection on the conservative site, as right-wing is also evolving and attracting newly formed social groups. The development of new media, which will be described in further research, allowed citizens to interact and engage in public discussion; this led to a further polarization of the political scene in the United States. The emergence of alt-right community can be linked to the Republican Party's inability to have such influence on young people, as the progressive organizations have on the left. Because of that fact, various new media outlets emerged that concentrated these groups and offered them simple answers to their problems. Also, men's insecurity related to the radicalization of feminist media coverage made specific groups of young voters vulnerable to populist movements, which opened the door for the revival of white supremacism. The so-called "incel" community, having origins in imageboard website 4chan is chauvinist, but does not really engage in Republican Party's life, preferring alt-right celebrities and activists, who with the support of right-wing's *éminence grise* such as Steve Bannon may threaten establishment's candidates during the primaries.

What is more, such movement can be defragmented, as some of the clubs are defined as alt-lite, they as distance themselves from nationalist groups, strictly focusing on anti-feminist issues.

As the political marketing started to develop and become the most important part of the campaigning process, specialists had to start thinking outside the box to describe the social groups and their voting patterns. Fragmentation of voters allowed them to target specific groups that are connected due to similar cultural background, free time activity, religion, sex or any other variable that can come to mind. Political pundits love to outlive their colleagues when talking about the marketing trends, that is why in current politics we no longer talk about female voters or male voters, we study the political behavior of NASCAR dads, or soccer moms. Politics nowadays are part of popculture – but when did that happen?

### **1.3 From traditional to new modes of campaigning process**

Campaigning strategies have seen a huge transformation in recent years, thanks to the development of Web 2.0 tools. The switch from traditional to new modes can be heavily linked to the professionalization and development of political marketing, which allowed the candidates to hand over most of their responsibilities to their full-time hired staff that specializes in communication with the voter. The campaign analysis can be researched from three perspectives: behavioral, which takes into consideration sociological and psychological changes in social attitude, through which the shifts in political processes can be recognized; functional, which focuses on political communication theories and allows to observe the effectiveness of various marketing tools such as adverts or debates; finally rational, which explains socio-political phenomena by spotlighting the decision-making mechanisms in the political market during the campaigns.

Twentieth century has seen a transition in how the electoral campaigns are led, as at the very beginning the parties took care of all the aspects of the campaign, in order to leave this job to the candidate by supporting him in the later timespan. This is related to the professionalization of political communication, which according to Holtz-Bacha is an adaptation to the changes in the political system on the one side and the media system on the other and in the relationship of the two systems (Negrine et. al., 2007, p. 10). In other words it is an adaptation of the campaign tactics to the trends and the development of the society's needs. Chris Rose describes seven principles of an ideal electoral campaign:

Be multidimensional – meaning that the candidate needs to understand humans in different ways, such as emotional, political, economic, psychological and scientific. Dealing with various ways of communication allows to translate the message fluently into various forms

Engagement by providing agency – the campaign needs to make the supporter aware that he or she can change the current political system and motivate them by relating to the issues they care about  
Have moral legitimacy – campaign staff and the supporters need to trust the candidate and be convinced that he is doing a real change, even if the campaign is planned, it is won in people's hearts

Provoke a conversation in the society – by talking to the society the candidate must acknowledge that he or she also needs to win the trust of their opponent's supporters. They need to ask themselves whether they're voting for a right person.

Have energy – the candidates needs to be excited, because if they are not showing any emotions then they can not transfer them to their supporters

Be strategic – whole campaign trail needs to be carefully planned, involving a battle-winning strategy at the beginning and a war-winning strategy in the end.

Be communicable as a story – it involves a positive way of whispering campaigning in which a knowledge about the candidate and good word is spread among the supporters, so he or she would become more recognizable (2010, p. 11).

How does it help in conducting the campaign? The candidate needs to be perceived by the voter as someone similar, so further a person that is casting a ballot could position themselves as if they were the candidate. What is needed to enforce that? Campaign marketing tools.

Kotler defines marketing as a "social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others" (1994, p. 5). How can it be implemented into the world of political marketing? There are four elements that make the modern political marketing activity:

Researching, which consists of political market research, meaning polls, surveys, focus groups and political market analysis, meaning voter profiling, segmentation, opposition research, analytics. Current campaigns need to rely on the research in order to create a product (meant as a political program), which has to fulfill the needs of the customer (voter)

Organizing, described as volunteer management, donor management, network marketing and GOTV (get out the vote). Modern electoral campaign needs to attract people that would be eager to spend their free time to canvass for the candidate in various areas. Get out the vote is in other words a mobilization campaign that focuses on increasing the voter turnout (especially among the minorities). This was the case in Obama's 2012 presidential bid and Beto O'Rourke's failed Senate bid in Texas in 2018.

Strategizing using the market-orientation and sales orientation – it is needed to create a program that will be based on what we're good in, but will also be mixed with what the voter is expecting from us

Communicating through e-marketing, market oriented advertising, direct marketing, celebrity marketing; candidate needs to use all forms of modern communication to reach the highest number of citizens possible. Celebrity marketing allows to increase the turnout, this will be further analyzed in next chapters (Lees-Marshment et. al., 2014, p. 4).

Of all the marketing tactics, advertising is the best way to reach the voter. The message needs to be repeated in order for the recipient to recognize it and influence him enough to buy the product (Wiszniowski, 2000: 114). In modern politics, they are created by a campaign staff or hired PR consultants. According to academics, advertising is one of the forms of mass communication , explained as method of effective communication between two entities, who are role-playing different characters (Dobek-Ostrowska, 1997, p. 7). How can it be transferred from the world of economics into the world of politics? Basically as it has been previously established, both the political program, candidate's image, his likability need to be sold through campaign advertising to the potential voter, the same way a marketing product is offered to the consumer.

The characteristics of adverts are universal and evolutionary, as nowadays they are used consistently through mass media (2000, p. 115). The message itself needs to be heard, seen, read by the recipient (2000, p. 115). In his book, Marek Jeziński follows popular scientific theories that media are a channel that allow the politician to distribute his message with to the citizen. Press, printed leaflets, books, posters, radio, door-to-door marketing, organizing events, campaign rallies, letters, phone messages, cassettes, CD's, television, cable media, internet – there are plenty ways to run campaign advertisements. The tactics, however, can differ, depending on where the politician is canvassing (2004).

What are the aims of political advert? Its main goal is to show the positive image of a political party (institutional advertising) and the image of candidate supported by the party (personal advertising). These adverts may differ, as when one leads an information campaign focused on the candidate, the tactics rely on introducing the candidate to the crowd before the election, whereas the party focuses on image building and announcing planned changes. As the advert focuses on convincing, it creates the positive image of the candidate in order to attract swing voters, while the institutional tends to appeal to voter loyalty and comparison to other parties, to underline its attractiveness. Finally, the consolidation advertising, which focused on keeping the dominance of the candidate on a political scene and informing the voters about the benefits of choosing him. In the institutional advert, the staff focuses on creating the message that is reminding the recipient of the history of the party and its merits (Schoell, Gultinan, 1988, p. 518) (Wiszniowski, 2000, p. 117).

If the politician is running a campaign against only one opponent, comparative advertising might be the right answer, as he or she can consistently remind the potential voter of what the rival

is / is not capable of. Wiszniowski also recalls SLB, AIDA and DIPADA models, which describe how an advert has to be created to attract the consumer:

SLB – *Stay, Look, Buy* – advert needs to draw attention, so the consumer would stop for a while and receive the message; this leads to him or her checking the product and buying it

AIDA – *Attention, Interest, Desire, Action* – getting the attention, which leads to the consumer being interested in a product. Later, the product is desired by the consumer, which results in action (buying the product).

DIPADA – *Definition, Identification, Proof, Acceptance, Desire, Action* – firstly it is needed to define the needs and acknowledge what needs will the advert fulfill. Later, consumers have to be convinced that they need the offered good, so they would accept it, as a positive attitude towards it is built. Desire to buy it culminates in action (Wiszniowski, 2000, p. 117).

Simpson and O'Shaughnessy believe that candidate's image and a campaign theme are developed as a part of a larger publicity plan (2016, p. 106). They provide seven questions that each candidate should ask:

What kind of voter do we attract? Who is attracted by our opponent and is going to vote for him?

Let's forget about the base of support, who else can we get to vote and how can we persuade him?

What are the images we want to project of our candidate?

What is the campaign theme?

How will we inform the electorate that there is an election, get them to recognize the candidate and mobilize them on the Election day?

How to counter the opponent's image?

How to implement voter contact, media publicity, social media and paid media? (2016, p. 106)

But how does it work? Which way is the best one? Marketing specialists have distinguished traditional and new media outlets that are used to sell the product, in political advertising a candidate or a party. Modern electoral campaign still needs to combine these tactics to win the elections; although many political scientists have called an end of traditional media era in the wake of increased access to the internet, there are still many social groups that prefer getting news from newspapers or television. The numbers are not growing: in 2018 68% of Americans admitted to get news on social media sites; the number has only risen by one margin when compared with 2017 (Matsa, Shearer, 2018). Everyone can agree that all the "cool" political stuff is happening in the internet, with *Buzzfeed*, *Vice* or *Complex* being lifestyle magazines/websites that often provide political news in very accessible way to target young liberals, or candidate's posting viral content on Facebook or Instagram, but the hardest work has to be done physically in the voting counties.

Polling techniques such as private opinion polls and focus groups allow the candidate to understand what voters think about the candidates and important issues. The results may help to



determine how the campaign should be handled, what kind of topics should become the main issue in our political program, but also which issues may antagonize the voters. This is one of the oldest marketing tactics, as already in 1774 surveys have been conducted to ask whether the colonists are fine with the existing system. Opinion survey data is inextricably linked to the permanent campaigns, as it is mostly politician's in office job to check the happiness of the citizen, likability of his image and evaluation of his political choices.

True political survey research started with the Gallup Polls, which were introduced in 1935. Private opinion polling became popular few decades later, for instance Labour Party (United Kingdom) introduced them in 1956 by launching a series of limited surveys (Kavanagh, 1992, p. 518). Many traditional party members believed that these tactics may lead to the Americanization of election communication, as they argued that it's politician's and party activist's job to understand what the voter needs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an enthusiast of modern survey methods; as he developed government polling, the survey data was often influencing his policies during New Deal era and the war (Jacobs, 1992b, p. 209). Another perfect example of traditional opinion polling influencing the politics was Kennedy's campaign during 1960 Democratic primaries. JFK understood "the importance and value of the polls on the American scene", (1992b) his enthusiasm resulted in many polls conducted for the primaries and the general election. The polls have influence his campaigning style, adverts, speeches and strategies (1992b). Such strategies became a significant part of electoral campaigning; Richard Nixon paid \$250,00 to Opinion Research Corporation to interview 500 voters in 13 states periodically (Bogart, 1985, p. 38).

Years later, polling is much easier to conduct with the development of internet voter targeting, which allows to collect the information about the voter in order to further analyze it an approach via phone or direct mail (Issenberg, 2012). The analytics, having access to big data (large volume of data that has potential to have significant information) and computer technology, can easily determine the election outcome. 2012 presidential elections have changed the scientific perception how the opinion is obtained – hitherto new media were used by candidates to obtain e-mails from voters via subscription or the campaign staffs implemented baby steps in social media campaigns. Jim Messina, who was Obama's campaign manager in 2012 decided to gather all the data possible to measure it – data analysis ran on 66,000 computer simulations daily (van Rijmenam, 2013). Van Rijmenam decided to describe how the analysis has been ran: all of the swing-state voters received a rating from 0 to 100. The ratings depended on various measures:

The likelihood that the voter would support Obama

The prospect that they would show up at the poll

How persuaded the voter can be by engaging in the conversation on particular issue

The possibility that a person supporting Obama could be an inconsistent voter

All these four measures would influence the message that would be sent out to a swing-state voter (2013).

This case shows that even though polling is a traditional canvassing method, it is still eagerly used as the development of various tools allows the campaign staff to not only reach higher number of respondents, but also ensure that the margin of error would be much lowered. What is interesting is how modern progressive politicians tend to criticize the use of big data in order to appeal to more "human" side of politics. The Democratic candidate for a Senate seat in Texas in 2018, Beto O'Rourke, consistently underlined that his campaign does not need help of pollsters to gain the voter support. His refusal of using such tactics became a national issue, as he still managed to outdistance the Democratic candidates when talking about crowdfunding. As he narrowly lost the race and was one of the media favorites for the 2020 primaries, it appears that such approach can also help gain the trust of voters, especially the young ones, who seek someone similar to them (Fernandez, Ferman, 2018).

Polls were and are used to examine image and check voter's needs. Radio and television ads on the other hand are created to reach the biggest number of voters possible. Campaign spots can have various goals, they can try to increase the GOTV or show more personal side of the candidate. They can also be a part of negative campaign, if staff targets the opponent and his policies. Benoit argues that the content of radio spots often does emphasize the policy over character, (2007: 86) but they also more frequently attack the opponent (2007, p. 89). According to studies by Shapiro and Rieger, political advertising in the radio is less effective than in other media (1992). At the beginning of 1920's, political parties started to use radio to spread the campaign message (Kaid, Holtz-Bacha, 2006, p. 37). Although it needs to be stressed that it is still an important way to spread the message along the potential voters, since television has been introduced to wider audience, it became more significant (2006, p. 37) and the use of radio has been decreasing over the time from 1952 to 2000 (Benoit, Hansen, 2006). Robert E. Denton Jr., when describing how television influenced American politics, cites Robert Hart, who argued that "television makes us feel good about feeling bad about politics" (Denton Jr., 2000, p. 101). He further concludes that such medium as television's goal is to „reduce ideological principles to human, personal components" (2000, p. 102).

When talking about the politics in the United States, Dwight Eisenhower was the first presidential candidate that used TV spots with his "I like Ike" ads (Greene, 2017). John F. Kennedy did not only use television to increase his recognition and inform about planned policies, but also was the first politician that combined that with voter targeting and celebrity politics, as the Democratic candidate also launched a commercial, in which he received the endorsement of another important figure in black community – actor Harry Belafonte (Watts, 2016, p. 94). From that point,

campaign strategists and candidates started to notice how powerful his manoeuvre is. Even though Nixon personally was not a fan of television, he has seen a huge potential in it – the highlight point of his campaign was the appearance in a popular comedy show *Laugh-In*, in which he said a show's popular catchphrase 'Sock it to me?'. According to Brownell, this was perfectly fit into the tactics his campaign staff presented, appealing to young voters to create a likable image in the popular media (2014, p. 189). It is important to stress that electoral campaigning in television was never limited to TV spots, as politicians started to attend talk-shows more eagerly or take part in presidential debates. Talk-show visits allow them to appeal more human-like to the voter and to show more personal side, as maybe they would share same interests or like similar food. This all adds up to creation of political image, since on one hand it should be professional, but on the other hand not that distinct. Such perception shortens the emotional distance between the candidate and his supporter. One of the campaigns that intentionally used TV programs to increase likability and recognizability of the candidate was Bill Clinton's presidential rally.

Clinton knew how to present himself in the media – during his campaign trail, he engaged in TV performances in order to boost his presidential chances; for example he impersonated Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando for the interviewers, answered personal questions on MTV and appeared in Arsenio Hall's talk-show, in which he demonstrated his saxophone playing skills (Meroney, 1993, p. 68). This was an easy move to help Clinton connect with young audience and women voters. By appearing at late-night shows, the candidate could approach viewers, who rather sought entertainment, than politics in TV. Clinton can be deemed as the first candidate, who won the elections by using the influence of the television. His appearance attracted the attention of the media, he understood the importance of popular culture. Although TV shows and adverts are still a significant part of campaign planning, running spots on social media platforms such as Youtube or videos on Facebook are much cheaper and allow to attract wider audience. What is more, if the spot is going viral, the campaign staff does no longer have to worry about promoting it, because through interacting with the content, (sharing, commenting, liking) users distribute it to a larger crowd.

Although ways how the Web 2.0 tools influence modern political campaigning will be further discussed in next chapters, a small conclusion can be made that even though television is one of the most important media outlets used by politicians, the way it is used has evolved, as with every year, the number of internet users that obtain political information from new media is increasing. One should not underestimate the power of traditional media, as (especially) during local elections or Congressional elections, the use of local radio stations, local cable channels is crucial to attract less technologically-advanced groups such as for example less-educated, older citizens. There is, however, one particular advantage that television has over the internet: campaign debates, which prove that politics are all about the show. Debate allow the candidate to distinguish

from the opponent and underline that he or she is more suitable for the office. Presidential debates usually are introduced in a standard conference format with moderator selected by the TV, who would lead panels on chosen topics. According to Schroeder's research, timing and scheduling is the most important part of debate planning, as however is leading in the polls, needs fewer debates and they have to be organized „on as much distance as possible between the final debate and election day, in case time is needed to rebound from a disaster” (2008, p. 32). Further strategy needs to rely on many issues such as outfit, final conclusion or debating style (aggressive or easy-going). As usually two or three debates take place, it is crucial to choose different TV channels to ensure objectivity. What is more important? Political issues or candidate's brand and behavior? It is generally considered that Richard Nixon lost the presidential campaign in 1960 due to failed debates in television, as the studio lights have shown how sweaty he is, whereas JFK looked calm and rested. Sometimes simple gestures are a key to winning, during 2000 presidential debate, Al Gore stood up and walked few steps towards Bush to discourage him – Bush simply reacted by nodding, which was met with audience's laughter. Political debates have always reminded reality shows, as by making the audience believe that they are organized around the issues, they transform into a popularity and likability contest whenever they have the occasion.

As public access to the internet allows the staff to strengthen the coordination of all aspects of the campaign, the ability to livestream content proves that the importance of television as a tool that represents of both traditional and new media may no longer be needed. This can be especially the case for local news stations – during local government elections in Poland, the debate between the candidates for Wrocław's new president was livestreamed on Facebook by Gazeta Wyborcza's local branch. During the debate, the spectators could show their support for the candidate by leaving Facebook reactions during their speeches.

Another traditional way of canvassing, which became more efficient because of the internet is the organization of campaign rallies and door-to-door meetings. The aim of this strategy is to secure volunteers, obtain information on the issues voters in the district care about or problems they are facing, organize fundraisers, strengthen the structure on a local level. Of course the way the candidates engage in meeting differ when talking about rural and urban areas – in the suburbs, citizens often live in gated communities, which makes it difficult to persuade them to a five minute talk. On the other hand, potential supporters living in high-rise buildings are concentrated in small areas, but they do not really tend to engage in local community's life, furthermore will not be able to provide significant information about the neighborhood and its political culture (Simpson, O'Shaughnessy 2016, p. 161). Conducting the campaign in rural areas is more difficult, as the candidate needs to travel larger distances to meet with the same amount of voters – nevertheless the issues tackled need to be more candidate-driven and locally-oriented (2016, p. 163).

Alternatively, door-to-door canvass can be replaced by direct mail or telephone canvass, with the main goal to remind people to vote. Staffs often obtain contact information on voter registration forms – during 2018 electoral campaigns in Utah, the Democratic Party staffers and volunteers sent out over 420,000 texts to voters (Locklear, 2018). Many experts stress that the organization of phone banks helps in running a successful political campaign, as telemarketing is quite cheap and effective. They are also perfect follow-ups to direct mails; as most of people do not read all the mail that is left in their postbox, repeating the message regarding fundraisers and volunteer recruitment increases the chance of engagement in the political campaign (Joy, 2016). Modern ground political campaign, however, would not be possible without the use of new media. As the campaign staff launches Facebook groups and fanpages that advertise in specific areas, it is easier to attract volunteers in various parts of the voting district. Because of that fact, the campaign staff no longer has to worry about the organization of rallies, as local activists often help them to find public places or conference halls. What is more, just like the debates, rallies and door-to-door events can be livestreamed directly through social media websites and the candidates are more and more willing to do so. This is a win-win situation, as politician is not only meeting his supporters in person, but also receives internet clout, which may lead to more people signing up as volunteers. Yet, this can be a double-sworded weapon, as the staff is streaming the meeting, the content can not be live edited and web users watching it may see both successes and failures in delivering the campaign message. Efficient internet campaign staff also needs to discuss how to tackle internet haters (in other words opponent's supporters), who will try to weaken and ridicule the politician.

Finally, political campaign can not survive without a logo, slogan, motto or a catchphrase that will be associated with the candidate or the party. Naturally, when creating a leaflet, poster or internet profile, first thing that should come to campaign manager's mind is the color. In Europe, for a long time red has been identified with left-wing parties, yellow with liberal or libertarian parties, blue is for conservatives, green for agrarian and ecological parties, orange with Christian democratic ones. This rule is flipped in the United States, as the Republican Party uses red color and Democrats incorporated blue for their public image. Electoral candidates, to distinguish themselves operate with catchy slogans that later can be connected to them, such as Barack Obama's "Yes We Can", which became viral and is still popular even though Obama is no longer the POTUS. Another slogan that went global during his presidential campaign is "HOPE", displayed on a poster designed by Shepard Fairey and is considered one of the most iconic political posters of all time. Donald Trump's presidential campaign's "Make America Great Again" phrase became that popular, that it is perceived as his tenure's main catchphrase. Internet allows such ideas to go viral, which leads to increases in fundraising, if the candidates and their staff decide to monetize on the hype. What is interesting, is how Donald Trump used Facebook to do such thing; when the potential supporters

visited his fanpage, they could press the "Shop now" button in order to buy "MAGA" related merchandise such as t-shirts and baseball caps (Tomaszewski, 2018, p. 108). In the era of social media, campaign slogans can be transferred into hashtags that could be use on various platforms such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram to reach out to the voters – Hillary Clinton's #Imwithher campaign allowed various female celebrities to post their endorsements on Twitter under a simple tag. Sometimes it is the supporters, who create campaign mottos that go viral, such as #FeeltheBern phrase, being Bernie Sanders's trademark since the 2016 Democratic Primaries.

Concluding this part of research – modern technology allows the candidates and their campaign staffs to use various techniques to approach the potential voter. Over the years the tactics have evolved – mostly thanks to the on-going development and widened access to mass media. Even if some of the methods currently seem old-fashioned, such as use of radio spots or door-to-door campaigning, it is not coincidental that political marketing specialists are using them, as there is still a large percentage of citizens that does not use internet on a daily basis. Internet tools are more effective, but the ability to organize people around one's cause should be confirmed at campaign rallies, because materials from the meetings can be later shared all over the voting district or a country. Without a doubt, television allowed the candidates to approach the voters and become recognizable. What is more, various talk-shows or political debates have proven that voters seek for more personal side of the candidate, as they do not only care about his or hers political programme, but also want to check whether they are decent human beings that do „cool stuff” during their free time. This most obviously appeals to young voters and it is the best way to make them interested in politics, especially in the United States.

## **1.4 Campaign management in the United States**

Political campaigns in the United States have always been trendsetters when talking about using new technologies to reach the voter – the ongoing Americanization of political marketing has been substantiated by various cases from over the world, where the candidates started using tools that were a new addition to the campaign in their area, but have been a part of American political life for years. In order to fully understand how the campaign management in the United States work, it is firstly crucial to describe what kind of political campaigns are conducted in the US, how do they differ and how long do they tend to carry on.

All the campaigns need to act accordingly to the federal campaign finance laws and regulations. The *Federal Election Campaign Act* has established limits on the contributions that can be made to the candidate's campaign. They do not include the funds that were organized from the

candidate's private money. Candidate's committee can accept up to \$2,700 from an individual per an election. A candidate committee can donate maximum \$2,000 per election. A multicandidate committee can submit up to \$5,000 and non-multicandidate committee can send up to \$2,700 per election. This however is not applicable for the independent-expenditure-only political committees, which are publicly known as Super PAC's. As the legislative does not include them, they can not contribute to the campaign, but can engage in spending money on the campaign, by raising money from unions, corporations or individuals without any limits. This law, introduced in 2010, disturbed the political scene in the United States, as these organizations have much bigger influence on the campaign funds than individual supporters. However, it may be perceived as candidate's advantage, if he's not relying on Super PAC's – Bernie Sanders during the Democratic Primaries in 2016 was able to attack Hillary Clinton for being dependent on rich sponsors, as his fundraising was purely based on voluntary individual contributions (Murse, 2016) (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 145). Such tactics can be associated with the politicians representing more progressive parts of the Democratic Party. During his campaign in 2018 for the Senate seat, Beto O'Rourke also stressed that he does not need the support, neither from PAC's, not Super PAC's (McDermott, 2018). This allows the candidates to prove they are anti-establishment and distinct them from the political elites, to appeal to younger voters. O'Rourke's and Sanders's cases show that they indeed work, as they were able to fundraise millions of dollars for their campaigns from small donations. Party committees – state, district, local and national can submit up to \$5,000 per election. Furthermore, candidate committee can send unlimited transfers to state, district, local and national committees. There are also some additional limits on the contributions – campaign can not accept more than \$100 in cash from a source and can not accept more than \$50 from an anonymous contributor (Federal Election Commission, 2017-2018). According to Commission's rules, the in-kind contributions (goods, services or property that is offered less than the usual or normal charge, also meaning payments made on behalf of political committees, but not directly to) count against the limit (2017-2018).

It is advised for the campaign's accounting team to distinguish contributions that are made for primary elections and the general ones. The limits apply to federal elections separately – this means that a primary election, general election, runoff election and special election are understood as unrelated (when talking about the contribution limit). A party convention or caucus can be constituted as election if it has authority to select a nominee for federal office. If the candidate won a primary, the unused funds collected during the primary campaign can be spent as general election expenses. The contributions to the primary campaign are still counted against the general election limits (2017-2018). If the primary is lost, candidate needs to refund the donations that were made strictly for the general elections within 60 days of the primary or the date when the candidate has signed off from the race; the money can not be used to repay the primary election debt. This means

that the candidate and the account's team need to make sure that they have money on hand to issue refunds. Independent and non-major party candidates that do not take part in the primaries are eligible for a primary limit – they need to set a date as a "primary" date and until that date they can collect (primary) contributions. A candidate is eligible to a separate limit of contribution if unopposed in an election or a primary or general election is not held, because the candidate is unopposed (2017-2018).

A recount fund can be established as a separate entity or bank account. The funds spent, received, directed, solicited and transferred in relation to recount are subject to limitations and source prohibitions. In order to explain how do the recounts work during the elections in the United States, it is needed to discuss what kind of the elections are being held.

United States are the perfect example of a bipartisan system, in which political scene is dominated by two parties: Republican Party, called "*Grand Old Party*" (GOP) with an elephant being its symbol and Democratic Party (DP) often displayed with a graphic symbol of a donkey (Wiszniowski, 2000, p. 174). Elections in the US can be divided into three different sections: federal elections, state elections and local elections.

The federal elections are being held every two years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November (whitehouse.gov). There are two types of congressional elections. Each member of the House Representatives is up for reelection every two years, there are 435 seats; Senate elections occur on the same day, but only about one-third of incumbents is up for reelection, as the the Senate tenure lasts for a six years period. Each of the states can have two Senators. This may sound complicated, but that's just the beginning, as most of the states have different law regulations. State-level elections operate on a single-member constituency rule, meaning that each electoral district has a winner takes all order (2000, p. 179). There are three single-winner system methods currently in use:

Plurality voting system – 47 of the states determine the winner in congressional elections via a plurality vote in which the candidate that received the largest share of votes, wins the elections. It is not needed to receive at least 50% of the votes to win.

Majority voting system – In Louisiana and Georgia, the candidate needs to receive at least 50% of the votes to win the elections. If not, a runoff is being held between the two candidates that received the highest number of votes.

Ranked choice voting system (RCV) – also known as instant-runoff or a single-seat-ranked-choice voting, implemented for presidential elections in Alaska and Maine; an electoral system in which voters can rank the candidates by preference on the ballot. If the candidate does not win the majority first-preference vote, the one that received the least first-preference votes is eliminated. This way, the second-choice votes on these ballots are lifted. The process is repeated until one of the



candidates received a majority (ballotpedia.org). Many thinkers believe that this voting system is perfect, because this way the citizen's vote is not wasted and it allows to cast a vote against the least-liked candidate (Orman, 2016).

Very often, special elections are held at a federal level, when there is a vacancy that needs to be filled (caused by a death of a Congress member, resignation or when the member is ineligible to continue being in office). According to Sigelman, who analyzed the special elections from 1954 to 1978, these contests are often perceived as referenda on the incumbent president (Sigelman, 1981). His study has shown that the partisan turnover had a higher frequency than in standard congressional elections (Gaddie et. al., 1999, p. 104). Although Gaddie's further and more modern research argues that this is not always the case and they are structured by the same predictor variables, the case of Senate special election in Alabama, 2017, where the Democratic candidate Doug Jones won with the candidate supported by Donald Trump (with Alabama being a highly-conservative state), shows that it may sometimes be truth (1999, p. 110).

Presidential elections are held quadrennially and the POTUS is elected by the Electoral College (U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 1). In 48 states, all the electoral votes are awarded to the candidate that receives the plurality of popular vote. In Maine and Nebraska, a congressional district method is being used, meaning that in both of states two electoral votes are given to the candidate that won the popular vote and the other electoral votes (2 in Maine and 3 in Nebraska) are given to the winners of each Congressional district (270towin.com). The number of electors in each of the state equals the members in the Congressional delegation plus one for each member of the Senate. The total number of electors is 538, which is a number combined of 435+100 electors "representing" the Congress and three additional electors from a District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) (Vincent, 2016).

If the candidate does not agree with the outcome of the election or if the difference between the two candidates is low, an institution of recount can be introduced. Recount laws are implemented on a state level. During this section, a procedure of a recount will be described based on the state of Florida, mainly because it is the largest swing-state and because of the 2000 presidential elections which resulted in a recount fiasco; ever since, this procedure in Florida is attracting a nationwide attention. If the margin between the two candidates is 0,5% or less, an automatic recount is ordered. The canvassing board that is responsible for the conduction of a recount, needs to check each of the marksense ballots (optical scan) in a tabulating machine and determine if the outcome is correct with the voters choice (Florida Statute 102.141.7.a). Nonetheless, if the results checked after the automatic recount still show that the difference between the candidates is less than 0,25%, a manual recount of overvotes and undervotes is launched if the number of them is bigger than the number of votes that are needed to change the final result of the

election (102. 166. 1). If the candidate officially concedes, no recount is needed. A candidate may request a recount, accordingly to the state laws in his or hers voting district. Overvote happens when voter selects more candidates than is eligible on the ballot. Similarly if the voter comes to the polls and submits the ballot, but does not cast a vote (Brady et. al., 2001) (Richie, Hanson-Metayer, 2014). According to Fair Vote, recounts do not tend to change the elections, as between 2000 and 2015 4,687 statewide general elections have been held and only 27 were followed by recounts. Out of them, only three resulted in the switch of the winner (Bialik, 2016). Although it rarely changes the outcome, recount is a vital part of democracy in the United States (Hailey, 2012). The most significant case, in which a recount decided on the final result of the election was the Senate election in Minnesota in 2008. Norm Coleman (incumbent, GOP) won the election by 215 votes, but a mandatory recount according to state law has been made as the difference between the votes was under 0,5%, After the recount, Al Franken representing Minnesota-Democratic-Farmer-Labor-Party (affiliated with DP) has won by 312 votes (Weiner 2010).

When talking about the Voting Equipment during US elections, there are four main types. Optical Scan Paper Ballot Systems are paper ballots that can be scanned by a licensed device. Direct Recording Electronic systems (DRE) allow the voter to use pushbutton, touchscreen or dial to cast a vote, which is instantly recorded in device's memory. Computer usually has a keyboard, this allows the citizen to cast a write-in vote, which will be later described in this subchapter. DRE systems are available in 30 states, although in not all counties (VerifiedVoting, 2018). Ballot Marking Devices and Systems help disabled voters to mark a paper ballot that can be later scanned. Hand Counted Paper Ballots on the other hand are the standard ballots that are counted by hand (VerifiedVoting).

Electoral elections in the United States also introduce different voting stages, as not everyone can visit the polling place on the Election Day. Leaving out the polling places voting and accessible voting, states provide the option or early voting, as the citizens are allowed to cast a vote prior the Election Day (with a period varying on the state law). Absentee Voting is available for the citizens, who need to vote via mail (in some of the districts these votes are counted manually). Provisional Ballots are available for the voters, who are not displayed in the pollbook, but believe that they are eligible for voting. This happens if the data provided during the registration is inaccurate (VerifiedVoting). Sometimes alternative ways of voting can influence the outcome; in California most of the voters vote via mail and the ballots have to be postmarked by the Election Day (Bollag, 2018). The votes that are arriving late are usually casted by Democratic voters, which tightens the race and usually eventually flips the results onto the DP side (Wildermuth, 2018) (Rakich, 2018).

State legislative elections have the same voting tabulation method as the federal elections

(ballotpedia.org) and in all 50 states gubernatorial elections are won by a single-winner. Governors are chosen for a four-year term, thirty-four states and three territories hold elections during the midterms. Some states also conduct the elections of Attorney General or Secretary of State. Voting also includes initiatives and referendum processes, according to the description in the state laws. Local elections are held for a local office, mostly county and city government positions. If one party has its own governor, majority in both state senate and state house in a state's government, then it's called a trifecta. Trifecta plus is a trifecta with the majority of the court siding with the ruling party.

The federal, state and local elections in the United States are usually preceded by the Primary Elections or a Caucus (only available in some states and during the presidential primaries), during which a candidate affiliated to the party is chosen for the general elections. Primaries can be used in nonpartisan elections in order to lower the number of candidates participating. The blanket primaries are primaries in which voters can choose one candidate per office, without focusing on the candidate's affiliation. Winners from each of the party advance to the general election (ballotpedia.org).

There are six types of Congressional Primaries with the state rules of the primary acting accordingly to the state law:

Closed – only registered party members are eligible to vote in a closed primary. On the voter registration form, the citizen needs to sign up the affiliation to the party, which means that independent voters can not take part in the contest

Semi-Closed – state law allowed political parties to decide, whether the unaffiliated voters can take part in the elections. This allows to both engage the independent voter in the primary and exclude the member of a different party from influencing the outcome. What is interesting, is that sometimes in this system, voter is allowed to cross the party lines, but needs to publicly declare the ballot choice, voter can change the party affiliation in order to vote on primary.

Open – all voters can participate in any party's primary. regardless of party affiliation. This system is tricky, as it allows the voters to influence the candidate choice of the party in order to weaken it, which is called *raiding*. In 2008 an "Operation Chaos" took place, as conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh encouraged Republican Party supporters in Indiana to take part in presidential primary and vote for Hillary Clinton, in order to weaken Barack Obama's candidacy (who was at that time winning in the polls with John McCain) (Battersby, 2008).

Top-Two primaries – all candidates run against each other regardless the party affiliation in an open primary – the two winning are meeting in the general election

Two round system – candidates run against one another, if a candidate receives 50% of the votes, they win – if not, the top two are taking part in a runoff (National Conference of State Legislatures) (FairVote)

Nonetheless, the laws regarding the presidential primaries differ, as only open, closed and semi-closed primaries are allowed. In some of the states, caucuses instead of primaries are being held to decide on which party candidate should the supporters choose. Caucus is an old-type way of determining the winner during a political party state convention; in 2016 presidential primaries, 13 jurisdictions of both of the parties have chosen to organize caucuses (ballotpedia.org). To show how complicated this can be, let's shortly describe how does the most important caucus during the primary campaign work - the Iowa Caucus, which is the first major political event during the presidential primary season (Malone, 2016).

During the 2016 Presidential Caucus in Iowa, registered Republicans were allowed to cast secret ballots. Participants selected their preferred candidate and the chair announced the number of the potential delegates that were supposed to be elected by the precinct to attend the county convention. The number is established according to the number of votes that were given to the Republican candidate for governor in 2014 race. The delegates were nominated based on the candidates receiving the most votes (the votes were divided proportionally). Caucus is usually held in school, churches or other public places in a precinct (Des Moines Register, 2016).

The Democratic Caucus in Iowa on the other hand is a bit more complicated. In each precinct, party members attending the caucus have to divide into groups based on their selection of the candidate. The participants were counted to establish the percentage of supporters. Typically, the groups that are represented in lower number than 15%, need to realign or recruit other members to join them. This is called a walking subcaucus method. When the final count is conducted, precinct decides which delegates to send to the county convention. Then if the proportions are decided, delegates are sent out to a state convention. The eventual outcome is counted proportionally (Jacobs, 2016) (Des Moines).

The whole primary season is entertaining, as in both parties, depending on the state, the number of delegates corresponding to the outcome of the primary (or a caucus) can be either chosen through the winner-take-all contest or in a proportional vote. Presidential primaries are usually being conducted between the February and June during the presidential election year. Political pundits often use the term of Super Tuesday, meaning a one or more Tuesdays when a very high number of primary elections and caucuses are being held (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 147). In the Democratic Party, there are two types of delegates that attend the National Convention in order to officially choose a presidential candidate during the elections. According to the latest data, in 2020 the Democratic delegate counts will be determined by the jurisdiction's Presidential vote in 2008, 2012 and 2016, combined with the electoral vote allocation in the jurisdiction, which is based on 2010 census for the number of electors in 2020 (greenpapers.com). As opposed to the Republican Party, there also is an institution of a superdelegate, which is either a DNC (Democratic National

Committee) member, Democratic Governor, Democratic U.S. House member or a Democratic U.S. Senator serving at time of convention (greenpapers.com) (Bresnahan, Caygle, 2018). This controversial tactic of more party-oriented decision-making is often attacked by non-establishment Democratic candidates, who are often frustrated that the primary is rather won by how influential the candidate is inside the party than over the issue. The Republican Party also allows unpledged delegates to attend the national convention and vote for the candidate, but the unpledged status only belong to three Republican National Committee members from each state (ballotpedia.org). The delegate count should be based on the number of Republicans chosen to State Legislatures, Governor chairs and Congress seats through 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019 (greenpapers.com).

As it is very hard to encourage the party member to switch alliance, in the dominating two-party system there is not much place for other projects. However, Libertarian Party and Green Party, (even though not having any representation on a federal level) are an important part of a public discourse. Third-party candidates during the presidential elections often have a huge influence on the election outcome – for instance, progressive voters during 2016 presidential elections, disillusioned with Bernie Sanders's primary loss to Hillary Clinton, tended to vote for Jill Stein (Green Party). Gary Johnson's (Libertarian Party) election result was also much higher than expected, as moderate voters did not want to choose between Trump and Clinton.

When managing a political campaign in the United States, one must take into consideration the specifics of political behavior in various regions. Political analysts usually divide American states into more liberal-oriented and conservative-oriented. So-called "red states" are regions in which the Republican Party wins more federal seats, whereas "blue states" are states in which the Democratic Party has more supporters. This is heavily linked to the socioeconomic and cultural conditions that were described in earlier subchapters. For instance, most of the southern states are red, which means that during the last four presidential elections, Republican Party won the electoral votes in Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma and many other. On the other hand, western states such as California, Oregon, Washington and north-eastern (New York, Connecticut, Vermont) are blue. There are some states, which were blue, but now are blue-ish, such as Pennsylvania, in which Donald Trump won in 2016 (and lost in 2020), or Michigan, where the Republican candidate won after 28 years (and again, lost in 2020). North Carolina is a red-ish state, as usually the Republican candidates win there, but Barack Obama managed to win the electoral votes in 2008. With every elections, the demographics reshape this map, as new swing-states appear, meaning the ones, where the difference between the Democratic and Republican votes will be low. For example, Iowa was won by Trump in 2016 and out of four seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, three of them were won by the Republicans. However, in 2018, two of them were replaced with the Democrats. In Arizona, Democrats have also flipped one seat during the midterm

elections, what is more, they managed to win over the Senate seat, as Kyrsten Sinema won with Martha McSally by over 30,000 votes. Having in mind growing population of Hispanic voters in this state, who tend to vote for the Democrats, it is easy to argue that Donald Trump may not feel optimistic about winning the state he won at in 2016 by only over 90,000 votes. The same thing goes with Texas, which has been a red state for many years, but the growing urban population in Austin, El Paso or Houston has proven to register for voting more eagerly, which means that very soon it also may become a swing-state, or a purple state, as the maps tend to paint such areas in purple. Furthermore, the voting patterns change, as left-leaning voters tend to leave blue areas such California, Chicago or Boston, in order to move to Texas or New Hampshire. Kristin Tate calls these geopolitical patterns "locust theory", as the Democratic voters, exhausted with high costs of living, move to GOP oriented areas, where the economic environment is more friendly (Tate, 2018). What other campaign tactics should the candidate have in mind, when taking part in federal, state or local elections in the United States? Most definitely, different campaign weapons and tactics should be chosen for the primary and general elections. First of all, during the primary campaign, the candidate needs to communicate the message to the party supporters, as they will have the biggest influence on the outcome of the elections (unless the opposite side decides to „troll” the open primaries”). Primaries can always be the perfect way to shape the direction in which the party should go – as Bernie Sanders, the only Senator representing the Congressional Progressive Caucus, almost managed to win the party nomination against all odds and the Democratic Party's establishment, it is heavily expected now that the Democratic candidate during the 2020 presidential elections will be more left-leaning than liberal. During this process, the candidate needs to distinct as much as possible from rivals, as most probably their political programme is similar – in order to do that, campaign needs to attract the voters and show them that even if the opponent won previous elections, people have an alternative that may offer more and is closer to ordinary people. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, before winning the New York's 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District elections in 2018, shook everyone, as she managed to win the primaries in a precinct, where Joseph Crowley has been an incumbent for ten terms. Her idea was similar to other progressive candidate's as she stressed that Crowley is Corporate-funded, in oppose to her grassroots campaign (reddit).

The overview of primary campaigns on the Republican side brings the same thoughts, especially nowadays, when Trump supported candidates often clash with more moderate Republicans. Additionally, the development of alt-right media, allowed some *éminence grise* to grow their influence among the party supporters, such as Steve Bannon, ex-chairman of fake news media website Breitbart, with whom endorsement, the ridiculous candidacy of Roy Moore during Republican primary elections was led to victory, against the candidate supported by GOP and Donald Trump himself (Tomaszewski, 2019). This shows how polarized the opinions may be even

inside the parties – far left or far right supporters tend to reach out to new candidates, who offer fresher solutions than the party favorites.

Even though these tactics help to appeal to voters who support the candidate's party, the key to win the general elections, is winning among the moderate voters. Being too progressive or too extreme on the issues may lead to a lose, just like in Roy Moore's case, who won the Republican primary in order to lose an already won battle in Alabama with Democratic candidate Doug Jones. General elections, especially in an American two-party system, rely on voter engagement. Independent and non-voting citizens do not chose extreme candidates, that is why the campaign message needs to be softened. That is how Beto O'Rourke played his campaign in 2018, as during campaign rallies he appealed to moderate Republicans as a consensus-seeking young politician, who focuses on the issues rather than on partisan wars. His refusal of leading a negative campaign against Ted Cruz can also be mentioned as a move towards the voters who do either identify with Republicans or Democrats.

To widen the support, choosing the right running mate during the presidential elections is the best way to ensure that the most important voting groups will have their ideal candidate. According to the expert on presidential politics, Bill Crotty, most candidates, when choosing their potential vice president, are hoping to gain votes and supplement their weak points, whether they are geographical or ideological (McDonald, 2016). Tim Kaine, who was Hillary Clinton's running mate in 2016, seemed ideal for this job. As Clinton was popular among liberal, young voters, she could either choose someone progressive to reduce the damage that would be made after some of core Bernie supporters announced that they would vote for Jill Stein, or she could find a Veep, who would be more conservative than her, but still well liked. Senator from Virginia is a moderate, who speaks fluently Spanish, which was supposed to help her get the Latino vote. Mike Pence on the other hand was supposed to bring more stability and predictability to Trump's campaign (2016). It has already been established that lack of chemistry between the candidates can affect voter's choices, (Kelly, 2016) so the reputation of the potential VP can hinder the campaign – just like during 2008 presidential elections, as Sarah Palin, who was John McCain's vice-presidential candidate, was not perceived as someone who did not really knew policies on the national level. The VP candidates need to unify the party's supporters, not diversify them. Although it is helpful to choose them based on geographical or sociopolitical aspects, politicians tend to make safe choices while making such decisions.

During the political campaign cycle in the United States, politicians and their campaign staff need to focus on the most important part of this game: encouraging people to vote. American politics in 49 out of 50 states, demand the voters to register in order to cast a ballot; this is required in federal, state and local elections with North Carolina being the only state, where it is not needed.

Mobilization campaign needs to rely on a solid team that can deliver on the ground, by organizing fundraisers and rallies. This plus traditional and new media allow to increase the recognizability of the candidate. How does it relate to the registration? As the voters who are interested in politics will tend to engage more in campaign activities, there are plenty of social groups that can be encouraged to cast the vote. Many young people check political news less frequently than older voters, the research conducted by always reliable Pew Research Center shows that historically, young citizens did not follow politics and elections closely – in 2012 only 43% of Americans aged 18-29 declared that they did. When comparing this result to 70% of Americans aged 65+, the result of the survey shows how disillusioned young people are with the politics (Mitchell et. al., 2015). What is more, in 2015 only 35% of Millennials declared that they talk about politics at least few times a week. Increased voter turnout is especially important for the Democrats, as young voters and ethnic minorities tend to lean left and liberal.

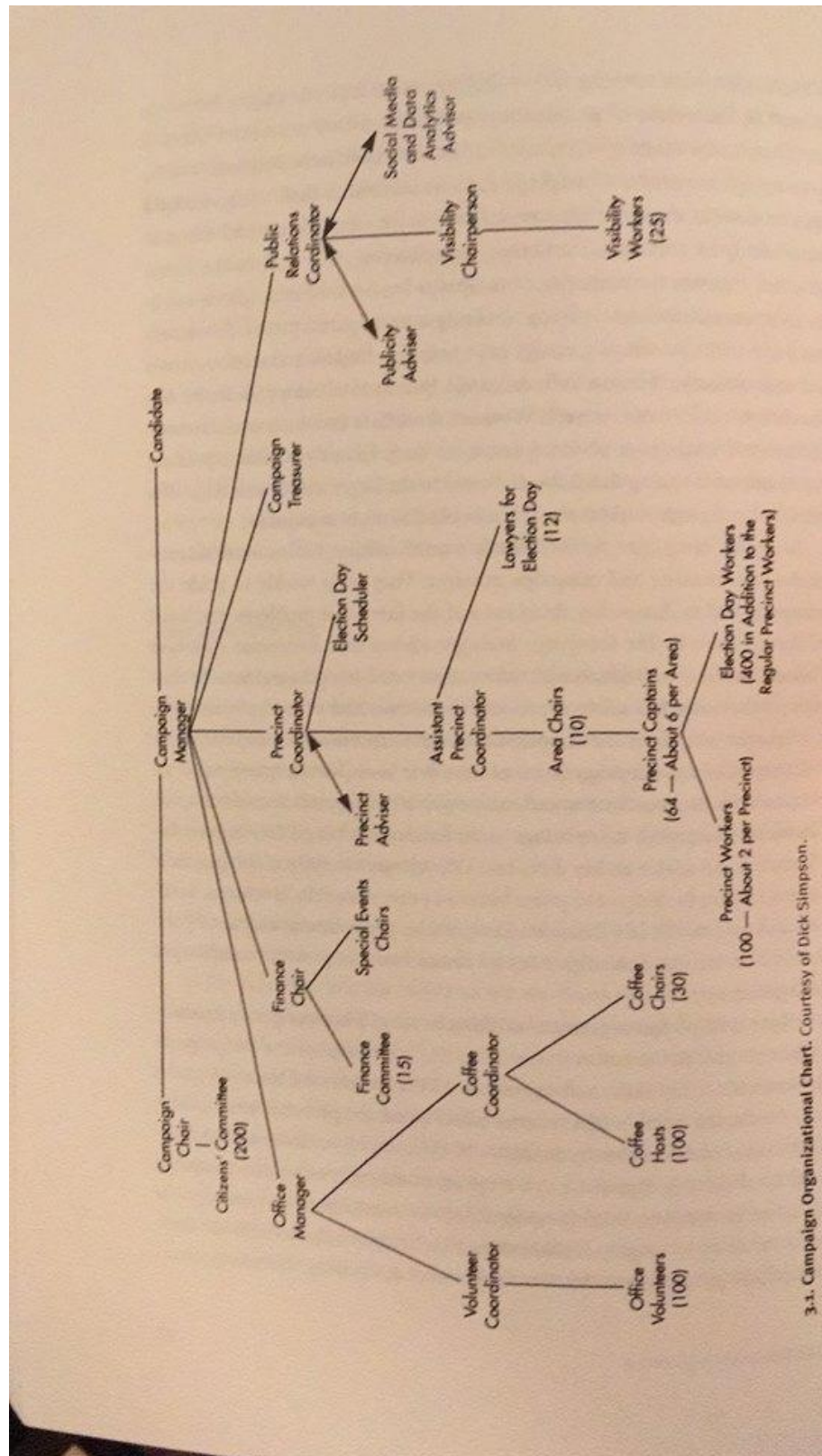
According to 2018 research, young voters were less likely to say that it matters which party wins Congress (Pew Research Center). When adding another poll made by Gallup, which stated that only 26% of people aged 18 to 29 were certain that they would vote (and 27% of Hispanic voters), it became obvious that in order to win back the House of Representatives (at least), they had to organize huge mobilization campaign (Saad, 2018). The Democrats outspent Republicans in Congressional races, as around 73 candidates were able to raise at least \$2,000 000 for their campaigns (when compared to only 17 Republicans) (Silver, 2018). Not only candidates and their parties focus on their goal, as NextGen America, a PAC founded by a billionaire Tom Steyer, became the largest voter engagement effort organization in U.S. history (Bauer, 2018). Its goal is to encourage college students from all over the country (especially in Wisconsin, Virginia, California and North Carolina) to register to vote. Voter registration is often linked to celebrity politics as it has been already established, as celebrities represent the same socio-economic background and ethnic minorities, which allows citizens to identify themselves with them. As Barack Obama and his campaign staff's analysis showed that Hispanic female voters will be the most important group that can help him remain at the office, many celebrities such as Eva Longoria not only publicly endorsed him, but also canvassed with him all over the country (Tomaszewski, 2019). As the turnout rates have increased in 2018, helping Democrats in many precincts, once again it is crucial to remind how Texas almost turned blue on one special night in November, 2018. As the Hispanic voters are an easy target for mobilization campaigns, which is related to their rather low turnout described in the previous subchapter, Beto O'Rourke focused on rather mobilizing the potential Democratic voter, than persuading Republican ones to support him (Golshan, 2018). That is heavily linked to changing demographics, which may soon award O'Rourke, as John Cornyn (GOP) will be defending his Senate seat in 2020. During 2018 midterms 3,7 million more Texans voted than in



2014 with the 500K increased vote in Houston and its suburbs and around 200K in Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin and San Antonio (Goldsberry, 2018).

Finally, as American electoral politics set new trends and prove how the professionalization of modern campaigning in the U.S. is influencing ways of canvassing all over the world, it is needed to describe how developed the campaign staffs are in America. The model displayed on the next page is a proposed campaign structure for a voting district up to 25,00 voters with a budget around \$150,000 (Simpson, O'Shaughnessy, 2016, p. 23). Authors stress how important it is to have full paid staff workers on the most important levels, such as office manager, public relations coordinator or a campaign manager. Campaign staff shall consist on experts, who can influence the election outcome in different ways, as some members of the team create viral posts that would be shared nationwide on social media, whereas others have to focus on ground work to ensure that all of the supporters are met during the campaign trail. The figure shows that even though the structure of the staff looks like a corporate structure, volunteers are its most important part of it and the main job is to encourage the candidate's supporters to spend their free time after work to canvass. What is more, the campaign structure needs to be decentralized, so the candidate has their regional branches all over the voting districts. This allows to shift the tasks to smaller groups, which are a key to increasing the voter outreach in smaller regions. In order to do that, candidate's job is pretty similar to rock band's when being on tour, as it does not matter whether the conference hall is fully stuffed, or only small group of voters is attending the meeting. Each vote is important and helps to build a base that would eventually allow to flip the county on party's side.

Fig. 2 Campaign Organizational Chart



3-1. Campaign Organizational Chart. Courtesy of Dick Simpson.

Source: Simpson, D., O'Shaughnessy, B. (2016). Winning Elections in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. University Press of Kansas. Lawrence.

The research shows that electoral campaigning in the United States needs to rely on many factors. United States are so ethnically diverse that the potential candidate has to consider needs of various groups of voters. In order to do that, not only he or she has to have in mind the historical

environment that crafter the voter behavior, but also current political trends, which happen to change very quickly. Even though the internet may be becoming the most important area in which the candidates meet and fight for new supporters, they also have to remember about the traditional ways of canvassing, which allow them to reach citizens from less developed areas. Although academics have different views on how the political behaviour is shaped, it is crucial to distinct the ethnic groups when analyzing this subject, as each of them has a different history of fighting for a suffrage, which is still a very big problem after many years, as many groups of voters that were excluded from political life, do not want to cast a ballot. The increased access to social media tools may change it, as nowadays, through Facebook groups, Twitter or memes, young people are engaging more and more in American politics, both on the left and the right side. Next chapters will try to answer the crucial questions how can the internet shape American voter's political views and whether it can influence the outcome of 2020 presidential elections.

## **Chapter 2. The role of new interactive media in campaigning strategy**

### **2.1 From Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. New technologies for American voter**

Modern internet is shaping the way we communicate with each other through various platforms that allow us to engage in discussions, share our personal beliefs or interests or simply the way we obtain news from media. According to Pew Research Center, in 2017, 59% of Americans were getting news on a daily basis from the web, less than in Sweden or South Korea, by more than in the UK, Germany or France. This meant that there was a huge base of potential voters waiting for the candidate to engage in internet politics, having considered the fact that in 2020, 86% of Americans admitted that they are obtaining political information from digital devices (Shearer, 2021). How the voter would interact with the candidate's image, however, depends on various aspects, especially in the digital fake news era, where every fact should be checked before being shared on the internet. This is a brand new task for the policymakers and journalists, as fair politics will depend on how will they handle this situation. What is more, as in all of the countries, the percentage of citizens that are using internet is growing, in the U.S. there are still 10% of people, who do not use this tool. When Pew Research Center first analyzed the amount of Americans that use the internet in 2000, 48% of them admitted that they are not web users. In 2019, most of the non-internet users were seniors; 27% of them were offline (Anderson, 2019). Another important factor is education, as 29% of American adults that do not use internet in 2019, have less than high school education (2019). Released as a follow-up to the 2013 survey, analysis explains that the non-internet users stated six years earlier that 34% of them did not have interest in being online and 19% of them did not afford computer or internet. In 2019, these two factors are the main reasons why there are still citizens excluded from the technological revolution. However, it is also needed to stress that internet users tend to have different behavior on the internet, especially when fragmentizing them into groups that share similar nationality. It is obvious that in different countries, different level of upbringing with new forms of media can be measured, so for the cause of this research, all the studies presented will understand the "internet user" as an „American citizen". Such perception will let us straight away examine why did the politicians from the United States experiment with the internet during the campaigns, taking into consideration how this country was setting milestones for the professionalization of the political campaigns (defined by many as an Americanization).

Nevertheless, before exploring the world of social media, fake news and political memes, first it is crucial to set some definitions of the web that will allow to throw in more academic approach. In his philosophical essays called *Dialogs*, Stanislaw Lem contemplates optimistically how will the world look like after the cybernetic evolution. Lem predicts the creation of “informatic machines” and data banks that will lead to the development of computer nets (1957). The first, however, direct and recorded concept of an internet was written by J.C.R. Licklider of MIT in 1962 in the „Galactic Network” concept. The idea was to construct a network of the computers that would exchange data and access programs all over the world (Leiner et. al., 1999). In the meantime, in 1961 Leonard Kleinrock published a paper on packet switching theory, method of transmitting data over a digital network. Originally, internet was supposed to be multiple independent networks (1999) with the Advanced Research Projects Agency network (ARPANET) being the pioneer network that would include other satellite networks. Although ARPANET was just launched, around 1971-1972 first internet transaction was made through this network, when students from Stanford engaged in conversation with their peers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in order to buy cannabis (Power, 2013). This case is the first ever registered e-commerce transaction. What is more, in his article ”The History of Electronic Mail”, Tom Van Vleck reckons the first (according to him) SPAM created in 1971, which was an anti-war manifest written by the users of MIT's CTSS (Compatible Time Sharing System). The message was sent to every user of CTSS and started with the statement ”THERE IS NO WAY TO PEACE. PEACE IS THE WAY.” (Keats, 2010, p. 60). This can be also perceived as a first commercial political message shared on the internet.

As the web was slowly becoming more accessible, first program that established group chats was created. At the very beginning, PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations) was the instruction system designated by the University of Illinois. As Don Bitzer wanted to use computers for teaching, along with other engineers, he created a timesharing system. In 1973, however, Doug Brown made a program that allowed the PLATO users to chat in a group called Talkomatic (Woolley, 2016). Members were able to send messages at the same time, which appeared in windows. This idea evolved into a ”term-talk” option of a chat, which limited the conversation to two users (2016).

That was just the beginning of a revolution, as PLATO released first online messageboards called *Notes*, where each of the authors could tag their thoughts under labels such as ”bug reports”, ”suggestions”, ”jokes” or ”events” (2016). At first, PLATO users were mostly located in Illinois and were academics and students, but later this community started to include people from government or business, who found interest in this invention and wanted to check how it works. Slowly, PLATO community was becoming popular among technological nerds all over the country. As *Group Notes* were released in 1976, online personalities started to develop such as Dr. Graper (originally David J.

Graper, student from the University of Delaware), who started to post funny stories in his public notes (2016). However, PLATO was not only a place for tech geeks, as its users discussed on various topics. One of them, was Watergate scandal, which was heavily talked about. On 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1973, at 10:58 p.m., Stuart Umpleby posted a new topic in "Discuss":

A news bulletin tonight reported that Nixon had fired Special Prosecutor Cox. Attorney General Richardson resigned. Deputy Attorney General Ruckelshaus then became acting attorney general. Nixon gave Ruckelshaus an order which he refused, so Nixon then fired Ruckelshaus. That made the solicitor general the acting attorney general. These events seem certain to produce a serious move for impeachment in the house with the only reservation being the war in the Middle East. (...) What do the participants in this discussion think about all of this; the firing of Cox, the chances of impeachment, and the possibility of connections between Watergate and political assassinations? (Dear, 2017, p. 203).

As students started to engage in conversation, they started to share their political views and opinion on the impeachment and JFK's murder. What is important, is the fact that Umpleby not only posted arguments, but also wanted PLATO and ARPANET to influence the impeachment process by reaching various activist groups all over the country (2017). Two days later, Umpleby posted about the student union petitions and the ideas to post letters to the congressmen regarding this issue. He also shared information about planned events and meetings. As he used the platforms for political activism, someone in Pentagon learned about that and checked what kind of content is posted on ARPANET (2017). Shortly after, Don Bitzer was contacted by the National Science Foundation that the funding of PLATO and ARPANET may be threatened by these actions, as they are no longer used only as learning platforms. Bitzer had to order Umpleby to post a disclaimer for the users visiting "Discuss" section, stating:

PLATO in its present implementation within the University of Illinois is essentially an extension of the classroom. While discussion of current topic is as legitimate on PLATO as in the classroom, it is not permissible in the classroom or on PLATO to organize political mobilization. For this reason, CERL cannot at this time permit the use of the PLATO system for organizing political activities (2017).

Nixon administration's intervention can be argued as the first ever situation, when the government tried to censor internet and Umpleby's efforts are a landmark for internet political activism.

Around that time, in 1975 a first mailing discussion list has been created, called MsgGroup. The main idea behind this project was "not to establish 'another committee' but to see if dialogue can develop over the net" (Milne, 2012, p. 150). Mailing list, established by Steve Walker of IPTO, was initially moderated by Dave Farber from the University of California, who then passed the task to Elinar Stefferud. At first, as he was receiving the emails, Stefferud passed them on to list members,

but in 1979 a method for automatically distributing emails was developed (2012).

The end of the 70s brought electronic Bulletin Board Systems, as in 1978 Ward Christensen and Randy Suess launched their online messaging system. BBS is a computer server that through a program allows to transfer files, receive emails and read news and bulletins. At first, BBS's were used only by computer enthusiasts and hackers, but they slowly started to become popular with the development of Fidonet in 1983, which allowed users to exchange messages and bulletin posts from discussion groups. In 1983, Tom Jennings started to work on a new communicating system hosted by MS-DOS, which started to run in San Francisco in early 1984. At the same time, John Madil wanted to create similar net in Baltimore. As the web started to become more popular, more nodes were joining from different areas, which allowed the creators to store the unofficial public list of phone numbers that were using the network. As the phone call rates between the cities were still high, Jennings figured out that a separate external program can run the exchange of emails over the night, when it was much cheaper (Bush, 1992-3).

This, however, was just a recycled idea influenced by the Usenet, which was launched in 1979 as a form of online communication for scientists, whose universities did not have a contract with the Department of Defense and as a result could not access ARPANET (Milne, 2012, p. 150). Usenet was inspired by BBSs, as it was supposed to look like a BBS discussion group that divided the content onto threads (Lake, 2009). At the beginning of the 80s, University of California connected newsgroups from Usenet to ARPANET, although Usenet users could only use the read-only mode, which did not allow them to engage in discussions and react to the content (2012).

Even though such messaging groups raised from the academic communities full of young people, both ARPANET and Usenet were at that time used mostly for the technical matters. This was simply because the community was created by Computer Science students and their peers that majored in similar sciences. One may argue, however that the creators of Usenet had some kind of political mission that would help the underprivileged members of the community to make use of the latest innovations (Hafner, Lyon, 1996, p. 210). The internet users at that time only talked about specific topics that can absorb young engineers such as (apart from the technical issues): cars, chess, science-fiction, football etc (Price, 2004).

According to some scientists, even though this community was very professional (and obviously in 99% male), it lacked the radicalism that was so typical for the academic communities back in the 1960s (2004). However, Ian T. Hardy in his thesis argued that e-mails brought a significant social change, as they brought a brand new culture of interaction that did not require any interventions from secretaries. They allowed the users to choose more informal way of communicating, as „imperfect grammar between educated correspondents suddenly became tolerated” (2004, p. 23). Furthermore, e-mails allowed to break down the social barriers (for

example age differences), which made the web conversations much easier than the ones in real life. In 1983, polling firm Louis Harris & Associates did most probably the first survey on the internet use, as it asked adult Americans whether they had a personal computer at home and if they are using it to transfer information (Fox, Rainie, 2014). Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1983, Southern New England Telephone, through the aforementioned polling firm, gathered data from 1256 adults. Ten percent of them admitted that they own a personal computer and from these 10%, 14% of them were using internet modems that transmitted information. This means that estimately 1.4% of U.S. adults at that time were using the internet (2014). Furthermore the respondents were asked whether it would be useful for them to receive (and send) messages from other people, with 23% of them stating that it would be very useful and 31% saying that it would be somewhat useful (2014). This survey shows that even though internet was exclusively used by very few citizens, they knew that if more people would have access to it, it would make it easier to communicate with their friends.

1983 also brought some useful changes in the development of internet, as TCP/IP became the core protocol that replaced NCP (Network Control Protocol introduced by ARPANET). Although this project is rather supposed to be about the sociopolitical aspects of the internet use, than the technical ones, brief description of this protocol will allow us to learn more about how does the web work. TCP and IP are two different protocols that are used together, divided into four layers, with each of them having the set of protocols. (Lifewire) By protocol, author means an agreed-upon set of procedures. If two computers follow similar protocols, they can communicate and exchange data.

TCP divided a file into packets that are transmitted over the net, whereas IP is responsible for the address of each packet.

Additionally, 1983 brought the introduction of domains, for instance gov., com., org. or net., which means that from that time users no longer had to remember the number of the website they wanted to visit. Along with these rearrangements, internet started to attract more users, but still only few of them though about it as a way to engage in political discussion or activism. In 1986, Eric Thomas developed a software that allowed to automatically manage e-mail lists, called LISTSERV. What's truly interesting is the fact that this program allowed users to set autoresponders to the messages, which was an innovation at that time. In the second half of the 80s, the internet community started to grow thanks to the public chatrooms, some of them that were already popular (like Talkomatic) and some of them only have been created and were slowly becoming popular, just like Internet Relay Chat (IRC) – real time chat that allows users to connect to various channels in order to discuss topics in a group or communicate one-on-one. In his article written in 1986 for the Washington Post, Vic Sussman wrote: "To say this typewritten „human contact” or „people typing in their thoughts” is the equivalent of genuine friendship or intimacy is something else. (...) Log on



to any of 15 national networks – CompuServe, ProtoCall, American People/Link and the Source are examples – and you're welcomed into a world where your persona exists only as typewritten lines. Race, age, sex, appearance or social standing no longer count.” (Sussman, 1986). People started to observe how big impact can the internet and online messaging have on their lives. Although earlier chatrooms were already popular within the computer geek community, created by Jarkko ”WiZ” Oikarinen IRC was the first that can be defined as cyberanarchist, meaning that people started to realize they could basically write anything and stay anonymous (which meets the very basic criteria for the equivalent of shitposting). Although at the end of the 80s IRC was rather used for professional purposes, at that time a term ”internet troll” has been coined, meaning someone, who intentionally disrupts online communities. At that time trolling seemed innocent, replying to Usenet threads with stupid responses and waiting for others to fall for the bait. It was rather perceived as a game that would distinguish the new, naive users from the experienced ones (Schwartz, 2008).

At this moment of the chapter, I would like to establish some ground scientific rules that would define the trolling in an academic way, as this kind of psychological and sociological approach will help to understand some of the user behavior on the internet. An article from 2004, entitled *The Online Disinhibition Effect*, written by John Suler, describes the six factors that determine some changes in human online behavior. Apart from the obvious ones, such as anonymity (when one posts on the internet, they do not act as themselves) or invisibility (nobody can judge who is on the other side), psychologist describes asynchronicity (troll's actions are not set in real-time), dissociative imagination (internet is not a real world), minimizing authority (on the internet, everyone is equal and there are not any authorities here) and solipsistic introjection (we do not know who is on the other side, therefore we can just assume the identity of the user and frame them) (2004).

This strongly relates to a broken window theory, first presented in the article in 1982 by George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson. By describing the environment in which the police had to work in, they described the effects of the foot patrol as a neighborhood watch on the overall safety of the area. Losely based on Zimbardo's experiment that tested the theory, thesis proposes the viewer to imagine a building with broken windows – if the windows will not be repaired, more vandals will be attracted, that will not only destroy the parts of the building, but also occupy them or maybe light fire inside (Kelling, Wilson, 1982). But how is it related to the internet? Imagine an internet forum that is not moderated, a forum that allows the trolls to post whatever they want to. Sounds familiar, isn't it? The creators of internet chats and forums did not really expect them to evolve that way in the 21<sup>st</sup> century., especially after the development of Web 2.0 tools. In his book „Democracy and its critics”, released in 1989, Robert Dahl argued that ”telecommunications technologies have a key role in making possible the advanced democratic country” where policy is

firmly anchored in the judgements of the "demos" (Bimber, 1998). One year earlier, the first serious publication that focused on how the new media and politics would mix, has been released, as Abramson, Arterton and Orren observed that there are three constructs that can relate to electronic media, which are communitarianism, pluralism and plebiscitary democracy (1988).

At the very end of the 80s, AOL launched the Instant Messenger chat service, while rebranding from Quantum Computer Services bulletin board system to America Online. Within a decade, this small project would become an industry leader with 14 million members (Woodford, 2005, p. 92). Year 1989, however, brought a much more important tool, as Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. The CERN project would evolve and only one year later the first server and website would go online, along with the browser (Pew Research Center, 2014). With this invention, came the higher level of public access to the internet, which means that politicians started to think more seriously about using web as a campaign tool and the voters began to use internet as a form of social activism.

Before entering the era of internet activism, it is needed to provide some theoretical frameworks that will allow to understand this topic better. The invention of internet allowed the movements to set up new forms of communication that allows the users all over the world to organize online protests, very often illegal such as hacking or DDOSing (distributed denial-of-service attacks that cyberflood the system with multiple systems), or by sending petitions or emails. Internet expands and completes the modern social movement's „repertoire of collective action" (Tilly, 1984) (Mc Adam et. al., 2001) (Van Laer, Van Aelst, 2010). Furthermore, Van Laer claims that Internet gives the society "new tools to support their claims" (2010, p. 231). Diani's definition of social movements fits very well into the author's observations, as they are defined as "networks of informal interaction between a plurality of individuals, groups and / or organizations engaged in a political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity" (1992, p. 13). Nowadays the correlation between these the internet and movements is obvious, as new media tend to increase the participation in politics, especially among young people. For us, scientists, this invention was even more important, as academic researchers finally got access to publications all over the world and were able to exchange them, not to mention online surveys. But it was not that clear back in the 90s, before Web 2.0 was established. Let's go back to these days for a bit more.

What was the first historical campaign that can meets the criteria for internet activism? According to most of the scientists, the Lotus MarketPlace crisis in April, 1990 was the first case in which web users fought for a common goal, consumer privacy (by the way, the pattern is very similar to most of the actions took by the internet movements nowadays). Lotus MarketPlace tried to change the marketing industry by obtaining the private information such as names or addresses of over 120 million Americans. This caused a stir in online community, which led to a mass e-mail and

messageboard campaign and eventually around 30,000 users asked to remove their information from the database. Shortly after, at the beginning of 1991 Lotus withdrew from these plans in 1990, Pew Research Center asked their first question in a survey related to online activities (Peters, 2011). At that time, 42% of U.S. adults claimed that they use a personal computer on some occasion, with college graduates being the most likely group (Fox, Rainie, 2014).

But what about the politics and the campaigns? 1992 United States presidential campaign was officially the first one in which the candidates started to experiment with new media such as world wide web in order to attract the tech-addicted voters. At that time this tool was becoming more and more accessible for the voters all over the US, that is why for instance Bill Clinton and his campaign staff decided to launch an official candidate website, on which users could obtain information about him and his political program. What is more, the admins of the website uploaded Clinton's speeches that were available in text format (Hendricks, Kaid, 2004, p. 4). This was not the only way Clinton and his entourage used the internet, as they were also active in various discussion groups, where they shared his speeches, biography and program (Chadwick, Howard, 2010, p. 4). Democratic candidate also made his e-mail address publicly available through internet service providers, for instance Compuserve (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 23). This era is described by Richard Davis and his academic colleagues as an experimentation phase, when politicians were slowly discovering positive values of the internet, but were not “geeky” enough to go full frontal with the web campaign (2010).

Clinton also had supporters that shared his campaign message on the internet, especially college students that were the ones generating internet buzz for the Democratic candidate, mostly by joining the bulletin groups and sending campaign e-mails (Tomaszewski, 2019, p. 146) (Klotz, 2003, p. 67). Klotz's research shows that there were so many young Democrats that supported Clinton, that the campaign staff did not really have any important tasks for them, as the candidate was generating around 800 postings weekly (2003) (2019). According to Dee Dee Myers, who was Clinton's first White House press secretary, the use of electronic email was the development that has shown the interactive nature of modern technology (1993). Myers argued that “for the first time, ordinary citizens had an easy way to obtain information that was previously available only to the national press corps” (meaning Clinton's speeches etc.). Instead of the bites of the speech that are selected by the media producers, user could obtain the whole speech (1993).

Without a doubt, Clinton and his campaign gang felt the „new media blues”, but did not really know yet how to transform this support into something that would be as much profitable as ground campaigning, especially that the patterns are and will always be similar: internet campaigning attracts mostly young people and young people tend to be more liberal. This is a field for discussion when talking about alt-right and Trump's campaign, but at that time the young right-

wing did not really know how to organize on the internet.

It is needless to say that George H.W. Bush's campaign managers are perceived by academics as a bit lazy, as not much effort has been put into presenting the candidate to undecided voters, but also his approach to new technologies was a bit conservative. Nevertheless, there are few signs showing that the Republican Party knew that at least some work needs to be done with new media campaign, as the Whitehouse Communications Office was distributing around 200 Bush speeches to commercial bulletin boards.

And what about the lesser-known candidates? Larry Agran, who got around 58,000 votes during the Democratic primaries, can be perceived as the online campaign management pioneer, as he used Compuserve, Prodigy or American Online. Does the term "modemocracy" sound familiar to anyone? Otherwise known as "cyberspace campaigning", it was coined in a Compuserve article, describing how American voters are bored with standard political campaigning and tend to buy subscriptions to services like Compuserve in order to obtain news on the internet (McCracken, 2016). In their words, modemocracy simply meant online campaigning – for instance, as Agran was not invited to the Democratic debate on the December 15, 1991, he decided to speak directly to CompuServe subscribers one day earlier, reaching 850,000 users. Furthermore, Agran was the first political candidate ever to hold an online press conference in January 1992 (Tomaszewski, 2019). Last but not least, Agran developed the idea of candidate Q&A's, during which he would answer to the questions asked on the message boards by speaking out loudly, so his transcriptionist could post them as responses (Smith, 2016) (2019).

Jerry Brown on the other hand, decided to challenge the POTUS during Republican primaries. Governor of California believed that internet is the future of political marketing, as online canvassing was much cheaper than using traditional ways to reach out to the voter. Candidate organized an online meeting at Genie (messageboard) and gathered around 200 users (2016). Later, fueled by this success, Brown decided to use CompuServe for the same purpose. Republican candidate was the first major politician that used such internet tools on a huge scale. The Genie sessions were led by himself, as he used a borrowed Macbook to answer the user questions. Washington Post wrote an article about online canvassing, quoting Brown talking about Jesse Jackson: "Jackson has won more than 7y millio9n votes and his trsaveled widely in the world and has been a lea leader in the civil rights struggle which still con tin ues as the majolr challenge facing our nation." (McCracken, 2016). This shows that even though the responses were full of typos, the candidate really cared about maintaining contact with the online community in the United States. Modemocracy at that time was heavily influenced by Prodigy, which was the most politically oriented platform, having a news subscription costing 12,95\$ a month called Prodigy's Political Profiles (Belton, 1992). In order to mobilize the voters and increase the voter turnout during the

presidential elections, its news team worked with League of Women Voters (1992) (Tomaszewski, 2019). The information posted on a website were similar to the ones posted on political websites nowadays: conventions, caucuses, debates, primaries and each of the users could search through a database with the zip code (1992). Moreover, users could track information about candidate's policies and how they vote on them (1992). Prodigy knew that digital advertising had potential, that is why they were offering digital ads to the candidates for the price around \$10,000 (Tomaszewski, 2019).

Usenet groups were slowly becoming popular as a field for discussing politics. Users posted very often about Bill Clinton and Ross Perot, who even though did not really focus on new media in 1992, was an internet phenomenon back then with the users backing his statements and framing him as misunderstood by the mainstream media. A thread called "A USENET Guide to Ross Perot" attracted eleven authors, who argued about his political stances with most of them stating that "people are exaggerating what Perot has said", rationalizing his quote that "You can't appoint a gay man to lead a group that bans gays as members" (Meier, 1992).

Prodigy was not the only medium that wanted to benefit from the campaign. MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) created a Presidential Campaign Information Service at MIT's AI Laboratory as an experiment that would prove how emails and internet could help educate people about the political process (Campbell, 1992). From a *campaign92.org* domain, 2000 electronic queries were responded to daily, as users could ask for the debates or position papers, or even sign up as a volunteer for any of the campaigns, even John Hagelin, Natural Law Party candidate (named as "Larry" in the text), who ran in 28 states (1992). Service also allowed to ask anonymous random questions to the campaign staffs. When researching content proving the use of web during 1992 elections, it is also worth mentioning The Huron Valley Free-Net Project created by Richard Foote from the Michigan Public Computing Consortium. Authors planned to create a Free-Net service that would allow the users to get access to information services for free. One of the projects, the Teledemocracy project was supposed to focus on the positions of the candidates in the 1992 elections and electronic books and documents (Foote, 1993, p. 11).

The beginning of the 90s has also seen the beginning of very specific online activism, hacktivism. Cult of the Dead Cow (cDc), created in 1984, first dominated the Bulletin Boards scene by creating a collective of affiliated BBSs. What is interesting, is the fact that the group coined a term 31337, meaning Eleet (Elite), which can be observed as a precursor for l33t (1337) language, used by the internet geeks, mostly popularized on messageboards. Group was releasing an e-zine with texts of heavy metal songs, poems and manifestos. In 1991, *Sassy* magazine nominated the group the „Sassiest Underground Computer Group” (Chiesa et. al., 2008, p. 223). Unarguably the best thing about cDc (which will definitely return later when introducing 4chan and 8chan), is the

fact that it returned to its fame in 2019 thanks to Beto O'Rourke, as in his interview given to Reuters he admitted that he was a member of this hacker group at the beginning of the 90's, as he discussed punk rock and posted poems on group's BBSs. This was perceived both as a blow to his campaign as he stole long-distance calls and used pirated materials, but on the other hand O'Rourke's power rests in the Millennial base, which without a doubt must have thought that their candidate is even cooler (Menn, 2019). It is worth noting that other important hacking groups formed at the beginning of the 90s were Legion of Doom and Masters of Deception. The research, however, shows that they were mainly focused on computer programs and hacking, instead of political messages (Gragido et. al., 2012, p. 22).

Concluding this subchapter, presidential elections of 1992 were the first ones, when the internet was used during political campaigns, mostly in order to obtain e-mails from the supporters to create mailing lists that would send content such as political programs and speeches to the subscribers. Candidates and their advisors knew that great power is hidden in web, as sooner or later it will allow to reach a huge number of potential voters, while spending much less on the campaign. Voters could also slowly obtain political news from the internet, thanks to subscription services, but not only – if they knew better and were familiar with the computer culture, they could discuss politics among each other and the lack of targeting at that time allowed them to avoid any media bubbles, which are 21<sup>st</sup> century's information nightmares. It is needless to say though, that back in 1992 internet was still a tool available only for the privileged.

According to Diana Owen's text on New Media and Political Campaigns from the Oxford Handbook of Political Communication, the 1992-1994 timeline can be describes as Old Media, New Politics era, during which the candidates more eagerly visited late night televisions shows or radio shows, MTV and tabloids. Web campaigning was at that time still primitive (2014). Owen, by citing Davis (1999), reckons that the web versions of traditional print campaign flyers were called brochureware and were digital "repositories of campaign documents" (2014).

In 1993 a first publically available browser is released. Mosaic 1.0 becomes a sensation, with Wired and New York Times writing a piece about the invention, acknowledging it as a „map to the buried treasures of the Information age (Markoff, 1993). In 1994 Pew Research Center releases its report about the computer and web use in the United States called *Technology in the American Household*. The survey is very long, but some of the questions show how the internet use has been slowly evolving over the years. For example question 53<sup>rd</sup> asking:

*How often, if ever, do you dial up in order to get news, weather or sports information... often, sometimes, hardly ever, or never?*

As a response, 11% of adults admitted looking for news on the internet often, while 17% of them were looking for them only sometimes. Also 17% of respondents answered to this question „hardly

ever” and 55% of them never looked for the news while dialing up the modem (1994, p. 137).

During midterm elections in 1994, some of the candidates launched their campaign websites. According to Bimber and Davis, campaign staffs needed to hire brand new experts to develop online presentations of the candidate – that is why they decided to start hiring web designers, which did not really fit into the traditional pattern of the campaign organizational charts. Webmasters were usually reporting to the directors of communications, but if they did not really feel like riding the internet wave, they would cooperate more with the campaign managers and candidates (Bimber, Davis, 2003). 1992 presidential campaigns encouraged politicians to flirt with the web, according to Michele Matassa, 1994 was the ”year that politicians invaded cyberspace” (Denton Jr., 1994, p. 219). An article from Computerworld provides information about California's Election Web Server, as thousands of voters would be able to check the poll reports during the elections. League of Women Voters of the U.S. has launched at that time around 20 projects for the Wired for Democracy program, such as Voter Online Information and Communication Exchange (Booker , Betts, 1994). These projects allowed the potential voters to learn about the candidate's voting records and political platforms. In Minnesota, an E-democracy project was created, in which gubernatorial candidates answered the questions asked by the voters (Scott Aikens, 1996). An interesting piece from Wired shows that in 1994, some of the authors were wondering how one can measure the online activity of Americans and propose the creation of net census, which would provide information on users (Hoffman, Novak, 1994). This is one of the first examples of ideas that would later lead to online surveys, which are so helpful for both academics and campaign staffs. Authors for instance discuss the direct user surveys, which would be much more effective than discussions on messageboards.

In 1994, The White House went digital, as it launched its first website. Announced by tech-savvy Vice-President Al Gore, website consisted of audio welcome messages recorded by the POTUS and Vice President. Gore's message is still available for listening and says ”*Hi. Welcome to my Internet home page, I hope you find the information useful and informative. Electronic communication like this is of course changing the way we communicate, work and learn*” (Izadi, 2014). Unfortunately Clinton's message is no longer available. The website had various options such as Publications and What's New bookmarks. Visitors could also read about the Executive Branch, The First Family and even sign a Guest Book (2014).

Before we proceed to the 1996 presidential campaign, during which politicians truly found out the power that lies in online communication with the voters, let's focus for a while on 1995, as that was the year that the Republican Party registered its domain in March 1995, a move that was followed by Democrats launching their own domain (rnc.org and dnc.org). At that time, Republican candidates already acknowledged that in order to win the voters, they need to launch their campaign

websites. Lamar Alexander was the first presidential primary candidate that did so and his actions were followed by Phil Gramm and Steve Forbes. Alexander's website not only uploaded campaign information, biography of the candidate and press material, but also posted information on how the users can contribute to Lamar's campaign (4president.us). As he demonstrated the campaign site on a conference, Alexander stated that "America accelerates into a new era of technology and communications (...) it is important that the president will understand how deeply this new age of information technology affects us all. This technology will shape the next century (...)" (4president.us). Republican politician got endorsements from software executives, who were raising support and money for his campaign. Moreover, Alexander announced his candidacy on AOL. His website's colours were targeting specific groups of voters, for example red background was supposed to appeal to the working class (Stromer-Galley, 2014). Other politicians were also generating online buzz, for instance, a website was launched, urging Colin Powell to announce his candidacy in the presidential elections (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 23).

What about the three main candidates and why there were three of them? Let's start with Republican hopeful Bob Dole, who was the first politician that publicly announced that he invites internet users to visit his website [www.dolekemp96.org](http://www.dolekemp96.org). Even though he forgot to underline that there should be a dot before org, the website attracted around 2 million web users within the first 24 hours (Cornfield, 2004, p. 3). The Republican Party stated at one point that over 8000 people signed the guest book on Dole's website and 10 000 people subscribed to the campaign e-mail (Johnson et. al., 1999, p. 101). Another interesting fact is that Dole's website has an interactive part which allowed user to check trivia, play games or download the postcards. Downloadables became a thing at that time, as candidates made it available to download campaign screensavers and wallpapers (both Clinton and Dole).

There were some of the sites, however, that were targeting the candidates, especially Dole, Clinton and Pat Buchanan. Parody sites at first glance were looking like a legit ones, but for example Buchanan's fake site had a small nazi flag in the background (Laskow, 2016).

Clinton's campaign staff had no intention to pretend that new media would be important for them during the 1996 campaign as they tended to focus on traditional ways of canvassing. Efforts were made on getting Clinton to meet with people through events, TV appearances and fundraisers (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 36). His campaign however was able to earn around \$10 000 during an online fundraiser, a sum that maybe won't raise any eyebrows in 2019, but was spectacular back then (Hendricks, Kaid, 2014, p. 4). Clinton's campaign experts planned to launch a messageboard for his supporters, but withdrew from this idea, as they feared that the security on such website may be not good enough to battle against potential hacker attacks (2014). POTUS campaign website did not really mobilize voters to take active part in the elections, as it only posted favorable comments



about the president in order to put him in the best light (2014).

This quite lousy attempt to organize the campaign in new media, compared to Dole's innovative efforts is shocking, when we take into consideration that it is Clinton that is supposed to be more hip and tech-friendly than his opponent. Dole's partial (at least when talking about web campaign) success lies in a document called "New Media Blueprint", created by Rob Arena who was in charge for the candidate's web presence (2014, p. 34). The document was made for the campaign manager in order to show him that some of the campaign resources should be invested in new technologies. This piece provided research on active web users, stating that they are more politically engaged and professional than average people. The main idea behind Arena's concept was to mobilize these users, so they would mobilize people in their social network, who are less politically active (2014, p. 35). Furthermore he argued that this allows to contact the supporters directly instead of looking for their attention through mass media. The aforementioned event when Dole invited people to visit his website was planned by Arena, as he wanted to attract some traffic to the website. He also advised to create the attack websites aimed at POTUS by overtaking domains (just like the trolls did) like realclinton.com. Many specialists believe that his plan was the blueprint for digital media strategy for political campaigns (2014, p. 35).

Patrick Buchanan, conservative populist running a presidential campaign in 96 was also planning to mobilize the voters through digital media, as his website coined the nickname „The Buchanan Brigade” for the people, who decided to take action and his staff made a messageboard on which his supporters could discuss various campaign topics (2014, p. 37).

Diana Owen's phases of new media in election campaigns model sets 1996-2006 period as the one when the internet technology facilitated development of new forms of campaign communication with interactive capabilities, as websites with interactive features, e-mail discussion boards, blogs and meetups started to pop up. This era is called New Media, New Politics 1.0 (Owen, 2014).

In 1996 not only politicians were releasing campaign information, as various campaign sites started to emerge, representing nonprofit organizations that cared about increasing the voter turnout, but also interest groups, political organizations and news media (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 24). These groups launched such websites that operated both on a national and local level, posting political information such as speeches, press releases and news. Also minor parties such as Libertarian Party or Natural Law Party had their websites. According to Bimber and Davis, in 1996 candidates (at least the ones that were not the POTUS) realized that internet allows them to be more competitive and to attract more media buzz; Wall Street Journal for example, at the end of the campaign, posted its ranking of best and worst campaign websites (2003).

How about the web users? Were they as much enthusiastic as politicians about the new media and

their potential? According to Pew Research Center, the trend in online use was raising with every month, to conclude with the 1996 in internet and politics, I will present the best excerpts from the organization's surveys on online users.

Fig. 3 Trend in Online Use

Trend in Online Use							
	1995		----- 1996 -----				
	June	Jan	Feb	March	April	July	Early Sept
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	14	21	21	22	20	22	22
Goes Online for...							
Current events/ political news	n/a	11	11	14	10	13	12
Presidential election news	n/a	n/a	4	4	3	3	5

Source: Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/1996/12/16/online-use/>

More and more Americans started to visit internet websites in order to find political news and the survey has shown that they tend to be young, earn more than average and graduate from college more often than the general public. What's interesting is the fact that online users tended to be more Republican than the public, but in my opinion it is strongly related to gender gap, as the sex proportions among internet users were 58% of men vs. 42% of women (Pew Research Center, 1996).

Now let's further talk politics. Online users had more political knowledge than average, as 71% of them identified Bob Dole as the candidate that wanted to introduce a 15% across-the-board tax cut. Majority of internet users (55%) also recognized Clinton's phrase „bridge to the future”, when only 38% of public knew who was the author of this phrase.

Fig. 4 Political Profile of Online Users

Political Profile Of Online Users*			
	Total Pop. %	Wtd. Pop.+ %	Online Pop. %
Party ID			
Republican	29	31	34
Democrat	33	31	28
Independent	32	35	36
1996 Pres Pref#			
Clinton	49	48	47
Dole	34	36	38
Perot	11	12	12
1996 Cong Pref#			
Republican	44	46	50
Democrat	49	48	47

\* Based on 2,724 interviews/690 online users conducted July, Sept 1996.  
+ Demographically balanced sample (see footnote on previous page).  
# Among registered voters.

Source: Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/1996/12/16/online-use/>

This does not particularly mean that the voters were satisfied with the level of political content they are receiving when connecting to web. According to the survey conducted by the irreplaceable Pew Research Center, one-in-ten voters were looking for the information about the candidates over the web, but only 25% of them were satisfied with the results (Pew Research

Center, 1996).

Even though the voters were still more eagerly obtaining political information from newspapers or television, internet was allowing the candidates to make their campaign staff's lighter, as finally the voters could virtually engage in the campaign or learn more information about the candidate (especially when taking into consideration that TV news are condensed, so only the highlights are presented).

Without a doubt, using web in political campaigns was becoming a fashionable trend, very often perceived as something that is needed, but not really understood. Marc Sanford for example, when asked about the internet in his campaign, replied that he is getting "one of those pages, whatever they are" (Denton Jr., 2005, p. 219). The most entertaining, however, story related to internet campaign politics in 1996 comes from Mark Warner's campaign, as his webpage was linking to MTV's website, which outraged the Virginia Republicans, who stated that their content is offensive and should not be presented to children, who may visit his website (Shear, 1996). But why a link to MTV's website was even available at the candidate's website? Is that a cheap shot to appeal to young voters in a way that Steve Buscemi's character Lenny Wosniak from 30 Rock would admire? Mark Warner's website was not only providing political news or offering his biography, it also had a "Mark's Site of the Day" bookmark, which described the websites recommended by the candidate on a daily basis. Warner congratulated MTV on their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and stressed how MTV played an important part during 1992 elections (they were presenting political information about the candidates mixed with street surveys, presented as music videos and were encouraging voter registration with the "Rock The Vote" organization). At the end of the message, Warner asked his visitors to click on the website and later e-mail him what they think about it.

What did the academics think about this revolution? Katz and Rice presented two ways perspectives in which the internet could evolve. The dystopian perspective presented the future of web as a mechanism that will constrain privacy and lead to voter manipulation, thanks to corporate and governmental intervention (2002, p. 103). Content selection and spin-doctoring in order to confuse the voter already characterized the media and the access to internet content could only worsen it. However, the utopian approach predicted the rise of online activism, responsive communication with the governmental offices and more interactions with the candidates, which should lead to more mature voting patterns (2002, p. 104). Surveys in the second part of the 90s were showing that the internet users, especially the ones who used internet for the political reasons, tended to be younger than the public with activists being 32.8 years old on average (Hill, Hughes, 1998, p. 29). According to this research, men were dominating in internet activism (72%) and the users tended to be more educated than the average. Although the survey shown that more of the users were leaning Democratic, for instance Usenet's political newsgroups were more right-wing

and anti-government, most probably due to feeling underrepresented in the media (1998, 33) (Katz, Rice, 2002, p. 104). Van Dijk provides an interesting point of view that seems too real 20 years later, by stating that at some moment, the internet will have too much information, which will be too much for an average users to filter and figure out which information is valid (1999). Rash argued that because of the internet, new parties and ideas will have a chance to emerge (1997). Shapiro defined internet as a "control revolution", by the transfer of control from institutions to individuals (1999). According to his research, there are some features that enhance individual control:

- many-to-many interactivity
- digital content, making communication flexible
- the design of the internet as a packet-based network
- the interoperability of the internet, allowing the content to flow through a network without barriers
- broadband capacity
- universal access

At that time, the last two characteristics were not yet accomplished, but this was just a matter of time.

The midterms in 1998 also provided some revolutionary approaches to campaign management on the internet, mainly because of Jesse Ventura, who was running independently for a Minnesota gubernatorial seat. On some way, political path that Ventura obtained is very similar to Donald Trump's; pro wrestler, actor and radio show host, decided to run an anti-establishment campaign by using his celebrity persona. What differs them, however, at the very beginning is the fact that Ventura already was a politician, as he served as a mayor of Brooklyn Park between 1991 and 1995. Apart from aggressive grassroots campaigning and straight-talking style, Ventura invested in TV commercials and new media, who allowed him to become a viral underdog politician that would be the answer to voters who were lost in partisan wars and were disillusioned by the politics of Democrats and Republicans. Although Ventura's TV ads are something wonderful to analyze, research will bring focus to his campaign's internet activity. For starters, Ventura created a huge e-mail network by combining the networks of his fans and Reform Party activists, consisting of over 3,000 supporters (Chadwick, Howard, 2010, p. 15). His campaign staff used internet both to mobilize and recruit volunteers, but also to respond to his political rivals, attacking him on traditional media (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 26). Also the fundraising part was much more impressive, as he managed to collect \$50,000 from the volunteers. The most important part of his internet campaign, however, was last call mobilizing on the election day to get out the vote, as he

organized campaign rallies just hours before the polls closed (Klotz, 2003, p. 71) (Anstead, Chadwick, 2008, p. 59).

This case became the main argument for some analysts that the development of campaigning in cyberspace will equal the chances for the minor party candidates, as they do not have that much funds or organizational skills as the candidates from the two main parties. The internet definitely created new opportunities for the underdog candidates, as Ventura got 37% of the votes and won. Some of the experts even started to predict a doom of two-party system in the United States, but this eventually was not the case, as other politicians running for the seats did not have that much skills and charisma to organize such a mobilization campaign on the web. According to Bimber, in 1998 just one-third of independent and minor party candidates had a web page (2003, p. 26). The case was that the candidates did not really want to invest funds in cyber campaigning and at that time the production of high quality content costed quite big sums of money (2003, p. 27). What is interesting, is the fact that the only candidate other than Ventura, to use campaign website and win, at the same time not belonging to any of the major parties, was Bernie Sanders during his run for the House of Representatives seat (2003).

The higher the campaign budget was, the higher the chances were that the candidate had a good website, a survey obtained by Campaigns & Elections found out that 86% of campaigns with million-dollar budgets had websites, but only over 50% of those with \$50,000 budget or less had them. Nonetheless, most of the websites were still acting as if they were online brochures, they did not really allow the user to interact and were mainly used for creating an e-mail database. Campaign managers did not really want to experiment with new technologies and were just repeating patterns that were crucial for the traditional media. Management of data and internal campaign communication were the most important functions for the staffs, as they could not only try to mobilize the voters, but also efficiently communicate among each other. Some of the scientists reported that the quality of the website has generally improved, as more multimedia facilities were introduced and even the feedback options were becoming a regular case (Davis, Owen, p. 1998). Unarguably, Bimber did the best research on early online campaigning and it should be strongly recommended to analyze his publication „Campaigning Online: The Internet in U.S. Elections” for further study, as he provides an extraordinary data and survey results on congressional and presidential races.

With the 2000 elections around the corner, the access to digital content was becoming more and more inclusive. An online survey exploring the characteristics of an AOL user shown that 84% of them were registered to vote and 45% of them wanted to look for presidential candidate information on the internet (Katz, Rice, 2002, p. 111). Sunstein provides an interesting point that predicts the creation of social media bubble, arguing that the users will only communicate to

members of their online groups, who share similar interests, which will lead to the polarization of political opinion and avoid opposing perspectives (2001). DiMaggio et. al. conducted a study regarding this issue in 2001 and the results have shown that the internet users are more likely to be select the news than for example newspaper readers. Political candidates for instance, when creating a campaign page, do not really link on their website to other candidate web pages.

Year 2000 is described by academic historians as the year of the internet. Many of pundits admit that the 2000 campaign was the moment of maturation of internet use (Chadwick, Howard, 2010, p. 15) (Bimber, 2003, p. 28). Online fundraising was becoming more and more popular among the candidates, along with the mobilization tools. Web pages started to become more professional and looked like commercial websites.

First textbook 2000 campaign that used internet was John McCain's, which might be surprising when taking into consideration his presidential bid in 2008, when he was perceived as an old man that was not really a fan of new technologies. This was not the case back in 1999, as McCain's campaign staff knew that George W. Bush will be the Republican favorite for the presidential nomination. In order to strengthen his bid, McCain started to organize online fundraisers. Launched in 1999, website McCain2000.com started generating some buzz after a new version was introduced in December of 1999. McCain Interactive allowed the users to search through an online map that described campaign events in their areas (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 180). His campaign staff generated an e-mail to the volunteers which advised that the internet would be playing very important role during his primary campaign. People, who visited the website, could check alerts, whenever McCain or his staff organized any rallies or meetings (2003). This newschool approach, which not only made the candidate popular within new media, but also allowed McCain's fans to interact with the content, allowed him to win New Hampshire primaries. As a result, politician's bid started to receive plenty of online donations, at some point even \$18, 000 an hour (Van Natta Jr., 2000). Campaign heavily relied on small donations (around \$115), which shows that he was supported by average citizens (tactics that help position the politician as an underdog, see Bernie Sanders's and Beto O'Rourke's campaigns). Even though he managed to raise \$2.2 million dollars online, money was not the only positive result of investing time and money on new media, as also over 7000 new volunteers joined and signed in on the website (2000). Max Fose, who was McCain's webmaster, stated that they managed to raise \$6,4 million and attract 142 000 volunteers (Buie, 2000). Less than half a million was spent on online operations (2000). His staff thought of various ways the web users may support the candidate, as they offered an online chat with McCain for a \$100 donation (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 40).

Bill Bradley's campaign also managed to raise \$1,000,000 donations. Bradley, candidate in the Democratic primaries, requested for the ruling of Federal Election Commission, so the online

payments from credit cards would have the status of federal matching funds. When the Commission agreed, his online campaign started to flourish with money (Eagleton, 2016). The money was quickly spent on various online activities aimed at mobilizing the voters, for example Iowa users of Juno and Microsoft Hotmail were receiving messages from his campaign staff (Bradley spent around \$800 000 on this action) (Kettle 2000). In his article for Guardian, Kettle argues that Bradley pioneers the internet video streaming in campaign, as by clicking on his ad, a video launches with the senator wearing a red jumper and talking about the plans for healthcare (2000). McCain and Bush used voter segmentation in order to focus on microtargeting when releasing online advertising banners. Some of the internet enthusiasts admitted that the 2000 elections could be as revolutionary as the 1960 election affected by the television.

What about George W. Bush? He was a target of attacks on the internet, as Zack Exley launched a satirical website gwbush.com, which (among other interesting content) displayed a fake picture of Bush snorting cocaine (Buie, 2000). When Bush found out about that, his furious reaction resulted in website becoming more popular, which is described by the academics as Streisand effect, which means that whenever someone wants to hide the information that is displayed on the internet, or reacts to it, it becomes more popular and relates to the situation when Barbra Streisand tried to censor the attempt to publish pictures of her house in Malibu.

Bush managed to raise money from 80 000 unique donors and played his opponents by making the donations public. As a result, media started to ask other candidates why did they not do the same (2000). The sooner the elections were, the better website quality he had, as he hired numerous advisors who helped with this online campaign. One of the cool features on his website was the tax calculator, which allowed the visitor to check how much money would they save after Bush's reforms.

Al Gore's website algore2000.com let the visitors use an "Instant Message Net" option, which collected data from them and found potential political friends in their area, with whom they could engage in campaign events or just meet to talk politics. This is actually mindblowing, as this feature worked just like a modern social media dating app that allowed to find people with similar interests (like Al Gore for example). Gore's webmaster Ben Green launched various innovations, like FASTTV viewer that let the users watch campaign videos, commercials and speeches (2000). Not only the Democratic candidate had a mobile version of the website, there was also something extra for the tech geeks, as the website had an open source code built in, that could be checked to find a message from Gore (2000) (Tomaszewski, 2019).

Gore, however, felt too confident about his web game, as he stated during a CNN interview in 1999 that he basically invented the internet (Wiggins, 2000). This quote has been ridiculed for years by various comedians and politicians. Bush's campaign staff earned one symbolic win over

Gore during the presidential debate, as his website automatically transcribed his speech, while Gore's website had to be refreshed for new information (Lewicki, Ziaukas, 2000). At the beginning of the primary season, Gore's campaign raised around \$2.7 million in online donations, but this result was not matched later (Bimber and Davis 2003: 39). Gore pioneered the campaign merchandise game, as in "Gore Stores", web users could buy bumper stickers, posters, clothes and buttons (Chadwick, Howard, 2010, p. 15).

"You and I are entering the information age – and the Washington politicians are stuck in the Stone Age.". This was the message that welcomed visitors of Steve Forbes site, as he was the first politician to announce his candidacy online (Bimber, Davis, 2003, p. 38). Forbes registered domains that were announcing his partnership with Jeb Bush, such as [www.steveforbes-jebbush.org](http://www.steveforbes-jebbush.org) or [www.forbes-jebbush2000.com](http://www.forbes-jebbush2000.com). Although he ran as a Republican, Forbes wanted to be perceived as high-tech and modern (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 50).

Finally, the 2000 presidential campaign that is crucial, when talking about the use of new media, is Ralph Nader's bid, which as everyone knows crushed Al Gore's dreams of becoming a president, thanks to independent voters, who chose the Green Party candidate. After his website [votenader.com](http://votenader.com) has been launched, it earned 4000 unique viewers within three days. At the beginning Nader did not focus on fundraising, as only at the very end of the campaign he lobbied for donations, raising \$100 000 (2003, p. 184). The amount of volunteers signing up on the website reached 40 000 numbers, but the really interesting case is how the internet community started to cooperate with each other as his candidacy was bringing some strong numbers in the polls. The voters knew that Al Gore may be weakened by Nader's results in the general elections, so not only did they fun a website [nadersraidersforgore.com](http://nadersraidersforgore.com), on which they canvassed for Gore and tried to change minds of Nader stans; many similar websites were created, which educated users about swapping the votes: in the areas, where Gore was close to Bush, they tried to persuade his voters to choose the Vice-President, whereas in blue states, where Gore was sure to win, Democratic supporters would vote for Nader, so he would receive 5% during the presidential elections and as a result the Green Party would be funded by the state (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 59).

To conclude the part of this subchapter describing the 2000 presidential campaign (although the Congressional one was also interesting, only a general trend of candidates using websites can be observed, no pioneer cases were observed), I also found some materials describing what other innovations were implemented during the campaign trail. Jim Buie, among others, names:

- online voter registration campaigns
- popularization of discussion groups, both Republican and Democratic ones, where activists could talk about the formation of party structures
- online town meetings; citizens could ask questions via chat messages or e-mails and the



answers were transcribed within 24 hours (tactics of Barney Barren, candidate for House of Representatives from NH-2 and his internet coordinator Greg Laynor)

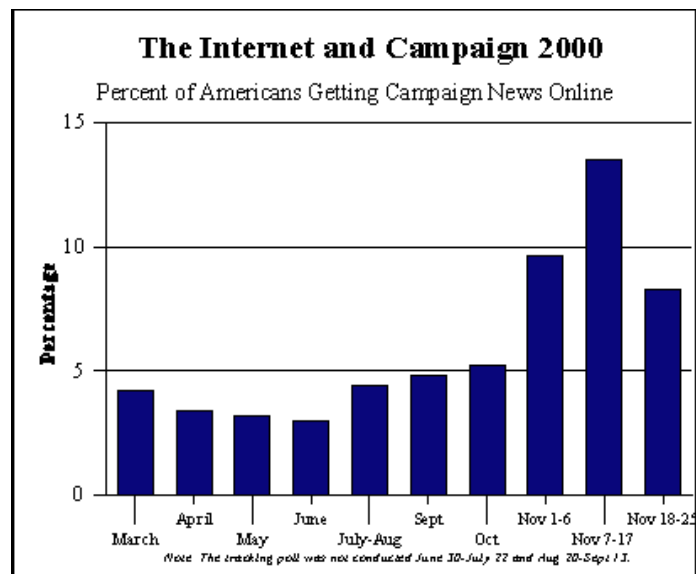
- online phone banks, which allowed to download the telephone numbers of voters to Get Out The Vote
- online voting (!!!) introduced in Arizona
- flash animations
- video e-mails from party leaders (2000)

What did the internet audience think of the 2000 elections? On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2000, Pew Research Center published results of a survey conducted on 4186 online users in October and November 2000. The results were proving that the internet was going mainstream – and so the internet politics were, as people more eagerly started to participate in online political activities. Convenience was the main reason for users seeking for campaign news online, as 56% of people looking for them on web stated such. The audience was showing less interest in other activities, as they were mainly focusing on obtaining information. 35% of viewers that were seeking for political news online, filled in any political polls; 22% of them contacted candidates via email (Rainie, 2000). This can be ascribed as a revolutionary process indeed, as back in 1996 only 22% of web users were going online for election news; in 2000 there was already 1/3 of them. The most important aspect of this research is that 43% of online news consumers stated that these news have influenced their voting decisions (compared to 31% in 1996). This has been especially effective among young people – many respondents that were under 30 advised that the internet content made them for or against particular candidate (2000).

Fig. 5 Growing Audience for Politics Online

<b>Growing Audience for Politics Online</b>		
	1996	2000
<i>Ever go online for election news?</i>	%	%
General public	4	18
Online users	22	33
<i>Why go online for election news?*</i>		
Information is more convenient	45	56
Other media don't provide enough news	53	29
Get information not available elsewhere	26	12
Internet news sources reflect personal interests	24	6
Other reason/Don't know	9	12
<i>Did online election news affect vote choice?*</i>		
Yes	31	43
No	69	55
Don't know	0	2
	100	100
* Based on those who go online for election news.		

Fig. 6 The Internet and Campaign 2000



Source: Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2000/12/03/internet-election-news-audience-seeks-convenience-familiar-names/>

Further results of the survey followed the patterns presented in previous researchers, as at that time more men were looking for online political news than women, more people with higher degrees and more higher-income households. There is no need to present the whole report, but

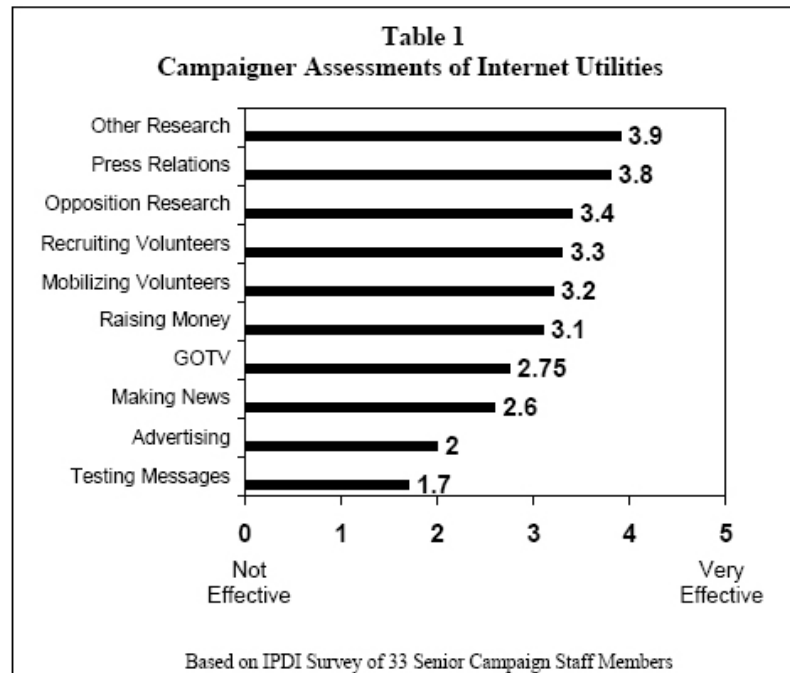
maybe it is important to stress that in 2000, people did not really seek for alternative media outlets, as CNN.com was the most popular news website visited by the users, with news features at Yahoo and MSN sharing the second place. Also Wall Street Journal, C-SPAN, PBS and MSNBC websites were popular.

Academics reported that by 2000 there weren't any big gaps between the amount of websites by challengers and incumbents, which is interesting, because earlier the incumbents could rely on government pages (Kamarck, 2003) (Gibson, McAllister, 2006, p. 248). Cass Sunstein argued that the internet polarized users, who shared similar interests, which could not have any impact on changing their voting behavior during the elections. The general consensus made by academics was that although everyone was excited by the capabilities the web gave us, it was still treated as a latest trend, rather than a substantial part of a political campaign process (Wiese, Gronbeck, 2005, p. 220).

Before reaching the end of this subchapter, by forming a definition of Web 2.0, which will allow us to forward to the description of social media use in political campaigns in the United States, just for the record we will include some facts about the 2002 Congressional campaigns, collected by Pew Research Center. There were two major developments that allowed to treat online politics seriously. First of all, e-mail started to become the main channel, through which voters and campaign staffs communicated with each other. Around 66% of internet users sent or received campaign related e-mails (Rainie, 2003). According to Pew Research Center's research, the internet was most effective when contacting the press. On the other hand, politicians did not really want to put money on online advertising.

The survey names Rod Blagojevich, gubernatorial candidate from Illinois, who created a GOTV operation that used web, e-mail and text messaging that allowed him to win the Democratic primary. What is also interesting is the fact that 51% of the respondents (candidates) stated that they will focus more on creating the campaign website during next elections, whereas 45% of them believed that this would not be an important issue.

Fig. 7 Campaigner Assessments of Internet Utilities



Source: Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2003/01/05/modest-increase-in-internet-use-for-campaign-2002/>

For the purpose of this research, in this chapter, the description of the electoral campaigns in the United States concludes with the 2002 elections. Mainly because already in 1999 a term Web 2.0 was formed and introduced to public in 2004. Christian Fuchs argues that back in these days internet was mainly focusing on the provision of information, whereas it transformed into a system that is oriented to communication and community building (Fuchs et. al., 2012, p. 3) (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 97). As more citizens were gaining access to new media, especially internet, these tools had to evolve to entertain them, as people no longer wanted to be just receivers of the content. They wanted to be the content and to make their own, in order to for example influence the opinion of other users. They needed to express their views, as standard media did not meet their expectations (2017).

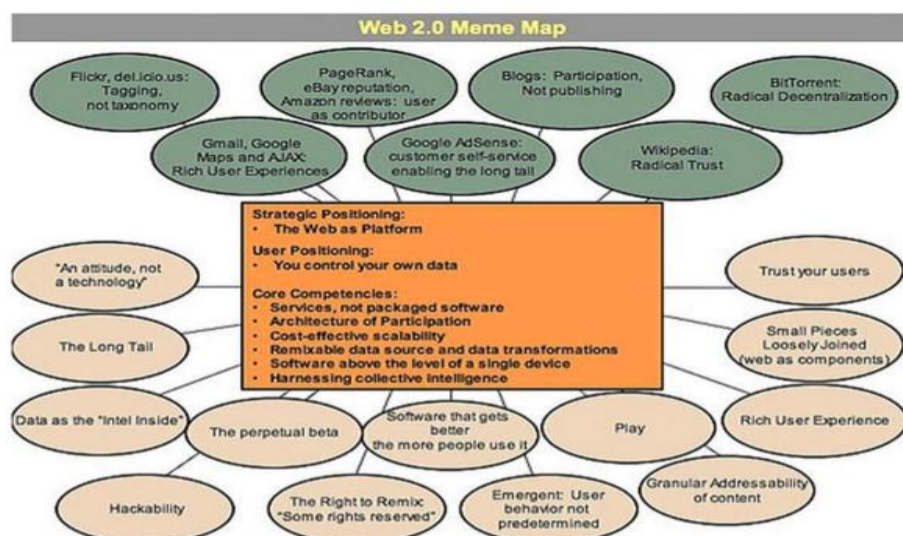
Web 2.0 term has been popularized by O'Reilly Media Group, which described this trend during a number of conferences in 2004. Tim O'Reilly, CEO of the company, argued that the internet was evolving and therefore its users: because of that fact, media started to allow users to take part in their creative process, also by sharing the feedback about the outcome (O'Reilly, 2005). This led to a new form of cyber-socializing through blogs, social media apps, chats and user applications (2005) (2017). The moment experts realized that a new era in internet development had just began, can be established as a milestone for the world wide web. Every trace that the users left on the internet, was their personal interest that could be used (by cookies applications) to track them and remember their choices. On the other hand, this was useful, so the users would be suggested to visit similar websites (2017). Politicians already knew that this is the moment that new media may

become more important when talking about engaging voters and mobilizing them than the traditional ones. Williams and Gulati, who are experts on social media politics, stated that the social networks allowed the candidates to control the created content on their website and the way the users would interact with it (Gulati, Williams, 2007, p. 4).

Much can be said how did the social media influence our everyday decision-making processes, also the political ones. With web 2.0 tools, internet activism started to flourish, more people started to connect to each other. Earlier, people often connected to people raised in their surroundings: their best friends lived on their endz (areas nearby their houses), the loved ones they met were friends of friends. Now, people could connect to basically anyone in the entire world, which allowed them to form bonds with users who lived far away from them, but had similar interests. Thanks to that, they also could talk politics with them, organize online events, create memes. The development of social media allowed politicians to reach out to the voters and present them their platforms through the websites that they use daily. This all, however, will be talked further in the third chapter that will truly focus on how social media are shaping the opinion and allow politicians and voters to interact. Web 2.0 term becoming public symbolically closes the subchapter that allows to go deeper and see how it was made possible to make these tools a crucial part of modern political campaigning. As more people could help in the campaign, politicians were able to use less money, generate more content and to reach more users who could help canvassing, as compared to the traditional media outlets. Before starting new subchapter, it would be a good idea to show a map created during brainstorming at O'Reilly Media conference, that will perfectly describe (in a memetic way) what Web 2.0 is and what it is not.

Fig. 8 Meme Map of Web 2.0

Source: O'Reilly Media <https://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>



## 2.2 Social media in American electoral politics

Living in 2021, can one imagine modern political campaigning without Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Twitch, maybe even Tinder or Grindr? Not really. Nowadays, the more liberal voters are, the more they expect from their candidates in order to entertain them during the campaigning trail. They no longer want to rely on political programs, debates – they just need some X factor that will allow them to decide for whom should they cast the ballot. This is especially important for the young people, very often first-time voters that need to be mobilized in order to get out the vote. This is possible, especially with the Web 2.0 tools that allow them to engage in political discussion with their peers and form their opinion on various policies. Facebook, Instagram users and people who use many other social media apps can choose who are they following and with whom they are interacting. This may of course lead to the creation of media bubble – since people do not want to follow the news they do not agree with, they are stuck with the content that is evaluate by them in a positive manner. As a result, nowadays everyone is dealing with the polarization of public opinion, leading to lesser amount of moderate voters.

These changes do benefit politicians, as thanks to the social media outlets, they can achieve a kind of pop star status, especially if they are charismatic and know how to use their profiles. Adding pictures of candidate's children or animals, combined with the campaign material, can be the best way to show that they care about the policies, while at the same time having the same interests as their voter. This subchapter will go through the situations, when smart social media use helped the campaign staffs to get out the vote, mobilize the supporters and show more personal side of political campaigning. The cases will mostly focus on presidential and presidential primary campaigns, but will conclude with 2018 midterm elections, as every year new social media apps are becoming popular and the recent changes in trends would allow to make some hypotheses about the 2020 elections and future campaigns. In order to keep this subchapter consistent, one campaign from each of the presidential campaigns was chosen, which changed the way we are looking at the social media tools, starting with 2004 campaign.

In political campaigning handbooks, the timeline of internetization of campaigns is split into two periods – before and after Howard Dean's campaign. Why is that? Wiese and Gronbeck proposed six factors that show the development of cyberpolitics during the presidential campaign in 2004:

- network software and theory were introduced to online campaign strategy
- database functions were expanded to enhance e-mail and wireless functions
- coproduction features were introduced to increase citizen's interest in participating in online

campaigns

- increased use of Web video and Web advertising
- candidate websites were now a standard part Web content
- political blogs becoming an integral part of political cyberspace (Denton Jr., 2005, p. 220)

In his article *The Real Lessons of Howard Dean: Reflections on the First Digital Campaign* (2005), author proposed a model describing why it was easier for Dean to earn the internet's momentum; the analysis of GSS (General Social Survey) that was conducted in 2000 and 2002, shows that the liberals dominate politics online and they tend to engage in more political activities in cyberspace, such as gathering news, obtaining information from government Web sites, etc. This can also be observed within the party supporters: young, higher-educated and liberal users are more likely to use internet for such purposes than the moderates (Hindman, 2005, p. 123). Dean's presidential campaign was more left-leaning than his opponents, which shows why the main power of his campaign lied in internet user engagement. As a result, he was able to mobilize more volunteers, receive more donations and attract more media buzz.

That is how it worked out with the *Meetup* website, which was at that time a tool that allowed users to form social groups. Instead of creating a chatroom, users were meeting in real life to discuss various topics, from Harry Potter to learning foreign languages. This Web tool was quickly adapted by aspiring political activists (Dodson, Hammersley, 2003). According to anecdotes, Dean was „lured” by his supporters to a New York City meeting in early 2003, where around 300 fans were waiting to talk to him (Wired Staff, 2004). This was a brand new situation for a politician participating in the election – before launching a serious campaign, people started the grassroots campaign and organized over the web. *Meetup* and its users were the heart of the campaign; Dean started to gather following and the number of his supporters raised to around 3,000. First, they focused on recruiting other Web users through this tool – in late March of 2003, Dean's members managed to outraise the most populous group on *Meetup* – Witches. Having 15,000 fans that were eager to help with the campaign, also by submitting donations. The bigger the numbers were, the bigger media buzz was, which resulted in more hype for the candidate and *Meetup* itself.

As his political net worth began rising dramatically, Dean started to be treated seriously, especially when *MoveOn.org*, leading liberal activist website conducted an online primary in June, which he won by receiving 44% of votes. After the announcement of the results, Dean reportedly received around one million donations within first 24 hours (Gibson, McAllister, 2005, p. 3) (Hindman, 2005, p. 124).

Dean's true power, however, lied in the hands of political bloggers. Jerome Armstrong, who was blogging for the politician in 2001 already, in 2002 created MyDD (My Due Diligence), which

was the first largely recognizable progressive politics blog (Orlowski, 2004). It was him and Mathew Barrett Gross, Director of Internet Communications for Dean's presidential campaign, who encouraged the candidate's campaign manager Joe Trippi to rely the campaign on internet blogs and software (Orlowski, 2004). Dean campaign has launched, supporter and moderated plenty of blogs such as „Dean Nation” (dean2004.blogspot.com), ”Howard Dean 2004 Call to Action Weblog” (deancalltoaction.blogspot.com), „Change for America” (changeforamerica.com) and „Blog for America” (blogforamerica.com) (Davis et. al., 2010, p. 16). Dean for America website was using the Lazlo software, which allowed the visitors to search for election events in their areas (by city or zip code). The website, by using MapQuest, made it possible for the user to enter mileage in order to identify rallies near their location. This program also could create a printable calendar that consisted of all the campaign events that the user was interested in (Wiese, Gronbeck, 2005, p. 220). Dean's campaign also published first official U.S. Presidential election video game, produced by Persuasive Games. ”Howard Dean for Iowa Game” allowed his supporters to form a cyber outreach and transform it into real-life support. Although it costed only \$20,000, it was an internet hit and was played around 100,000 times in the month before the Iowa caucus (McCormick, 2013). Markos Moulitsas, founder of *Daily Kos*, at that time one of the most influential liberal-Democratic blog in the United States, worked with Armstrong and Trippi to get even more clout for the candidate in the blogosphere. At the time of the Iraqi War, when most of the Democratic Party was leaning right, Dean was an ideal candidate for the progressives. Hindman, by citing Bimber and Davis, argues that although the candidates tended to create internet content that was appealing to the swing voters, undecided and independent, the surveys were showing that people that were using web to obtain news, have strong party affiliations and political views. According to him, that was Dean's power, as his campaign staff realized that instead of trying to present the catch-all tactics, their role is to mobilize the core supporters that are using the internet, to increase the fundraising and energize the ones that believed in their candidates (Hindman, 2005, p. 124). In 2002, Jerome Armstrong coined a term “netroots” that maybe according to some of the modern authors is not hip (Bill Scher in his article for *Politico* from July 2019 argues that we've been facing a dawn of Democratic Netroots for few years now), I believe that perfectly describes the role of new media in modern political campaigning, especially in the United States. The combination of words “internet” and „grassroots”, describes a wave of internet political activism that started to develop after the start of Iraqi War. Thanks to the tool such as aforementioned *Meetup* or political blogs, people could exchange their opinion over the internet and even meet in real life to try and change the world around them – all thanks to the developments of new technologies. Netroots is creating an online community that is not only active over the web, but uses the web to create forms of real activism. Blogs, social networks services, independent news websites – all of these tools began to be an



important part of political cybercampaigning, while at the same time helping to get out the vote and form regional staffs.

Meetups were not only a hot innovation that could attract some media buzz to the campaign, as the use of this tool was a consequent strategy that was focusing on the formation of Dean's new legion of political activists. According to data collected by Hindman, when Dean dropped out of the race, 640,937 people registered through his website and 188,941 signed up to receive notifications about events in their area (2005, p. 125). Around 75, 000 of those people did attend the meeting, the meetups were organized in 612 cities (2005). Dean's campaign staff admitted that this was their main recruiting tool, what is surprising is the fact that usually volunteers do already have experience when talking about engaging in political campaigns. Williams, Weinberg and Gordon did provide a data that states that 23 and 31% of respondents of their survey learned about the meetups from the people they knew. The rest of the respondents learned about the events from either Dean's website, other pro-Dean sites and *Meetup.com* (2005, p. 126). That is very surprising, as previous researches stated that in most of such cases, the contact base is created because people provide their personal contacts. Here, the technology allowed for the first time to create an activist group of people that were complete strangers that had one goal – Howard Dean winning the Democratic Primaries.

Hindman believes that the rise of internet donations during the 2004 campaign encouraged small donors to send money to the candidates. According to the data, Dean managed to get 2,851 donors that supported the campaign financially with max 2000 dollars. This balance can be also observed during Kerry's campaign trail – when he got the Democratic nomination, his campaign started to attract online donors and most of them can be established as „smaller donors” (2005, p. 126). Hindman argues however, that the internet was not the only strength of his campaign, as for instance, he was the only candidate that opposed the intervention in Iraq. In their article about Dean, Wired argues that the key to his online success was something that can be defined as the decentralization of the modern political campaign. Dean's supporters were creating an online community that worked as a really big campaign staff that was receiving tasks. They define the community as ”network rather than an army”, or a ”stupid network”, mentioning David Isenberg's *The Rise of the Stupid Network*. The idea for the network was to accumulate plenty of online supporters that organized in groups, by at the same time giving them the absolute minimum of directions regarding where should the campaign be heading (Wired Staff, 2004).

Secondly, local groups created a collaborative net that supported Dean's campaign from various parts of the country, as for example they exchanged campaign materials (graphics, videos, emails), forming a volunteer infrastructure. This way, the campaign staff, while campaigning before the Iowa Caucus, was joined by various internet users, who sent out letters to Iowa Democrats, asking for their support for Dean's candidacy; after 2<sup>nd</sup> of July meetups over 30,000 handwritten

letters have been sent out.

Third of all – leaders tend to attract supporters like places. Although MoveOn.org website is more to the left side than average, Dean won its poll, although he was pro-gun and pro-death penalty. People perceived him as more cool and entertaining and that is why they chose him.

Another important factor is that popularity attracts more popularity. If the candidate is able to gather some clout around themselves, for sure they will attract another groups, who also may think that they are a good leader. This is how it works with internet users, as they tend to join fanpages or groups as they are becoming more popular (2004).

The last factor proposed by Wired is simply the fact that "Dean's swarm" often had chosen to talk among themselves about the tactics and their political beliefs, which made them very strong. David Weinberger, who was the consultant for this campaign, argues that Dean's campaign gave its supporters tools to implement their own ideas, instead of just passing them to the headquarters (2004). By concluding this thought, authors recall Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, in which he argues that the civic participation will decline, as people will tend to stay at home instead of meeting with their friends. After reading the book, Scott Heiferman founded Meetupcom, which led to forming one of the first internet political movements. Maybe the society was not supposed to be that doomed at all after implementing the Web 2.0 tools?

In 2008, online politics already were an important part of American life, with 74% of users going online to get information about the 2008 campaign. With 55% of entire adult population obtaining information over the net, this meant that for the first time over 50% of Americans that were eligible for voting, used web tools to focus on politics during the election cycle, at least when talking about Pew Internet & American Life Project's research (Smith, 2009). Since this presidential campaign did not see any incumbent defending his presidential seat, both Republican and Democratic Primaries were supposed to be interesting to watch. Since George W. Bush had rather low support, it was quite obvious that the potential Democratic nominee will have huge chances of winning. The question was, however, who will get the nomination? Senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, or widely recognizable Hillary Clinton?

According to Bruce Bimber and his article describing the campaign tactics of Obama in 2008 and 2012, with the development of communication technologies, the campaigns change and need to adapt to new media outlets. His campaign from 2008 was without a doubt at that time the most extensively new media using campaign in the history of the US and world. This all happened due to new political environment that allowed to implement new tactics in order to mobilize the voters and integrate social media with core campaign activities (Bimber, 2014, p. 131).

According to the presentation made in 2009 by a public relations firm *Edelman*, Obama had to combine the tactics of McCain in 2000 and Dean in 2004; however, he had to avoid their

weaknesses, which were: inability to turn online donors into real time voters (McCain) and inability to transform online clout into ground support (Dean) (Lutz, 2009, p. 3). Even though plenty of researches have been published over the years, *Edelman* provides really good methodology that examines the efficiency of social media political campaigns. One of the proposed models is the "Ladder of support", which describes how an internet user can engage in one's political campaign. According to *Edelman*, Obama's campaign staff created a ladder of engagement that consisted of three steps. The lowest step was personal support – Obama's fan could add him on social media, like his profile, post a comment or create a profile. Then, they could engage a bit more, by donating money to his campaign or signing up to his newsletter (by e-mail or SMS) (2009, p. 4). Second step is social support – on this level, once user has invested some time in Obama's campaign, they could join a group that supported his cause, post some campaign pictures or videos over their social media profile, finally they could write a post on political blog. The final step of the ladder is an advocate – here the users create endorsement groups, host campaign events in their areas and recruit other web users to donate to Obama's campaign (2009). Before proceeding to a rather chronological description of Obama's implementation of new media tactics, it would be helpful to present another methodology proposal formed by *Edelman*, which allows to simplify the route of establishing credibility in social media. The crawl-walk-run-fly method describes Obama's route, as at the very beginning he had to establish online presence, then enrich content, only to later engage thousands of online influencers and embrace community – all this to get out the vote in real life and mobilize his supporters.



Fig. 6, Source: Edelman Research. „The Social Pulpit.” 2009. p. 10.

Obama announced his bid in February 2007 and already started to build a community around his persona. The MyBO website allowed users to create a profile, search for campaign

events, raise funds and download campaign materials – everything we have already been familiar with during presidential campaigns in new media. The issue was that Obama was the first candidate that has blended these ideas in a perfect way and just like Dean asked for not only votes and money – but also his supporter's time, meaning engagement (Aaker, Chang, 2009, p. 16). In February 2007, Obama's campaign staff was joined by Scott Goodstein, who became an external online director. The main tactic created by him was to not only focus on one social media tool, but on as many as possible, by at the same time being active in them and using them carefully. This way, Barack Obama had profiles on 15 social networks, from Facebook and MySpace, to MiGente.com, BlackPlanet.com or AsianAve.com, which were very important for ethnic communities. It is worth noting, however, that these tools were for gaining clout and starting relationships, rather than fundraising (2009). At the same time, another social media platform helped Obama, as a Youtube ad that mashed up a popular Apple campaign from 1984 was uploaded on this platform and became a viral hit. The advert, which displays a young woman in colorful clothing (symbolizing Apple products) being compared to brainwashed, boring people wearing gray (symbolizing IBM) was remixed, so the woman was wearing an Obama t-shirt and Clinton is a Big Brother delivering a speech (Stromer, Galley, 2014, p. 123). This perfectly depicts how Obama was perceived as a next generation candidate that goes to war with his own party to change it into more human-like and fresh.

In March 2007 Obama's network team consisted of 15 people already, for example Chris Hughes, who was one of the founders of Facebook. Hughes was supposed to share his knowledge and experience about social media tools. His goal was to develop MyBO, so it would work like Facebook (2014). Sam Graham-Felsen joined the team to become a lead blogger, who would share stories about people engaging in the campaign. The fundraising goal was not the money, but the amount of donors – as the staff showcased information about the 75,000<sup>th</sup> donor by e-mail and over the website, the message had a chain effect on other donors (2009). The e-mail program was launched in May 2007, individual users were receiving customized e-mails, to which they could subscribe by texting „HOPE” (2009).

Obama's staff not only knew how to build a community on the web – they also wanted to encourage the users to engage in real life canvassing activities. *Walk for Change* was a grassroots campaign that organized canvases in all of the states, not only focusing on early states that held first primaries and caucuses, such as Iowa, South Carolina, Nevada or New Hampshire (2009). Another important event that fueled the small donor fundraising in 2007 was the *Dinner with Barack*. Usually, fundraising dinners are organized by celebrities and the tickets to such events are quite expensive - this way of endorsing candidates will be widely described in a chapter focusing on celebrities. Such buyout allows the attendee to take part in the event that is organized for the

candidate. Obama's staff did the opposite, as they decided to select four donors that would take part in a dinner with Obama, no matter how much money did they transfer to his campaign (2009). The events would be transmitted on Youtube and attracted around 25,000 new donors, who submitted just five dollars. This way, Obama's "swarm" was becoming bigger and his staff had more people taking active part in the canvassing process, which obviously would be beneficial on a later stage of the campaign. It is also worth noting once again, that the more small donors the campaign attracts, the more clout it gets as a grassroots, underdog event.

Although Obama's campaign staff introduced many social media tools that allowed him to get the nomination from his party, in my opinion his win would not be as spectacular, if his celebrity persona was not supported by other celebrities endorsing him through Youtube, which in 2008 already was one of the most important web portals. Since it would be possible to collect so many materials to write a separate chapter, two important Youtube spots allowed to position the Senator from Illinois as people's candidate, as both *Obama Girl* and *Yes We Can!* Videos were user-generated friendly spots. First one, uploaded on *Barely Political's* Youtube channel in June 2007, depicts a girl singing about her love for Barack Obama. *Crush on Obama* became a viral hit and at the end of 2007 was nominated in 2007 Youtube Awards (category: politics). The second video, however, was updated shortly after Obama narrowly lost the New Hampshire primary. As a form of endorsement, will.i.am made a song with samples from Obama's concession speech in New Hampshire, in which various serious A-list celebrities were saying the *Yes, we can* slogan (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 126). Nonetheless, Obama's campaign staff not only relied on user-generated videos, as 14,5 million hours of official footage was shared through this medium – all for free (Fox, 2012).

Obama also popularized Twitter as a platform on which politician can engage in discussion with other users, share their content and both campaign and private materials. On the Election Day, Obama was already the most followed user on this platform. How is that possible? According to Troy Duncan's blog that focused strictly on Obama's 2008 campaign, the Twitter strategy was plain simple:

- Deliver the message: Obama's profile had 262 status updates by the Election Day, which makes 3,5 status updates per week. At that time, this was enough to keep the follower informed and not turn them off by the spam.
- Build their brand awareness: all the profile updates, from profile photo to location and website address were deeply thought, as for example the background color was changed to match the website
- Increase their number of followers: Obama's campaign staff attracted new followers, simply by following plenty of people: although by the Election Day he had 115,000 followers, his

profile was following over 119,000 people.

- Drive traffic to their website: the status updates consisted of links that targeted barackobama.com website and its content (Duncan, 2008)

And what about Myspace? Modern teenagers have no idea how influential this social media outlet was back in the days. The only issue was that before Obama could start his social media campaign on this tool, he had to take over his own fanpage. How is that possible? In 2004, Joe Anthony started his unofficial fanpage, inspired by young Senator's keynote speech at the Democratic convention (Smith, 2007). After the start of Obama's presidential bid, his Myspace profile started to become very popular, which resulted in candidate's campaign staff overtaking it. Anthony accused Obama team of bullying and Myspace executives had to resolve the dispute. By the end of campaign, Obama had 833,161 friends on Myspace, compared to McCain's 217,811. After overtaking the profile, his staff transformed it, so friends and other fans could get a blog badge that could be displayed on their profiles and websites (Barefoot, Szabo, 2009, p. 165). Let's not forget about another important task – fundraising. Obama's profile had a „Donate Now” button, which after entering the amount the users wants to submit to the campaign, linked to BarackObama.com donation bookmark.

2008 was also the year, that Facebook managed to surpass Myspace as the most popular social networking website. On the Election Day, Obama's Facebook page had following statistics: 2,443,658 supporters, 494,998 wall posts, 1669 notes, 12 favorited pages that were linking to niche fanpages related to his campaign or policies, 5 mini-feed stories and 39 Youtube videos. All the posts and videos were widely interacted (Duncan, 2008). During the general election campaign, Obama was obviously perceived as more internet savvy than is opponent McCain, who had a great web campaign back in 2000. Illinois Senator's personal profile did not only feature campaign materials, but also allowed his supporters to obtain information about his favorite sports, musicians etc (Dutta, Fraser, 2008). The use of Web 2.0 tools was especially important for Obama to reach out to the youngest electorate, which usually is not that interested in politics. Thanks to this and celebrity endorsements, he was able to establish himself as a cool, celebrity persona that leads an underdog campaign against Washington. It is also important to stress that the online community already started to organize to conduct a negative campaign against his opponents – a tool that with every presidential election is becoming more visible. When Obama already had a huge following on Facebook, Clinton had to tackle various Facebook groups that were created against her bid, such as “Stop Hillary Clinton” (2008). McCain was not able to position himself as a fan of new technologies and most of the ideas were quickly turning against him – taking into consideration a videogame on his Facebook page called “Pork Invaders”, which was styled after the 1970s game “Space Invaders” and seemed just outdated (Talbot, 2008).

Concluding this part of research, Obama could use all of these tools to entertain the web users, but his true power was a highly effective use of mobile messaging. Each month, users received five to 20 messages as a form of subscription to his mobile platform. Obama's staff released an iPhone app that allowed people to track latest campaign news and even organized contacts in their phonebook to highlight friends from battleground states (Lutz, 2009). On August 23, around one million message subscribers received an information that Joe Biden would be Obama's running mate, which at that time, according to Nielsen Mobile, was the largest mobile marketing event. The message was: "Barack has chosen Senator Joe Biden to be our VP nominee. Watch the first Obama-Biden rally live at 3pm ET on [www.barackobama.com](http://www.barackobama.com) Spread the word!" (Aaker, Chang, 2009). At the end of the campaign, Obama raised \$778,642,962 and most of this money was collected thanks to internet fundraising. As the founder of Huffington Post stated during the Web 2.0 summit after the 2008 election: "Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not be president. Were it not for the Internet, Barack Obama would not have been the nominee" (Schiffman, 2012).

By 2012, Obama's digital team consisted of Web 2.0 veterans, who perfectly knew how to target the voters in order to win the elections and get out the vote. It is always harder for the incumbent president to lead an interesting campaign, as his opponents are receiving an on-going clout related to primary debates and elections. On the other hands, having reminded that we are living in the state of permanent campaign, modern politician needs to entertain their supporters during their tenure and conduct surveys to check whether they are satisfied with their image and policies. Obama's campaign staff had one challenge when starting the 2012 campaign: once again it had to focus on how to transform the energy of online community into real time mobilization. By 2012, almost half of American web users admitted to using social media networking sites and 70% of users watched a video on Youtube (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 145). According to Pew Research Center survey, 80% of adults had access to internet and over half of the registered voters watched campaign ads over the web. 36% of them watched political ads online, 20% of them followed politicians on social media and 40% of them used social media to engage in politics (2014, p. 145). MyBO tool transformed into Dashboard, which became the main social campaigning tool for Obama's team (Scola, 2012). Dashboard offered the same engagement tools as MyBO, as it allowed users to connect to real time activities such as volunteerism, mobilization and participation (Bimber, 2014, p. 138). The personalization of the message while using this tool had a huge impact on its eventual success; as it collected data from phone bank workers, e-mail subscriptions and voters, local campaign staffs were able to provide specific campaign information, compared to 2008 campaign, when local area staffers had to build their own base of contacts within their communities (Hall, 2013). These changes would not happen if it wasn't for Teddy Goff, who was Obama's Digital Director. In his interview with Steve Hall, he explained that Dashboard had to transform into an

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organizing platform, thanks to the development of social media tools that were not that available back in 2008. Dashboard allowed to download packets for door-to-door canvassing, communicate with ground-volunteer teams and organize phone calls (2013). This way, the clients (receivers of content) would receive specified content, which encouraged them more to canvass on ground. This tool allowed to unify the volunteers all over the country and was deemed the "Holy Grail for political organizers" (Pilkington, Michel, 2012). Each of Dashboard users was automatically becoming a part of a local team, which allowed the user to seek for other members in their local area. Neighborhood teams were ran by a local leader. The „Groups" function allowed people to connect to other members, with whom they shared similar values, ethnicity or interests (Bimber, 2014, p. 138). Dashboard was also the most important fundraising tool, each user could set a fundraising goal on their profile (2014, p. 138).

Bimber cites Pew Research Center's surveys to stress how the demographics were important for the Democratic incumbent: at that time, more women (who tend to be more liberal-leaning) were using social networking sites. Also, according to Nielsen data from 2011, more women of color tended to use smartphones, with 60-65% Latina, African American and Asian American women using such devices, compared to only 33% of white women (2014). Goff also observed that 18-29 voters were harder to be targeted over the phone, but 85% of them were friends with someone, who was friends with Obama on Facebook (2014).

Facebook and Twitter were traditionally dominated by Obama, which is rather obvious taking into consideration the fact, that he was building his image as a POTUS for the last four years. At that time, he had over 32 million likes on Facebook (compared to Romney's 12 million) and over 22 million followers on Twitter (compared to Romney's 1.8m) What is interesting is the fact that Obama's staff was strictly following the rules that allowed them to dominate the web back in 2008 – whereas Romney only followed 274 Twitter accounts, Obama's account followed 670K Twitter users, which definitely increased his already high level of recognizability. During his tenure, Obama held digital town hall meetings on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, which were met with wide acclaim from the marketing pundits (Meckler, 2011).

In further research regarding Obama's 2012 campaign I will focus on the implementation of brand new tools that allowed the candidate to reach out to the voters. On 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2012, Obama surprised internet users with an Ask Me Anything session on Reddit, popular social news aggregation, web content rating and discussion website. His unannounced visit set a record with 200,000 unique users visiting the website during the iAMA (Jeffries, 2012). Naturally, shortly after Reddit and Barack Obama became trending topics on Twitter and the news have hit the blogosphere (2012). Within the first 34 minutes, president's post got 6,500 comments.

Newsjacking is a term that describes a situation, when one tries to deliver a viral that will



outshine a planned A-list event. Obama's launch of Instagram account was planned carefully to do some damage to Republican clout – that is why he joined this social media platform on the day of Iowa Caucus. Obama's campaign staff encouraged Instagram's users to tag their photos with #Obama2012 hashtag; within two days, POTUS already had more than 15,000 followers (Fox, 2012b). At that time, Instagram was not that popular within political scene, as it did not have the tools yet that allow modern politicians to communicate on a daily basis with their voters (such as Instagram Live option or Stories). Still, the president used Instagram to show some behind-the-scene photos from the campaign and to show more personal side of the politician and his family. Not only Obama's Instagram profile created virals, as in my opinion the Instagram-related content that received the biggest buzz during the 2012 presidential campaign was posted by The Obama White House account on Youtube. A video depicts Co-Founder of Instagram, Mike Krieger, posing for Instagram pictures with Michelle Obama “striking a pose” (Schulman, 2012). Michelle Obama also joined Pinterest, pins posted by her were signed “-mo” (Fitzpatrick, 2012).

Obama's digital strategy, just like in 2008, was focusing on small donors, with similar success just like four years earlier. Apart from the fundraising campaigns on Facebook or Dashboard, president's staff introduced mobile donations via iPhones and Android smartphones through a Square tool. Additionally, from 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, the campaign started to accept money from text message donations, as the supporters could transfer up to \$50 by texting “GIVE” to 62262 number (Fox, 2012).

Without a doubt, the most important technical innovation of 2012 presidential campaign was the ability to use big data. Although both Obama and Romney could rely on data analytics, Obama had unarguably bigger base and one goal: to measure everything. Before explaining further how did the POTUS's campaign staff use big data to target the voters, I will use the model presented by Chris Wegrzyn, who was a Director of Data Architecture of the DNC. At the very beginning, the campaign staff had to establish three ways they could influence the outcome:

- registration – getting out the vote and encouraging people to register
- persuasion – convincing the voter to vote for Obama
- turnout – increasing the turnout on the Election Day (van Rijmenam, 2013)

In order to do that, each voter from the swing-state was assigned a number from 0 to 100. This system and final scores were made of variables such as:

- likelihood that the voter would endorse Obama
- prospect of appearing at the poll on the Election Day
- how one can change their opinion on chosen issue influenced by the conversation
- the odds that Obama supporter that votes inconsistently would be nudged to the poll (2013)

Having taken into consideration each of the scores, swing-state voter would receive a personalized message encouraging to engage in the campaign and vote for the incumbent.

The campaign team was divided into five channels that cooperated with themselves, while at the same time handling distinct tasks. While finance team was focusing strictly on the issue of fundraising, media team had to buy media time to reach out to the voter. Digital channel's main focus was recruitment of volunteers and staff, while comms/press team's work was strictly related to the issue of persuasion, in collaborative with media. Finally, the field channel had to approach the voters during the ground campaign (2013). DNC focused on three steps of big data handling: volume, as they started with 10Tb of raw data that was doubling with each analysis, variety as data was collected from various sources and velocity – data analysts were creating new data that had to be acknowledged (2013). HP Vertica, analytic database management software company created a Massively Parallel Processing database which allowed to recycle data, while in addition creating a feedback loop, which allowed the potential voters to receive information regarding the issues they are interested in, once a volunteer visited them (2013). Microtargeting has let the analysts to fragmentize the voters, which is one of the most important tasks in modern political marketing. 2012 presidential campaign has especially seen the emergence of two potential voting groups that could be targeted thanks to the development of such tools: NASCAR dads and soccer moms. First term depicts white middle-aged working-class men, who enjoy watching NASCAR races or other similar entertainments, while soccer moms are suburban middle-aged white women, who attend their children's sporting events. Both of these groups have been subjects of special interest of Democrats since 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, as the candidates wanted to win the votes of undecided and moderate voters (Bimber, 2014, p. 141). Jim Messina, Obama's campaign manager admitted to spending around \$100 million on technology, apart from the data collected from the supporters, president's staff bought commercial databases sold by corporations (2014). Jennifer Stromer-Galley also mentions the creation of Project Narwhal which was supposed to database both voter and online files in order to create direct messages to weak Obama supporters (Stromer-Galley, 2014, p. 162).

To conclude this part of research, this citation from Pew Research Center's report sums up Obama's 2012 campaign perfectly. According to the study, Obama's success relied on direct digital messaging, which was much more effective than Romney's. During the timespan of research (two weeks), president's campaign staff posted 614 posts, compared to 168 posts by Romney. On Twitter, Obama posted 29 messages daily, compared to only one post on a daily basis shared by Romney (Rosentiel, Mitchell, 2012). Key outcome of the research which creates a field for discussion is that neither campaign made use of social aspects of social media (2012). Candidates did not reply or retweet posts from the users. From the 404 posts studied in June 2012, 3% of them were retweets of

Twitter users that were not actively engaged in the campaign. Romney only once retweeted a post that was made by his son. Campaign website was the main area for obtaining political messages and engagement – even if social media profiles were rich in campaign related content, they often linked to more information on candidate's website (2012). Finally, Obama's website targeted specific groups of voters, as visitors could join various social groups, such as young Americans, LGBT, Latinos, women or African-Americans (2012).

The description of 2016 presidential campaign will be loosely based on my article from 2017, which describes the influence the Web 2.0 had on voting behavior in United States. The focus will be put on more than one candidate to show how online political marketing has evolved over four years and how different approaches to conducting campaign on Web 2.0 do the candidates from Democratic and Republican parties have.

Although Bernie Sanders was deemed to lose very early to Hillary Clinton, he managed to keep pace with her, mostly because of the buzz that was made by his online supporters. Although he had three times less followers on Twitter than Clinton, his messages were more personalized to target specific voters. A hashtag #Feelthebern became a viral that attracted young internet users with progressive views (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 104). Hector Sigala, at that time 27, who took care of Sanders's social media team, made a really interesting move during the first Democratic debate on 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2015, as he decided to choose the „hashtag hijacking” tactics. Hashtag hijacking simply means adding a popular trending hashtag to our post with the hashtag that we want to make relevant. Sanders supporters started to post tweets that both had official #DemDebate hashtag, combined with a hashtag #DebateWithBernie (Fares, 2016). During the debate, the account of Sanders was tweeting, for example when a commercial with Tom Hanks was launched, a tweet was posted saying: ”Tom Hanks. Finally. Somebody, who makes some sense. #GOPDebate #DebareWithBernie”, which became a viral and was widely retweeted (2016).

Progressive candidate's campaign was also getting recognition on other platforms. For instance, the organization of campaign rallies was strictly relying on social media tools. Although it seems now outdated, as the popularity of some social media platforms is changing rapidly, Iowa Caucus campaign was preceded by a nine-day long Snapchat campaign (Tomaszewski, 2017b, p. 150). That was important, as in 2016, the first wave of voters that were raised on social media were becoming eligible for the voter registration. Although already in 2004, 2008 and 2012, internet users were rooting for their candidates and tried to develop campaign materials by themselves, it was 2016 when memes, social media and internet polarization crossed their paths. Young progressives were endorsing Bernie Sanders via Facebook groups such as „Bernie Sanders Dank Meme Stash”, on which around 500,000 unique users were posting memes about the progressive candidate, comparing him in better light with Hillary Clinton (2017b, p. 150). Among various

virals, one meme was characteristic for Sanders supporters; Bernie or Hillary meme depicts two candidates sharing fake opinion on many topics: from politics to music, with Sanders responding in much cooler way (2017b, p. 150).

His campaign staff also targeted specific groups of voters via other social media channels. For instance, team was heavily relying on Slack, where volunteers could communicate with each other in order to organize campaign events and tactics. What is more, chat allowed various tech specialists to advise about more technical aspects of online campaigning; Coders for Sanders were working on development projects (2017b, p. 150) (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 104).

Campaign was also very active on reddit, subreddit post named /r/ SandersForPresident reached 200,000 subscribers. According to Pew Research Center's research, Sanders was much more mentioned (165,000) in comments than Clinton (85,000) (Barthel et. al., 2016). Some of the "Standers" (hardcore Bernie supporters) even campaigned for the candidate on Tinder, by engaging in political discussion with their matches to encourage them to vote for Bernie during the primaries. This tactic, however, had its good and bad side, as many of them got banned on this dating app for spamming (2017, p. 105).

On Instagram, which was slowly becoming one of the most important campaigning tools, Sanders often shared posts that combined private content with campaign content – for example he shared a picture depicting him as a child with his brother Larry, with a copy telling a story about his father arriving to Brooklyn from Poland without a penny in his pocket. Post was supposed to show that everyone deserved an opportunity and ended with a hashtag #PoliticalRevolution. Post earned 38,575 interactions by 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 (NewsWhip, 2016). High level of online engagement in Sanders's campaign was strongly related to his focus on canvassing on college campuses and free tuition policies (Chaykovski, 2016). In Michigan, 20% of voters were under 30 and Sanders won 81% of votes within this group (2016).

It was supposed to be much easier for Hillary Clinton, who was a recognizable celebrity and politician since becoming the First Wife back in the 90s. However, Sanders managed to position himself as an underdog candidate that received an outstanding number of small contributions from donors, raising over \$185,000,000 by the end of March 2016 (2017, p. 105). Even though Clinton was widely supported by the Super PAC's, she only managed to outrun Sanders by the end of June 2016, when it was clear that she will win the nomination from the Democratic Party, as she raised \$238,000,000 compared to \$229,000,000 raised by Sanders team. Statistics were showing that Clinton was supported by wealthier Americans, as Sanders aimed at Small Individual Contributions, in March he managed to receive contributions from 2 million unique donors (OpenSecrets Report, 2016). Clinton's main social media power was her Twitter, on which she has been an active user as an ex-Secretary of State; she had much more followers than Sanders, having around 8.1 million of

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them by the end of August 2016. The main hashtag of her campaign was #Imwithher, as her team wanted to stress that she may be the first-ever female candidate from one of the two biggest parties. Her staff and endorsements heavily relied on this issue and her posts were presenting rather catch-all approach as she focused on mainstream topics that could attract everyone – from progressives to moderates. Scharff acknowledges Clinton's Twitter campaign, as each of her tweets had a shortened URL link attached, which linked to a trackable source page, on which user could register as a donor or volunteer. These tactics were pioneer during Obama's campaign trail back in 2008 (2015) (2017, p. 106). Clinton also had to tackle negative Twitter campaign towards her, especially from progressives supporting Sanders and Black Lives Matter members, who made a #whichHillary hashtag trending, as they wanted to show that Democratic candidate tends to change her opinion on various topic whenever it suits her, such as gay marriages, gun control or universal healthcare (2017). Another hashtag that became a symbol of negative campaign against Clinton was #Hillarysoqualified, also popularized by Sanders supporters, that was supposed to frame Clinton as SuperPAC's and Wall Street's candidate (Hoadley, 2016). The most successful part of Hillary's campaign on Twitter was a tweet aimed at Donald Trump. As the Republican candidate started to attack Obama on this social media platform, she tweeted a message “Delete your account” (9.06.2016), which became the most popular tweet of the campaign, receiving 480,000 retweets (2017).

On Facebook, Clinton had less fans than Sanders, but her campaign was still a success. Her first presidential launch video had 2.1 million views and got 600,000 likes over first 24 hours (Charlton 2015) (Tomaszewski, 2017). Most of the content shared on this platform was eventually linking to her campaign website, which can be perceived as a smart move; not only Facebook users were generating clout for her on Facebook, they could also engage in campaign activities on her website afterwards, for example by becoming online donors. My favorite part of Clinton's Facebook campaign was the launch of „Trump yourself” app, slowly after she got Democratic nomination. The app allowed users to check what would Donald Trump say about themselves, as they represent various social and ethnic groups, offering some of the nastiest quotes from her opponent (2017).

Clinton's staff also experimented with Snapchat, which was launched in August 2015. At the end of April 2016, her team uploaded a series of faceswaps of Trump's face on various American presidents with his words, showing how offensive he is and how it would be strange to see some of the presidents using the words he is using (Heath, 2016). Przybyla argues that candidate's social media tactics were similar to a startup, in which her team made content such as GIFs or interactive quizzes, that targeted users who would engage in the development of the website. This is strongly related to the characteristics of modern internet users, who need to obtain information very fast and are easily distracted (Przybyla, 2016).

The main difference in perception of Web 2.0 tools in presidential campaigns between the 2016 campaign and the previous ones, was the feeling that the content shared by politicians tends to be more specific and personal, whereas at the past it was more obvious that there are some PR companies and specialized staffs taking care of such content (even in Obama's case). However, Trump's success was relying on a fact that his message was not controlled by any marketing specialists working for his social media team – people loved that he speaks for himself. It is worth noting that he already had thousands of followers, as he was a celebrity, but the amount of users who subscribed to his social media profiles has exploded after he announced his candidacy. The on-going development of polarization of political views of web users was combined with the simplicity of Trump's message on internet platforms, especially when considering the fact that just like Sanders, Trump wanted to position himself as an anti-establishment persona that although is popular, has nothing to do with Washington politics and wants to change them (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 107). His honesty was also a part of a marketing plan: Justin McConney, marketing specialist for Trump's campaign, encouraged him to post controversial content, simply because his followers expect him to do so. That is interesting when comparing to the content shared by other candidates: whereas their actions are carefully planned, Trump's team has one plan: avoiding plans (2017, p. 109) (Roussi, 2016). Trump's Twitter account became a symbol of his campaign and presidency, as this is where the "magic" happens, as he insults his opponents and shares his (often wild) thoughts on various policies and issues. Around the end of August 2016, Trump had over 10 million followers on Twitter, at the end of October 2019 he has over 66,000,000 accounts following him. His social media profiles are a personification of them, with personal attacks and short, strong messages to the followers. By being the one that is loudest and most provocative, he receives buzz, as people seek entertainment from his content (2017, p. 108). Naughton argued that this is because "in Web 2.0, mainstream can not control what is acceptable for the candidate to say in public" (2016). Internet users, who engage in political discussions over the web, are often victims of a media bubble, which means that they often select only these media, who suit them, which leads to the polarization of personal beliefs. This is convenient for Trump supporters, as he can share content that is not fact-checked, knowing, that his followers will believe him. Trump's growing popularity was also observed on Instagram, where he uploaded campaign materials, short spots in which he was mocking his opponents and family content. It is important, however, to stress, that because of the fact that Donald Trump became a worldwide celebrity phenomenon, most of his followers came from outside the United States. For example, at the time of his campaign, only 42% of his followers on Facebook were American citizens, whereas huge number of them came from the developing countries, which could mean that many fake accounts, troll farms and social media frauds could have been liking his fanpage (Parkinson, 2015). It is important to add that Trump was

the first candidate that was streaming weekly Q&A's on Periscope, platform that at that time was supposed to become the biggest player on the social media streaming market (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 109).

It is interesting how Trump used his celebrity status to receive donations from his supporters. His Facebook fanpage shows that from the very beginning, Trump's political path was related to his business, as a button „Shop Now” is displayed on the top of the website and was present long before other politicians found out that this is the best way to sell campaign gadgets. However, it was Trump that created the most popular merchandise, such as MAGA (Make America Great Again) red hats, which became a symbol of his 2016 campaign trail. Another interesting aspect of his behavior on Facebook is content – as it has been established previously, candidates usually tend to share campaign material, which often links to their campaign websites. He focused on sharing news, media appearances, with sources from Fox News or Daily Mail (Pew Research Center, 2016). His web 2.0 persona is matching the one people see in real life – that is why his content seems honest and people can relate to his political views. By sharing his own opinion, he attracts the attention of alternative and mainstream media and the more attention span he gets – the more potential voters his message reaches (2017, p. 108).

Last but not least, Ted Cruz's Republican primary bid is definitely worth noting, only to stress how important and hard it is to maintain a serious public image, when internet decides to bully you. It definitely was not like this at the very beginning of his national career, as he was perceived as a conservative star that is very internet-savvy, when he announced his Senate run on a conference call back in 2011. As he hired two staffers, who had to focus full-time on Facebook activities and launched a cruzcrew.org website, where he encouraged his volunteers to engage in his campaign by printing his campaign materials and helping in groundwork activities, he was named „Barack Obama of 2012” by Politico (Friess, 2012). Josh Perry, who was Senator's social media advisor during his campaign in 2016, decided to follow the rules that helped him become a nationwide phenomenon on the right side of political spectrum in 2012. Cruz used both Facebook and Twitter to announce his candidacy, reaching 1 million Facebook users (Chittal, 2015). Analytics platform Zoomph announced that he had the highest score, when talking about the activity of candidates in social media during the GOP debate that took place in October 2016, receiving 27,500 engagements on Google+, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook (Moon, 2015). On Facebook, at the beginning of the campaign, Cruz had 1,200,000 followers, more than Clinton or Marco Rubio (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 110). Dedicated Cruz Crew app was measuring the activity of his supporters, allowing them to compete with each other to reach the top of the leaderboard. App users could earn points by sharing Cruz-related content on Facebook, volunteering or donating (Detrow, 2015). Cruz managed to win the GOP Iowa Caucus, earning 27% of the votes. However, at the end

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of 2015 the public found out that his staff was using the data provided by researchers from Cambridge University that were collecting data about the US Facebook users, such as combining likes with voter datasets, for example gun-owning (Davies, 2015). According to Patterson, personal-based data modeling, growing activity of users of his mobile app, efficient microtargeting and combination of direct communication via Web 2.0 tools combined with door-to-door campaigning where a key to his early success (2016) (2017, p. 110). What happened though and why Ted Cruz became the funniest “meme” of the campaign? In simple words, his campaign was damaged by social media users, who mocked him, as every awkward campaign move made by him was going viral. His rather shy personality, compared to Trump's vigorous persona, was a perfect target for attack from social media users. In 2013, a tweet has been posted as Cruz was speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference with title “This is the Zodiac Speaking”, which referred to a famous murderer and became a recurring joke during the campaign. Even though Cruz was born in 1970 and Zodiac was already committing crimes at that time, people had a laugh and all the memes and tweets regarding this issue were lowering the perception of Cruz as a serious candidate (especially when he publicly denied being a Zodiac Killer, which was just out of touch). Another viral related to Cruz was a Vine (short-lived social media app for posting short videos), on which Cruz is seen eating a booger during his speech (Tomaszewski, 2017, p. 110). Second Vine viral starring Cruz was a video on which he unsuccessfully tries to handshake his running mate – this post has been seen over 7 million times only in 2016 (Alexander, 2016). The issue with jokes, especially on the internet, is that whenever they become viral, everyone wants to make new virals that are related to the main topic. That is why all actions of Cruz were carefully followed by his anti-fans to entertain other web users and to do some damage to Republican campaign. Even when Cruz had to end his campaign due to the decrease in poll numbers, internet still had plenty of fun with his persona with a video of Cruz awkwardly and accidentally punching his wife in a face with elbow during the campaign-ending conference, or his female-doppelgänger, who became an internet sensation during Maury Povich show due to the resemblance to Texas Senator and shortly after was offered to do porn (2016) (2017b).

Deeper analysis of Web 2.0 campaigns during presidential elections proves that new media, every four years are becoming a much more important part of modern political campaigning. Each of these campaigns however was different – mostly because of the fact that web 2.0 tools are still developing and we can never predict which of them can be the most efficient ones when talking about voter engagement and getting out the vote. Cases of Myspace, or even the quite fresh one with Snapchat and Periscope becoming an important part of 2016 elections show that internet users demand the platforms to be the best versions of themselves and if they can not keep up with the user-friendly updates or simply buzz, they may be simply forgotten by them. The description of the



newest web tools used by campaign staffs, from 2018 and 2020 campaigns can be found in the last chapter of this book.

## **2.3 Connections between the celebrities and the politicians in the United States today**

This subchapter briefly introduces the subject of chapter 4, which is celebrity endorsements and how can they influence modern political campaigns. Here, are described all the theoretical approaches that explain how can the celebrity politics be understood and what is their genesis in various social sciences. The second part of 2.3 subchapter describes the case of 2016 presidential campaign, taking once again into consideration that 2018 and 2020 campaigns will be described in the final chapter, as every day new endorsements appear that can affect the primary polls in the U.S. This brand new academic approach to mix of popculture and politics tries to answer the questions, whether the use of celebrity politics by campaign staffs is efficient and whether the voters really appeal to their idols and their personal views.

When analyzing the very beginning of the sociological and political thought linked to the status of celebrity on the political scene, it is crucial to mention a German sociologist Leo Lowenthal, who, in 1944 in his essay called *The Triumph of Mass Idols*, managed to scrutinize the main difference, in how the biographies were written before and after the First World War. Whereas before the war, the idols of the masses were the "idols of production", people identified as the representatives of the ruling elites such as industry owners, high-ranked military officials or politicians, in 1930's the biographies started focusing more on the "idols of consumption", who were lucky enough to become famous and entertain the ordinary people. While maintaining their role in the 20's, "idols of production" started to lose their influence after the Great Depression of 1929, after which the problem of consuming goods was much more important than the issue of producing them (Schatz, 2004, p. 46). Lowenthal suggests, that when surveying the material on how do the authors of the biographies evaluate their subjects, what is attracting attention is the mutual way of both justifying their hero by means of superlatives, while still interpreting him in terms, which could bring him as close as possible to the level of the average man (Lowenthal, 1944, p. 9). Attempting to combine this thesis with the aforementioned Bourdieu's distinction theory and the anti-distinction approach presented in the previous chapters, a correlation can be considered, showing how the ordinary citizen can identify with the successful member of the community, who was simply luckier and was able to „market“ his skills. With the "success stories" circulating in the

media, the American society became obsessed with the power of the ownership. According to Custen, who interpreted Lowenthal's works, Lowenthal explained how the morality of American citizens has changed and what lessons would they learn from the magazines; biographies could prepare the average people to accept their place in the social structure, by letting them resign from the unreachable goals (Custen, 1992, p. 68). The biographies helped the people connect with the world, that was close, yet so far from their reach.

The scientific approach to this trend in political marketing is rather young, but there are more and more publications, that focus on this field. In their milestone publication, *Celebrity Politics*, West and Orman state: "Even though Americans tend not to trust politicians, they have great respect for and confidence in celebrities who enter the world of politics" (2003, p. 102). This situation is recognized by the political strategists, since the voters nowadays make decisions based on the personalities of the candidates and since the popular culture and politics converge (Marland, Lalancette, 2014, p. 130). To fully describe this cohesion, one should first describe the role of the celebrity in the society and establish, who could be counted as one. Rojek describes three types of the celebrity in the media: ascribed, achieved and attributed celebrity (2001, p. 17). The first type is linked to a lineage, this has been a common situation in the past, when the celebrity status could be achieved by having the same bloodline as the royal family, or someone, who has already achieved his status. The achieved celebrity, on the other hand, is a person, that has successfully used their talents to establish their position in the media and become popular, such as sportsmen, musicians or the actors. Finally, there is a third type of the celebrity, attributed one, that gathered the attention of the media due to the situation this person is in, a celebrity, that is "created" by the media – Natalie Suleman, who gain the popularity by giving birth to octuplets is the ideal example, what is more, her situation became such a hot topic in the mainstream media, she received a nickname "octomom", which she used to maintain her status (2001, p. 18). Having these types described in the academic language, one shall discuss the definition of the celebrity itself. A celebrity is a person, whose status is achieved by the attention of the media, who create their picture, which both can appear to an ordinary person and would consider them being similar, just more lucky, but also would distance them from the people, by presenting them as modern gods. Even though the chapter shifts the focus of the celebrity politicians to the celebrities, who just engage in political activities, these theories can be interconnected, because the celebrities may diffuse between these two groups. Having these approaches considered, it is needed to split the world of connections between the celebrities and the world of politics into two sections. The first group of celebrities have established their positions in mass media and would take into consideration supporting the candidate just because of their position, non-profit. Their agenda is usually connected to their personal beliefs, set of values, that they represent. The public response of their engagement may have positive or

negative impact, but because of their skills or the attention around them, they will maintain their place. But what about the celebrities, who want to refresh their position? People, whose stardom has fade out and after their fifteen minutes of fame needed to get back to their ordinary activities? They could use the politics to support the candidate, but also to re-establish themselves in the show business, which could generate a mutual profit, both for the celebrity and the candidate. One can find such celebrity in a win-win situation, in which even, when they won't accomplish their goals, can generate a media buzz around them, which could lead to them being hyped and getting back the fame, that once was lost. Wheeler describes the power of the celebrities, as the ability to influence their fans, fueled by their audience and media's investment in creating their "exceptional" role in the society (Wheeler, 2013, p. 28). In his work, he recalls the academic works of Boykoff and Goodman, who determined the five factors defining the political status of the celebrity:

- a) celebrity performance
- b) celebrity branding
- c) celebrity artefacts
- d) the political economy of the celebrity
- e) audience responses (2013, p. 28)

The celebrity performance focuses on the overall activity of the celebrity, both in her public and private life – by that one may mean the appearance, that is caught by the media (paparazzi), which creates the image of the celebrity. This, by intruding their personal activities, lets the receiver of the information make an impression about the famous person and generate positive or negative emotions surrounding them. One must however remember, that such perception may be controlled and used as a publicity stunt. The branding of the celebrity, is linked to how this person is framed by the media, if the personality is appearing "cool" to the audience, it is easier for them to influence them. What is important, once the celebrity is "framed" as "hot", "shy", "flamboyant" or simply "funny", it is hard for them to change the way it is perceived. It is also linked to the celebrities' social or cultural background and their position in their field of interest – as Boykoff, Goodman and Curtis mentioned, it is easier for Chris Martin from Coldplay, to engage in environmental issues when he's playing soft-rock, than if he would be playing power metal (Boykoff et. al., 2009, p. 397). The celebrity artefacts are the images or characteristics linked to the celebrity, which help them be connected to the case and make them easier to be associated in the media to the case they are dealing with. The political economy of the celebrity is the set of factors, that make them valuable to the media, whereas the audience is the group, that creates their value (2009, p. 397). From this perspective, it can be described, that the celebrities are the chosen ones, whose role is to entertain the society. But what if they also wanted to somehow represent the society? Each of them, having different social and cultural background, can appear to a different group. It is also needed to

explain, that very often celebrities represent the set of values, that can be followed by their fans, letting them appear as the 'guiding light' on the path to success, or even ethically. The connection to the audience is the core of the relationship in the celebrity endorsement. As they represent the positions, the audiences may adapt them, while forming their social identities. According to Marshall, "The celebrity's strength or power as a discourse on the individual is operationalized only in terms of power and position of the audience that has allowed it to circulate." (Marshall, 1997, p. 65).

This academic perspective can be closely associated with the modern times, when standing for the social value changes can lead to the mass following and the celebrity obtaining the position as a symbol of changes, just like Madonna and the LGBTQIA+ minorities (Gunter, 2014, p. 6). Through establishing this, a fan may create a relationship with the celebrity, in which he may consider the similarities between them. This often leads to realising the fact, that both of the parties have similar goals and interests. If this is the case, only the „chosen ones”, the celebrities have power to speak publicly about the issues – their role in the society is being the voice of the people. Such perception can be supported by the case study of Obama's win in 2008, when the rappers, respected representatives of the black community, called for an action regarding the voter registration and the support for the senator from Illinois. The celebrity support could create the celebrity status of Obama, since he was eagerly using his social skills to appear to people as "one of them".

The theory formed by Erica Austin acknowledges, that the external celebrities (which are not physically involved in the election process), can attract the attention from media and by that influence their followers in thinking positively about the political process, therefore having the potential to reach out and mobilize the apathetic public (Austin et al., 2008). Taking these theories into consideration, Marland and Lalancette decided to distinguish two types of external celebrity support, that is used to endorse the candidate: celebrity political endorsement publicists and fundraisers (Marland, Lalancette, 2014, p. 135). Most of the celebrities engaging in the political campaigns belong to the first group. Using their position in the society, they attract the media attention, to forward this power to the campaign staff of the candidate they endorse. By creating buzz on their social media profiles or public appearances during concerts or other events, they are able to gather their followers, express their views and encourage them to canvass. The use of the Internet 2.0 tools is especially practical, because they can reach most of their followers, while spending only few minutes on posting their statement. Fans can engage with them emotionally, concentrating on the common goal, that can be achieved with the win of the candidate. Apart from mobilization of the voters, by making art, they can create unconventional campaign ads. This type of endorsement, later described in the chapter, is especially powerful, because does not only become

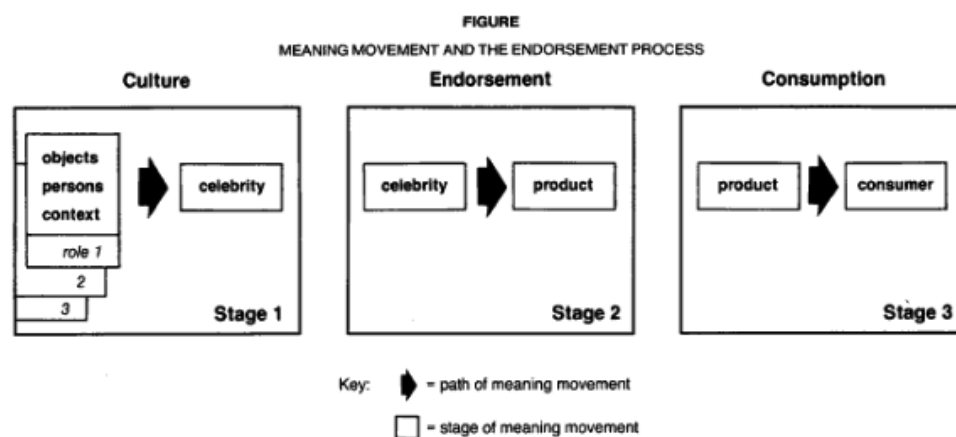
viral during the campaign, but may generate buzz for the politician months, years later. As it has been previously established, with such endorsement comes the risk of the decrease of the public trust towards the celebrity, if the endorsed suddenly becomes unpopular. This situation can affect the VIP, unless they cut the support and distance themselves from the candidate (2014, p. 135). The second type of the external celebrity endorsement, however, is much more important. Celebrity political endorsement fundraisers fulfill all of the aforementioned functions, but also focus on raising funds for the candidate, by appearing at the fundraisers or creating private ones. Such way of canvassing is more image-enhancing for the candidate – the more money he receives through the voluntary donations, the more events he is able to organize all over the country. Such engagement may be linked to the policies favored by the politician, such as LGBT issues during the Obama's campaign, that were the main reason Cher, Lady Gaga and Ellen DeGeneres decided to support the candidate financially (2014, p. 137).

This behavior of the voter can be scientifically linked to the social cognitive theory, which states, that people's knowledge can be influenced by the observation of the behavior of other people. According to this theory, humans duplicate the behavior of other people, that seems to them as appropriate and often change their decisions influenced by the behavior of others. Coping the attitude allows them to not only avoid mistakes, but also justify them if any would happen. This way humans learn the consequences and model their behavior by the observation (Bandura, 1989, p. 1180). This theory appeals to the behavior of the voter, who instead of studying the political program of the candidate, relies on the choice of the celebrity.

There also is a marketing value to the celebrity endorsement. From the marcom (marketing communication) perspective, companies use different strategies to sell their products. Companies recognize the value of the endorsement, as Erdogan stated "They invest money to align the celebrities both with them and the product. Endorsers are seen as dynamic with attractive and likeable qualities" (Erdogan, 1999, p. 291). Companies transform all the value from the celebrity, to the product they are recommending, therefore it is easier for the buyer, who has a relationship with the endorsing one, to make the final decision and buy the product. As it has been aforementioned, such strategy can work as a two-edged sword if the celebrity loses their positive influence and the decrease of the public opinion polls towards them can bounce on the brand image. To avoid this situation, a Q-score has been introduced, that simply measures the familiarity and the appeal of the celebrity. The "Q" rating, is a reflection of the popularity of the celebrities, among the people, who recognize them (Solomon, 1996). Since 1963, the Q-score is developed and owned by Marketing Evaluations, Inc., and is calculated both for the population as a whole and by the demographic groups (Finkle, 1992). This opinion poll can be crucial for the firm, because a celebrity can be widely recognizable, but may appeal to negative emotions.

Celebrity endorsement also has its roots in cultural studies. Celebrities represent various social groups and their role in the endorsement can be linked to their ethnicity, gender, class, age, sexual orientation or lifestyle. This helps the campaign staff to distinguish celebrities, so each of them could influence the groups of voters they are associated with, which gives a campaign a catch-all approach. Taking this study into consideration, one can find such cases in many of the presidential campaigns in the United States, with Clint Eastwood appealing to older, conservative audiences, or Lena Dunham being influential with young women from urban areas. It is worth to support this thesis with McCracken's "meaning transfer model". In his work, he states, that the "cultural meaning is located in three places: the culturally constituted world; the consumer good; and the individual consumer, and moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual" (McCracken, 1986, p. 72). During this process, the cultural value of the celebrity, lets the celebrity to be associated with the product, which later is endorsed by them and later consumed by the consumer as the result of such action. With the "meaning" depending on its context, Hackley elaborates this thesis, by acknowledging the "meaning transfer" as "culturally embedded message codes" (Hackley, 1999, p. 143). To understand the relationship between the politician, celebrity and the voter, it is needed to describe all three stages of this model.

Fig. 8 The description of endorsement process



Source: McCracken, G. (1989). Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process

As it has already been established, the cultural background of the celebrity determines their position in the society and the show business. Stage 1 of the process, focuses on establishing this position. According to a further work of McCracken, while anonymous models hired by the companies represent the social groups and target them, celebrities are "able to offer these meanings with special precision" (1989, p. 315). With them being the more powerful media, they are able to attract the crowd and send the messages more powerfully. McCracken describes, that celebrities draw the meanings from their roles in the media, as sportsmen or tough actors. With new dramatic role, actor is set with the new pair of context in which he is seen (1989). The image the celebrity

maintains during the endorsement process, has already been established in its work. Since the choice of the celebrity is the part of a bigger, cautiously developed marketing plan, it is important to determine, "which of the symbolic properties of the celebrity are in fact sought by the consumer" (1989: 316). Taking this into the consideration, the candidate or the firm, needs to set the ad, that is operating on the same set of the emotions, that are linked to the celebrity. What is more, it is also important to minimize the "meanings", that are not suitable for the product. For example in politics, a conservative actor, that is famous from the action movies can appeal to the voters, that care about the gun-ownership laws, but if he is divorced, he will not appeal to the voters, who put the family first – in this case it is better for the ad to not mention this issue. To achieve that, the advert must display the similarities between the celebrity and the product, so the consumer (voter) may take the last step in the meaning transfer process (1989: 316). When the voter sees the similarity, he is ready to buy the product (candidate), that is a visualization of the endorsing one. This idea brings the theory into the third stage, in which the voter would equate with the candidate through the celebrity. Since the celebrity itself is the "superconsumer" influencing the decision-making process, it plays a new role – acting as a role-model, inspiration, shaping the first stage of the consumer. If one would re-shape this model into the political marketing, it would be clear, that in the last stage, the voter, by interacting with the candidate, engages in the canvassing process and feels the interaction with the celebrity, because of the values or background they are associating with at the very beginning. McCracken describes this correlation, by arguing, that "the constructed self makes the celebrity a kind of inspirational figure to the customer" (1989: 317). While the voter admires the celebrity, the celebrity already knows what is good for them.

Furthermore, when describing the specifics of the American politics, it is important to set the theoretical framework for the role of the underdog in political marketing. According to Trautman, the underdog has "a particular appeal to Americans, since the American society is defined and influenced by concerns about equality and fairness" (Trautman, 2010, p. 6). On the one hand, this background can be traced to the lack of consent for social inequalities and the discrimination of selected social groups. On the other hand, the US voters were the first to shape a new function of the public elections - an entertaining function. Contemporary voters, in addition to pursuing a program that is beneficial to them, expect the elections to be a talent show, in which instead of sending SMS they would attend the voting ballots and choose their candidate, basing purely on their emotions. What is the role of celebrity in this process? Celebrities are commonly linked to the establishment, so when they decide to endorse the unpopular candidate, they may gain respect from the voters, they may be seen more human-like, voting against the interest of the authorities. Such approach could be taken into the consideration with third-party candidates during the presidential elections, but also with the candidates of the Democrats or the Republicans, who would not have the

support within their party.

Now the celebrity endorsers of presidential candidates in 2016 will be described and whether they played an important role during the electoral process.

Back in 2016, the influence of social media on the voting behavior was inarguable with the launch of Vine and with Snapchat's popularity reaching its momentum. Liberal voters could finally, after eight years prepare for their favorite spectacle: Democratic Primaries, who were supposed to bring the nomination to the first female candidate, Hillary Clinton, who at that time was a Secretary of State in Obama's administration. This allowed her opponent, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, to be framed by the media campaign coverage as an underdog during the primaries, who represented the progressive fraction of the Democratic Party. After he formally announced his candidacy on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015, his growing popularity has already become recognized by media. This attention was followed by the first endorsements of the celebrities, who believed, that the country's policies need more crucial changes, whereas Hillary Clinton would just follow the politics of Obama. However, a question needs to be raised – what was the main factor, that attracted the celebrities to support an underdog? According to the materials, his anti-war stance during the Iraq War voting was the first main reason, with Clinton supporting the aggression. This was the case with one of the most influential celebrity activists in Hollywood, actress Susan Sarandon, who supported Sanders on her Facebook fanpage, by posting his speech during the vote (Fields, Simpson, 2015). Another issue was the fundraising, actor Justin Long posted an infographic on Twitter, showing, that Sanders is mostly financed by unions, whereas Hillary Clinton receives the support from the Super PACs (2015). The same platform was used by Julian Casablancas from the indie rock band The Strokes, who wrote on Twitter, that Sanders is the only candidate, that is not bribed (2015). As Sanders started to circulate over the media as an internet celebrity, he received the endorsement from one of the most famous celebrities created by this tool. Rapper Lil B became famous not only for his critically acclaimed music releases, but also for his unusual social media appearance and positive presence, which led to him becoming an internet meme and creator of quality viral content. Lil B has already supported Obama in 2012 with his mixtape Obama BasedGod, but as the influence of the Internet 2.0 has raised over past four years, also his popularity raised. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Lil B tweeted a series of endorsing messages, stating that Sanders has a long civil rights track records, is anti-war and he follows black people on Twitter. The senator has used this endorsement in the best way possible, as he started to follow Lil B The Basedgod on this platform (LILBTHEBASEDGOD, 2015). Over the holiday season, Sanders was also endorsed by another popular Hollywood progressive, Danny DeVito (DeVito, 2015). A group started to form, consisting of already known activists known for their social causes, that decided to stand behind Sanders during the elections. In



his interview with Daily Beast, Mark Ruffalo admitted, that Hillary Clinton needs to adopt the message of her opponent to win the votes of the progressives (Stern, 2015). It is worth noting for the description of this campaign, that Sanders has already positioned himself as an underdog years earlier - his autobiography, that was first published in 1997 is called *Outsider in the House* (Sanders, 1997). The endorsements were soon followed by the appearances at the candidate's campaign rallies. One of the first worth noting, is the comedian Sarah Silverman, announcing Bernie Sanders at his rally in Los Angeles to the crowd of over 17,000 people. Artist has namechecked three main events, that led to her supporting the causes of the candidate: his engagement in civil right movements in the 1960's and 1980's, his stance against the Iraq War and the deregulation of Wall Street (Heinz, 2015). As it can be seen, the celebrity support for the candidate was very different from the previous cases. This time, Sanders attracted a specific group of the celebrities, who even though were the part of the mainstream, were against the establishment and focused on the political issues. This allows to distinct the celebrity support into two groups. First group throws the support for the candidate in order to create the media buzz around them and the candidate, which often has a positive impact on the voter. Second group, however, which is much smaller, is the politically motivated endorsement, which allows the celebrities, who already have very specified political views, that they share with their fans, to throw the support to the candidate. What is important, is the fact, that the second group has much bigger impact on their followers, but on the other hand they risk much less by endorsing the candidate, because their fans already know what causes they are fighting for and they trust the person, that has influence on them. This is most often related to the celebrities, who have progressive views and advocate for social and environmental reforms; thanks to that, their views are perceived as lacking false, as they resign from supporting stances, that would benefit them, focusing on the causes, that would benefit the greater group of people.

This was the case with the Ben & Jerry's owner, Ben Cohen, whose company has always been known for fair employment politics. Along with the endorsement on the candidate's campaign rally, Cohen also brought ice cream for the supporters and announced a new forthcoming flavor, that would be related to the candidate. The announcement was followed by the action in April, 2016, when Bernie's Yearning was released, with the quote on the box saying "Open Joyfully, Political Revolution Inside" (Beck, 2016). Sanders addressed this group of celebrities during a fundraiser in Hollywood, organized by a real estate agent Syd Leibovitch, saying, that "(...) there are many people in this country who have money but also believe in a social justice" (Haberman, 2015).

As it has already been established, the support mostly came from the actors and musicians, who were already known in the public for their specific views, what was interesting, in the light of

Sanders's campaign, some of them "came out" as the ones having social democratic views. The case was made by Seth MacFarlane, creator of TV animated series *Family Guy*, known for its criticism of modern society. As the comedian rallied for Sanders at the fundraising event, he publicly announced, that the politician's work and the criticism of their opponents made him realize, that he needs to come out as a democratic socialist (Husband, 2015). To support his stance, MacFarlane also posted on Twitter addressing the attacks from, as he said "Hollywood liberals" (Daunt, 2015) and stating, that Sanders would make an "A+ president" (2015). During his speech he mentioned the main problems, that Sanders promised to face during the Democratic debate: environment, healthcare and social issues, while also reminding Roosevelt's New Deal, which helped control capitalism in the United States.

Apart from the rallies and the fundraisers, which were often low cost, the campaign staff of Bernie Sanders has used his celebrity persona in mass media. The senator was a guest in *The Ellen Show*, where he not only presented his dance moves, but also tackled the most important issues for him (Waxman, 2015). His TV appearances differ, however, from Obama shows during his campaigns – the power of his persona laid in his political stands rather than showman personality, but he managed to sneak few popcultural references, as he mentioned Harry Styles as his favorite singer from One Direction (2015).

The staff knew how to attract the celebrity attention towards the candidate, as it has released on the candidate's website a huge list of celebrity endorsements called *Artists for Bernie*, consisting of 128 famous personas, that have signed the endorsement letter. Apart from the already aforementioned artists, the list was joined by such huge names as Red Hot Chili Peppers, Hans Zimmer, Will Ferrell, John C. Reilly or Zoë Kravitz (McMorris-Santoro, 2015).

As it has been established in this scientific work, previous presidential elections have proven, that there is one celebrity, that plays the biggest part in the campaign, being candidate's brother-in-arms, who not only canvasses for the candidate, but also is closely identified with him and is even seen as a media representative for his campaign staff. This role was played by Killer Mike, one half of the hip-hop group Run The Jewels, rapper and the activist. As the artist has already been framed by the music media as the musician, who eagerly shared his political views, often going against the grain, as he criticized Obama in 2012, by comparing him to Reagan saying, that he focuses on media attention rather than on the issues, every news linking him to the candidate was a headline. Putting on the par his role as a rapper and as an activist, he not only released new music, but also gave lectures on race and equality at the universities and visited White House to talk about these issues (Arnold, 2012). At first he announced the endorsement on Twitter, citing the candidate's fight to restore the Voting Rights Act, which would make voting easier for the communities in the United States, but this was just the beginning of a longer journey (Kampf-

Lassin, 2015). Hillary Clinton was already winning the black votes in the polls, therefore Killer Mike became an ambassador for the candidate in the African-American community. His views, perceived by the liberal media as radical, were a perfect match for the progressive senator's campaign – Killer Mike took to Twitter to explain, that he is tired of political clans such as Clintons or Bush, that were dominating the elections in the United States, while Sanders had a long history of standing for the rights of the victims of inequality (Goodman, 2015). The key event of the campaign, organised by Killer Mike were a series of interviews with the candidate at the SWAG shop in Atlanta. The talk between two progressive activists consisted of six segments, during which they discussed economic freedom, social justice, rigged economy, free healthcare, political protest and encouraging people to vote (Burns, 2015). With this campaign stunt, they created a perfect couple – older supporters of Sanders could find out about the rapper and the causes, that he shares with the candidate, whereas Millennials listening to Killer Mike could find interest in politics through their idol. The series were followed by the speech given by the rapper during the rally in Atlanta, as he positioned himself as an independent individual, who trusts neither the Democrats or Republicans, but trusts politicians, who are eager to fight for their political beliefs and the equality. He also recalled Martin Luther King's fight and compared the candidate to him underlining, that this Sanders is the only choice (Holpuch, 2015). The whole event was carefully planned to attract the black voters in Atlanta, using social media tools such as Instagram to show Sanders dining with the rapper in one of the most legendary food places in town called Busy Bee Cafe (2015). The political couple also recreated Run The Jewels's graphic logo displaying a pistol hand gesture pointing at a fist. The photo of Sanders and Killer Mike appeared on Killer Mike's Instagram profile after the talk in the SWAG shop with Sanders wearing tie and shirt and rapper wearing casual clothes (Burns, 2015). The way they are clothed symbolically shows the difference, how the personas from two different worlds could cooperate on mutual political causes, the post is followed by hashtags #CoolOldMan and #RespectHim. As the primaries started, rapper became an unofficial campaign adviser for Sanders, becoming more than a standard celebrity surrogate, organizing events, contacting rappers, tweeting on a daily basis about the campaign and even advising the campaign staff to book more appearances in the radio shows for the candidate, to attract the black voters (Suebsaeng, 2016). Furthermore, in order to help Bernie Sanders get better results among the black working class, he created a project of a barbershop tour, that would be held on the South – eventually the tour did not happen, but Killer Mike appeared at South Carolina's barbershops to canvass for him. During the primaries he also decided to attack Clinton for her husband's policies and tried to encourage the black voters, which votes for the Democrats are rather taken for granted, to reconsider who they want to represent them in the White House, while also comparing the rally events of Sanders and Clinton, that were interrupted by Black Lives Matter activists and how the

candidates dealt with them (Murphy, 2016).

Instagram became a crucial part of the 2016 presidential campaign, with celebrities showing the support for the candidate with infographics, pictures from the rallies or short spots. Zoë Kravitz became one of the most vocal supporters of Sanders, regularly posting content on social media regarding his campaign and even creating a short spot, which shows an edited interview with Sanders and her declaring love for him (2016). What is more, this social media platform has been also used by rapper T.I., another hip-hop celebrity, that criticized Obama in the past – during SuperTuesday, rapper posted an infographic showing how in the past Clinton and Sanders promised to tackle crime, favoring Sanders as a candidate, who drew attention to the fact, that the policies regarding this matter often focus on punishing black people (Malone Kircher, 2016). Although it appeared, that Sanders would not have much chances with winning the support of this community, he was also joined by one of the most influential actors from this background, Danny Glover, who not only appeared at his rallies, but also wrote an article for Huffington Post called Sanders Campaign Is a Genuine Progressive Social Movement for Democracy, in which he argued, that his policies not only would help construct the social democratic reforms, that would help fight with the inequality, but also his approach helps create a community in which citizen activism in political causes helps create a political class, that is more aware of the politics in the country (Glover, 2016). Sanders also received endorsement from Spike Lee, who created campaign ads for him and encouraged voters to support him with a special spot called "Wake Up" (Tomaszewski, 2017b).

Before moving to the Democratic National Convention and the Sanders surrogates, who declined to throw the support to Hillary Clinton, who won the primaries, it is needed to focus on how she was supported by her own group of celebrities. It can be argued, that the group did not differ much from the Obama's 2012 celebrity list, representing the Hollywood's establishment, that launched high prize fundraisers for her. This was targeted by Sanders and his campaign staff, especially after George Clooney's fundraiser, during which in order to attend one had to pay over 33,000\$ (Bueno, 2016). What is important, Hillary Clinton's campaign staff has bet on the female endorsements, as she was soon becoming the first presidential female candidate, media focused on her campaign rallies, which were attended by Lena Dunham, who represents Millennial females from urban areas, or Demi Lovato. The support from the world of celebrities often came from their social media profiles, as Amy Schumer posted a photo of her with the candidate with Clinton's campaign hashtag #Imwithher (Newsday.com, 2016). What is more, Drew Barrymore organized a fundraiser with Katie Holmes for the female candidate, joining an already huge list of CPE fundraisers in Clinton's campaign, while at the same time Sting launched similar, high prized event (Rayne, 2015). The huge group of celebrity supporters appeared at the concert before the California Primaries – the event, called She's With Us was attended by such aforementioned celebrities as Eva

Longoria, Jamie Foxx, Ricky Martin or Christina Aguilera, who celebrated her already secured win. The huge, star-filled list of surrogates helped Clinton's campaign staff target the voting encouragement of most of the communities, who were represented by each of the celebrities. This huge representation was followed during the Democratic National Convention with the speeches from Longoria, Meryl Streep, America Ferrera, Angela Bassett or Sigourney Weaver and the performances by Boyz II Men, Demi Lovato, Katy Perry (who even changed the lyrics to her hit song *Roar* singing "Let's roar for Hillary!") and Lenny Kravitz (Konerman, 2016). This stance represents a wider trend, that has already been argued in this chapter, with the relationship between Sanders and Clinton representing metaphorically music scene and the indie and mainstream scene. Sanders rallies were often supported by band like Vampire Weekend, Grizzly Bear, TV on the Radio or Dirty Projectors, who are rather outsiders to the musical establishment (Lapowsky, 2016). That is also the reason why the politician appealed to the Millennials, who could attend the fundraising events and rallies not only to engage in the campaign, but also to see their favorite bands. To support this thesis, one may quote Michael DeLuca, student and the vice-president of NYU's Young Democrats, who, while interviewed by Wired stated, that 'not everyone is a political major' and that "When you have people you respect and see them going for specific candidates, that carries a lot of weight for a lot of people, and Ezra Koenig (Vampire Weekend's leading singer) is someone I respect." (2016). However, according to the academics, this campaign has proven, that celebrity endorsement is not a crucial issue during the elections and that Clinton lost them because it does not mean much for the voters. This statement can be argued, but from my scientific point of research it can not be agreed on. The main issue is Clinton had lost because of the anti-endorsement of the celebrities, who engaged in a "Bernie or Bust" campaign. As Sanders has conceded and started canvassing for Clinton, a movement was created, that refused to support the Democratic nominee and supported the third-party candidates and other forms of expressing the disenchantment. Susan Sarandon, Rosario Dawson and Danny Glover strongly criticized the Democratic National Convention for not addressing changes Sanders stands for and not letting Nina Turner, Ohio Senator and Sanders supporter to make a speech (Mulvihill, Trimble, 2016). Even though the #BernieorBust hashtag has already been circulating in the social media, it gained its momentum after the convention, as the celebrities were demonstrating with senator's supporters. This situation quickly escalated into a huge crisis with celebrities endorsing Green Party candidate Jill Stein. Sarah Silverman during her speech at the Democratic National Convention tried to encourage progressive voters to focus on the presidential elections; as she once was a Clinton supporter, that switched to Sanders, she explained, that even though they have lost, there is still much more to do and the liberal voters need to defeat Donald Trump, telling BernieorBust supporters "Get Over It" (Bixby, 2016). Jill Stein supporters often played the 'female president' card by saying, that the country needs

a woman in the White House, but Stein is the only candidate worth voting for. Viggo Mortensen, Rosario Dawson and Susan Sarandon played a key role in this campaign, stating, that Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton represent the same establishment values, that they have been fighting with during the campaign (THR Staff, 2016). Shortly after, Killer Mike announced, that he would vote for Jill Stein, representing the same stance, arguing, that two main party candidates do not differ (VICE Staff, 2016). Of course the celebrities were just famous faces of much bigger movement, but one needs to agree on how big impact their anti-endorsement had on white Millennial voters. It is also worth noting, that libertarian candidate Gary Johnson has also managed to get few endorsements, such as support from Drew Carey or Krist Novoselić of Nirvana, who canvassed for him on Twitter (Strauss, 2016).

It is interesting, how Donald Trump's campaign staff managed to position all of the Democratic celebrity endorsement, as the part of the liberal establishment, with the candidate actually being a political celebrity, that in the past eagerly engaged in relationship with this community. His campaign staff knew, that his supporters perceive celebrities as elites, who do not represent their values and causes, so he followed McCain's approach, by positioning Clinton as the favourite of the establishment, that has ruined the country. In some way it can be discussed, that Trump's supporters did not need any endorsements to make their decision – they had their candidate already being a celebrity, which they admired for connections and financial success, which made him a billionaire. His celebrity persona, however, was followed by the surrogates, who his voters indeed could associate with such as country singers, wrestlers such as Hulk Hogan and television personalities known for their conservative views, such as Willie Robertson of *Duck Dynasty*, who rallied for the candidate. His celebrity roster also consisted of celebrities created by the media and the internet, who were identified with controversial views such as Tila Tequila or Dan Bilzerian, poker player with an enormous social media following, who endorsed him during *Larry King Show* (Larry King Now, 2016). As such endorsements were received with a negative backlash from liberal media, his political advisors knew, that these celebrities represent what is the most valuable in their candidate – uncompromising image often followed by politically incorrect thoughts. That is why the campaign staff welcomed the endorsements from such controversial figures as Mike Tyson or Dennis Rodman, who admitted being friends with Kim Jong-un. Trying to cope with the huge surrogate list of the Democratic candidate, Trump announced, that he would bring showbusiness to the Republican National Convention, which was a rather surprising move having in mind his contempt for the star support. At the same time he attacked the celebrities supporting Clinton stating, that 'they are not hot anymore', which was an arrogant, but very clever move – this way Trump could appeal to his white, conservative voters, who loved nothing more, than seeing the most famous people being humiliated by their candidate (Collins, 2016). This can be linked to two

factors: people often read media gossip to feel better about themselves, seeing, that the stars have the same problems as they have and are fueled by *schadenfreude*, when they see successful people lose. The second factor is, Trump this way has divided voters into two groups – Democratic liberal voters, who can not think for themselves and are victims of mass media, who influence their opinion and Republican conservative voters, who stick to their values and know how to form their opinion basing on them and their family, instead of other people. During the convention, however, Trump did not manage to fill the event with stars, as the speeches by B-list actors such as Scott Baio or Kimberlin Brown were rather ridiculed by the media. To his most popular surrogates one may include singer Kid Rock, who appeared at Trump's campaign rallies, controversial rapper Azaelia Banks, who in a series of tweets defended Trump by saying, that Hillary Clinton is the candidate, that would do more damage for the black community and Ted Nugent, who, just like Kid Rock is a beloved idol of a working white class. (THR Staff, 2016b)

# **Chapter 3. Social media in campaigning strategy for presidential elections in the United States**

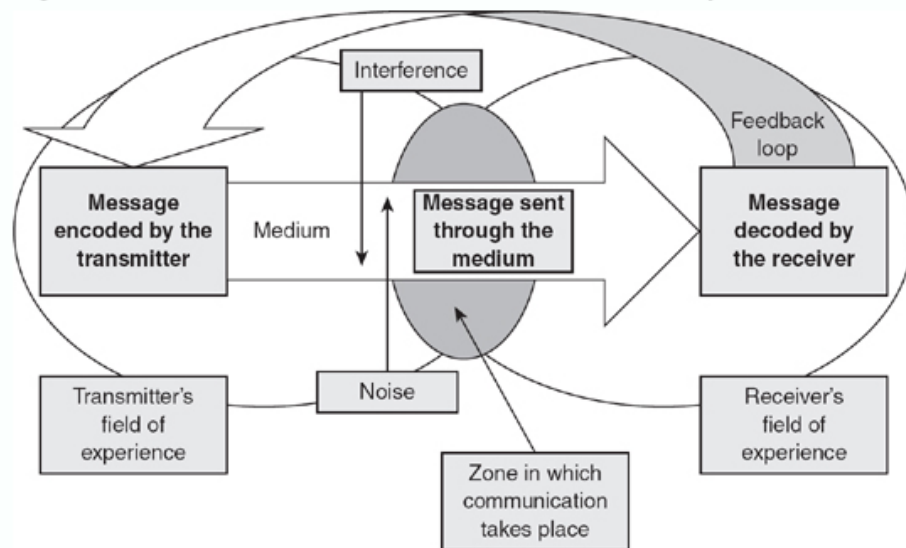
## **3.1 Social media as a new space for public opinion**

In order to fully understand how can social media allows space for public opinion, it first needs to be established how does the public and political communication work. To do so, it is crucial to present some theories and later put them in a new perspective that is linked to the development of social media. Without a doubt, social media allow users to communicate on a brand new level, especially taking into consideration the fact that nowadays, internet users can interact with people all over the world and talk politics. The development of such tools creates possibilities to share content, organize in politically affiliated groups, or even participate in online politics. After sharing communication theories, the chapter will focus on Web 2.0 theories and how they evolved, as scholars started to notice new patterns in online behavior. Then, the work will explore the means of modern political communication through social media, by splitting the content into the description of different social media tools. Finally, this will allow to discuss post-truth and fake news outlets and how the lack of news verification on social media can affect the communication, spread of information and political behavior.

Schramm's model of communication would be the most suitable to start with. According to his circular model theory, communication consists of dimensions, which create a relationship between the sender and target of the message. The dimensions that are discussed are: Message – meaning what kind of information are we communicating, source – starting point of the information, emisor – defining who is the source of the content, sender, encoder, form, channel (type of medium that was chosen), destination, receiver of the content and target (1954). Sender's role is to encode the message and recipient's role is to decode it (1954). This is an extension of Schramm's study on communication, which was developed in the late 1940s. I believe that the easiest way to present it will be to use a figure made by Jim Blythe, who specializes in communication and marketing. This idea was first presented in 1948 and revised in 1971 by Schramm.



**Figure 4.4 The Schramm model of the communication process**



Source: Blythe, J., Key Concepts in Marketing

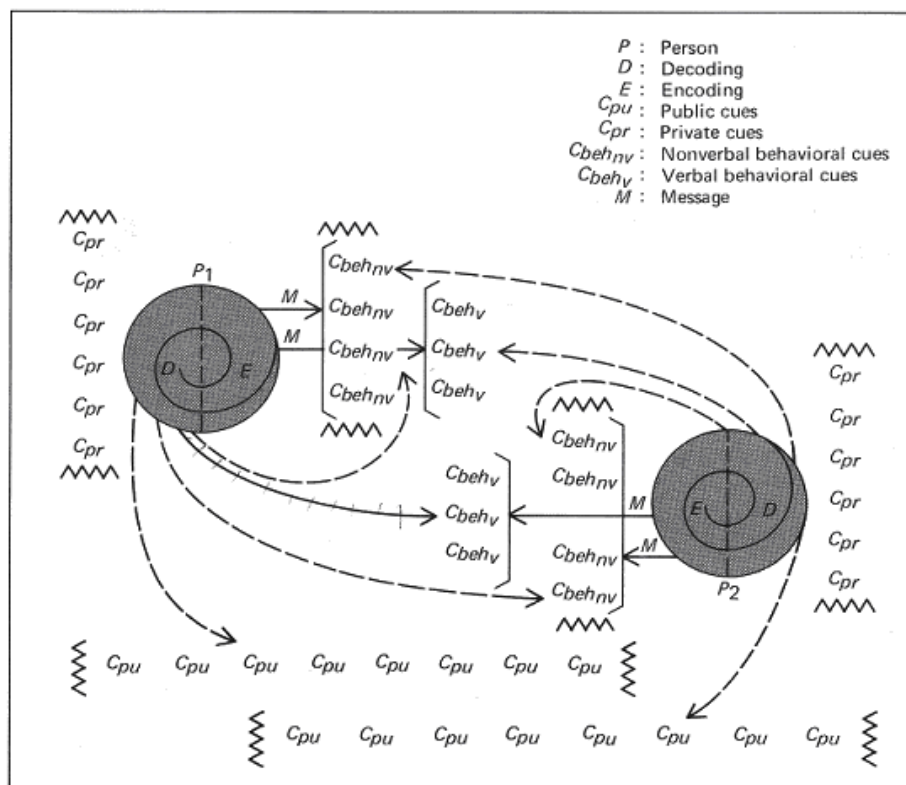
What's interesting and practical in this diagram, is how the fields of experience are presented. In order to find common ground to communicate, transmitter and receiver should overlap, so the message would be clear, as it can be also affected by noise and interference, meaning an attempt to distract (Blythe, 2013, p. 237). Blythe recalls the criticism of this model, which assumes that people in these interactions are passive, while they tend to add content to the message, or use persuasion (2013, p. 237) (Varey, 2000).

Constructivist theorists have different approach towards the analysis of human communication. It was originally proposed by Delia and can be described as a way of communicating in which a person takes into consideration their environment and source, rather than succumbing to external forces (1977, p. 69). This framework is further explained as "an explication of behavior in terms of the shared knowledge, the linguistic system, and the individual interpretive processes by which the perspective of the group or other is represented as part of each interactant's cognitive organization of the social event" (1977, p. 71). This basically means that people encode and decode the information through their constructs. As people interact with each other and exchange codes, they (in ideal world) reach information consensus, as they perceive different topics in a subjective way. In a functional communication competence theory, which is a further transformation of this thought, the message is influenced by social perception, message production, message processing and interaction coordination (Bodie, Jones, 2015, p. 2). Social perception is a process that consists of interpersonal constructs, behavior and qualities of people (2015, p. 3).

Barnlund's model of communication is transactional. The core of this theory is that people are simultaneously sending and receiving messages. It can be perceived as a multi-layered feedback

system, which is continuous and takes into consideration the fact that both messages are important and receive feedback. It is described on this diagram:

Fig. 10 Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication



Source: Businesstopia <https://www.businesstopia.net/communication/barnlund-transactional-model-communication>

In this model, public cues are defined as environmental or natural, whereas private cues are our senses. They are outside of control of people who are interacting in the communication. Behavioral verbal and nonverbal cues on the other hand are the ones that people are initiating and controlling. Arrows are symbolizing the exchange of message cues, describing the act of producing and encoding the message. Barnlund assumes that there is no limit to the amount of the cues (1970). Having established the theoretical aspects of communication, now it will be easier to define how does the political communication work. Of course the theories on communication presented here may seem old, but their purpose is to set up some ground rules for this chapter. Moreover, the fact that the main topic are social media, there will be plenty of fresh theories to operate with.

Political communication extends this field of research, by adopting this approach as a concept of interactions between political actors. It focuses on how does the information spread and how does it engage with politics, media and citizens. The oldest approach towards political communication is the behavioral concept that derives from Lasswell's linear communication model. In this proposed theory, communication process consists of five parts, which are: who, says what, in which channel, to whom, with what effect (1948). This is a classic media theory that presents a one-

way process of communication. Lasswell explains further that by “who?” we mean a communicator, which needs a control analysis, “says what?” is a message that uses content analysis, “in which channel?” is a medium with media analysis, “to whom?” element is audience and audience analysis and with what effect? is an effects analysis (1948). This approach is still used in studies, even though it is over 70 years old. Empirical studies in the 70s were dominated by the linear model (Dobek-Ostrowska, Wiszniowski, 2013, p. 107).

Chesebro proposed a different approach to political communication theory and rhetorics, as he wanted to prove how they interact on different levels. In his study, he defines five types of approaches:

- The Machiavellian Approach – describing the power dynamics of collective political action, taking into consideration how do the social movements work and deriving the symbols from the type of leader. Power is understood as a one-way force and symbols „create the self-conception of being the “dominant” or the “subordinate” (1974, p. 4)
- The Iconic Approach – assuming that symbols play an important role and are viewed as icons. Rhetorical icons are representations of physical force, influencing the actions and reliance of those in a dominant/subordinate position. They may be also used as political weapons, or future-shock messages.
- The Ritualistic Approach – politics are perceived as a combination of signs that influence the action and can be used as a manipulation to satisfy different sets of needs. Chesebro provides presidential campaign as a ritual and its functions are to convince the voter that actions can affect the election outcome (through rhetorics) (1974)
- The Confirmational Approach – this approach understands political communication as a mean to confirm or disconfirm political agents and policies. Elections can be understood as a way for the society to express their opinion (satisfaction or disillusion with politics or system), also to accept proposals of policies or seek for other policies that can transform the system into more citizen-oriented. Chesebro states that this approach is used to “describe, interpret and evaluate political actions on all levels of interaction” (1974, p. 8)
- The Dramatistic Approach – politics are a creation that develops through symbols that people use. Power is a relationship between people and symbols determinate the relationships (1974, p. 9)

Another important study that explains the relationship between the actors in political communication is the agenda theory, which assumes that media filter and shape information that are provided to citizens and that they tend to choose which information are more important than other. It was first introduced by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 and was an extension of a study on 1968 presidential election (Freeland, 2012). There are three types of agenda setting

proposed in this theory by Everett Rogers and J.W. Dearing: public, media and policy agenda setting: (1988)

- public agenda setting – with public determining which agenda is important
- media agenda setting – with media determining which stories are considered important
- policy agenda setting – public and media having the influence on decision-making process by public policy makers (1988)

Although it is clear that such patterns can be observed, as the more media talk about an issue, the more public attention, the cause will get more traction. There are many cases from U.S. history in which media helped make some causes more popular, from Watergate, through Bill Clinton's affair and ending with Trump's impeachment process. However, there are critiques to this theory, which stress that it does not work in the environment, where people already have formed strong opinions. Another important fact is that the development of social media weakens the media agenda setting proposal, as internet users exchange information and content through web. Furthermore, everything that happens can be recorded and later go viral with help of internet community. How does this theory work then, when taking into consideration the growing development of new media?

As it has already been established in this work, with every new year Americans tend to use internet to obtain news. Jessica Feezell argues that the process of digital sharing of political information is like a two-step flow of communication, as media produce information that are later shared in social media outlets by opinion leaders. As a result, internet users who are not that interested in politics, receive the information that is shared and already framed by the opinion leaders (2017, p. 486). McCombs revised his theory in 2005, by adding three consequences of agenda-setting effects, which are forming an opinion, priming opinions about public figures and “stressing particular issues and shaping opinion through an emphasis on particular attributes” (Grzywińska, Batorski, 2016, p. 26).

The truth about social media outlets is that people tend to choose to live in a media bubble instead of obtaining news from media that do not share their political views, therefore they will rather strengthen their opinion about a subject, instead of forming a new one. Homophilic specifics of social media make people interact and buildup likeminded communities. Grzywińska and Batorski argue that the architecture of social networking services helps people find other users that share their interests. The more often people interact with each other, the more likely they will be to agree on some issues and have similar sources of information (Bakshy et al., 2012). Additionally, the emergence of online citizen journalism allows users to create discursive spaces.

Through social media, internet users can shape their opinions about politicians, also by getting to know them through their profiles. Politicians can engage in dialogue with citizens and citizens can

interact with them by commenting on their content. This phenomenon was already described in this book and will be recounted while talking about cases from presidential campaigns. The third effect related to social networking service's potential to have influence on public reaction about important issues, especially catastrophes or political protests. Without a doubt in 2020 this is the most important effect worth studying, as on one hand internet users obtain information on COVID-19 on social media (both verified and unverified ones) and on the other hand, killing of George Floyd and the film material that proves that he was assaulted during the arrest resulted in protests not only all over United States, but also all over the world and encouraged people to learn more about Black Lives Matter causes, racial inequality and the potential police reform.

Internet users not only tend to seek political information through internet fanpages of traditional media or websites, but only from opinion leaders, or as we can define them, influencers. Before the Web 2.0 started developing, academic researchers tended to argue that the declining membership in social club and organizations, where the social influencers belonged means that it is less likely for opinion leaders to have influence in modern times (Putnam 2000). However, more recent studies have shown that Facebook is the website, where users tend to focus the most on the feed and the leading topics tend to gain more interest than on Twitter, where more variation of topics was observed (Trilling et. al., 2017, p. 16) (Feezell, 2017, p. 4).

Without a doubt, the emergence of social media influencers not only tackles the issue of marketing and advertisement, but it also tackles the issue of politics and how the information are framed by them in order to later be distributed by sharing the content. This topic is considered contemporary, because internet users tend to get more political on the internet and the amount of political fanpages and groups (also trolling ones) is growing every year. Study on influencer marketing started to develop in 2010s and this term is defined as an actor in a respective social network that has huge amount of followers and because of that fact is linked to a large groups of members of this network (Perret, Edler, 202X, p. 6).

Although the terms microinfluencers and macroinfluencers derive from the world of brand marketing campaigns, we can easily use it when talking about political marketing. There are many approaches to these terms, but for the sake of this research I would divide them into two groups: macroinfluencers are people, who have more than 10,000 followers on described social media networks, while microinfluencers have 500/1000 – 10,000 followers and they can be basically anyone with following that trusts them regarding political issues. Freberg et al. define social media influencers as „independent third party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets and the use of other social media (2011, p. 90). Social media can also be defined as digital mediating platforms for knowledge transmission studies (Meishar-Tal, Pieterse, 2019) (Manca, 2017). These definitions need to be extended when talking about influencers, as they can be party-

affiliated, when talking about politics, but through their social skills and charisma, they tend to have a bigger influence on their followers. Can we for example call Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez an influencer? Of course. She is a politician, member of House of Representatives, but on her social media she is both a politician and an influencer, as she does not only educate progressives about the causes, but also talks other topics during livestreams.

How should this be measured though? How to decide who is an influencer, without taking into consideration the amount of followers (which can be bought on the internet by the way)? Some scholars that conducted a research on Twitter, measure the mentions the user got on this platform and re-tweets (Cha, Gummadi, 2010) (Sousa et. al., 2010). Others focus on content analysis, for example rank quality of language or assign level of influence through tracking URL's (Bakshy et al., 2011) (Dubois, Gaffney, 2014, p. 1263). When studying influence, whether we're conducting research on celebrity endorsements, or how the campaign staffs use social media to promote the candidate, all of these theories need to be taken into account, as it has been aforementioned that the amount of followers is just a number that can affect one's perception, but is not a measurement per se. Dubois and Gaffney do not limit the perception of being an influencer to only one or two actors, as according to them politicians, journalists, activists, bloggers (including political commentators) and average users may use tools such as sharing, interacting with other users in comment sections, posting links to influence someone (2014, p. 1262). They discuss that being an influencer depends on network position of a user and their study conducted on Canada's Twitter communities has shown that the network placement was considered an important factor for the influence of media outlets, journalists and politicians, while the interaction and content was an important factor for these actors plus bloggers and political commentators (2014, p. 1269) (Requero et al., 2019, p. 2). There is a study by Graham and Wright on online participants that may be crucial to understand how does online debating and discussing work in internet communities. Their research focuses on the hyperactivity of a small percent of members of forums and what makes their super-participation crucial, as they interact with less active members and what is the most important, start discussions on brand new topics and drive the discussion. Researchers propose three types of members that, although act differently, have one thing in common, as they are the most active:

- Super-posters – those, who post frequently. To study this group, there needs to be established a minimum amount of posts and threads started by the member. It is important to remember that the frequency does not mean quality, as many users may just generate useless content – internet community coined a term "shitposter" that defines such person. Adding few words to this type of user, they can and are often sharing important content from the political communication perspective, but the quality of it may get lost in their own feed – this can relate either to forum users, or social media users and fanpages.

- Agenda-setters – Himelboim et al. studied the impact that Usenet forum active users had on the members of their community, as they shared content and pushed for their agenda. They have an influence on the debate as they post on topics they specialize in and create new ones.
- Facilitators – users, who engage in discussions as they moderate or manage them, their role is more formal than of the previous participants (Graham, Wright, 2013, p. 10).

Another important part of digital public communication is digital activism, which is heavily related to the aforementioned aspects of this study. Independent media outlets started to become more attractive for internet users, as they were getting tired of mainstream news media. Digital technology allowed more users to get involved in politics and at the same time lowered the entry barrier for participation, as they would be able to engage more, while spending less time on politics (George, Leidner, 2019, p. 1). It allows social movements to recruit new members and organize in much easier way, as during special times in history (like pandemic lockdowns) it may appear that demonstrations and marches may have a limited use. Any form of political participation online can be named cyberactivism, scholars name Facebook and Twitter as the most popular ones, while also considering smaller social media tools, forums and websites (Amin, 2010) (Christensen, 2011). When Milbrath described a model of hierarchy of political participation, it consisted of of three segments, which are:

- Spectator Activities – everyone that initiates a political discussion, attempts to convince others, sports politically related merchandise can be considered this type of activist. This is the lowest form of participation
- Transitional Activities - contacting politicians and leaders, attending rallies, donating to campaigns and causes
- Gladiatorial Activities – taking active part in a political campaign, belonging to a party, taking care of the political funds, being a candidate, forming a strategy; that is the highest level of participation (1965)

But what about online politics? Jordana George proposed a new model that describes and rates web activities hierarchy. In this model, inspired by Milbrath, we can name:

- Digital Spectator Activities – *clicktivism*, which is simply endorsement of a social media post by liking content, it allows followers to see what cause the user is supporting – a critique of clicktivism or as others say slacktivism can be found in work of Rotman et al. (2013) as it is described as a low-cost activity in social media with a purpose to raise awareness, also with some other scholars adding to this definition that such involvement does not facilitate an effort with tangible results (Boulianne, 2009); *metavoicing* in this case

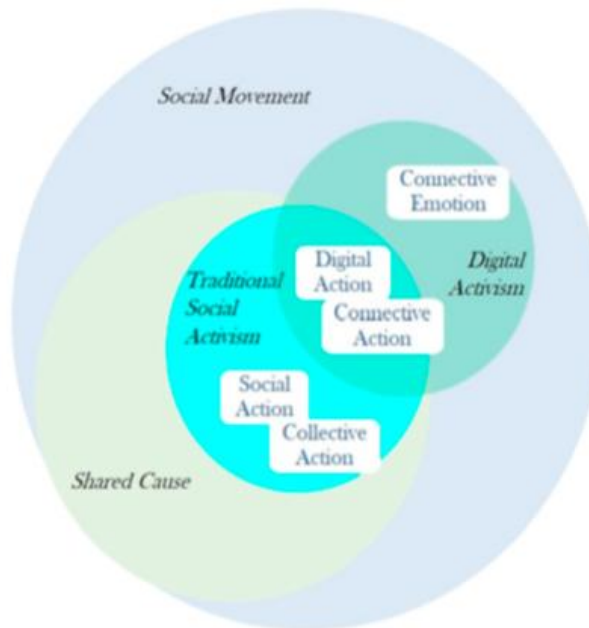
means sharing and commenting social media post, functioning as internet's echo chamber (Majchrzak et al., 2013); *assertion* meaning creating their own posts and engaging in communication with representatives. I would discuss this form of activism further, as on one hand it appears foolish to think that it would have any influence, but from my perception it works perfectly fine in smaller communities, where microinfluencers by sharing digital content, for example encouraging to get out the vote, can start a domino effect.

- Digital transitional activities – *political consumerism*, which is defined as supporting businesses the consumer is agreeing with and boycotting the ones that support different politics; *digital petitions*, using online petition concept introduced by Obama's administration in 2011: basically, citizens can submit petitions and if it gathers 100,000 signatures, administration has to respond to it; *botivism*, using bots for call-to-action to get out the vote or educate users on political causes. This way of activism can also mean online trolling through bots and communicating political information. George recalls the case of *Stay Woke Bot*, which provided educational material on racism. It is important though that not all internet users may understand that this content is not human-made, but generated by a code ; *e-funding* – digital donations made by a user or supported by them. E-funding also means using malware and generating revenue with donation buttons, also by using cryptocurrency (Pozzebon et al., 2016)
- Digital Gladiatorial Activities – *data activism*: promoting one's bigger individual power over data collected by the biggest companies such as Google, Facebook or Amazon. George also explains further that data philanthropy can also be submitted to this group, helping organizations to use data. Finally, open data activism, which means promoting open government (George, Leidner, 2019, p. 10) (Baack, 2015); *exposure*, sharing information that exposes dirty politics, confidential information (for example Wikileaks). Finally *hacktivism* which is targetting individuals and organizations that have advantage over others. Some may define this also as cyberterrorism, when activists are using malware and viruses to reach their goals (2019, p. 11)

George also presents a figure that explains the relationship between social movements and actions taken by traditional and digital activists:



Fig. 11 Social movements and actions



George, J.J., Leidner, D.E. From clicktivism to hacktivism: Understanding digital activism

This means that when focusing on a shared cause, collective action which derives from the membership in an organization can be combined with a connective emotion, which is organization without identifying cause, resulting in connective action that focuses on a connectivity that is provided by digital social networks. Once again a perfect example of digital organizing is #BlackLivesMatter movement, which started as a hashtag circulating in social media after the death of Trayvon Martin, who was killed by a member of neighborhood watch George Zimmerman, who did not receive any punishment. Briefly introducing this topic, which will be described wider in final chapter of this book, the movement can be perceived as a symbolical milestone for online organization through social media, as it allowed members to spread information to wide audience, also by sharing videos showing police brutality. This also allowed them to draw the attention of mainstream media and build a community over last seven years that was able to build structures and in 2020 after nationwide protests is considered to soon have their representative in Congress. Concluding this part of subchapter some results from a survey conducted in 2018 by Pew Research Center on online activism will be quoted; the timeline here is especially important as it was the time when also the #MeToo movement started to get worldwide traction. At that time, according to the study, roughly 34% of Americans belonged to a group on social media that shared their interest in a cause and 32% of them tried to influence one's opinion by encouraging them to take action on issues that were important for them (Anderson et al., 2018). 19% of them were searching for information regarding rallies and protests and 18% of them changed their profile picture as a form of support for the cause. This was very slowly becoming a trend, since in 2016 Facebook introduced profile frames, which allow users to modify their profile picture by adding logo's or drawings that

represent the causes (Williams, 2016).

Another poll shows that around 41% of respondents believed that social media are important when talking about finding people, who share our interests about issues and 40% of them thought that they help to get involved with them (Anderson et al., 2018). 37% of them said that social media give them space to share their political beliefs (2018). We will get back to this survey in the fifth chapter, as it has some interesting results when talking about ethnic groups in the United States.

To many scholars, social media appear as a new form of public sphere, in which readers can quickly transform from readers and listeners to speakers and participants (Benkler, 2006, p. 2013). Papachrissi introduces the term of “virtual sphere 2.0”, where consumers understood as internet users can express “dissent with a public agenda by expressing political opinion” (2009, p. 244). This is a continuation of the theories about public sphere formed by Habermas and Arendt, as Habermas argues that through public sphere, citizens can engage in public debate (Habermas, 1991, p. 52). Society changed its way of thinking, as public sphere creates a space of appearance, meaning political freedom that allows citizens to express their concern about public institutions. It also created common world, which separates us from nature, providing context for our activities (1958). Fuchs names three antagonisms that shape social media world, which are:

- the economic antagonism between user's data and corporation's profit interests
- political antagonism between privacy and surveillance-industrial complex
- civil society antagonism between creation of public spheres and corporate and state colonization of these spheres (2014, p. 89)

Academics believe that social media can be just a tool that is used by a public sphere to organize, as worth as its users (Yolmo, 2014). They characterize depending on the type of their audience, as in the internet everyone occupies a different position with different social capital. When analyzing Twitter, some believe that the debate there is fragmented and consists of small, disconnected groups, leading to the fragmentation of debates, while others see the potential, as many of the groups are connected on the borders (Bruns, Highfield, 2016, p. 58) (Fuchs, 2015, p. 7). Fuchs calls for the critique of modern social media, as they profit from virtual labor of its users and they attribute to themselves the merits of social movements which organize themselves in a traditional way and treat social media as a mere accessory (2014, p. 93). This is a very important question to ask in the fifth chapter, where presumptions about the future perspectives of the social media use in campaigns and social movements will be presented.

Selective exposure to partisan media create polarization of audiences according to many academics (Baum, Groeling, 2008) (Stroud, 2010). How does it work with social media? As it has been already established in this work, users tend to follow the agenda their agreeing with, by subscribing to influencers, fanpages and groups. In 2002, Sustain studied political groups, which

were defined as “echo chambers”, which consist of like-minded individuals, who would tend to isolate from other groups, who represent different ideas. As social media use algorithms that suggest similar content users would interact with, they create such chambers (Requero et. al., 2019, p. 3). Early studies admit that users that are exposed to political information on Twitter or Facebook, can only be exposed to different views if their friends are interacting with them and subscribing to them (Wojcieszak, Mutz, 2009) (Gromping, 2014, p. 43).

As the polarization has been rising in the United States in recent years, one may wonder whether this would be the fault of new media, from which more and more people obtain political information (Iyengar et al., 2019). Lipschultz brings up the fragmentation of media audience on social media, as many news outlets use Facebook groups to reach out to different social groups – from Latinx to African-Americans and LGBTQIA+ community (Clark, 2016) (2017). There are however few studies that do not support this concept; social media may polarize audiences, because elites are becoming more polarized on political issues (Newton, 2020). In a study published in 2018, Bail et al. separated Twitter users into Democrats and Republicans, in order to pay them to follow a bot that was posting content different to their political perspective. 1,220 participants regularly filled in surveys that asked about their views on different polarizing political issues. What is surprising is the result, as Republicans were becoming significantly more polarized after being exposed to liberal content, whereas Democrats became just slightly more liberal. It's worth noting however, that the study focused just on Twitter users and did not take into consideration the Independents (2018). It is interesting, however, to see that the exposure to different views may have the backfire effect on the respondent, as it supports completely different behavior than expected. In the interview, Bail explains the mechanisms behind these results, as he presented three theories. First one was counter-arguing, as the social media user that stumbles upon political content from a different perspective is not likely to agree on some parts of the content; their first thought would be to find arguments why the other side is wrong (Klein, 2018). Another theory proposes the thesis that Republicans are more likely to become polarized as they are more offended to challenges to authority (2018). Third theory relates to the fact that respondents absorbed negative cues from the other party and Republicans would be more scared and disgusted by the liberal worldview than Democrats by the conservative (2018).

Boxell et al. on the other hand believe that the use of social media does not have effect on political polarization, as they used different measures to find that out. The results of their study have shown that the biggest polarization is observed among Americans older than 65 and the smallest in cohorts aged 18-39, which are the most consistent users of social media outlets (2017). It definitely creates assumptions for further study, as different social media platforms may have different effects on the users.

The largest part of this subchapter was focusing on verbal aspects of new media and how can they shape user's opinion. However, there are studies that focus on visual aspects of these changes, as digital communications also allows to exchange photo and video content that can educate, polarize or simply persuade. It's worth noting that apart from marketing use, social media also are important for the individuals, as they want to present their social status through pictures, or show content to their friends.

The evolution of new media was not the only aspect that changed human behavior – we also need to take into consideration the evolution of technology, which allows us to make and share content in much quicker way and connect to our friends within seconds. Smart mobile technologies, along with social media, have let humans to create their another persona that can be “sold” to other consumers. Mobile phones were introduced to our social life much quicker than any previous communication media (Carey, Elton, 2010, p. 308). According to Veneti et al, mobile photography can appear as a mediator of relations between politicians and public, it depends though on how accessible political actors are in real life (2019, p. 19).

In her breakthrough publication about Instagram, Elisa Serafinelli recalls the event on 28 April, 2004, when during *60 minutes*, CBS programme, photo images showing tortures from Abu Ghraib were shared. The episode has proven for the first time the potential power behind new forms of online storing and sharing of images (Gaby, 2010) (2018, p. 10). Another event that marked the importance of media convergence were the London bombings on 7<sup>th</sup> of July, 2005, when witnesses recorded the tragedy and shared it on social media platforms (2018, p. 11). Studies on the use of Instagram have shown that personal satisfaction, reciprocity and experiencing new visions were the biggest motivations among users, when sharing images on this platform (Serafinelli, Villi, 2017). The development of smartphones along with built-in cameras encouraged humans to catch moments from their lives and share them in order to receive likes and positive feedback. It quickly caught the eye of political actors, especially marketing experts, who started to see this as a way to not only share political content, but also show more personal side of politicians and institutions.

But what about the image manipulation? The introduction of Photoshop in 1990 allowed users to edit pictures to the extent that previously was not that possible. Digital effects empowered users to make the fake look real; an experiment conducted by Jeremy Bailenson, in which faces of people who were taking part in this study were morphed with faces of unknown politicians has proven that people were choosing the facially similar candidates, while not having any idea about the manipulation (Bailenson et al., 2008). Of course such photo manipulation would be deeply unethical if used during serious elections, but taking into consideration the forthcoming era of deepfakes (technology which allows to replace one's face with a face of a different person) may make us a bit anxious about future politics.

Visual media practices on social media can be heavily linked to the growing popularity of political entertainment as a tool to communicate with the voters, as simple images of a candidate or causes seem much easier to appeal to the receiver of the content than a very long post on social media.

Some scholars perceive the visual online communication as a natural evolution of digitally mediated communication that transformed from a text-based content towards a visual one (Schreiber, 2017, p. 145). Schreiber further argues that visual media are socially constructed, but also co-construct sociality (2017, p. 145). As pictures have become an integral part of mass expression, users express themselves aesthetically, as they not only think about the content, but also how it is presented stylistically (Przyborski, 2017). Content may have a various context, depending on a platform and variety of followers. For example, nowadays many boomers have Facebook accounts, but only few of them may use Instagram or Snapchat, so younger generation may want to share more personal content on the platforms, where they won't have to hide anything (smoking cigarettes etc.).

Final thought that has to be shared (regarding visual communication), is that for most users, such platforms are the presentations of themselves, as academics argue that photography is a crucial part of identity performances online (Boyd, Heer, 2006). Users share image and video content to share their daily routines, especially after the introduction of Stories tool on Instagram and later on Facebook. This way users combine the elements of their offline and online persona, as photography becomes a link between daily visual experiences and life on the internet (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 163). This part is crucial for understanding how the political communication should work on these platforms, especially when connecting to the younger audience, which follows influencers and their friends, as politician must combine the aesthetics of political actor and influencer at the same time.

On the internet, users prefer a one-sided information flow, as they are looking for political news, as they want to obtain information that is tailored to their political views earlier than others (Gaines, Wagner, 2014, p. 28). Political knowledge and forming one's opinion on new media are important to attract new groups of users and keep interested the already following fanbase. Some scholars associate use of social networking services with higher political knowledge, as users have greater confidence in it and because of that fact would be more likely to participate in political processes (Sweetser, Kaid, 2008) (Hanson et al., 2010). Most definitely social media can contribute to strengthening democracy, especially having in mind that every year a higher percentage of U.S. citizens are using these tools, Nevertheless they offer some dangers which will be discussed in third subchapter.

The last part of this subchapter focuses on discussion how public opinion research has

transformed thanks to the development of SNS (social networking services). Without a doubt, first concerns academics can stumble upon when using these tools are the fact that new media may not be accessible for representative groups, as on one hand some people are not using them, either voluntarily or because of digital exclusion. Another important aspect is that people do not behave exactly the same online like in real life. A “differential use” term has been coined to describe this phenomenon. What is more, content in social media is not equally distributed, as users select the environment they want to follow (Murphy et al., 2014). Murphy et al. also discuss the potential legal and ethical aspects of data use, as one's public opinion can be another's private, taking into account the privacy settings on each of the platforms. Researchers need to take this into consideration when collecting data, as it can also be edited – social media users have ability to edit or delete content. Public posts can be analyzed and accessed for research, which can be perceived as a digital social or even ethnographic observation.

The theories presented are an introduction to a very interesting topic of social media relationships between politicians and voters and how can they both communicate their needs through different platforms. It also focuses on the differences in use between these platforms, as a politician may develop different personas on each of them and a voter can approach political actors in different ways, also by engaging in their political campaign.

### **3.2 New concept of interactive relations between political candidate and American voter**

As social media have now become an integral part of American politics, one may wonder: what's next? How will political actors communicate in the future? When pundits were excited about the digital movements behind Bernie Sanders in 2016, or analyzed tweets by Trump, they must have expected that very soon, new tools will emerge, which will allow politicians to connect more with voters. Only few however could expect how fast these tools would become crucial, both from a voter perspective and from a private perspective, when talking about sharing content with their followers and friends. In this subchapter it will be discussed how social media changed since 2016 (and they did change pretty much). Vine is dead and Periscope is only used by geeks, whereas TikTok became Zoomer's favorite social media tool and many influencers started setting accounts on this platform. Youtubers started to slowly receive recognition for their work, while Google+ is perceived as one of the biggest misunderstandings of modern era. After XXXTentacion's success, Soundcloud started to become a marketing hub for aspiring lo-fi rappers and Last.fm is slowly becoming a digital graveyard for Millennials, who still enjoy going to music festivals.

The idea for this part will be to separate social networking services and present some cases, which will support the thesis that these tools are still developing and with every new elections, both politicians and voters need to adapt to new reality. The focus will be put on four biggest platforms, which have proven to be crucial regarding digital campaigns: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. Then, the subchapter will examine smaller or newer platforms, which are not that popular among campaign specialists, but still have the potential to create buzz around the candidate (of course taking into account American politics, as some platforms are made for specific audiences from all over the world, like for example Weibo, which is a Chinese SNS that combines characteristics of Facebook and Twitter).

Research will start with Instagram, as on one hand Facebook and Twitter appear to be the most popular networks when talking about social media use in campaigns and reaching out to potential voters, but on the other hand it is Instagram that changed the most, allowing new political celebrities to emerge and stay in touch with their followers.

In order to present capabilities of Instagram campaigning, first case that will be shown, which was presented by the author on a conference of Florida Political Science Association in 2019, is Beto O'Rourke's 2018 Senate campaign in Texas, as his presidential bid was the extension of marketing tactics that he presented during this campaign. Another important factor that encourages to start with this case is his rather young age, which allows to think that in the future he may be one of the most prominent moderates in the Democratic Party.

During his Senate bid, O'Rourke posted around 830 pictures and clips on Instagram – 288 of them were uploaded during the final month of the campaign (Tomaszewski, 2020, p. 11). The success of his strategy was linked to the fact that he appeared to be an influencer rather than a politician and this way he attracted young base (Herndon, 2018). The most prominent posts that I analyzed were the ones, where O'Rourke was wearing sweaty shirts, which became “his thing”, as in the comment's section many of his followers perceived this as a hard-working attitude, which was an ideal plan to target voters from Texas (Tomaszewski, 2020, p. 11). His voters stated on numerous occasion that such pictures (O'Rourke was wearing light grey or blue shirts, so the sweat would be fully visible) meant that he is working hard to win every voter (Petersen, 2018). What is even more surprising is the fact that the voters often accused Ted Cruz (his rival in Senate elections in 2018) that he is not sweating that much (2020, p. 11)! There was one particular post that drew my attention, as on 19<sup>th</sup> of October, 2018, he posted a picture of him holding a grain and a small frog in a sweaty blue shirt, as it combined the representation of traditional Texan values along with cute content about nature.

Instagram posts shared by O'Rourke have been split into three groups in my research, as author observed that they differ and target different emotions:

- Pictures with fans representing minorities - Knowing that he was performing well with white millennials, O'Rourke needed to attract ethnic minority voters. He often posed in photos with African-American, Latinx and Asian-American supporters. He was also shown in Instagram photos supporters with disabilities, which coped well with his policies for public healthcare.
- Campaign rally content - These contained pictures of O'Rourke performing, invitations to events and general press information.
- Beto-as-an-influencer content/so-called dadcore content - This group consists of all the other campaign material that shows O'Rourke's personal side, such as of him sporting a Metallica hoodie, his JFK mural, or him playing with his children, a recreation of the Beatles' Abbey Road album cover with friends, funny dogs, and of his children sleeping on the back of the car (Tomaszewski, 2020)

Not only O'Rourke knew how to use Instagram in order to reach out to this platform's users, he also skilfully operated the Instagram Live feature, not only by streaming his speeches, but also to show his more personal side, which, as it has already been established, is a crucial part of social media campaign tactics. His most memorable Live appearance, however, was before he launched a bid for the seat of Democratic Party's nominee during the upcoming 2020 Presidential Elections; he streamed his visit to the dentist, during which he talked with his dentists about border policies and being brought up in the South (Carrie, 2019). Although it has been one of the most memorable moments of “political Instagram” in 2019, many pundits stated that candidates using such platforms may be distracting their followers from actual issues they could get interested at while scrolling through the feed.

A totally different approach to politics on Instagram was presented during Michael Bloomberg's primary presidential campaign in 2020. Former Mayor of New York, aged 77, decided to attract younger base, by paying meme accounts on Instagram to share self-deprecating humour related to the candidate. To do so, Bloomberg hired *Meme 2020* company owned by people behind the popular *Fuckjerry* account, which has over 15 million followers. The campaign was launched by placing sponsored posts on many popular Instagram meme accounts, such as *Tank.Sinatra*, *Trash Can Paul*, *Kale Salad*, *Middleclassfancy*, *Grapejuiceboys*, *sonny5ideup*, *neatdad*, *neatmom*, *fuckadvertisements*, *drgrayfang*, *trashcanpaul* and many more. What is so special about these accounts? They represent more normcore and mainstream side of meme reality, with all of the aforementioned accounts having more than one million followers. All of these posts had one thing in common, as the posts were screenshots of Mike Bloomberg talking to the admins of the profile about being endorsed with the running joke that the candidate is old and does not really know how to use such platforms (Pietsch, 2020). Each of the posts had similar copy under the picture, stating



that “yes, this post was sponsored by @mikebloomberg” (2020). The campaign started around 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 and according to his campaign staff it was launched in order to “break mould in how the Democrats use marketing and advertising, doing it in digital way” (2020). Was it successful? Although Bloomberg has spent millions of dollars on digital advertisements, it may have appeared that he found a fresh way to attract Instagram users, but it was rather perceived a cheesy way, through which an out of touch billionaire, who did not really have any donors and campaigned only by using his own money, wanted to join the race and become an equal rival to Biden, Sanders, Buttigieg and Warren. What is interesting here is the fact that not only the biggest Instagram accounts started to cooperate with Bloomberg, as he also offered to pay influencers around \$150 to make original content about the candidate through Tribe platform, which connects influencers with brands (Henney, 2020) (Lorenz, 2020). It is worth noting though that these posts were getting traction on the platform, as for example the memes shared by *Grapejuiceboys* receive around 75-86 thousand likes and Bloomberg's meme got over 120,000 (Lorenz, 2020). The main issue Instagram users had with this campaign was the fact that they were surprised by the amount of news feed flood on that day, related to candidate's bid. Combined with rather negative perception of Bloomberg, people felt like they are manipulated (Ghaffary 2020). If any other candidate (especially older one) launched such campaign, users would interact with the post in much nicer way and would actually admire the idea behind this project. With Bloomberg, this backfired and did not end well, as most of the young Democratic base thought that he is just exploiting the world of new media with his money.

When talking about flawed attempts to use the power of Instagram during the presidential campaign, the rocky beginning of Elizabeth Warren's campaign comes into mind. As Warren announced her candidacy through an IGTV post (video post that can be longer than a standard video upload), it was followed by a livestream during which she was drinking beer. Of course every candidate is allowed to do that, especially as they try to appeal to younger audience, but this move was rather perceived as cringeworthy and the screenshots were quickly used against her by Republican media and Donald Trump himself (Graham, 2019). Of course one may assume that the negative buzz surrounding this live feed can be related to misogyny on the internet, as in my opinion if a male candidate would open a beer during live feed with fans, no one would even notice that. However, her Instagram campaign can not be rated just by this flop, as her profile uploads were consistent and interesting. Warren's campaign decided to share surprisingly many IGTV videos, which were her spots, short lectures about the issues she was going to take care of, endorsements and clips from her visits in TV. Especially the last group of uploads would be crucial for her: Warren is perceived as a very issue-oriented candidate that instead of promises, provided details of her plans that just seemed less exciting for the audience. Materials from TV, however,

were a good way of showing younger Instagram users that do not really obtain news from traditional media anymore, that their candidate is popular and appears in news outlets as an expert on the issues she wants to get fixed (Friedersdorf, 2020).

Another nice tactic that Warren used is the inclusion of her dog on her Instagram feed. For the sake of this and next chapters, a definition of “pawbaiting” has to be made - by pawbaiting meaning all the attempts the candidates do to show that they are animal friendly – whether we are talking about their own animals, or the ones that they meet, maybe the ones sporting their campaign merchandise. This all has one goal – to show the receivers of the content that they are capable of compassion and that they are ordinary human beings, because hey – who hates animals? And if so, who would admit that publicly (Korecki, 2019)? Her golden retriever called Bailey played an important part in her campaign, as the dog was generating user interactions, for example a post uploaded on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2019, showing Bailey welcoming Warren home has 385 685 views after 72 weeks. In June 2019, Warren launched a text service: anyone that texted “Bailey” to 244-77, was receiving dog updates about the campaign of his owner (Ladd, 2019). Golden retriever content was a perfect addition to Warren's Instagram, which consisted of campaign material and infographics. Bailey was having fun everywhere, whether he was canvassing with his owner, or playing with snow – he was building a positive image of Warren, often seen as an academic and a professional, but not really a fun person. Even when Warren dropped out of the race, Bailey stole the show, as he snatched a burrito during a campaign event, securing another viral moment (Waller, 2020) (Behrmann, 2020). The case for Bailey shows that sometimes even if they try their best, candidates are not the most important part of their feed. Many people use social media for entertainment and although they seek for political information, they also want to be provided with lighter content.

Another candidate that had a powerful campaign on Instagram is Bernie Sanders, whose online army was involved in throwing shade at Warren and her social media posts. When Warren “turned her back” on Bernie Sanders during presidential primaries, by accusing him of saying that he does not believe a woman would win presidential elections in the United States, she could not predict the spam that Sanders supporters would tend to drop in her comments section under every post. His supporters revived a snake emoji meme, which was first used by Kim Kardashian during her and Kanye West's beef with Taylor Swift, to show that the pop singer is untrustworthy (Grey Ellis, 2020). From this moment, snake emoji spamming was used by stans whenever there was a conflict in the show business between two influential celebrities. This case also may show more sexist side of the beef between a female politician and a male politician, as snake is biblically framed to show women as untrustworthy (2020).

The issue with Bernie Sanders is that he does not need to have viral posts on Instagram to

attract the audience, as he was the most popular candidate among the youngest voters. They practically led the campaign for him, as Bernie memes and hashtags were flooding this platform throughout the campaign trail. His account consists of IGTV spots and infographics that show statistics, issues that are on his political platform and celebrities that endorsed him. Although during the campaign trail he had many memorable moments, there are not any standout appearances on this platform, apart from the livestream with female rapper Cardi B, which took part few days after he suspended his campaign. During Cardi's stream, Sanders joined in to talk about politics, nails and quarantine, which became a hot news all over the web (Kile, 2020). It is worth noting that his Instagram profile is the most popular among all Democratic primary presidential candidates; he currently has over 5.1 million followers, more than twice more than another two candidates with the biggest amount of followers (Joe Biden: 2.5 million, Elizabeth Warren: 2.4 million). That is simply because Instagram is a platform for young people and candidates use it to show younger audiences the behind-the-scenes looks at the campaign trail and candidates (Kreiss et al., 2018, p. 18).

Pete Buttigieg's husband has created both opportunities and trouble for the candidate, with his Instagram profile. Chasten Buttigieg's Instagram account was met with acclaim by Mayor Pete's fans, as he was showing more personal side of the candidate – he currently has over 250,000 followers on this platform. Along with the campaign material, he was posting plenty pictures of their dogs (Truman and one-eyed Buddy) and more private content of him and his husband. That's also a useful tactic when conducting a campaign, as people are interested in private lives of celebrities and politicians, so if the staff chooses that candidate's profile will be more professional, they can offer some entertainment on family accounts. However, Buttigieg faced criticism at some point, when a picture of him from Chasten's Instagram went viral, showing Mayor Pete posing at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin (Relman, 2019). This should be a lesson for all of the candidates, as nothing disappears on web. Before starting a campaign, every candidate should check all their social media accounts to be completely sure that they did not post anything insensitive.

This were few standout Instagram profiles that tried to use social media innovations to reach out to the voters. But what about another platforms? The second social networking service that is crucial for analysis is Facebook. Over the years, Facebook has become one of the most important tools of modern political campaigns, whether we're talking about how do the politicians interact with the voters, or the voters want to actively take part in campaigns. As four years have passed by, not much has changed regarding the biggest political players, as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders dominate the discourse, also thanks to their polarized fanbase, which quickly reacts to any flops made by their rivals. Facebook Watch, a streaming tool for the users of the website, has been introduced to public on 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 and just like Instagram livestreams, has completely

changed the way marketing pundits plan any moves on social media, simply because of the fact that from now on they could stream political rallies to much wider audience. Candidates, especially Sanders, have built their own media infrastructure through streams, having in mind that mainstream media outlets will not give them even chances (liberal media promoted more moderate candidates). That is why organising on Facebook was such a success, as Sanders once again was able to create a digital army of followers that perceived him as an anti-establishment candidate. His campaign staff told *The Washington Post* that out of 57 million Facebook Live views for Democratic primary candidates in 2019, 54 million of them were Sanders's. That is an astonishing number, especially having in mind that there were plenty of candidates younger than him, who at least theoretically should be more social media savvy (Edelman, 2020). Apart from that, Sanders got endorsement from two notable Facebook groups; *Bernie Sanders Dank Meme Stash* group which has over

386 000 members got worldwide recognition during 2016 presidential elections, when members exchanged memes about the candidate, comparing him to Hillary Clinton. Another group that supported his candidacy was *New Urbanist Memes for Transit-Oriented Teens* (NUMTOT), which currently has over 200 000 members. Both of these groups are dominated by young progressives, who wanted to move American political scene towards left. There are plenty of pro-Sanders fanpages that tried to discredit his rivals (by using facts) and have also played an important role when talking about the mobilization of voters, just like the official fanpages wanted to. As it has already been aforementioned, it appears that Elizabeth Warren has become their arch nemesis, but later when she withdrew from the campaign, Joe Biden was becoming the subject of the memes. What is interesting is how the content of the fanpages fills the pattern of 2016 campaigns, when pro-Sanders fanpages, after he lost the primaries, did not really encourage their viewers to go vote for Clinton/Biden, as they rather endorsed third-party candidates.

There are two fanpages that the Sanders campaign operated with. The official Bernie Sanders fanpage has 5.5 million followers (there is also another fanpage dedicated to his Senatorial work: U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, which has 7.4 million likes). The People For Bernie Sanders fanpage is a fanpage that focuses on the campaign from the activist's perspective and has over 1,5 million likes. This fanpage was dedicated for grassroots activists, who wanted to help with the campaign, as it shares infographics, screenshots from Twitter and campaign materials.

An article from *New York Times* from 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 2019, shows how the Democratic primary candidates used different tactics when launching Facebook ads to target specific voters. Bernie Sanders and Andrew Yang rather targeted young people: Sanders spent equally \$1.2 million on targeting men and women aged 13 to 44, whereas Yang spent accordingly \$710K and \$290K on them at that time. While Elizabeth Warren and Pete Buttigieg had rather balanced approach, Joe Biden and Amy Klobuchar decided to target older women with ads (Goldmacher, Bui, 2019). This

shows perfectly how politically divided the Democratic Party is right now, as we are and will be facing a "battle for the heart of party" between older moderates and young progressives. This data of course does not include Michael Bloomberg, who announced his candidacy in November. As an example, by 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2020, billionaire has spent \$35,348,000 on Facebook ads and during the last week before Super Tuesday he spend another \$8 million. During the exact same week, Sanders' campaign spent \$1 million on Facebook ads, Biden's \$900,000 and Warren's \$500,000 (Kraus, 2020). After Biden won the Super Tuesday, his campaign decided to triple the money spent on Facebook ads, targeting the states in which the next primaries were about to take part in (Rodriguez, 2020). Tom Steyer, another billionaire that took part in Democratic presidential primaries, spent more than \$10 million on Facebook ads from December 2019 until the end of February 2020, focusing mostly on targeting voters from South Carolina (Zenteno, 2020). Before the Iowa Caucus, it was observed that candidates such as Andrew Yang and Pete Buttigieg, focused on digital spending in early states, in order to seek for the momentum (which actually worked for Buttigieg).

Yang's presidential bid is an interesting case, as in my opinion he was able to create a community, just like Bernie Sanders, which supported him and leveraged him from an unknown businessman towards a position of quite serious candidate, who was able to take part in TV debates. This is mainly because of the fact that anti-establishment candidates need to seek for grassroots activists outside of media mainstream and need to work more on attracting audience. The "Yang Gang" consisted of fans from both political spectrums, who previously voted for Sanders, Trump or third-party candidates. What is similar when talking about Sanders's and Yang's base is the fact that their primary voters were much younger than the average: according to Morning consult's weekly tracking poll that was conducted between 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, although Yang's support was around 4% on national level, 74% of his supporters were aged 18 to 44 years old, which was even a better result than Sanders's (69% to 31%) (Skelley, 2019). Yang's viral popularity was orchestrated by the "Yang Gang" supporters, who shared candidate-related content, from memes to songs and other pieces about his candidacy. #Securethebag hashtag became one of the most recognisable slogans and hashtags of the campaign, which meant Yang's signature proposal of universal basic income for the Americans (Roose, 2019).

If Yang and Sanders were the most popular candidates among young voters, which one of them received the biggest negative buzz? Inarguably Joe Biden, as he is the most popular candidate and as a result was roasted by Facebook users on many occasions, both from the left and right spectrum. However, from my observation, Pete Buttigieg had a very negative following, due to the moderate policies that he supported. A quite popular Facebook group consisting of around 25,000 members called *Lord Pete Buttigieg's Casual Imperialist Wine Cave* ran by progressive admins was posting tons of memes that targeting the former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana. It is worth noting

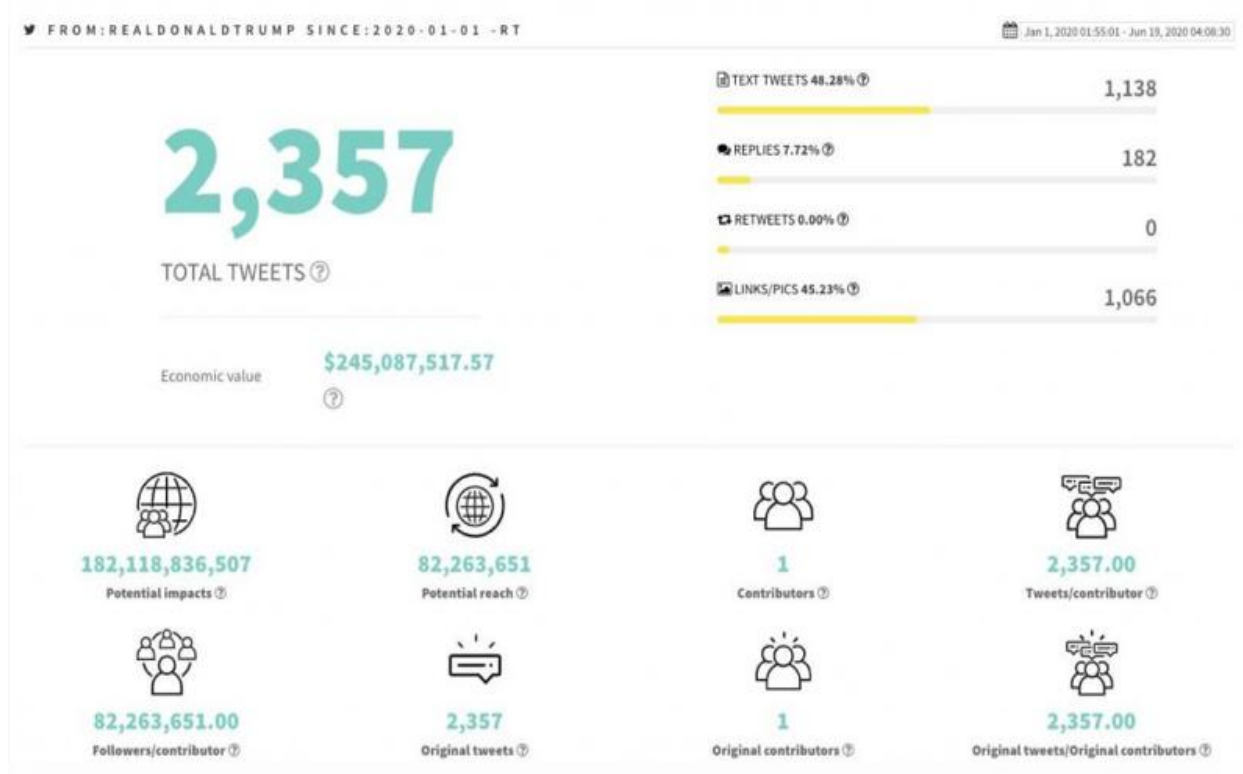
that after mild success during Senate elections in Texas in 2018, Beto O'Rourke's momentum did not survive his presidential bid, as he did not spend much money on Facebook advertising. However, he is still one of the most approachable American politicians thanks to his consistent use of streaming features on this platform, as even when he ended his bid, shortly after he started to stream once again, showing how he is canvassing for Democratic candidates in Texas that were going to take part in statewide elections.

Donald Trump's digital spending on Facebook ads was only matched by one Democratic candidate – Michael Bloomberg. Trump and his campaign staff know that smart use of such ads and Facebook algorithms allowed him to win in 2016 and what is more important – his 2016 campaign never actually ended. What is interesting is that not much has changed in his strategy, as he still sells campaign-related merchandise and runs very similar ads that just recycle the same imagery. His campaign exploits the microtargeted ad-buying by targeting custom audiences and then using the results of the marketing campaign to spend money on more Facebook ads. This way of experimenting with the audience allows his campaign staff to see what is working the best for them. This is a very complicated process that can not be just described in few words, so I highly recommend an article wrote by Ian Bogost and Alexis C. Madrigal for *The Atlantic*, as it dives very deep into the world of Trump's world of ad-buying (2020) Until the middle of June, Trump spent almost \$46,000,000 on Facebook ads and the most targeted states are of course the battleground states like Florida or Michigan (Corasaniti, 2020).

Apart from Instagram and Facebook, Twitter is the most popular platform, on which candidates can attract media attention. Without a doubt Donald Trump is a master of his craft, as both his supporters and haters check his Twitter account on a daily basis to seek for entertainment. It is also an important tool that allows to obtain political information from the POTUS. In order to show how big impact Trump's Twitter has, a research made by Tweet Binder will be presented, which shows the graphic analysis of his account. Just like in 2016, Twitter is president's most important campaign tool that is used to polarize the already divided audience on various topics. His most liked and retweeted post on this platform in 2020 (so far) is the declaration that USA will be designating ANTIFA as a Terrorist Organization. It received 826,000 likes and over 330,000 retweets. Having in mind the history of Trump's tweets, it is worth noting that the buzz around his posts is generated both by his fans and haters, as it has already been mentioned that Trump provides users with entertainment and some sort of comedy, as people are curious what would be his next move. That is why it is so hard for comedians to mock him, as they do not really have much work to do, which was admitted by many top comics and late-night show hosts all over the United States. Some of his tweets have already become classic comedy acts that became a part of modern political language such as „covfefe”, which was a misspelling of word ”coverage” in a viral tweet posted on

31<sup>st</sup> of May, 2017.

Fig. 12. Original tweets sent by @realDonaldTrump in 2020 between 01.01.2020 and 19.06.2020



Source: Tweet Binder <https://www.tweetbinder.com/blog/trump-twitter/>

The language that Trump uses in his tweets is very emotional just like his public speeches, that is why it is very easy to visualise him while reading them. They often end with exclamation marks to stress the importance of the message. POTUS did not really change the campaign tactics on Twitter either, as he still uses the hashtags that made him viral in 2016, such as #MAGA (Make America Great Again) and #AmericaFirst. Since his tweets are the main tool of his agenda, he can affect the whole news cycle during one day, just because of one message posted on this platform. However, in recent weeks Trump got into a beef with Twitter, since the platform has tagged his tweets with fact-checking warning, as one of the posts about mail-in ballots suggested, that this way of casting the vote can be easily forged (Allyn, 2020). As a response, Trump stated that the platform wants to interfere with the elections.

It is worth noting that Twitter banned political advertising on its platform on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. However, this platform was not that popular when talking about generating paid buzz for the content, as during the primaries only Kamala Harris and Beto O'Rourke spent more than one million dollars on paid ads on Twitter. Most of paid tweets by Harris were concerning a ban for Donald Trump from this platform, whereas Beto O'Rourke focused on asking for donation for his (already dying) campaign (Khalid, 2019). A Columbia University study's research found that new politicians were more likely to earn donations on tweeter than the popular ones (2019). The issue is

that Twitter is a rather hermetic environment that is helpful for activists and social movements, but it just really is more likely to be perceived as a social media account on which politicians can share their thoughts. Politicians share infographics, opinions, campaign videos and pictures on this platform, but they rather focus on other ones when talking about innovation. Twitter might be useful for lesser-known candidates, as by engaging in discussion they may become more popular. The analysis of Colin Allred's congressional campaign in TX-32 in 2018 has shown that for him, Twitter worked a bit like an imagesharing platform, as he shared pictures of his baby and animals (Tomaszewski, 2019, p. 45).

Twitter suspended plenty of accounts that supported Bloomberg's candidacy though, because of the fact that they were spamming and flooding the feed with the same information. As Bloomberg decided to spend tons of money on digital advertisements, his campaign staff paid around \$2,500 to volunteers, who were supposed to spread good word about the candidate on the biggest platforms such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. As *Los Angeles Times* wrote, 70 of such accounts were temporarily or permanently suspended after they violated the rules of the platform (Hussain, Bercovici, 2020). Once again this shows how ineffective Bloomberg's campaign was, although some feared that his spending would result in better position for him at the polls, the primaries did not bring him any noteworthy victories. The idea of Twitter relies on closed communities, full of activists that are interested in politics. If a candidate has enough power and following, their fans can help their issues to become trending – they also can help to create negative buzz around the candidate. Once again the case was with Bernie Sanders supporters, who started to flood Twitter with hashtags #NeverWarren shortly after Elizabeth Warren decided to attack their candidate. Hashtag became one of the hottest trending topics – however, the most retweeted posts were criticising the users that wanted to fuel the conflict between the candidates (Collins, 2020). The only memorable and fresh way of mobilising the base on Twitter was provided by Pete Buttigieg, as his campaign created a practice that was called by his staff “digital doorknocking”. Buttigieg campaign has reach out to 200 volunteers all over the Super Tuesday states to get in touch with Buttigieg supporters on Twitter in order to create a movement under the account names @TeamPeteForAmerica. This means that the campaign staff could divide followers into groups representing each states, also rating the follower on a scale one to five whether they would vote for Pete. Volunteer assigned to a state would contact follower and ask them traditional questions that are used during door-to-door campaigns in real life. That is a very interesting idea, as his campaign staff stated that it is better to create a campaign account, as it would concentrate followers that would be actually interested in elections and helping in campaign, whereas the official accounts of politicians have various groups of followers: from trolls to people who just want follow the news or like the candidate (Kelly, 2020).



There is one SNS app that political candidates did not even dream of during presidential elections in 2016. Although at that time Vine was still popular, it closed in January, 2017, which allowed other platforms to fill in the blank space left in the world of short video apps. TikTok is an app that allows users to share short lipsyncing and music clips along with longer videos (60 seconds maximum) that can loop. After merging on 2<sup>nd</sup> of August with another platform called Musical.ly, it became a favourite tool of younger Zoomer generation. 41% of TikTok's users are aged 16-24 and as of May 2020 there are 30 million users in the US. At first glance, adults using TikTok can be perceived as creepy, as there are tons of other platforms on which they can socialize with people their age. However, according to many pundits and journalists, Zoomer generation is more likely to engage in digital activism (and activism in real life), so that is not surprising that even this platform became political during 2020 presidential elections and the primaries.

First of all, TikTok was used by its users for roasting the candidates that did not appear cool to young people. Their first victim was Pete Buttigieg, who even though can appear to be quite young when compared to other candidates (he is only 38), was not really liked by teen meme task forces on social media. Teens started to mock him and his policies on TikTok by calling him “Mayo Pete”. This catchphrase was linked to the fact that his policies were supposed to favor white people and stress blandness of his campaign (Basu, 2019). A viral trend on Tiktok started to circulate in late Autumn, 2019, mostly showing Mayor Pete being introduced at his rallies walking on state to the song by Panic! At the Disco called *High Hopes* (2019). Some experts say that although most of TikTok users are below voting age (18), this platform can be used just like Instagram and Snapchat to bolster their approachability, or clarify errors (Jennings, 2019).

Just like on other social networking services, the biggest clout is generated by Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. Progressive community on TikTok is sharing lots of Bernie content, as of January 2020, posts with #Bernie2020 hashtag received more than 85 million views. In March, Sanders launches his campaign's official TikTok and the first video earns over 2,4 million views within first 48 hours (Wallace, 2020). Currently, the account has over 3 million likes and over 500,000 followers (1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2020) with TikTok's mostly directed by fans (as stated in the description of the profile) and content mostly consisting of summaries of Bernie's campaign goals and memes.

Which candidate also used TikTok during their campaign? It will not be surprising if I will mention one of the masters of campaign innovation - Andrew Yang. Although his account has only 445 followers, pundits should still admire the fact that he tried to follow the trend to reach out to young people, who are his most important base. Julián Castro's TikTok account has roughly 463 followers and has nine videos depicting young people (and cute dogs!) encouraging users to vote for him.

On TikTok, one can find plenty of Trump-related videos, as he is creating memorable content on a daily basis. The popularity of his videos can be related to the algorithm of the platform, which rewards content that generates strong reactions. Moreover, since the internet is so polarized, especially among young people, the viral potential of Trump related videos is just caught in these posts as a form of political entertainment for both sides of the political spectrum.

Who else is roasted by teens on TikTok? Definitely Joe Biden, whose bloopers are very popular on this platform, especially reminding us that Bernie Sanders is a very popular candidate among Zoomers. It is worth noting though, that even if we can not imagine Joe Biden launching a TikTok account, he recently appeared on *The Washington Post's* TikTok, for which he created a face mask awareness video (Deese, 2020). However, it is interesting how this platform is evolving, especially in 2020's political climate, as users on this platform are interested in *politics*, but not as much in *politicians*. How is that possible? For instance, #trump2020 hashtag has generated over 2 million posts since the start of his campaign, whereas the #blacklivesmatter hashtag attracted 22 million posts (Svirskis, 2020). TikTok can eventually affect the voter turnout during 2020 presidential and congressional elections, as young people are more interested in political issues surrounding them. There are plenty of political accounts on TikTok, like “hype houses” @ConservativeHypeHouse, @TikTokrepublicans, @therepublicanhypehouse, @liberalhypehouse, @leftist.hype.house, which create educational videos for younger generation, mimicking the influencer houses that are popular on Youtube (houses on which Youtubers collaborate with each other and create content) (Lorenz, 2020). TikTok duets features are important, as users can create a content consisting of users side-by-side interacting with each other, allowing them to create a form of political communication and a space for discussion.

Most definitely the biggest show of strength that was presented by TikTok users to mainstream was the sabotage of Donald Trump's rally in Tulsa, in cooperation with K-Pop fans. This may sound strange for people over 30, but these two groups of users are often engaging in online beefs with conservatives. Users of the platform enquired and registered for thousands of tickers for rally as a prank. As Trump campaign's official Twitter account @TeamTrump asked users to register, K-Popers started to share the information about the prank, which also started to become a trending topic on TikTok with users sharing the registration instructions (Lorenz et al., 2020). The trend was started by Mary Jo Laupp, dubbed “TikTok grandma”, which volunteered during Pete Buttigieg's campaign trail and resulted in one million registrations for the event (Greenspan, 2020). The #trumprallyfail hashtag started to attract 270,000 tweets daily (Svirskis, 2020). Although TikTok may not appear as an easy tool for campaigning, many lesser-known Democratic candidates running for Congress started to invest their time in their TikTok accounts, as they wanted to attract young voters, for example Joshua Collins running for the WA-10 seat, Eva Putzova from AZ-1 or

Kojo Asamoah-Caesar from OK-1 (Sabin, 2020).

Even though Periscope is no longer as attractive for politicians as it was few years ago, many candidates still used it during Democratic primaries before U.S. Presidential elections in 2020. This is mainly because of the fact that users are more likely to check the livestreams and video materials on Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, candidate's own campaigning apps. For example, Elizabeth Warren has 20 videos on her account and most of them were launched at the beginning of 2020, starting with the live event in Brooklyn along Julián Castro. Since Warren ended her campaign bid, she did not really use the platform, as on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 2020 there is only one stream that was uploaded on her profile that is less than four months old (Warren, 2020). Pete Buttigieg's Periscope profile is even more outdated, as his last stream was uploaded in Autumn, 2019! He is only observed by more than 1800 users and his profile looks a bit like a digital cemetery (Buttigieg, 2020). That is interesting when taking into consideration that he was deemed a serious candidate for a much longer time than Warren. Ever since Joe Biden became (yet unofficial) Democratic presidential candidate, he started to use Periscope in order to launch virtual town hall meetings. His profile has roughly more than 5000 followers, but his 20 transmissions have earned over 3 200 000 likes (1.07.2020). The streams are launched weekly and it can be assumed that this account will be used at least until the end of his presidential campaign (Biden, 2020).

It should be not surprising that once again Bernie Sanders is the most popular presidential candidate on a described social media platform. On Periscope, Sanders has more than 109 000 followers (2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2020) and his channel uploads discussions and films that are even longer than one hour. The educational aspect of the content allows users to earn some knowledge through digital materials, which is met with universal acclaim as Sanders has received over 30 million likes (Sanders, 2020).

Another streaming service that became an important part of Sanders' campaign is Twitch, which is very popular within gaming community. Josh Miller-Lewis, who is Sanders' director of digital communication, wanted to launch a broadcasting account on this platform to connect with this community and listen to their opinion about political process. Within first 24 hours, Sanders was followed by 70,000 accounts and 20,000 people tuned in for the broadcast of the first Democratic debate on this channel (Stephen, 2019). It was the second campaign account on this platform, as Andrew Yang was the first politician that started broadcasting in this service. Bill Neidhart, who is Sanders' campaign's Midwest press secretary, said that Twitch's advance is that the account/streamer can interact with the community and receive live feedback (2019). Donald Trump also used Twitch, as his account was launched in October and the first livestream was a two-hour-long broadcast of a campaign rally in Minnesota. The stream averaged 11 520 viewer, peaking at 15 147

540 viewers (Miceli, 2019). However, his account was closed by the end of June, as on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June it was temporarily closed; the company said that the broadcast of Trump's rally in Tulsa was breaking the policies of hateful conduct and harassment, as POTUS was making negative comments about Mexican migrants, calling them “hombres” (Bonifacic, 2020).

Snapchat is yet another interesting case when talking about political advertising during presidential campaigns, as already in 2016 some of the candidates used it to attract young voters. Its original idea to share person-to-person photos and videos that disappeared after maximum ten seconds may not have appeared as convenient for campaign staffs, but eventually it was met with candidate's acclaim, as the “stories” function finally allowed users to share their feed that lasted for 24 hours (just like Instagram Stories) and the launch of “discover” function introduced targeted digital advertisements. Bernie Sanders used this app in 2016 to target young voters and Snapchat itself launched functions that allowed users to show that they voted during the Election Day in 2016; moreover, they could share geofilters and stickers with election results. Four years later, political advertising on Snapchat started to blow; OpenSecrets.org reported on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2019, that since June 2018, the company earned more than \$1.2 million in political ad spending targeting the U.S. (Massoglia, Evers-Hillstrom, 2019). Some of the candidates received support from Super PAC's, for instance NextGen America that belongs to Tom Steyer spent about \$100 000 in 2018. A Super PAC supporting Jay Inslee also spent thousands of dollars (2019).

Some of the politicians started to buy campaign ads by themselves; in 2019 only Buttigieg's, Biden's, Bloomberg's, Warren's, Sanders' and Trump's campaigns decided to spend some money on Snapchat advertisements. For example, Warren bought the biggest amount of the ads (147), but only nine of them were targeting young voters in the early states (Shepherd, 2020). In early December 2019, Pete Buttigieg's campaign targeted teens aged 17-19 that were “urban & hip-hop music fans” and viewers of BET (Black Entertainment Television network). Although campaign spent only \$3293 on the ads, it was targeting teens from South Carolina, trying their best to reach out to Black and Hispanic voters, among whom Buttigieg did not really have that much of support (2020). There is also an interesting case with one Donald Trump's ad, which was depicting an African-American Trump supporter wearing a Trump 2020 hat. The ad was targeting Fox News fans aged above 18 (2020).

Without a doubt, Joe Biden's launch of a campaign profile on Snapchat was met with many responses, mostly the ironic ones. Biden has set an account on Snapchat on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, shortly before the second Democratic debate. His profile started to share content with him wearing characteristic aviator Ray-Bans and eating ice cream. He also released an “Aviator filter” in Detroit prior the debate (Singh, 2019). The whole concept was a bit disorienting for everyone, as it has already been aforementioned that Biden rather prefers to target older voters and his Snapchat

campaign had the potential to be very cringeworthy. What is more, his granddaughter also engaged in a campaign on this platform, as she was sharing some behind-the-stage content on her Snapchat profile (2019). Bill de Blasio also had a memorable moment on Snapchat, as he posted a picture of the sink in the green room with a copy “Sink in the green room” (2019). Brittany Shepherd, in her article about spendings on political ads on Snapchat, stated that this platform is much cheaper for the candidates and that is why they started to explore its potential during the presidential campaign. Few months later, as it has become clear that Joe Biden will be Donald Trump's main rival during 2020 Presidential Elections in the United States, candidates started to invest more time and money on Snapchat. Nearby the end of May it was reported that Trump's Snapchat earned 1.5 million subscribers. The battle for the votes of Gen Z and Millennials has started much earlier, but Biden knew what his digital weaknesses were, as he admitted that his campaign could have much bigger outreach on all of the platforms. Snapchat tries to become an important digital political actor, as it has added the voter registration links option for the users that just became 18 years old (Hutchinson 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only changed our usual habits – in many cases it has also changed the way people work. Political marketing is a work and is essential during the presidential campaigns, which means that campaign staffs needed to reorganise in order to digitalise their campaigns even more. The outcomes of this situation will be widely discussed in the last chapter of the book, but without a doubt Zoom Video Communications, Inc has become one of the most popular tools that earned profit from the lockdown. Social distancing has destroyed plans of marketing specialists, which had to invent new ways of interacting with the voters, also when talking about campaign donations. Even though plenty of people just send money to the campaigns, some of them (usually the rich ones) engage in fundraisers, often organised by celebrities or politically affiliated personas. Zoom was a perfect place to experiment with, for example Joe Biden organised a virtual reception with Amy Klobuchar, which costed from \$1000 to even \$20,000 (if one wanted to host). The fundraiser earned over \$1,500 000 and was a success – however, let's remember that Biden's power lies beneath the traditional large-dollar fundraisers, as he does not attract small donors like Sanders or Warren (Corasiniti, 2020). From March until the beginning of May, Biden organised 20 virtual fundraisers, also receiving digital clout from his ex-rivals like Buttigieg. Was that a good idea? Most definitely. Was it the most Biden could do with his digital campaign? We will see, but everyone agreed on the fact that ever since the lockdown, Democratic candidate's digital campaign has been a tragedy, as his staff was not prepared to fully switch to virtual campaigning (Linskey 2020). All experts agree that Biden is very good at speaking to a huge crowd, that is why it may appear as he has held up his campaign. However, donors are stepping up, when talking about Zoom fundraisers: a fundraiser hosted in June by Kamala Harris raised \$3.5

million (Halper, 2020).

When talking about Zoom, two more things need to be discussed: Joe Biden's shape during Zoom meetings and the potential emergence of a new Zoom-related term that describes a demographic group that may be fragmented for the need of political campaign. Biden's virtual rallies became a subject for laughter, as during online meetings with voters he was streaming from his home in Delaware in aviators, looking uncomfortable as if he was hiding from the public because of the pandemic (which is way tougher for senior citizens). Biden appeared as a "simulation of a political candidate", without any emotions (Ferguson, 2020). It is needless to say, however, that Trump also has not been looking vital during the streams, as his charisma works best during public appearances during real rallies.

Alexi McCammond and Margaret Talev in their article for Axios propose the idea of Zoom moms. Who are Zoom moms? Most of them are soccer moms in the time of pandemic, as they no longer need to take their children to extra classes. Why would they be important during the upcoming presidential elections? The presidency may depend on the women's vote, as it depended for example during the 2017 United States Senate special election in Alabama, where Doug Jones won with Roy Moore thanks to the swing-state women voters, which did not accept the idea of a child molester as their representative in Senate, even if it meant slightly crossing party lines. Moreover, since the beginning of the pandemic, the percentage of Americans using video calls has increased from less than half to around two-thirds (2020). According to the Axios-Ipsos Coronavirus Index, 56% of American adults that engage in video calls every week are women: of those women, 40% are Democrats, 25% Republicans and 36% independents. They are rather middle and upper-income women, under the age of 55 (2020). Further analysis of this study shows that one in four of these women discuss politics during online calls, half of them are Democrats. On one hand, more men engage in political discussion during video calls, but more women tend to make video calls, that is why they would be more important for political discussion and campaigns (2020). Jesse Ferguson, who was the first person that coined the term Zoom moms, states that for a long time focus groups of suburban women were showing having issues with Trump and his views, but they started to see the negative consequences for their lives after the start of pandemic (2020).

To expand the digital outreach for the right, Trump's campaign decided to merge two important topics from this chapter: digital campaigning and entertainment politics, by creating a digital show called *The Right View*, which is hosted by four conservative women and is aired every Wednesday on all digital platforms. Was it a good idea? Most definitely. Is it popular within women? I would not be that sure, as the talk-show's ratings are not looking good: the shows that had their premiere in June 2020, have around 20,000 views each, which, having in mind that Donald J. Trump account on Youtube platform has over 540,000 subscriptions. Trump's Youtube account

uploads lots of content, consisting mostly of fragments of his speeches, campaign spots, other talk-shows and panels, but there aren't any videos that stand out, when talking about the views ratings. From 1<sup>st</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, the most popular video post uploaded on this platform is Trump's rally at Mount Rushmore, which has roughly over 177,000 views (09.07.2020). The only other two posts that have over 100,000 views, uploaded during the first nine days of July are a video of Air Force One doing a flyover at Mount Rushmore and a spot attacking Joe Biden in regards to some of the Democrats publicly supporting defunding of the police, called *Abolished*, uploaded on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2020.

Campaigning on Youtube has not changed much since 2016, as candidates upload on this platform spots, their speeches and materials targeting groups of voters. However, when comparing the Youtube channels of two main rivals during 2020 presidential elections in the United States, everyone can see one thing: Joe Biden is not as entertaining as Donald Trump, especially when talking about digital platforms. His Youtube account has only 77,000 subscribers (09.07.2020). However, his campaign staff does not flood the platform with Biden content, as much less videos are uploaded there than on Trump's profile; as a result, Biden has much bigger outreach, as the posts have more viewers. What is interesting is the fact that the profile consists of remarks, some discussions and campaign spots in Spanish language, but it also stresses the main difference between Trump's and Biden's presidential campaign: their attitude towards social distancing. Donald Trump's account uploads tons of parts of his public speeches, whereas Biden does not really appear in public since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This also shows the difference between the approach of Democrats and Republicans to this problem. In their article for *NPR*, Khalid and Keith name main areas in which Biden is outmatched by Trump: he does not have the social media dominance and instincts to entertain and outrage (2020). Biden's campaign knows that, that is why their message on digital platform stresses the importance of compassion, empathy and experience, assuming (probably correctly) that this is what people count on during the health and economic crisis (2020). Biden's digital presence is still developing, but most probably he will not be needing that to win with Trump, as the polls show that Biden is increasing his advantage over Trump. As it has been already established in this chapter, internet is a nice territory for polarising opinions and centrist Biden will never have that much digital power as Trump or Sanders. Even the digital director of Biden's campaign knows that, as he admitted that the elections and the digital campaign needs to focus on building a community and showing the empathy instead of attacking Donald Trump during the campaign trail (Roose, 2020). The potential in Biden's viral activity lies beneath the celebrity and political endorsements, as the almost 12 minutes long video of Barack Obama endorsing Joe Biden for president currently has over 2 million views, being uploaded two months ago (9.07.2020). Trump on the other hand, focuses on digital ad spending on Youtube on the

Election Day, just like he did back in 2016. In early November 2020, Youtube's homepage will be full of Trump's ads. What is interesting is the fact that in 2019, Trump's reelection campaign spent \$500,000-\$million on Youtube ads before the first Democratic presidential debate (Kelly, 2020).

There are also some less important platforms that need to be mentioned when talking about social media campaigning in 2020, as some of them also allow campaign staffs to organise. Many candidates such as Trump, Yang, Warren, Cory Booker, Buttigieg used Slack for communication, whereas for example Amy Klobuchar used Wickr and Tulsi Gabbard's campaign staff used GoogleSuite and FrontApp. Andrew Yang also used Zapier and Trump's campaign preferred RingCentral, which is a tool for team messaging. Trump, O'Rourke, Sanders or John Delaney spent money on video conferences through UberConference and Booker, Klobuchar and John Hickenlooper used MaestroConference. When talking about the recruiting software, Warren, O'Rourke or Sanders spent money on Greenhouse – on the other hand, Booker, Buttigieg or Yang used Lever (Cheng, 2019). These are information obtained from a rather outdated article from 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 2019, but by citing it, one could just want to show how many options do candidates have in order to organise themselves and their campaigns on the internet. Additionally, who knows – maybe some of these tools will be more “cool” during next elections? These considerations will be left up for the last chapter. The last Web 2.0 tool that should would like to mention in this subchapter is Reddit, as for some pundits, this forum/discussion website can be used as a perfect tool to approach new voters and mobilize the existing base. The subreddit discussion about the political issue named r/politics currently has over 6 million members that every day tackle and discuss all the most important political subjects. Politicians like Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders or Barack Obama have took part in AMA (Ask Me Anything) sessions on the website, in which users asked them questions. Many candidates also have their own subreddits with r/SandersForPresident having 499,000 subscribers (09.07.2020) and Joe Biden having 33,000 of them. What is interesting is the fact that recently, at the end of June 2020, Reddit also started to close its door to Trump supporters that did not follow the rules and made offensive comments. “The\_Donald” reddit, which had almost 800,000 members has been deactivated, as it was breaking the rules against harassment and hate speech (Edelman, 2020).

### **3.3. Shaping the news and political facts through social media**

When talking to other academics or students about social media, they all agree that they made it easier for us to communicate with each other, also when talking about obtaining news and political information. There is always one thing though that worries when talking about Web 2.0



tools, which is how can the information be verified to assure that the facts that are shaped through social media are correct and do not spread rumors? History has proven that negative campaigning can also be led by fake information that influences the political behavior of citizens. In this subchapter, a study that was conducted in 2017 will be presented, describing how the post-truth and fake news could have influenced the outcome of presidential elections in the United States in 2016, taking into consideration what may or may not have changed since then, both taking into consideration the awareness of internet users, the action that owners of these platforms took to fight with fake news and how has this affected our political culture.

In 2016, *post-truth* was named a word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries. However, dangers that political actors became aware of because of this phenomenon did not discourage anyone from spreading them in order to reach their goals. 2016 U.S. presidential elections highlighted the weaknesses of this solution - user-generated content is rarely verified, especially on the largest social media platforms. This leads to an uncontrolled (deliberate and unconscious) flow of erroneous information, which may affect the voters' decision-making process. What is the reason for this? Mainly because the recipient of information often reads what they want to hear, is suggested by the headline and does not check the reliability of the messages he or she receives. In this situation, the fake news is an online embodiment of a gossip that builds the lie of the whole news from one piece of information. Of course, the blame for spreading unverified posts on the Internet can be placed on both sides, but undoubtedly the main beneficiary of this situation was Donald Trump, the current president of the United States, in 2016 the candidate of Republicans in the presidential election, who eagerly repost and publish any information that might have put his political opponents in the wrong light (Tomaszewski, 2017b, p. 159).

At the beginning, it is worthwhile to present theoretical assumptions as to what post-true and fake news is, and to divide false information into categories to determine what their creators are guided by. Fake news can be called information that is consciously created by the creators in order to deliberately mislead the recipient (Allcott, Gentzkow, 2017, p. 213). According to Keyes, we live in an era of posttruth, which is characterized by blurring the boundaries between truth and lie (2004). By transferring this issue to the field of contemporary political science, it can be concluded that we are dealing with the politics of post truth, i.e., a situation in which the media coverage of political content differs from the activities that are performed by legislative, executive or judicial bodies (Roberts, 2010). This leads to a situation where the assessment of a politician by the voter is manipulated by the facts he receives and interprets in his own way (2010). Based on this thesis, one can perceive the fake news as part of a manipulative machine called post-true. The focus on modern forms of media such as the internet has allowed them to become independent on the one hand, while on the other hand, it makes the control over this content unstable. University of Ontario academics

have singled out three types of fake news in their research work that can affect their audience:

- fabricated news, i.e. untrue news, which is based on loud headlines suggesting something completely different from the content of the article. The purpose of such information is to provide the widest possible range of information created for the author of the content or its publisher - this type of information is often found in tabloids, so it is not limited only to new forms of media, also appearing in their traditional forms.
- internet mystification: deliberate misleading of the recipient, which differs from the fabricated news in such a way that it is intended to harm the person or company that is described in this rumour. This is a kind of unbelievable gossip, a conspiracy theory that is based on false arguments that are credible enough to convince the recipient.
- satirical news: websites such as Clickhole, The Onion or Wunderground publish absurd information to parody traditional news portals. People who visit these types of portals know exactly what they can expect, while an outsider who hasn't previously been involved with these media can share their content and continue to provide it with the belief that it is real, thus misleading people in their circle on the social networking site (Rubin et. al., 2015, p. 3)

Due to the increased activity of the fake news in recent times, especially during the presidential campaign in the United States, many scientists have decided to conduct research on the course of receiving such false information. An excellent example is the analysis of the dormitories of the University of Warwick, who checked how much time it takes to deny the Internet rumour and prove that it intentionally misleads the recipient. The authors begin by quoting research by Arkaitz Zubiaga and Heng Ji on verification of information on Twitter, which confirms the the thesis that false information is most often encountered when publishing last-minute news; such information is published immediately, but very sparingly, which encourages ambiguity and rumors (Zubiaga, Ji, 2014). Internet users, in order to find out as quickly as possible, look for any new information about an event and are therefore at risk of being misled. Research has shown that it takes two hours to verify the true rumour, while it can take as much as fourteen hours to verify the wrong information (Zubiaga et. al., 2016, p. 16).

It is easy to conclude that in such a long period of time it is easy to lose control of the information given, which makes it much harder to deny it later. Interestingly, other studies have shown that not always denying a rumor makes the recipients stop believing in it. Nyhan and Reifler conducted a study in 2010 to show those involved in the experiment a satire news story that George W. Bush's tax cuts increased government revenues. When a group of respondents was presented with true information that showed that revenues had fallen, it turned out that among the Liberals fewer people believed in the information given at the very beginning of the survey, while the Conservatives were even more convinced that the first news was true (Nyhan, Reifler, 2010, p. 154

314). These results show unequivocally that those involved in a particular political option believe in the information that is favorable to them because it reinforces them in their own right. This research is reflected in the movements of social networking users who, with their specific political views, focus mainly on the information they get from the media that suits them. As a result, they create a kind of information bubble, because by sharing, commenting on, and spouting this type of content, they restrict access to information by dissociating themselves from the news provided by people with different views, confirming that their views are correct (Tomaszewski, 2017c, p. 214). This makes them want to believe in the information they receive and do not necessarily want to verify its truthfulness.

Despite the fact that the issue described in the study gained popularity in 2016, the world of American politics had already much earlier had to fight against false information provided by hostile parties to the political dispute. The British historian Tim Stanley believes that the first fact that affected the electoral behaviour of Americans was a rumor from 1828, released by supporters of the then president of the United States, Andrew Jackson, that was intended to hit the candidate John Quincy Adams. It suggested that during the time when Quincy Adams was a minister plenipotentiary in Russia, he gave the Russian emperor Alexander I an American girlfriend to satisfy his desires (Ingram, 2017). However, American history also knows more contemporary cases where the candidate's campaign suffered from the spread of false information through whispered propaganda.

In 2000, Senator John McCain fought for party nomination with George W. Bush in the presidential Republican primary election. Prior to the South Carolina primary, voters received calls asking if they would vote for John McCain if they knew he was the father of a dark, illegitimate child (Banks, 2008). This information was not true because McCain and his current wife adopted a girl from Bangladesh in 1991 - in the week of the election, the South Carolina media received mysterious phone calls with the same content asking them to respond to the rumor. As a result of this type of negative campaign, McCain lost the South Carolina primary election, later losing the appointment fight with Bush. With the advent of the 21st century, the forms in which the faxed news was made available evolved - this was connected with the evolution of the Internet. Before the popularity of social networking sites grew, such rumors were sent via emails: during the 2008 Democratic Party primary elections, Hillary Clinton's supporters sent emails about Barack Obama's birth certificate to suggest that he was not born in the United States (Smith, Tau, 2011). Obama became a major victim of viral slander fashion: among other things, one of them suggested that he was a Muslim, suggesting a picture of his brother's wedding. The aim of this rumor was to convince the recipient that Obama is a terrorist, using fear as a tool to discourage voters from running for office (Altheide, 2017, p. 201).

Last decade has allowed the development of social networking sites, which gives celebrities greater access to their fans and thus influence their behavior (Tomaszewski, 2017b, p. 139). With the right reach, they can spread non-verified information, which the loyal recipients mostly believe in. Already in 2011, Trump used his favorite social media platform, Twitter, for this purpose. One example is a tweet linking to an article from the right-wing blog *therightscoop.com*, suggesting that doctors acting under the influence of ObamaCare do not want to operate on older patients. Confirmation of this rumor was supposed to be an anonymous phone call from a neurosurgeon, made to a radio talk show of the same name (Maheshwari, 2017). It is noteworthy that already in 2009 this rumour was called the lie of the year according to *Politifact*, which only confirms that, despite the strong denying of false information, the rumors live their lives (Drobnic Holan, 2009). Fake news that Trump operated on Twitter was aimed at Barack Obama. To fully understand his election tactics from 2016, it is necessary to mention two more untrue stories that the businessman shared on this social networking site. His activity was connected with the fact that already in 2011 he suggested that he would run for president of the United States. It was at that time that he brought back to life a rumor about where Barack Obama was born, as during his television visits, where he questioned that Obama was born in Hawaii (Phillips, 2017). Then, in order to confirm his suspicions, he shared articles from right-wing conspiracy theory blogs, such as *freedomoutpost.com*, and posted tweets declaring that he has proof that Obama was not born in the United States from “very reliable sources” (Maheshwari, 2017). By September 2017, the post on “a credible source” had collected more than 18,000 likes and 23,000 retweets.

Trump operated in exactly the same way as Obama's enemies were sending out false information, being both a distributor and a victim of the news fax. Another piece of information he gave before the 2012 presidential election was the false news that Obama had made his wishes for the upcoming Kwanzaa holiday, forgetting about Christmas (McMorris-Santoro, 2011). This information was confused on the conservative blog *thegatewaypundit.com*; when the *Talking Points Memo* portal was proven to be false, Trump posted another tweet in which he said he was right, unlike the portal (Maheshwari, 2017).

Every year, more and more Americans use social networking sites to get basic news from them. In 2012, nearly half of Americans (49%) used social networking sites to gather information about the world - a 13% increase four years later (Gottfried, Shearer, 2016). According to other studies published by Pew Research Center, in 2016 79% of adult Americans used Facebook, 21% used Twitter, 28% were active on Instagram (Greenwood et al., 2016). These statistics are the best example of the fact that traditional media are in crisis, and that politicians tend to use social networking sites during election campaigns to reach their voters more easily. At the end of the presidential campaign, Trump's Twitter account was watched by 12.9 million users of this platform

(Chadwic, 2017, p. 254).

Describing the issue of the fake news in the US presidential campaign in 2016 and its impact on Trump's popularity among voters, first of all, one should distinguish the news that was made available by interest groups favoring conservatives, then check how the candidate reacted to it. Web portal *Buzzfeed* pointed out that the fake news started to grow in popularity three months before the presidential election (Silverman, 2016). In order to understand the specifics of this information, addressed mainly to conservative voters, study will briefly describe the untrue news provided by Facebook, which met with the greatest involvement of portal users during this period.

One of the most popular rumors of the campaign period was that Pope Francis officially supported Donald Trump as his candidate for President of the United States. Originally, this surprising news was made available on the WTOE 5 satirical portal, which ended its activity a moment after the information was deemed true (Ritchie, 2016). The site did not hide the fact that it is a comedy - in its description one could find a statement that the content on it is a product of fantasy (2016). This news started to circulate on other portals, gaining the most popularity thanks to *endingthefed.com*, a website with false information, whose Facebook fanpage *End The Fed* in August 2017 had more than 350 000 likes. The post on the most popular social networking site reached 961,300 users before the end of the election campaign. Although Donald Trump's staff did not share this information, they did not do anything to deny it, which could mislead many people.

Some of the fake news was related to the real situation regarding the leakage of Hillary Clinton staff emails, which were made available by *Wikileaks*. The cyber-attack targeting John Podesta, former Clinton campaign manager, was picked up by *Wikileaks*, which published the material in October 2016. This led to information chaos - the content of the emails itself was not very shocking, but there was a mass of false information that was shared as part of the leak. One such piece of information was certainly an email confirming that Hillary Clinton had sold ISIS weapons - moreover, the content of the article suggested that the news was confirmed by *Wikileaks*. The post, made available by the right-wing portal *The Political Insider*, reached 789,500 Facebook users by the end of the election campaign. Similar information was posted on the previously mentioned portal *Ending the Fed*. The headline also concerned sales of ISIS weapons and reached over 700 thousand recipients (Silverman, 2016). Shortly after the announcement of the results of the presidential election, it turned out that this portal belongs to a 24-year-old Romanian citizen, a supporter of Donald Trump. As he admitted, his news was little different from the mainstream media, which also misleads the audience - the author, who is a supporter of conspiracy theories, defended himself by explaining that the news that was verified as untrue was removed from his side (Townsend, 2016).

The most popular conspiracy theory related to the email leakage was the so-called Pizzagate.

Trump's internet supporters believed that John Podesta's emails are actually a cipher that proves that he and other high-ranking Democratic Party politicians are involved in paedophilia and underage trafficking. This information was picked up by right-wing portals, but also by close associates of Donald Trump. Michael Flynn, Trump's future security advisor, has been sharing false information related to this conspiracy theory through his Twitter account; his tweet has been shared more than 9000 times, gaining around 8000 likes (BBC News, 2016). After Trump was elected president of the United States, the same theory was spread on Twitter by his son, who was subsequently released. This information, interestingly enough, was mainly disseminated by portals and thematic forums such as 4chan or Reddit, which on the one hand are associated with internet trolling, but on the other hand are associated with young people with right-wing views, which do not fit into the typical model of a young conservative. This group, which describes itself as “*Alt-Right*”, supported Trump's online trolling campaign by (often in a conscious way) sharing memos or false information.

Another piece of news that shook up the social networks was the story of an FBI agent involved in an email leak, Hillary Clinton, who was found dead in his apartment. It was posted on November 5, 2016 by the *Denver Guardian*, who was impersonating the website of *The Denver Post*. Shocking for many users, the message was at one point made available a hundred times a minute, reaching as many as 576 000 Facebook users (Ritchie, 2016). *The Denver Post* responded very quickly to the news by publishing an article in which it spread out the first parts of the lying page, by publishing the address of the alleged *Denver Guardian*'s headquarters, which was actually located in a closed parking lot, or by verifying the photo that decorated the article (Lubbers, 2016). The portals providing fake news turned out to be also a great way of making money - authors of articles about Pope Francis or a dead FBI agent were able to make even \$30,000. The idea was quickly picked up by young people from a city in Macedonia, where a group of people decided to set up a portal that would share fake content. In this situation, it is worth noting that not only political views may be the main motive behind the people who share the faked news - it may also be the profit through clickable articles with loud headlines - tabloids operate in the same way. The sixteen-year-old managing the *BVANews.com* website himself admitted that he and his friends wanted to create a platform with false information focusing on the most important policies in the United States, while after a preliminary analysis it turned out that Americans were most susceptible to information favorable to the Republican candidate (Silverman, 2016). The most popular news from this group was a 2013 quote by Hillary Clinton, taken out of context, that she believes Donald Trump would be an excellent candidate for President of the United States. According to a study by *Buzzfeed*, the post had a reach that allowed it to reach over 480,000 Facebook users (Ritchie, 2016). Macedonians created a whole network of portals that were supposed to sound like right-wing media, giving them names like *USConservativeToday.com*, *DonaldTrumpNews.co*, or

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*USADailyPolitics.com* (Silverman, 2016).

A considerable amount of disinformation was also introduced by rumors of paying protesters against Donald Trump by a closer unidentified sponsor (rumors suggested it was either Hillary Clinton or George Soros). During the campaigning period, two independent false information may have caught the attention. The first one was posted by a portal impersonating ABCNews, called *abcnews.com.co*; from the content of the article one could learn that the Craigslist portal offered as much as \$3500 for participation in the protest. This information was to be confirmed by the person who took part in the protest (Dewey, 2016). The article was rapidly growing in popularity, reaching 5000 hits in one day.

What made this rumor more credible? It started to be shared by people cooperating with Donald Trump, such as Trump's chief of staff, Corey Lewandowski, who made the article available on Twitter. The article was also posted by Ann Coulter, a conservative journalist who published the article on her Facebook fanpage, gathering more than 1,000 likes in one day. When Lewandowski was dismissed by Trump from the post of Chief of Staff after the primary election and hired Kellyanne Conway to this position, the new Chief of Staff also made the article available on her Twitter account - this took place on 12 October 2016 (Masnick, 2016). A rumor that was long forgotten began to live its life again - just a few hours later, the article was made available on Twitter by Donald Trump's son, Eric, and gathered around 1,000 views and more than 700 retweets in a short time (2016). A similar story was described by the *New York Times*, who decided to take a look at the evolution of the fake news posted by Eric Tucker, a 35-year-old Twitter user whose account was only watched by 40 people. The day after the presidential election, November 9th, 2016, Tucker released a series of photos of buses on his profile to prove that the protests in Austin against Trump are an organized action and the people taking part in it are being transported on the buses (Maheshwari, 2016). On the same day, the post was made available more than 16,000 times - this was just the beginning of the gathering of coverage, as the second day it was picked up by Reddit users, generating nearly 300 comments in the thread (2016). This rumour was then posted on the conservative *FreeRepublic.com* forum and a link to it started circulating on Facebook pages related to conservatives, reaching 300,000 users of the portal (2016). The author of the tweet himself said that there is no evidence of the truth of his thesis, but he is fully convinced that he is right - this was enough for more media to start sharing this information. When Tucker deleted the post on November 11th, the media did not mention it anymore.

However, false information was not only made available by Trump's sympathizers during the campaign - the candidate also happened to publish rumors that favored him. The most popular case was a tweet linking to an article from *prntly.com* in which, according to a survey, Trump had the greatest support among the working class since Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s. The

post, published on October 19, 2015, received over 1700 retweets and 2800 likes (Bump, 2016).

*Buzzfeed* decided to make a transcript of Donald Trump's tweets, starting from 16 June 2016. It is worth noting that he very often shared news from the right-wing *Breitbart*. This portal has grown in importance in recent years, becoming one of the 50 most popular websites in the United States, gathering over two million fans on Facebook (Kreiss, 2017). Trump's tweets were mainly aimed at people browsing *Breitbart* - in Andrew Chadwick's book *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*, the author proves that Trump operated in a similar way to the portal, trying to attract attention with loud headlines that would gather the greatest possible involvement of the online community (Chadwick, 2017, p. 260). This way he could not only reach his fans, but also make him still present in the traditional media, so he could provide himself with free airtime (Denton Jr., 2017, p. 135). The Republican Party candidate very often provided favorable headlines that led to *Breitbart* articles that often distorted the original information. One example is the 2 July tweet, which recommended an article recognizing that Trump had won a dispute with the Democrats about immigrants because Obama confirmed that some of them may be rapists (Ritchie, 2016). This information was not confirmed by any of the popular media, but it lived its life on websites that provide fake news. In his tweets, Trump also thanked *Breitbart* for his integrity, unlike the NBC and other most famous media (Trump, 2016). Interesting in all this is the figure of the portal's owner, Steve O'Bannon, who, according to many people, was a gray eminence on Trump's electoral staff, directing his movements in the social media. It was precisely the posts with the candidate's favorable information that were most often linked by him. According to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Breitbart* operates in a completely different way from ordinary click-through pages of fake news - the goal of this portal is to disinformation through articles that have a grain of truth in them, which can serve as a development of confabulation (Benkler et al., 2017). Trump also reposted false information from other sources on his Twitter profile - on August 6, 2016, he provided a link to an article on *truthfeed.com* that tempted a potential recipient with video evidence that five people associated with Hillary Clinton and her private business email scandal have died in the last six weeks (Herron, 2017).

Finally, it is worth focusing on one more statement by Donald Trump, which proves that a politician not only limited himself to social networking sites in the use of post-true or fake news for his benefit. Trump explained during his speech that he did not care about supporting his former primary competitor, Ted Cruz, additionally quoting a rumor published by the *National Enquirer*, which suggested that Ted Cruz's father knew John F. Kennedy's killer, Lee Harvey Oswald. According to the material, Rafael Cruz was supposed to distribute leaflets supporting Fidel Castro's policy with Oswald in New Orleans in 1963 (McCaskill, 2016). This proves that Trump used the unproven news for three purposes: to slander political opponents, to put himself in a good light and,



most importantly, to make as many people as possible talk about him.

Noting the impact of false information on the conduct of the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, it is difficult to establish clearly whether or not this information is provided by a candidate on purpose. On the one hand, Trump's staff continued to spread rumors through social media platforms, while on the other hand, it is hard to say whether each of these people did so deliberately or, despite everything, believing in the conspiracy theory contained in the article she made available. Surely the authors of this information are guided by two main factors which make them set up more portals impersonating well-known media. The first one is money - the example of Macedonians shows that in the modern world every click on information is business; information platforms that provide fake news work on the basis of modern tabloids, attacking Internet users with surprising and shocking headlines to make them visit their site. Research has shown that both left and right-wing people are equally susceptible to conspiracy theories, while some scientists have shown that conservative people are more likely to target untrue information (Bakshy et al., 2015) (Allcott, Genzkow, 2017, p. 224). This thesis is confirmed by the situation in 2016 - mainly because Donald Trump himself was such a polarized public figure that his followers were the easiest target group for this type of portals.

The second group includes people who purposefully prepare fake news, but do not do it for financial gain - they want to harm the person representing the opposite political views. Often such behavior is connected with belief in the message that is being made available - believing in conspiracy theory, one wants to tell it to as many people as possible. Such portals include *Breitbart*, whose authors, on the one hand, try to influence the current political situation in the USA, but on the other hand, they most likely honestly believe in most of the information they provide. Here, too, the type of information changes, most often it is post-true, news that is taken out of context and had a completely different meaning in the original. It is also worth noting that Internet users who are Internet trolls - this type of people do not care about financial gain, nor do they often care about proving themselves right on the Internet and the news they post or make available are simply to mislead Internet users.

As it has already been proven, this type of audience also includes Donald Trump, who provided unproven information during the campaign, but avoided signing the most absurd ones with his name. Looking at the statistics of untrue information made available on social networking platforms, it can be considered that they could actually have influenced the outcome of the election. Researchers are divided, some of them agree with this thesis, suggesting that if this type of information could not be avoided, it must have had some influence on the voter's decision-making process; Others hold back on their assessments, suggesting that the average Facebook user in the U.S. is faced with so much information during the day that one fake article has minimal power

compared to a successful TV campaign - it may cause some concern, but its target is people with specific views who would not be able to change them after reading one piece of information on the internet (Allcott, Genzkow, 2017, p. 232) (Perrot, 2016).

How, in such a case, can the spread of gossip and fake news articles on the Internet be prevented? Before the creators of Facebook started working on algorithms that would allow to fight this problem, social networking users themselves decided to fight against it. A perfect example was the Chrome browser plug-in called B.S. Detector, which automatically alerts Internet users that they are visiting a site that is publishing false information (Hinchliffe, 2016). The most recognizable portal dealing with the verification of untrue news is *snopes.com*, a site established as early as 1995, which focuses on taming Internet myths related mainly to politics and celebrities. Currently, Facebook outsources its content to fact checking websites such as *snopes.com*, *Politifact* or *FactCheck.org*, which allows them to quickly confirm whether the article is true. Google also uses *snopes.com* and *Politifact* for this purpose, while inviting other sites and organizations that would like to fight the scourge of untrue articles (Debczak, 2017). Also worth noting are tools and platforms such as *FactWatcher*, *RumorLens*, and *TwitterTrails*, which allow journalists to verify the news they receive (Tolmie et al., 2017, p. 1).

Now to sum up, all the steps taken by United States and social networking services to battle the spread of fake news will be presented. When it was confirmed that Russian secret service has been interfering in the 2016 presidential elections, federal government decided to intervene. In October 2017, a bill was announced by Congress, which would require SNS like Google or Facebook to collect copies of ads with public access and the information who is paying for them. A month later, when the Senate judiciary committee was questioning these platforms (plus Twitter) regarding their eventual role in the disinformation during the elections, the outcome of the talks has proven that indeed Russia was interrupting (Funke, Flamini, 2020).

In September 2018, a bill was introduced in California that encouraged media literacy in schools. The state Department of Education website would recommend the materials that would increase students' knowledge regarding the evaluation of the media, as the Stanford University study has shown that 82% of the students in middle schools were not able to distinguish news stories from advertisements (Minichiello, 2018). Similar bills have also been introduced in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The bill from Massachusetts is especially important, as it elevates media literacy as a priority and students will evaluate all types of media, while at the same time “attaining an understanding of how that media shapes attitudes, behaviors and values both as individuals and as a society” (MediaLiteracyNow). Also in 2018, Governor of California Jerry Brown, vetoed the law that would allow to create a fake news advisory group that could monitor the content shared on social media (CBSSacramento, 2018).

Apparently, during the presidential elections in 2016, political scene was still particularly safe from the manipulations that can and most probably will affect our digital visual communication. Deepfakes, which are synthetic media that replace a person on an image or a video with another person, started to gain popularity in 2017, as a Reddit user with a nick “deepfakes”, used a subreddit r/deepfakes on which they and other users shared fake pictures that they created, often swapping the pictures of actors with pornographic videos. In January 2018, an app called FakeApp was introduced, which allows users to make videos with swapped faces. The rather more disgusting trend that started with pornographic content, can easily be used in order to affect one's campaign. Deepfakes are created by uploading thousands of photos into an algorithm that would put one face on top of another (Dold, 2018). U.S. Representatives contacted the Director of National Intelligence in order to enquire about their knowledge regarding deepfakes and the level of national security regarding this issue. A joined intervention by two Democratic Representatives (A. Schiff-California, S.Murphy-Florida) and one Republican Representative (C. Curbelo-Florida), acknowledged the fact that this technology is becoming more and more advanced and it could “pose a threat to United States public discourse (...) concerning implications for offensive active measures campaigns targeting the U.S.”(Schiff, 2018). Still, even though many politicians believe that deepfakes could even affect the campaign in 2020, experts believe that this is a long-range threat and crisis that does not exist (Parkin, 2019).

In 2019, NY Attorney General settled the case with company called Devumi, which sold fake content (likes, followers, views) on platform like Youtube, Twitter, Soundcloud or Pinterest. This meant that finally some steps are taken in order to distinct fake influencers from the real ones and may mean the beginning of a long fight for the transparency of influencing.(Jones, 2019). This was the first case in which law enforcement stated that it is illegal to sell social media activity that is fake. The research from 2019 has shown that Democrats and Republicans are able to distinguish real news from the hyper-partisan sources; however, Republicans did not trust mainstream media outlets that much, which is just the reflection of Donald Trump's framing of these sources. More information about this study can be found in the article called *Fighting misinformation on social media using crowdsources judgments of news source quality* by Pennycook and Rand. Another study has shown that Americans aged +65 are seven times more likely to share fake news on social media than young adults aged 18-29. Still, 90% of respondents did not share any fake news on their personal platforms (Guess et al., 2019). Brendan Nyhan, a political scientist for the University of Michigan believes that fewer Americans were exposed to fake news in 2018 than in 2016. His report also has shown that the most conservative respondents were most likely to click on fake news stories (Shalby, 2019).

It took a global pandemic for Facebook to realize that the spread of unverified content may

harm its users. Recently it started to work with 60 fact-checking organizations, which day and night review the content that is posted, in order to make sure that all the information regarding (especially) COVID-19 are true. It is supposed for people to make it easier to find correct information about the flu (Facebook, 2020).

This is where the chapter ends, as it briefly introduces the digital chaos that everyone needs to face because of the pandemic, upcoming presidential elections and social unrests. Hitherto, only few acknowledged the fact that in order to treat traditional and digital media with equal respect, they need to be reformed, as their development may lead to the informational anarchy. What perspectives do we have in upcoming years and how would they affect American internet users and at the same time voters?

## **Chapter 4. Celebrity endorsement during presidential campaigning in the United States**

### **4.1 The role of celebrities in political life. Evolutionary model**

Having described the theoretical assumptions regarding the celebrity endorsement process, let's now focus on how this relationship between the political actors has been evolving over the years. Unarguably this is strongly related to the development of mass media, which both allowed to expand the recognizability of the celebrities and transformed political marketing into more voter-friendly. Starting with interviews and radio shows, Hollywood actors and musicians shared their thoughts on politicians, only to eagerly appear with them, when television was becoming accessible for most of the Americans. This opened opportunities for both celebrities and politicians, as both of the parties wanted to be perceived as a part of cool establishment that would impress their fans. Additionally, for politicians this was a chance to earn some of the buzz reserved for their famous friends. The chapter is split into three parts with the first one describing the endorsement politics before Barack Obama's campaign, which rocked the world with its amount of A-list celebrity endorsers, only to focus on the 2008 and 2012 campaign trails more in detail, as the effect the celebrities had on these campaigns are more measurable. Finally, the third subchapter will tackle the area of political entertainment, as modern voter needs to not only be informed about the campaigns and their programs, but also, through various channels, needs to be kept interested in these issues. This especially touches the youngest groups of voters, which (at least until the end of last decade), did not engage that much in politics and campaign activities, and most probably getting out their vote and encouraging them to register is a crucial part of winning modern political campaigns – both for the Democrats and Republicans.

First proofs of the celebrity endorsement in politics can be found in the relationship between Theodore Roosevelt and the actress Marie Dressler. After visiting the White House, she stated, that Roosevelt had “vigorous and magnetic” personality. Such opinion, made by a publicly recognized persona helped him create the image of a statesman. The traces of such behavior can be also found during the First World War, when Woodrow Wilson launched a campaign, that was aimed at securing the Liberty Loans, which were to help finance war expenditures. To achieve this, Wilson's

staff ran rallied with the appearances of popular movie stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford. What is more, they also managed to get the support of a baseball hero Ty Cobb (Milton Cooper Jr., 2011, p. 392). Academic researchers argue, that the turning point of the mechanism known as the celebrity endorsement were the 1920's, when the celebrities started to gather around the candidates during the presidential campaigns. As Warren G. Harding started canvassing for the presidential race with Calvin Coolidge, he managed to gather around dozens of actors, who identified themselves as Republicans, such as Douglas Fairbanks, Lillian Gish or the aforementioned Mary Pickford. But none of them had the position like Al Jolson – the biggest star of Broadway, the leading man of many musical blockbusters, who led the parades declaring himself as the president of the "Harding-Coolidge Theatrical League" (Giaimo, 2015). What is more, Jolson even wrote a song endorsing the candidate, which he sang in candidate's hometown, called "Harding, You're the Man for Us" (Troy, 2013, p. 73). Referring to the aforementioned theory of Lowenthal, the campaign was also fueled by the support of the "idols of production", who were not able to attend the events, but expressed their support – among them one can find famous historical figures such as Thomas Edison, Henry Ford or Harvey Firestone (Giaimo, 2015). Following these events, Harding won the elections and became the 29<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. Before the 1930's brought real tightening of ties between the world of politics and celebrities, it is also worth noting the 1928 presidential campaign, in which baseball superstar Babe Ruth, refused to pose for a photograph with the Republican candidate Herbert Hoover, while offering his support to the Democrat candidate Al Smith (Khorsandi, 2016).

Taking this into consideration, the 1920's have laid the foundations for the usage of the celebrity power during the campaigns. Many researchers assert in their academic works, that Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the first candidate, that purposefully used the celebrity support to win the presidency. According to Schroeder, he understood the power of good relationship with Hollywood stars and his campaign staff did not hesitate to use it (Schroeder, 2004, p. 17). His liberal approach appealed to Hollywood and as a result he received a wide endorsement during his campaign in 1932. Roosevelt maintained strong links with the Warner Brother's studio, which's films often supported New Deal's values (Wheeler, 2013, p. 42). During the crucial times for the development of the sound films, the approach of the studio differed from the mainstream, not always offering happy endings and presenting the life of the working class (Cohen, 2013, p. 1). Jack L. Warner to support the case donated 50 000\$ to Roosevelt's campaign, but this was not enough for the Studio to show the support – they have organized a huge event called Motion Picture Electrical Parade and Sport Pageant, which was held at the Los Angeles Olympic Stadium (2013, p. 20) (Wheeler, 2013, p. 43). The event featured luminaries such as Charles Chaplin, Clark Gable, Oliver

Hardy and Stan Laurel, riding cars around the track and greeting the crowd (Cohen, 2013, p. 21). This rally, even though it was not an official one, was a huge demonstration of power of Democratic Party, that fueled the campaign with the endorsement of the crowd's most beloved ones gathering in one place. It can be easily argued, that this was the key moment of the campaign, that made it much easier for Roosevelt to win the elections. The moviegoers, influenced by the mass idols have enhanced his position and could consider the candidate as someone publically respectable.

This, however, was only the beginning of a trend. Movie fans could meet their heroes by attending films in the cinemas, but the creation of the television has let them invite the celebrities into their houses. Moreover, such power was given to the radio, which play a crucial role in the 1944 elections. The relationship between Roosevelt and the entertainment community was on its highest level and was supported by his wins in 1936 and 1940. The president managed to attract two important figures: Frank Sinatra and Orson Welles. The singer, who was a representative of the American youth, spoke highly about the president and met with him in the White House. Orson Welles on the other hand, used the clout of the radio, by endorsing him during his popular radio shows. At this time, in Hollywood, a group of Democratic supporters gathered and organised a Hollywood Democratic Club, which aimed at supporting the president's campaign. The campaign has reached its pivotal moment during the national radio broadcast hosted by HDC (Wheeler, 2013, p. 44). The show started with an opening song *You Gotta Get Out and Vote* sang by Judy Garland and was followed by a political sketch by Groucho Marx. At the end of the program, Humphrey Bogart gave a crucial speech, first explaining, why he even engaged in political activity, citing his experiences, while visiting U.S. Soldiers and then stating: "I am going to vote for the man, who has demonstrated his ability to look ahead and plan ahead in war and peace. I am going to vote for Franklin Delano Roosevelt" (Brownell, 2014, p. 78).

After the Second World War, the perception of the position of the politician in the society has changed. John F. Kennedy was not only seen as Hollywood's favorite – his supporters perceived him as a celebrity. Coming from a powerful background, Kennedy could easily be argued as the first "pop star" of politics – his brother-in-law was Peter Lawford, member of the "Rat Pack", group of the most influential actors in the Hollywood. Since the "Rat Pack" consisted of inter alia aforementioned Bogart and Sinatra, the group was strongly associated with the Democratic celebrity supporters. The link between them and the senator was the perfect instrument, that could throw the support to the voters. It is important to state the role of Sammy Davis Jr. in this group, successful Afro-American actor and singer, who could appeal to vote-registered black community. Since Bogart's death in 1957, Sinatra became the leading figure in the group, that was focusing on political activity, establishing a mutual respect with Kennedy and sharing their passion for politics and also women. During the Democratic convention in 1960, the Rat Pack sang the national

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anthem, joined by other movie stars such as Lee Marvin, Nat King Cole or Shirley MacLaine (Watts, 2016, p. 93). Sinatra himself did not stop canvassing for Kennedy even during the convention, where he was lobbying the delegates and promoted the candidate to the press (Wheeler, 2013, p. 46). The group, by endorsing the candidate, received a new nickname, "The Jack Pack", but they were not the only celebrities, that helped Kennedy win. The Democratic candidate also launched a commercial, in which he received the endorsement of another important figure in black community – actor Harry Belafonte. Still, Sinatra was the "deadliest weapon" of Kennedy's campaign staff, appearing not only at the events, but also during the strategy meetings (Watts, 2016, p. 94). The singer maintained his position even after Kennedy won the elections, as he produced the inaugural ball, during which not only he managed to gather the most important celebrity figures, but also presented a new version of his hit song *High Hopes*, changing the lyrics to endorse his friend. However, shortly after the elections, Kennedy decided to cut the ties with Sinatra because of his mob ties.

As it can be acknowledged, Hollywood seemed to be attracted to the Democratic Party, especially after the "internal war" between the actors and senator McCarthy in the 1950's. Nevertheless, there still were important celebrity figures, who supported the Republican values and endorsed their candidates. In 1960, John Wayne appeared in an ad for Life Magazine and supported Richard Nixon's candidacy, referring to the Battle of Alamo, about which he just finished making a movie. Henceforth, the popularity of Republicans among movie stars started to grow. As the congressman, who was fighting communist enemy in Hollywood, he was not likely to success among celebrities, but he managed to gather around his campaign Republican oriented movie stars, who formed a "Celebrities for Nixon Committee" (Doyle, 2009). After becoming friends with Bob Hope in 1950's, it was easier for him to approach this group – film director Mervyn LeRoy played a key role during his failed 1960 presidential campaign, recruiting endorsements for Nixon such as Jimmy Stewart or Gary Cooper – this trend was also followed, when he ran for the Governor of California (2009). At this time, a Hollywood actor, Ronald Reagan switched sides and started to support Republicans and actively engaged in the presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater in 1964. As he became influential in the party's structures, he also became a Governor of California in 1967, which allowed him to lobby for the nomination during the 1968 elections. The Republican voters finally had their own celebrity politician fighting during the primaries and what is more, he was not the only one influential in the establishment. Not only Reagan was a celebrity politician – his main rival, Richard Nixon was a politician, that was highly respected among older movie stars, who represented more conservative values. His campaign staff knew how to use this image, as this event coincided with the premiere of "The Green Berets", anti-communist war drama set in Vietnam, directed by the aforementioned John Wayne. Even though the film was protested in northern cities,



it appealed to blue-collar and white southern voters, who were supposed to play a crucial role in Nixon's win (2009). Nixon also managed to earn the unexpected support from the NBA superstar Wilt Chamberlain, who decided to engage in politics after Martin Luther King Jr.'s death. As the Democratic Party by 1968 has already established itself as the liberal, black voter-friendly, this was seen a surprise. Nixon and his political advisors skillfully used the celebrity endorsement as the mechanism to gather the support of the voters, hitherto used mostly by the Democratic candidates. Even though Nixon personally was not a fan of television, he has seen a huge potential in it – the highlight point of his campaign was the appearance in a popular comedy show *Laugh-In*, in which he said a show's popular catchphrase "Sock it to me?". According to Brownell, this was perfectly fit into the tactics his campaign staff presented, appealing to young voters to create a likeable image in the popular media (Brownell, 2014, p. 189).

At that time, liberal celebrities started to engage in civil rights movements, strongly opposing the Vietnam War and the ongoing discrimination of ethnic minorities. 60's have finally brought a new type of the celebrity – celebrity musicians, who became more and more influential among young voters. It is needed to describe how their importance grew at that time, to understand how they managed to establish a position, that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century played a more significant role during the elections, than actors or sportsmen. These celebrities no longer were linked with the establishment, unreachable for the ordinary fan. They were rather perceived as social rebels, fighting for the goals of common people and being a part of the movements. Musicians with their pacifist attitude were spokesmen for the youth, who was tired of conservatives and the country's foreign policies. Martin Luther King's movement against the racial segregation drew support from many artists – one of them, Baez, after hearing his speech stressed, that she would only play for the integrated audiences (Wheeler, 2013, p. 54). Bob Dylan, MC5 or Rolling Stones were also very important figures in these movements. Even though some of them softened their image, they have started a new trend in celebrity support, by attracting voting students and instead of supporting the politicians, painted them in a bad light. Also actors were attracted to the charismatic persona of Luther King, during his March on Washington in 1963, such Hollywood stars as Paul Newman, Charlton Heston, Marlon Brando or Sidney Poitier, attended the event showing their disagreement on racial injustice (Johnson, 2013). Aforementioned Harry Belafonte was one of the closest supporters of Luther King, organizing funds for his movement, while using his celebrity status. Most of the entertainment community at that time was a bastion of centre-left politics, Paul Newman campaigned in 1968 for Eugene McCarthy, one of the candidates during the Democratic primaries, who strongly opposed the Vietnam War (Wheeler, 2013, p. 47). The seventies, however, brought a new form of the celebrity endorsement, as the result of the mutual cooperation between the world of acting and music. Campaign staffs have already learnt, that it is wiser to let the

celebrities play a more important role during the elections – therefore they emerged more eagerly during the campaigns as the CPE fundraisers. In 1972 George McGovern faced Nixon during the presidential elections – as a Democratic nominee, due to his anti-Vietnam stance was appealing to liberal voters. That is when the celebrities took over his campaign – especially the famous siblings Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine. MacLaine, interested in Women's Movement claimed, that she was one of the "new politicians" who would use her celebrity status to influence voters (Schroeder, 2004, p. 84). Her brother on the other hand, decided to step in as the campaign manager, cooperating with the chief Democratic organizer Gary Hart (Biskind, 2010, p. 167-171). Beatty organized door-to-door events, during which his friends such as Goldie Hawn, Jack Nicholson, Dustin Hoffman or Gene Hackman canvassed for the candidate, but this was not his main job – he pioneered fund-raising concerts with Quincy Jones or Barbara Streisand (Wheeler, 2013, p. 48). He managed to score one million dollars for the Democratic nominee's campaign, but these were not his last words – in 1972 he persuaded Simon & Garfunkel to reunite for a special event called "Together for McGovern Reunion Concert" (2013, p. 48). It is argued, however, that Beatty's appearance in the media, as a notorious Hollywood womanizer, could do more damage than good for the candidates he supported. On the other hand, the celebrity activism at that time was strongly linked to liberal values and younger voters sought authenticity in their idols.

The presidential campaign in 1980 was so full of endorsements, it was deemed by some political marketing experts as the "Star Wars". Jimmy Carter, President of the United States of that time, was a distant cousin of June Carter, wife of a country singer Johnny Cash. With their support, he could reach the Southern voters, that had rather conservative views. But they were not his most important weapon, on the 22<sup>th</sup> of July, he appointed a President's Council for Energy Efficiency – a group, that was supposed to help encourage citizens to spend the energy more efficiently. The formation was announced on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April and among experts, one could find very influential celebrities linked to the world of film and music, such as Kirk Douglas, Burt Reynolds or Mary Tyler Moore (Carter, 1981, p. 1404). During the campaign, Tyler Moore stood up with the support for Carter as a representative for liberal women from urban areas – Carter's campaign staff launched a campaign ad called "Carter for President", in which the actress endorsed the candidate advising, that "his attitude toward the women of America is clear and constructive" (Doyle, 2016). To support her opinion, she stated, that "during his presidency he was in favor for women equal rights and that anyone, who is concerned about women's freedom is going to vote for him" (2016). This situation shows, that the celebrities not only supported the candidate, but also explained why they are doing so, while sharing the values they have in common with them. One can argue, that this kind of support was more mature and less linked to the establishment connections with the candidate. Not

all of the Democratic celebrities shared her opinion, mainly because of the fact, that his opponent during the Democratic Primaries was senator Ted Kennedy, who was an influential persona in this entourage, with already famous for their political engagement stars such as Warren Beatty or Goldie Hawn (Rodriguez McRobbie, 2007). On the opposite site, Reagan had a tough task to do. Hollywood has already established itself as the influential liberal group and the right-wing approach was not popular at that time among the celebrities. Reagan's staff knew about it, that is why they have approached people linked to the show business. His Entertainment Committee focused on "individuals, who represent commercial and creative agencies in the film and television industry" (Critchlow, 2013, p. 212). He managed, however, to catch few recognizable names, such as Dean Martin, Jimmy Stewart or Charlton Heston and Frank Sinatra (!), who during the 70's switched to being a moderate conservative (2013, p. 212). Hollywood's right-wing was weakened after John Wayne, the most influential figure in this society, had lost his battle with cancer in 1979. Reagan, however, managed to attract young actors such as Clint Eastwood, who was supposed to play an important role in the modern Republican Hollywood. As it has been already established, Reagan was a celebrity himself, shaping his position on the political scene from a B list actor to a presidential candidate, he knew how to use media and all of the celebrity advantages to achieve his objectives – that is why Democratic voters disillusioned with Jimmy Carter decided to vote for him – this phenomenon was described as the creation of "Reagan Democrats".

As Reagan became the President of the United States, more and more celebrities "came out of political closet" and felt encouraged to show the support for Republicans. He was an ideal persona for this process – whereas conservative Republican values were not perceived as "cool" in mass culture, he was a politician, who was popular among voters and could be understood by the voters as the "rock star" of politics. With his faithful crew including Sinatra and Dean Martin, he managed to attract more newcoming stars such as Arnold Schwarzenegger or Jaclyn Smith. According to his campaign directors, this reflected the national trend toward conservatism (Sanello, 1984). What is more, Reagan's wife, Nancy, was also perceived as a role model for American conservative women acting as a celebrity using her husband's status to engage in political activity. Her action against substance abuse called "Just Say No" was a nationwide success and let her be distinguished as a politician. The support also came from Muhammad Ali, which was quite a surprise – boxer with rather radical views in the past, supporting Malcolm X and known for his stance against the Vietnam War. Ali, who by supporting Carter in the previous elections, helped him receive around 83 percent of the black vote, after failed attempt to win the Democratic Primaries by the reverend Jesse Jackson, stated, that "if there was a black candidate, he would support him", but he chose Reagan, because he "kept god in schools" (Wright Rigueur, 2016). Already 42, taking medication, that masked the Parkinson's disease and cutting the links with the "Nation of Islam"

organization, began to canvass for Reagan – campaign billboards along with him and his boxing rival Joe Frazier started to appear in black neighborhoods. This, however, did not have a big impact – furthermore, his image in the media was weakened with people blaming his decreasing health for his decisions (2016).

1980's are very important for the perception of how American celebrities influenced the political decisions of the U.S. voters for one reason. At that time, two influential social groups emerged, who were ignored in the past during the elections – ethnic minorities such as black voters and the LGBT community. The "War on Drugs" (called by many of the Afro-Americans "War on Blacks") during Reagan's era combined with the AIDS epidemic targeted these groups, making them scapegoats for this situation. This led to a decrease of trust in politicians among these groups, who did not feel represented enough in the world of American politics. It is important to stress that the cultural radicalization of these communities, combined with the celebration of their diversity created a, as one may call "cultural self-worth", which created a basis for the main topic of the chapter – the celebrity endorsements during last three elections.

Taking this into consideration, one needs to establish a stipulated definition of a "black celebrity". Of course, black celebrities in the past have engaged in campaign activities, but they were rather perceived as an addition, a 'tool' to win the elections among ethnic minorities. The situation changed in the 80's due to four factors: the growing popularity of Martin Delany's "black nationalism" approach, which re-defined the national identity for African Americans. Another important step was the issue, that finally the voice of Black America was heard through the movements of 50's and 60's. Both Martin Luther King and Malcolm X appealed to the community, but through different techniques – whereas Luther King as a civil activist focused on non-violent forms of civil disobedience, Malcolm X was seen as more radical, calling for the unity of black minority. This is strongly linked to the third factor – that young people learned about the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, that influenced their views, by rejecting white participation in their movements and focusing on building their own community. With these three elements, it can be argued, that at first "black celebrities" were social activists and politicians (and of course celebrities, who engaged in such activities, such as aforementioned actor Sidney Poitier, who played an important role during these events). The fourth and most influential element was the music – a way to articulate the needs of community and strengthen it. As soul music has gained its momentum during the Civil Rights Movement, stressing its importance for the community and its values, it had to evolve to let the younger crowd identify with the trend. A narrative was adjusted, that focused on storytelling, focused on describing the role of the African American in the society. In 1973, Afrika Bambaataa, a high school student from Bronx formed a Universal Zulu Nation, organization of racially conscious rappers, B-boys and graffiti artists, who were involved in the hip-

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hop culture (Asante, Jr. 2008: 84). Bambataa later started DJ'ing, spinning records on a sound system (2008, p. 86). At the beginning of the 1970's, one of the most influential figures of the genre emerged. Gil Scott-Heron, poet and spoken-word performer, who was the student of Lincoln University of Pennsylvania released in 1971 his opus magnum poem *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, which was recorded with a full band. The song, using a popular saying during the social movements of 60's, discussed how the true revolution would not be covered by the media. Scott-Heron was a true social activist, while being seen as a radical because of his links to the Black Panther Party, he organized concerts, during which he opposed nuclear energy and politics of Reagan (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 75). Heron's albums focused on problems such as social exclusion, white class ignorance and apartheid. In 1979 he performed at "No Nukes" concert, which took place in Madison Square Garden and was organized by MUSE – Musicians United for Safe Energy activist group, which advocated against the use of nuclear energy. Through music, the community dealt with police brutality and the social inequality. In 1980 the rebellions emerged in Miami, after four police officers have beaten an unarmed black businessman Arthur McDuffie to death (Asante Jr., 2008, p. 89). Same year, Dr. Molefi K. Asante released his book *Afrocentrity: The Theory of Social Change* in which he argued, that people of African descent should "see the world through African eyes" (Asante, 1980). Hip-hop started already establishing itself as a known genre in the mass media with the first film about hip-hop released into the theaters in 1982 called *Wild Style* (Asante Jr., 2008, p. 92). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1982, a first hip-hop track was released, that focused on the social commentary – the song was called *The Message* and was recorded by Grandmaster Flash and Furious Five. The recording described the everyday struggles of a black man in the ghetto with the verses:

*I can't take the smell, can't take the noise*

*Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice* (Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five, 1982)

Two years later, during the Democratic Primaries, the group supported Jesse Jackson's candidacy with the release of a political rap song *Jesse*, but eventually Jackson did not use it during his campaign. This, however, was the first attempt on hip-hop celebrity endorsement during the presidential campaign. Another important track, that influenced both the genre and the black community was *How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise?* by Brother D. The track describe the social situation in the United States, underlining the social inequality, weak education system, unemployment rates and inability to maintain the living on a decent level (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 75). Year earlier, Reagan established January 20 as a federal holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr (Asante, Jr., 2008, p. 94).

But how did the interests of ethnic minority groups came into political mainstream along with the interests of LGBT community? To fully describe this, it is needed to shortly analyze the

emergence of LGBT social movements. In 1965, first gay rights demonstrations took place in Philadelphia and Washington, as a result of the Civil Rights Movement's success concluding in the Voting Rights Act, which banned the voting requirements, that discriminated the black community (Browne-Marshall, 2016, p. xxi). On 27<sup>th</sup> of June, police raided a gay bar Stonewall Inn, which resulted in a riot, that lasted through the weekend. Over 2000 people took part in them and it was perceived as the first organised disobedience of this community against the police. Soon after, a Gay Liberation Front has been created, which has set a groundwork for a bigger movement (Cruikshank, 1992, p. 3).

The election of Harvey Milk in 1977 to a San Francisco Board of Supervisors marked the first time, when the openly gay person was elected to public office in California. As he became popular within the community, he strongly opposed "The Briggs Initiative" – a law, that would ban gays and lesbians from working in public schools. The conservative law caught the attention of one of the most known Hollywood activists – Jane Fonda. She met Milk in 1978 and shortly after befriended him – the pair successfully canvassed and defeated the law. Even though Harvey Milk was assassinated the same year, the LGBT community's voice was already heard in the media.

That is why, during his campaign, Jesse Jackson decided to merge the power of unheard communities, by launching a National Rainbow Coalition – an interest group, that represented the needs of the minorities, that were left behind during Reagan's administration. This helped to increase the voter registration in these groups, by attracting for instance the Arab-American community, giving voice to their concerns, such as the sovereignty of Lebanon (Zogby, 2014). In 1988, Jackson once again tried to win the Democratic nomination – even though he failed, he doubled his result. This would not happen, if he was not endorsed by at that time the most influential black celebrity in television, Bill Cosby. Cosby, who used his status for the philanthropic gestures. As a celebrity fundraiser, he managed to gather 100 000\$ for Jackson's primary campaign (Dyson, 1993, p. 79). He lost to Michael Dukakis, at that time the Governor of Massachusetts. To attract younger audience, he appeared at his campaign rallies with Rob Lowe, young Hollywood star, whose career was just supposed to blow up. However, his image had been compromised only the day before the Democratic National Convention, when a sex-tape has been videotaped, showing Lowe engaging in sex acts with a 16-year old. This situation shows, how sometimes the relationship between the celebrity and the politician can be fragile and one's behavior can interact with the image of his campaigning partner (Tanabe, 2011). Meanwhile, the Republicans did not really need the celebrity support to win the elections – they already had the most popular celebrity at the office. Nancy Reagan and Ronald Reagan helped George H.W. Bush win the elections, but Bush at one time thought about asking for a help of a celebrity. Clint Eastwood, who was already both a movie star and a politician (he became the Mayor of Carmel, California in 1986) was thought by Bush's

campaign staff as a perfect addition to his campaign. Moreover, Bush believed, that he should run for the presidency with Clint Eastwood as his potential vice-president, but eventually Dan Quayle became his running mate (Levy, 2011).

In 1992, Democratic nominee Bill Clinton earned huge support from the Hollywood celebrities. How was that possible? He was close friends with the Thomasons, a couple of TV and film producers, with whom he established friendship during his years as a Governor of Arkansas. They managed to introduce him to the world of movie stars – in 1991 they ran fund-raisers to help him win the Democratic candidate nominee (Wheeler, 2013, p. 78). As he secured the nomination, he was already perceived as a “cool” star politician, who always appears in a company of the biggest Hollywood figures. This has been acknowledged by the actor community in September of 1992, when they hosted a US\$1 million fundraiser for him (2013, p. 78). He indeed had an image, that appealed to young voters, having history with smoking marijuana and opposing the Vietnam War, he struggled to get the support of older, conservative voters. He earned the support of Jack Nicholson, Danny DeVito and Michelle Pfeiffer, but he especially benefited from the endorsement of Barbra Streisand and Warren Beatty, who were already one of the most influential liberal celebrities (2013, p. 78). Streisand hosted another fundraiser, during which his campaign aid earned US\$1,5 million and the support of the most popular film director Steven Spielberg (Troy, 2016). Clinton also needed to earn the support of the minorities. After clashing with ACT-UP member Bob Rafsky, during one of the fundraisers, two days later he met with the members of the association along with other activists to talk about AIDS policies (Rafsky, 1992). The organization, disillusioned with Reagan's policies, was fighting for the rights of people affected with HIV and AIDS; Clinton assured them, that he is the only candidate, that would take care of this issue. Clinton was also endorsed by David Geffen, producer and member of the LGBT community. He promised him, that he would represent gay rights (Wheeler, 2013, p. 78).

At that time, hip-hop already became one of the most popular and influential genres in the world of music. In their music, rappers eagerly sampled speeches of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, who were role models for the younger black community. According to hip-hop academic researchers, Malcolm X was more influential among them because of his hardline political stands (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 74). Adam Bradley argued, that Martin Luther King's mild approach would not go well with the aggressive hip-hop lyrics (2010). Hip-hop became the music of black consciousness, artists from the East Coast, such as KRS-One or Public Enemy in their lyrics encouraged their lyrics to fight with the oppression of the system by engaging in physical fights with racists in the means of self-defense and by refusing to serve in the military (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 75). Chuck D of Public Enemy even stated, that “hip-hop is Black America's CNN” (Chuck, Yah, 1999, p. 14). In the meantime, the West Coast hip-hop emerged with

different issues raised in their lyrics. Gangsta rap was influenced by gang wars in the socially and economically underdeveloped communities and its storylines often focused on hedonism and rebellious approach. Why is that important? That is because both of these sides focused on one goal – fighting with inequality. One of the milestones of this era was a song by a group called N.W.A – *Fuck tha Police*, in which rappers focused on the police brutality towards black community, also pointing out, that black policemen in order to gain respect were even harder on young, black people (N.W.A., 1988). The Rodney King's beating in 1991 marked the first time, when the world of hip-hop clashed with politics in the mainstream (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 75). The video of King beaten by the policemen was recorded by the witness and sent to media. After the officers were acquitted of all charges by the jury, the Los Angeles riots started and lasted for six days. Hip-hop community released tons of material on this subject, member of N.W.A, Ice Cube released an album called *Predator*, commenting on racial tensions and the other member of the group, Dr. Dre released a song called *The Day the Ni\*\*az Took Over*, in which he compared the riots to the day, that symbolically the ethnic minorities took over the power – the song was featured on his 1992 album called *The Chronic* (2015, p. 76). The event heated the campaign and even influenced the U.S. political marketing strategies. The member of the Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Movement, hip-hop artist and poet Sister Souljah, stated during the interview focusing on the Los Angeles riots: "If black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people?" (Davey, 2012). Bill Clinton shortly after condemned her statement and criticized Jackson for her involvement in Rainbow Movement. This was a smart campaign move to distance himself from an unpopular opinion, to attract the vote of the white middle-class (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 76). This move helped him gain their votes by showing, that he does not fully support the minority issues and allowed to attract the moderate voters. Taking this into consideration, it is needed to form an academic definition of "Sister Souljah Moment" in American politics. This condition in the field of political science is described, when the candidate is distancing himself from the person, who is supporting him, because of his/hers controversial views, that could make him lose the votes of the moderate or undecided voters. What is more, it means also standing to a representative of the interest group, to acknowledge candidate's independency.

Clinton knew how to present himself in the media – in 1992 his campaign activity in television included impersonating Elvis Presley and Marlon Brando for the interviewers, answering personal questions on MTV and appearing in Arsenio Hall's talk-show, in which he demonstrated his saxophone playing skills (Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., 2015). According to Stanyer, this was a move to help Clinton connect with young audience and women voters (2007, p. 31). By appearing at late-night shows, the candidate could approach viewers, who rather sought entertainment, than politics in TV. Clinton can be deemed as the first candidate, who won the elections by using the influence of

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the television. His appearance attracted the attention of the media, he understood the importance of popular culture. For his campaign theme song, he used a 1977 hit *Don't Stop* recorded by Fleetwood Mac and even though their popularity at that time was no longer this big, he persuaded them to reunite for his inauguration ball. To maintain his "hip" status in the media, he also invited musicians, who were appealing to young communities and ethnic minorities such as Boyz II Men and rapper LL Cool J (Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., 2015).

Clinton managed to maintain his position as the Hollywood's favorite during the 1996 elections. After Democrats lost their majority in Congress after the 1994 elections – Republicans attacked the morality of film industry and their links to the president. Clinton at that time became even more influential, he hosted celebrities in the White House to talk about the proposals to health-care system. Democratic fundraisers were hosted by famous personas such as Sharon Stone; his large group of supporters also included new stars such as Macaulay Culkin. The positive image within the Democratic voters reflected his negative image within the Republicans – seen as a part of the liberal establishment, that ruled the country. His influence within the LGBT celebrity community raised after Republicans took over the Congress. In 1995, Nina Jacobson and Bruce L. Cohen founded *Out There*, a political group with the mailing list of over 500 openly gay personas from the entertainment industry. Even though the community was disillusioned because of the president's stance on gays in military and same-sex marriage, they did not have any other candidate, who would advocate for them (Rose, 2020). During the elections, Clinton benefited on celebrity financial endorsements – he received donations from Spielberg (US\$503,123), Streisand (US\$142,825) and Paul Newman (US\$72,500) (Wheeler, 2013, p. 78). During the fundraisers, many stars of entertainment collected money for the candidate, during the fundraiser hosted by Ron Burkle, owner of a Ralph's supermarket chain, Tom Hanks was an emcee, The Eagles and Streisand played concerts and the guest list included Kevin Spacey, Carrie Fisher, Shirley MacLaine, Sharon Stone and Eric Idle (AllPolitics, 1996). Academics argue, whether Clinton's campaign staff used the celebrities to achieve their goals, by this meaning winning the elections, or Clinton was flaunted by the world of celebrities and that is why he maintained relationship with them. After his second term, however, the issue of endorsement became more complicated.

That is because a third player appeared during the 2000 Presidential Elections, who managed to gain the sympathy of Hollywood and reclaimed the influence of the establishment from the Democrats. That is why it is needed to analyze the endorsements of not only George W. Bush and Al Gore, but also Ralph Nader, political activist, who ran as a candidate of Green Party. Vice-President Al Gore attracted a wide amount of A-list celebrities. Some of them, chose the narrowcasting technique, which allowed them to reach smaller groups of voters. For instance, radio listeners in New England could hear writer Stephen King criticizing Bush's policies. College

students in swing states would receive Lenny Kravitz's CD's on which the singer opposed Republican candidate's environmental policies (Marks, 2000). Voters in Florida would receive a recorded phone call from Barbra Streisand, in which she would critique W. Bush's stance on abortion; according to Planned Parenthood, an organization, that was supporting Al Gore, thanks to that she could reach almost 200 000 voters, who cared about the abortion laws (2000). Even though Gore was losing with W. Bush in the opinion polls, this tactic was impressive. Sometimes the association with the celebrity was risky – during Gore's event, Cher, who supported the candidate, expressed different views regarding the situation in the Middle East. Ahead of the Democratic National Convention, Gore already had support and donations from Jerry Seinfeld, Nicholas Cage, Jack Nicholson, Lily Tomlin, Richard Dreyfuss, Michael Douglas, Kevin Costner, Harrison Ford, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sharon Stone, Robert de Niro, Tom Hanks, Herbie Hancock, Sheryl Crow, Nancy Sinatra and Tommy Lee Jones, who was the candidate's roommate during the Harvard University student years (Kettle, 2000). Bush's ticket on the other hand was supported by Chuck Norris, wrestler Ernie Ladd, Robert Duvall, Chaka Khan, Meat Loaf and Marilyn Manson (!), who during his interview in *Talk Magazine* stated before the Republican Primaries, that he both supports the candidacy of John McCain and George W. Bush and if he had to pick, he'd pick Bush, while advising, that he is not interested in what "the other side" has to offer (Carlson, 2000). These elections have proven, that there is a special type of celebrity, that does not compromise. Study shows, that the celebrities, who more eagerly engage in political activism in their life instead of only appear during the campaign rally events, tend to choose the underdog. Ralph Nader was an ideal candidate for them, advocating for progressive causes and criticising the two-party system in the United States. During this campaign, Nader established himself as a celebrity politician, but in contrast to celebrity politicians such as Reagan, neither he was influential, nor he came from the establishment. During his sold-out rally in Madison Square Garden, he was accompanied by famous celebrity activists such as Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins, Patti Smith or Bill Murray (Chen, 2000). His candidacy also appealed to Hollywood politics radicals such as Paul Newman or Warren Beatty, who supported both Gore and Nader (Kettle, 2000). Another important figures supporting Nader were the Beastie Boys, a hip-hop group from New York. Having already established themselves on the music scene as political activists, in October of 2000, member of the group Adam Horovitz, known as Ad-Rock, announced his support for the candidate and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October released a song called *Count Down*, on which Nader's speech was mixed with Ad-Rock's beats (Mlynar 2011). Track became popular in the internet, circulating over the peer-to-peer programs. Soon after he endorsed the candidate on MTV and encouraged young voters to register. His bandmate Adam Yauch followed his politics and also endorsed the candidate – the band appeared at the super-rally for Nader on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2000 (Billet, 2012). It is also needed to argue, that 2000 elections

can be marked as the first elections, during which the campaign staff of candidates used internet as a marketing tool. While visiting Nader's campaigning website, one can find the endorsement statements from Susan Sarandon, Michael Moore, Cornel West, Phil Donahue and Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder (Nader, 2000); from these statements, one common thought can be noticeable – celebrities advise to the voters, that they do not have to choose between the two main candidates, they can vote for the candidate, that truly represents their values, they do not have to compromise. It is interesting, how the celebrities distinguish themselves from the establishment, who in their voice represents both parties. Even though Nader did not have any chances during the elections, he presented a good result, which by some academics concluded in 'stealing' the Democrat votes from Al Gore and him failing to win with George W. Bush.

Concluding the historical overview of celebrity endorsements during the presidential elections in United States, one needs to focus on the political battle between John Kerry and George W. Bush in 2004. George W. Bush was arguably celebrity establishment's least favorite president. His foreign policies not only angered the liberal establishment, but also created a fear among young voters. At that time, white rapper Eminem, whose uncompromising image and songs were reaching the top charts all over the world, was considered to be a voice of generation. Shortly before the elections, he release a protest song *Mosh*, which aimed at Bush's administration (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 76). In his song, he encouraged his fans to engage in a mosh pit with him outside the White House while stating, that every citizen deserves a better president, who should go to war himself to impress his father, instead of sending innocent young people to death (Mathers III, 2004). John Kerry's campaign staff picked this up and shortly after Kerry, during his MTV interview, stated that he agrees with the song and likes it (Heffernan, 2004). After the elections, rapper regretted, that he did not release the song earlier to help Kerry win. The Democratic candidate knew how powerful hip-hop is along young and black communities – in March of 2004, during yet another MTV interview he stated: "I'm fascinated by rap and hip-hop. I think there's a lot of poetry in it. And I think you'd better listen to it pretty carefully, because it's important." (Goldberg, 2005). The biggest, however, music event, that was supposed to help Kerry was the *Vote for Change* tour, held by a MoveOn PAC in the swing states. The main star of the tour was Bruce Springsteen, rock musician associated with blue-collar voters, while being personally a progressive. Although his political activism alienated some of his conservative fans, he was eager to help defeat Bush (2005). Tour was supported by a wide lineup of artists such as R.E.M., Dave Matthews Band, Pearl Jam and Bright Eyes (Orloff, 2004). During the opening act, Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes expressed his political views by stating, that "A vote for Bush is like shitting in your own bed" (2004). During Pearl Jam's set, the band was joined by Tim Robbins, who presented his electric guitar skills (2004). Apart from the tour, R.E.M. also engaged in the campaign – their song *Around the Sun* was donated to a pro-

Kerry documentary (Fletcher, 2014). Music also played an important part during the Democratic National Convention, when Red Hot Chili Peppers made an appearance (Crampton, 2004). The convention was officially hosted by Ben Affleck and Bianca Jagger, former wife of Mick Jagger and a fashion icon. The endorsement of Kerry during these elections were mainly fueled by the hate for George W. Bush. Sometimes the remarks of the celebrities towards him were offensive and could damage the candidate's and celebrity's reputation - when Whoopi Goldberg made a sexual joke about Bush during a Democratic fundraiser, she was dropped by the Slim-Fast company, she advertised (Brook 2004). However, Bush's biggest critic was director Michael Moore, who released his documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, which criticized Bush's administration, especially the foreign policy, during the election year. In 2003, after receiving an Oscar for his documentary *Bowling for Columbine*, Moore gave an anti-Bush speech, that stirred controversy, but that was not enough for his Bush remarks in the media – later this year in the interview he called Bush a "deserter", recalling gossip, that Bush did not do much, while he was serving in the military (Moore, 2004). Moore was the main voice of the negative campaign against the running President. It is needed to also say, that Kerry's ticket was supported by such stars as Leonardo Di Caprio, Michael J. Fox, Puff Daddy, Stephen Hawking, Cameron Diaz or Moby. Especially it is needed to underline the influence of Puff Daddy, who launched a Citizen Change organization, that aimed at young people for them to engage in voting. The message of the campaign, "Vote or Die!" was promoted on t-shirts and order merchandise and the action was backed by Mary J. Blige, 50 Cent or Mariah Carey (Associated Press, 2004).

Bush managed to remain in the presidential chair, even though most of the media and celebrities were against him. Nevertheless, he earned the support from Jessica Simpson, who toured the White House in March of 2004 (People.com, 2004). Furthermore, Alice Cooper, actress Bo Derek and Robert Duvall supported George W. Bush. There is an answer, however, to the question, why some of the Republican celebrities remained silent during these elections – celebrities tend to canvass less for the president, that is in charge, while focusing on the primaries. The 2004 elections also earned the celebrity support on the libertarian side – comedian Doug Stanhope was the most recognizable person, that canvassed for Michael Badnarik.

The research shows how the celebrity support has transformed over the years and how the political marketing shaped because of the endorsements. The demonstration of that behavior was needed to answer the questions raised in the further academic work, especially in the black community, that used hip-hop to express their political stands. Over the years, the presidential campaign became more of a show, than a political debate, but this was just the beginning of a trend, that culminated with the elections in 2008 and the development and transformation of the internet use.

## 4.2 Celebrity endorsement as a factor influencing the American voter

When Fredwreck released a song called *Dear Mr. President* in 2004, featuring rappers such as Everlast, KRS-One or a group Mobb Deep, it became clear, that young people and the ethnic communities are tired of Bush's presidency. In the song, rappers blamed Bush for the Iraq War, that made many young people handicapped and traumatized instead of letting them develop and achieve their dreams. The lyrics also focused on the behavior of the middle-class voters, who still supported the president (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 77). This song is a perfect entry to this subsection, because it also shows how the political music has developed before 2008 – rappers not only directed their message to the Democratic voters, but also tried to understand the Republican stance (2015, p. 77). Around that time, Obama emerged in the world of politics as the candidate for the U.S. Senator's seat. During Democratic National Convention in Boston in 2004, he delivered a keynote address – after winning the U.S. Senator Democratic Primary in Illinois by a landslide, he was deemed as a potential future star of the party. During his speech, he referred to his Arab-American background, his rather progressive views and Kerry's nomination, which gave him faith in the elections (Obama, 2004). Obama's charismatic appearance and rhetoric quickly caught the attention of the media. It can be argued, that because of that, he already became a celebrity politician in the eyes of voters, who were interested in politics. Although Kerry failed to beat Bush during the elections, Obama could celebrate his own victory – in November, he won with the Republican candidate, Alan Keyes by a wide margin.

Obama became the only member of the Congressional Black Caucus in Senate. During his term of office, he engaged in the creation of a new immigration law, by cosponsoring the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, increasing the transparency of financial institutions by introducing the Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 and reduction of nuclear threat, by introducing the Lugar-Obama extension of Cooperative Threat Reduction (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 77). 2006 Congressional Elections allowed Democrats to finally regain the majority in Congress. This was mainly the result of the decreasing popularity of George W. Bush and his policies and let the Democrats believe, that during the 2008 Presidential Elections, they would have a big chance for their candidate's win. The cornerstone of Obama's primary campaign can be established during his interview with NBC's Tim Russert, during which he stated, that he reconsidered the possibility of running for the president, even though nine months earlier he argued, that this would not be possible (Nagourney, Zeleny, 2006). But when did his actual campaign start? On the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2007, Obama uploaded a video on Obama Exploratory Committee website.

During the spot, Obama announced, that he was thinking how could he advocate for change and that as the result, he decided to run for the presidential office (Murray, Cillizza, p. 2007). This was a symbolic proof of the transformation of American campaign politics – instead of using the traditional forms of communication, the candidate decided to plump for the internet and new media, to attract younger audience. His first endorsements were political – Obama received support from Senate Majority Whip Richard J. Durbin and Rep. Artur Davis. The senator from Illinois was already recognizable among the voters after the reprint of his first book shortly after his speech in 2004, called *Dreams from My Father*, followed by his second bestseller *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* released in October, 2006 (2007). Obama formally entered the presidential race on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, by delivering a speech called *Our Past, Future & Vision for America* by the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois, where Abraham Lincoln began his political career (Nagourney, Zeleny, 2007). Being compared to Hillary Clinton, who was a widely recognized politician, Obama could at that time be defined as a celebrity politician, who was an underdog, whose rally campaign was fueled by the hype of the media. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, Obama received the endorsement from Jesse Jackson, stating, that his candidacy in 1984 and 1988 "broke down barriers" regarding black politicians participating in the presidential primaries and, that he is full of respect for the senator (Bellandi, 2007). As it can be argued, at that time Obama was just building his buzz in the media, being endorsed by influential politicians. Before proceeding to the next step of the timeline of Obama's campaign, one burning question needs to be asked – can one achieve a celebrity status without the support of the media? This arguably can be established with the help of Internet 2.0, which transformed into various platforms, on which users could generate their own content. That is what happened in June of 2007, when the Youtube video was posted on the platform, called *Crush on Obama*. The spot was created by a channel called BarelyPolitical and displayed a young woman singing about her love to Barack Obama. The girl, calling herself in the video "Obamagirl", sings that "she can not wait until 2008" and is the humorous reflection of how the voters perceived the candidate, basing on his charisma and personal appearance (Tapper, 2008). Even though the girl was a fictional character, created for the needs of the video, the actress, who played her role became a celebrity connected to Obama's campaign. The creators stated, that this is just a spot made for fun, but with both of them being fascinated by the candidate, the video generated the buzz needed for his campaign. The candidate also started to receive endorsement from the hip-hop community, with Talib Kweli releasing his single *The People* with the lyrics "My raps ignite the people like Obama" and the music video in which a 'Obama 08' bumper sticker can be seen (Hamby, 2007). Later during the interview Common stated, that hip-hop represents the struggle and the progressive values, which can be found in Obama's political program. Furthermore, another two hip-hop songs emerged, that stirred a discussion, whether this

would become a campaign trend. Talib Kweli, after namedropping Obama in his track *Say Something* told CNN, that Obama is a refreshing face in politics and that his friends are eager to vote for him. What is important, Kweli, by describing Obama's values, has created a motion of Obama's agenda setting in the media, that was later used by his campaign staff. By stating "He is someone who looks more like you. I don't mean black, but I mean the young thing. And his name is Barack Obama. This country is become more and more multicultural", he addressed both young voters and the black community, that sought themselves in the candidate (2007). Another rapper of Asian-American descent, Jin, posted a track on MySpace, at that time still popular and influential music platform for emerging artists, called *Open Letter 2 Obama*, which had 320 000 views. How did the campaign staff of Obama react? They knew the power of the internet and celebrities, shortly after Jin's song was available as a ringtone at Obama's campaigning website and it became an introduction song to his appearance at the College Democrats National Convention in South Carolina in July (2007). In September, Obama was featured on the cover of the September issue of *Vibe*, entertainment magazine aimed at R&B and hip-hop enthusiasts. In the interview, he acknowledged the importance of hip-hop to black community and young people, when he stated, that the power of this culture affects how do young people see themselves and their decisions (2007). Obama also described himself as a 'more of a jazz guy', mentioning Marvin Gaye or Miles Davis, but he also admitted, that he has Jay-Z and Beyoncé songs on his iPod (Gardner 2008). His iPod became a campaign artefact, that received a media coverage. According to Dana Gorzelany-Mostak, "Obama's iPod contents were not just a public interest story, but rather a litmus test to determine his cultural blackness as well as his 'acceptability' as a candidate" (2016). This is related to a position of iPod among the users, who by creating their playlists construct their own soundtracks to the surrounding, which positions Obama as a music enthusiast, who selects the songs he's listening to based on his mood and personality (Bull, 2012, p. 1999) (Forman, 2015, p. 160). It is worth mentioning, however, that the history of the relationship between Obama and the world of hip-hop is a bit longer – the U.S. Senator met with rapper Ludacris at the end of November, 2006, when the musician was launching his YouthAIDS campaign, concentrated on raising awareness among young people. Ludacris was fascinated by the politician, stating, that he felt like he was meeting a relative, and that during their meeting they talked about the "youth empowerment" (Associated Press, 2006). Apart from that, the candidate was a guest at Ellen DeGeneres show in October of 2007. This shows, how his campaign staff used his media appearance to target the liberal groups of voters; not only this was one of the most popular TV shows in America, but also DeGeneres was (and still is) one of the most influential LGBT celebrities, having impact on millions of young people representing sexual minorities. During the show, Obama combined the

presence of his cool image in the media, by showing his dance moves to the legendary hit song *Crazy in Love* by aforementioned Jay-Z and Beyoncé, but also, after being confronted by Ellen, he presented his views on the LGBT issues, by stating, that there needs to be set up a civil union, that is acknowledged by the states, equal both for same-sex couples and any other (CBSNEWS, 2007). His biggest ally in terms of celebrity recognition was, however, Oprah Winfrey; without a doubt the most influential celebrity of African-American descent, host of the widely popular *Oprah Winfrey Show*. The first time, that she made a public endorsement of Obama, was during the Larry King's talk-show in September of 2006, when she declared, that she would support Obama, if he decided to run for the presidency. When she hosted Obama in October of 2006, when he was promoting his aforementioned book, she confirmed her endorsement. During her another visit to Larry King in May of 2007. Winfrey underlined, that she would choose Obama over Hillary Clinton, because he knows the candidate in private and knows, that his political statements are the reflection of his good nature (Zeleny, 2007). To describe, how big influence Winfrey has on Americans, Craig Garthwaite analysed the book sales of known literature classics such as *Anna Karenina* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* before and after the books were included in Oprah's Book Club. The results were astonishing, after being recommended by the book discussion club, the sales of each of the books increased by hundred times (Garthwaite, Moore, 2008). Winfrey established herself as the main CPE fundraiser for the senator from Illinois. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, she hosted a fundraiser gala, with tickets costing US\$2300, which at that time was the highest financial support, that the candidate could receive from a private person. The gala was attended by the most influential black celebrities such as Jamie Foxx, Halle Berry, Dennis Haysbert, Sidney Poitier, Forest Whitaker and Chris Rock and included a Stevie Wonder performance (Hoffman, 2007). The event helped collect almost three million dollars for the candidate (2007). In December, Winfrey engaged in other campaign activities, by joining him during rallies in Iowa and New Hampshire and introducing him to his supporters. Few days earlier, in Chicago, a legendary indie band Wilco headlined Obama's event "Chicago Rock's for Change" along with Macy Gray and The Cool Kids (NME, 2007). In 2007, Obama also earned the support of historians, what acknowledged his popularity among students and faculty members (Jaschnik 2007). What is more, he also earned the political endorsement from Zbigniew Brzezinski, the most influential foreign policy strategist (MacGillis, 2007).

By the end of 2007, Obama's campaign staff could be more than satisfied with the current situation. In the first quarter of 2007, Obama has raised 25,7 million dollars for his campaign, which was an incredible result. But that was just the beginning – in the second quarter he managed to overtake Hillary Clinton, by raising another \$33 million. Even though he was not able to win with her during the third and fourth quarter, his results shocked the public opinion and allowed Clinton to



start worrying about the results of the Democratic Primaries (Dupuis, Boeckelman, 2008). What was significant for the fundraisers, was the fact, that Obama did not accept money from the lobbyists or PAC's and had twice as many donors as Clinton. This once again has set Obama as an underdog politician, supported by the crowd of endorsers, instead of receiving the money mostly from the lobby groups. This was an interesting setting and a good campaign move, which allowed position Clinton as the part of the establishment, whereas Obama was perceived as a politician, that gets the support from the citizens.

With the beginning of the Democratic Primaries, Obama received financial endorsement from further celebrities, such as Will Smith, Morgan Freeman, Larry David, George Clooney, Jennifer Aniston, Edward Norton or John Cleese. At the beginning of 2008, Obama met with Jay-Z and Kanye West to talk about how the music can be used in a positive way to encourage young people and to fill the gap between them and older generations, who identify hip-hop with violence and misogyny (Aewing, 2008). Whereas the financial support was important for Obama's campaign staff, his true endorsement power came from the new media. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, ABC News Now premiered a will.i.am's song *Yes We Can*, which day later has been uploaded on Obama's community blog and on Youtube, by the user with a nickname WeCan08. In this video, celebrities of different cultural background show their support for Obama, presenting themselves as different people, but standing united for common goal (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 81). The title of the song refers to Obama's motto, which he used for the first time publicly during the Democratic Primaries in New Hampshire. The video, in which Obama's campaign staff has not been involved, featured Scarlett Johansson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Common, John Legend, Nichole Scherzinger, Herbie Hancock, Amaury Nolasco and many others (2015, p. 81). From the political marketing point of view, such video had much bigger impact on the voters, than the financial endorsements of celebrities. First of all, the video became a viral hit on the internet and began spreading among the internet users without much effort from the campaign staff. Second of all, no money was spent by Obama's staff on the spot, but the third and most important issue was already mentioned. The celebrities represented various ethnic groups, such as Latin-Americans, Arab-Americans, African-Americans. Not only this symbolically was supposed to show the unity, that America was built on, but also helped the viewers engage with the celebrities from their society. Furthermore, this type of endorsement is the most effective, because celebrities may endorse the candidates, show up at their rallies, but when they make an endorsement video, that becomes a viral, the spot becomes the hot topic of the entire campaign, with people sharing it, commenting on it and generating views on a daily basis. The clip was followed by another video by will.i.am, "*We Are The Ones*", in which another group of popular celebrities such as Zoë Kravitz, Jessica Alba, Regina King, Macy Gray, Tyrese, John Leguizamo, Ryan Phillippe and many others, advocated for the changes they believe

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in, while explaining, that Obama is the candidate, that would change the politics. The beat sampled crowd chanting cheerfully "Obama" (will.i.am, 2008).

The campaign staff's approach was to gather as many celebrities as possible to canvass for Obama, but also to create a multicultural group, that represents each of the surroundings. Robert DeNiro, Kerry Washington, Usher and Chris Rock appeared at Obama's events, but also actor Kal Penn, who represents the Indian-American community. Actress Kelly Hu held two fundraisers, which were aimed at young Asian-Americans supporting Obama, stating, that Obama has leaved among Asians, therefore he understands them (Newton-Small, 2008).

Shortly before the Super Tuesday, Talib Kweli wrote an open letter to the voters called *Open letter to President Barack Obama*. In his message, Kweli described how he followed the pattern of ethnic minorities and voted for Democrats, but he stopped doing that after voting for Bill Clinton, whose foreign policies and personal affairs disappointed him (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 78). Following his first term, he did not feel any need to participate in the elections, because he did not believe, that his votes would be followed by any change. The situation changed after Obama emerged at the political scene, when he learnt about his progressive causes regarding economic and social inequality and environment (2015, p. 78). That is when he felt, that the political scene needs to undergo a change, and even though one man would not be able to do that, this would just be the beginning of a bigger trend (Kweli, 2008). Rapper also mentions the fact, that the politician is a perfect example for his children and not only he is a hope of the ethnic minorities, but of all the people, which makes him the one, who could unite the nation (2008). This letter positions Obama as the leader of all Americans, regardless race, sex, religion or sexual orientation (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 78).

After losing the Super Tuesday by a minimum margin and winning the mid-February primaries, Obama gathered more delegates than Clinton. This was the time, when his campaign fell into crisis – after a sketch in *Saturday Night Live*, mocking media's favorable coverage of Obama, Clinton started to use this as a weapon, to show, that she does not receive that much of attention from them. Her campaign rhetoric began being more aggressive as she started to attack Obama on a daily basis. Launching spots suggesting, that Obama is unprepared for unexpected crisis, whereas Clinton is much more experienced. After winning the early March primaries, she was helped by Jack Nicholson, who made ads for her, while Brad Pitt appeared at the events with Bill Clinton (Kellner, 2009, p. 720). Obama on the other hand had his own Sister Souljah Moment, when he had to cut the ties with his former pastor Jeremiah Wright, who made controversial comments about the terrorism and about Hillary Clinton being privileged (Nasaw, 2008). How did Obama react to this? By confronting these views during his arguably one of the best speeches, *A More Perfect Union*, which he gave on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. During his speech, he addressed the problems of the inequality,

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privilege and the anger in the communities. While criticizing his stands, he stated, that he can not disown him, just like his white grandmother, who raised him, but also on occasion "uttered racial stereotypes, that made him cringe" (Pickler, Apuzzo, 2008). Furthermore, he tackled black and white anger regarding inequality, by calling for a mutual action to come together and built the America the country deserves. The speech was shortly after uploaded to Youtube, where it generated over 1 million views in less than two days. Not all of his speeches, however, were that fortunate. After saying, that Pennsylvania small town voters are bitter and cling to guns and religion, Clinton's staff used the media backlash the candidate received, to accuse him of elitism and being out of touch, to earn their endorsement (Kellner, 2009, p. 721). What happened next, was arguably the most important moment of the campaign, the moment, that the world of politics truly merged with the popculture to address the voters. Obama, after being asked about Clinton and her staff's attacks towards him, stated, that he does not feel affected – this is how the politics have always been played and he understands that. By saying, that these are the same games, Republicans played on Clintons in 1990's, he positioned her as a politician from the establishment, who prefers the old type of politics, in which personal attacks are more valued than the political program (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 79). Shortly after that he brushed his shoulders stating, that when one is attacked, it is the best to just move on forward. The shoulder brushing referred to Jay-Z's song "*Dirt Off Your Shoulder*" and the gesture was met with a huge applause. Academics argue, that this was the opus magnum of his political campaign, a move, that first established Obama as an underdog against the Democratic establishment and then supported his stance by appealing to the liberal audience. Obama's campaign advisors, seeing, that the material has gone viral on the internet, spread the news about the event stating, that indeed Obama has some Jay-Z's songs on his iPod (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 79). At that time, Jay-Z has already endorsed the candidate; during his tour with Mary J. Blige he shouted "Y'all ready for a change?", while at the same time displaying Obama's picture on the screen (DeLuca, 2008). Without a doubt, Obama's move helped him maintain his 'coolness' in the media, but he won the Democratic Primaries because of a different factor. As it has already been established, Oprah Winfrey, being arguably the most influential woman in America, had the power to turn the elections. This stance is supported by the academic research of Garthwaite and Moore, who measured the demographic and socioeconomic variables to compare the popularity of Winfrey and her magazine in the areas, where Obama's popularity started to rise after she endorsed him. According to their research, "The Oprah Effect" helped him get over 1 million votes during the primaries, in addition to that, her support boosted the financial contributions in the areas, where she was popular (Garthwaite, Moore, 2008, p. 39). The whole scientific research is the first attempt to estimate the effect of the celebrity's endorsement on the behaviour of the voters and is recommended for further reading.

After securing his nomination, Obama kept on using his main campaign artefact to generate buzz around him, while doing an interview for the magazine *Rolling Stone*. Although the interview also included discussions of political matter, after the interviewer mentioned the endorsement of Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen towards Obama, the candidate states, that indeed he has big respect for them and he has their songs on his iPod. He once again admitted, that even though he is rather a fan of jazz and soul, he listens to Jay-Z and believes, that the rapper does not get enough respect. While stating, that he is often disgusted by the misogyny in popular hip-hop songs, he admitted, that he has met Jay-Z and other rappers in private and he believes, that the values they present in their songs can help "shape the attitudes in a positive way" (Wenner, 2008). It is interesting, how the media covered this situation – while the "iPod thing" was only a small part of the interview, all of the headlines focused on the relationship between Obama and Jay-Z, making them "the hottest couple" of the summer season. At that time, a song called *Black President* was released by rapper Nas, in which he used Obama's catchphrase "Yes we can", stating his fear for the candidate, having in mind the assassinations of black politicians in the past, but also expressing hope for the presidency of Obama (Peterson, Estremera, 2015, p. 273-4) with the optimistic verse:

*"I think Obama provides hope and challenges minds  
of all races and colors to erase hate  
and try and love one other"* (Nas, 2008)

During the Black Entertainment Television awards, Puff Daddy called for the voter registration among black community in order to choose 'the first black president (Elsworth, 2008). After his speech he chanted "Obama or Die" referring to his slogan "Vote or Die", which he popularised during the previous presidential elections. His statement was supported by Alicia Keys, who said that "it was time black people removed the word 'can't' from their vocabulary" (2008). The gala was attended by Obama's backers such as Don Cheadle or Samuel L. Jackson.

Apart from the world of music, Obama received the support from the most respected and influential director of black ethnicity, Spike Lee, whose political stance was often adapted in his movies. Lee backed Obama by stating, that his win would mark a new day for American politics and the citizens predicting, that he is going to his inauguration and he is getting his hotel reservation ready (Mikkelsen, 2008). The director further told the interviewer, that people need the new "Chocolate City", referring to Washington and the term used by African-Americans to refer to predominantly black cities (2008). Finally, words of endorsement came from Jay-Z, establishing the most popular political friendship of this generation. After in July 2008 a new song was leaked called *Jockin' Jay-Z*, the verse "I rock with Obama, but I ain't no politician", suggested what everyone already knew – one of the most influential rappers in the world endorsed Obama, but (at the beginning) tried to keep it low-key to distinct the world of music and the world of hip-hop in order

to maintain his status as a politically independent artist (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 78).

Before the Democratic National Convention was held, Obama has his another Sister Souljah Moment, this time coming from one of his first admirers, rapper Ludacris. As he released his endorsement song *Politics as Usual*, he caught criticism for verses degrading Hillary Clinton and John McCain. The song quickly caught the attention of the media, but Obama's spokesman condemned the lyrics stating, that Ludacris should be ashamed of this song and that there is no place for such offensive behavior, that could not be a guiding light for the youth (Smith, 2008). This, however, was the only time, that the hip-hop song related to Obama did more damage than good. Also in August, Blender magazine published playlists created by Barack Obama and the Republican candidate John McCain, consisting of their ten most favourite songs. Obama's campaign staff created a masterpiece, by carefully choosing the songs to create the candidate's image. It can be discussed, that this playlist is a metaphor of a catch-all approach in political marketing, adapted for the needs of the article. The list consisted of Marvin Gaye and Aretha Franklin, who, as it has already been established were one of the Obama's favorite musicians, but also Frank Sinatra to appeal to older audiences, rock's biggest names such as Bruce Springsteen and U2, who supported the candidate over the campaign, while also aiming at hip-hop fans with Fugees and Kanye West. The list was concluded by a campaign's essential track *Yes We Can* (All Things Considered, 2008). Obama's music tastes has been analysed by the academics: his attachment to older type of music can be perceived as a display of a refined taste, or more mature depth of knowledge (Forman, 2010, p. 163). Forman also argues, that Obama by namedropping Aretha Franklin or Stevie Wonder lets the voters remind, that not only he likes music, that is widely acclaimed and perceived as "classic", he also displays his respect for the heritage of black popculture (2010, p. 163). By positioning himself as more of an "old school" type of music fan, on one hand does he reevaluate his "youthful" appearance, but on the other hand plays the nostalgia card among the middle-aged voters (2010, p. 163). Some of the celebrities did not settle for blank endorsement – Big Boi's music video for *Sumthin' Gotta Give*, featuring Mary J. Blige, begins with a quote from Obama and shows the musicians, joined by John Legend, working at Obama's campaign office (Reid, 2008). His charisma also attracted the youngest Hollywood stars, that emerged around 2008 and were preparing for their first elections as voters. Rapper Soulja Boy admitted, that Obama's critical stance on Iraq War was the main factor, that convinced him to go for Obama, joking, whether his vote would count twice if he is a celebrity (Vena, 2008). Emma Stone, Christopher Mintz-Plasse and Jonah Hill, stars of a comedy "*Superbad*", which hit the theatres all over the United States previous summer and shortly after achieved a "cult" status felt the same, along with Zoë Kravitz, who just started building her status as a celebrity progressive (Wolcott, 2008).

As the celebrities started to gather in Denver for the DNC, it was obvious, that the candidate

receiving the nomination has the support of one of the most influential personas in United States. Kanye West and Black Eyed Peas held private concerts over the week, whereas most of the celebrities appeared at the event. The national anthem was sang by Oscar-winning actress and musician Jennifer Hudson, will.i.am was joined by John Legend to perform *Yes We Can* (Chapell, 2008, p. 19). The convention was a display of power of black celebrities, who finally felt, that they have the candidate representing their surrounding and social background. Charles Barkley, Muhammad Ali, Fat Joe, Pharrell, Forest Whitaker, Jeffrey Wright and many others attended the event. Academy Award-winning actor Louis Gossett Jr. Called for action stating, that "it is time for the African-Americans to step up to help Obama win the presidency", while also saying, that Obama represents the black community, but he is only one man (2008).

As the real campaign started in September, more and more event and fundraisers were hosted by Hollywood stars such as George Clooney or Barbra Streisand, who during primaries supported Clinton (Mayerowitz, 2008). McCain's campaign staff reacted to these events, by positioning Obama as the part of the establishment, as McCain said during the meeting with blue-collar voters, that Obama would rather spend time with his celebrity friends, than to sit with the working class (Martin, 2008). This was a smart move; as Hollywood's Democratic approach is rather taken from granted, the Republican candidates, who also receive support from famous people need to play the "establishment" card to appeal to the conservative voters, who do not trust the hype of the mainstream media. Finally, another words of support came from Jay-Z – in the interview given to Vibe Magazine in September, he crafted a message, that he wanted to spread: "What Obama represents is, we as a people are a part of the American Dream", further explaining, that this means, that Obama became a role model to black children all over the USA, letting them believe, that they could achieve anything if they wanted to (Reid, 2008). Also at that month, Young Jeezy released a single *My President* featuring Nas, a celebration of black politician becoming a president of the United States with the verse "Obama for mankind, we ready for damn change, so y'all let the man shine" (Jeezy, 2008).

The support for Obama also came from the indie genre – it is needless to say, that whereas hip-hop is rather perceived as a black music, independent rock is more identified with young, white people from the urban areas. The issue with this group, is that most of them can be positioned as liberals, maybe progressives, but they do not show much interest in politics, unless the candidate appears, that is charismatic. While this type of group, if interested, rather chooses smaller, progressive parties such as Green Party, it tends to be heavily influenced by the alternative media buzz. The event called "Barack Rock", during which performed such indie acts as Franz Ferdinand, Fiery Furnaces or Les Savy Fav was hyped on *Pitchfork*, the most influential alternative music website (Pitchfork, 2008). Vampire Weekend organised a free event, during which people could

register for voting, while alternative rock band Tenacious D, lead by an actor Jack Black was also scheduled to perform at benefit concerts (Mulkerin, 2008) (Gregory, 2008). Later in the research it will be argued, how indie (independently released) rock can be associated with the underdog politician during his campaign.

On the final month of the campaign, the support came from none other than Jay-Z. Rapper decided to expand his endorsement for the candidate, by playing free concerts supporting the voting registration and the Democratic candidate (Crosley, 2008). Apart from that, Obama's campaign gained on two factors; first of them was the approaching financial crisis, as the Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy. From this moment, Obama's campaign adapted more aggressive style, knowing, that economy is McCain's weakness. As McCain announced, that he would suspend his campaign on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, media framed him as an old Republican, who would not be able to handle a crisis (Halloran, 2008). Obama on the other hand assured voters during campaigning events, that he has a rescue plan for the economy, while bringing responsibility and accountability to Wall Street and to Washington (Toomey, 2012, p. 123). The second factor were the three debates, which not only Obama won according to the polls, but also created a negative image of McCain, who during the second debate referred to Obama as "that one", which was later ridiculed during comedy shows (Amira, 2008). The final rallies were organized with a huge dose of optimism, as according to the polls, Obama was on a final stretch to his victory. The newest addition to his celebrity roster was Homer Simpson – in the episode of popular animated TV series, Homer declared, that "Obama cared about people like him" and while using the electronic voting machine, stated "It's time for a change" (HeadlineHollywood, 2008). Obama's campaign staff, however, still believed, that music is the key to voter's heart – during the rallies a CD was called called *Yes We Can: Voices of Grassroots Movement*, which included the artists supporting Obama (Talev, 2008). The most important statement, that was given at the end of the campaign, belonged to Jay-Z, who performed at LeBron James's rally. NBA superstar encouraged the attendees to go out with their families and vote, while Jay-Z delivered one of the most significant quotes of the Obama's campaign: "Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther King could walk, and Martin walked so Obama could run, Obama is running so we all can fly, so let's fly" (Associated Press, 2008). The rally also had an educational cause, since many people in the crowd were first-time voters, they were reminded, that they could submit the ballots earlier (2008).

Obama's huge win (365 to 173 electoral votes), was met with a wide applause from the celebrities, who endorsed him. Puff Daddy and Beyoncé stated, that they were moved to tears because of this fact. Oprah, who was present during Obama's acceptance speech announced, that the hope has won. Spike Jonze, Madonna, George Clooney and Usher also told the journalists, that they are more than happy with the result (Thomson, 2008). Shortly after the results, Jay-Z, Obama's most

popular companion released a track *History*, in which he rapped "the battle's finally won", (Jay-Z, 2008) while Common released *Changes* with the verse "What is change? Change is Martin Luther King Jr, Gandhi, Shakespeare, Assata Shakur, Barack Obama" (Common, 2008) (Tomaszewski, 2015, p. 81).

How did this campaign affect the political marketing? Further explanation will be included at the end of this chapter, but the characteristics of this campaign are unarguable – with this campaign being the first, that has fully adapted the new media for its causes, it not only delivered the endorsements from the celebrities from different ethnic backgrounds, (having in mind, that obviously black celebrities played the most important part in this process) but also helped shape a new type of celebrity – internet persona, that by using viral content could establish herself as a recognizable internet user, who could also influence the decisions of the voters. Also, the celebrities played a role of social activists, who advocated for change by supporting their candidate, instead of providing a recognizable face for the political presence of him. Finally, this case study supports the 'meaning transfer model' described in the theoretical framework, as the celebrities were the representatives of their social and ethnic groups, which helped Obama attract the undecided voters. It can be also argued, that even though some of the celebrities supporting Obama did have hidden causes such as rebranding their image, their overall intentions were good, as Obama appealed to them, while being "their celebrity".

According to academics, celebrities tend to engage less in second term campaigns, Having the scientific research in the consideration, three factors can be determined to support this thesis. First of all, the president fighting for the re-election lacks the freshness effect, that helped him win the primaries and the race in the very first place. The second factor is the performance issue – it is easier to support the candidate, who is trying to win the elections, instead of the president, who already is in the office and whose decisions can be rated, therefore affecting the ratings of the celebrity. The third factor is the freshness of the endorsement – the endorsement for the second term often lacks the surprise and media hype around this information. Nevertheless Obama managed to maintain his position as celebrity establishment's favorite, but it has not been as easy job as in 2008. Although Obama over his term eagerly appeared with celebrities for various causes, he received some official endorsements already in 2011. One of the first endorsements came from Tom Hanks, who already supported the politician for years, who stressed, that repealing the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy in 2010 and saving jobs in General Motors were the factors, that made him realize he was a good president and that he deserves staying in the office for the second term (McDevitt, 2011). Hanks was one of the closest celebrity associates of Obama – their acquaintance was media's favorite topic, who often reported on events like Hanks watching his TV series *The Pacific* with Obama, or bringing a new coffee machine to White House's press room with Steven Spielberg (The

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White House, 2010).

What strengthened the campaign at its very beginning, was the increased activity of CPE fundraisers. First of them started in June of 2011, hosted by celebrities already familiar to the crowds for their liberal and pro-Obama views such as Ryan Phillippe, Ellen DeGeneres or Whoopi Goldberg (Spiering, 2012). What is interesting, is that Barack Obama did not have to attend these events to generate the hype – his wife Michelle has already established herself as one of the most liked and recognizable First Ladies. It can even be discussed, that during her husband's first term, she became a celebrity activist engaging in social campaigns firmed by her name. The bigger fundraising events were launches around autumn; whereas some of them were simply focusing on raising money for the presidential candidate by his closes associates, like the *DreamWorks* gala attended by will.i.am, Jamie Foxx or Eva Longoria, or the one hosted by Will Smith and his wife Jada Pinkett-Smith, some of them focused on increasing popularity of the President along voters of specific ethnicity, with Antonio Banderas and his wife Melanie Griffith co-hosting with Eva Longoria the Latino fundraising event (Daunt, 2011). During the gala, Obama talked about his experiences with meeting the Latino voters and addressing their concerns (2011). Worth noting are also fundraising actions hosted by Lady Gaga, tackling issues regarding teenage bullying and the event organized by NBA superstars.

Basketball, just like hip-hop, played an important role in the relationship between Obama and the media and was eagerly used by president's staff. The significance of this game can be linked, just like hip-hop, to the roots of Afro-American celebrities; with musicians and basketball players being the first mass idols for the black youth. Obama's appearance at the "Carrier Classic", college basketball game coincided with the Veteran's Day, therefore he combined his cool and sporty image with paying the tributes to the U.S. Military. The event was held at USS Carl Vinson and was attended by his supporters Vince Carter and Magic Johnson (Nakamura, 2011). In December, a first ever Obama fundraising basketball event was launched – "Obama Classic", that was supposed to feature the most important past and present basketball players. Even though the event was postponed due to the sudden end of lockout, but was organized in August of 2012 with superstars like Michael Jordan, Carmelo Anthony or Patrick Ewing (Sharp, 2012).

Still, throughout his presidency, Obama was building his image mainly on his relationship with hip-hop. Since Jay-Z, Beyoncé and Puff Daddy attended Obama's inauguration, the message to the media was clear – hip-hop made its way to the White House. President carefully tried to maintain his beloved by the media rap image, by dropping hip-hop references on the occasion. During his speech at NAACP's centennial celebration, while addressing the black youth having role-models in NBA and hip-hop, he stated, that not everyone can be Lil' Wayne or LeBron James and that he needs young people to aspire to be engineers, doctors and scientists (Dagbovie, 2015, p. 193

120). As Obama and the media crafted his image as a fan of this genre, every time rap was becoming a hot topic, journalists approached the president to share his opinion. That is what happened, when Kanye West interrupted Taylor Swift at the VMAs. Obama's stance was critical, as he got caught off the record, calling the artist 'a jackass', which became the most hyped voice of concern on this matter (Moore, 2009). As it could be rarely seen to hear such harsh words from the President of the United States, Obama followed the path, that led him to the success in the elections – as he expressed an opinion, that most of the people agreed with, he was perceived by his supporters as a normal guy, who can be triggered by the lack of culture. Over 2010, many hip-hop moguls were seen visiting the White House such as Pharrell or Obama's favorite couple Jay-Z and Beyoncé, but what caught the biggest attention was the return of the artefact – the iPod, which has at that time transformed from a simple campaigning item to an artefact of the presidency, shaping its position as a product not only associated with the event, but with the persona owning it overall. During his interview with "Rolling Stone" Obama admitted, that his personal aide Reggie Love has added some new hip-hop tunes to his playlist, namechecking Jay-Z as an artist dominating his mp3player, but also mentioning new addings such as Nas or Lil' Wayne (Dagbovie, 2015, p. 121). As Obama's musical knowledge improved, the knowledge of his supporter improved at the same time – as Obama hinted Lil' Wayne on the occasion, it was a matter of fact for him to admit, that he listens to his tracks. As it has already been argued, Obama's endorsement was backed by the celebrities from various backgrounds, he clinged to black artists, by being "their man in the Oval Office" – when he celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, among the partygoers were Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z, Oprah Winfrey, Herbie Hancock or Chris Rock (Epstein, 2011).

Not every rapper, however, was Obama's enthusiast – Lupe Fiasco has been taking a radical stance at Obama's foreign policies, at one point even calling him "a terrorist", admitting, that he is not going to vote for him (Perpetua, 2011). Known for his progressive views Killer Mike also criticized Obama by delivering the numbers, showing, that black unemployment rate is still high and that he could do more for African-American community (Complex, 2012). Arguably, Killer Mike is the rapper, who can be perceived as a celebrity rapper-activist – his progressive political views made him one of the most influential celebrities of the 2016 elections. Being seen by the media as a person of huge political knowledge, he was invited by *Complex Magazine* to break down the presidential candidacies to portal's users.

In order to approach the undecided voters, Obama's campaign staff decided to marginalize hip-hop's influence. This can be seen in the Obama's 2012 campaign's rally music, which did not include any hip-hop tracks, setting on biggest alternative rock names such as Arcade Fire, Wilco or Florence + The Machine and the classics by Earth Wind & Fire and Electric Light Orchestra. This move is understandable – by embracing his hip-hop persona, Obama has already established the

support of the younger generation including the Millennials, so in order to get more votes he had to appeal to different target groups. Also, just like during the 2008 Presidential Campaign, Obama was targeted by the Republicans for sympathizing with the elites, focusing on the attention of Hollywood's elites, instead of reaching out for the working class. As he still was receiving an overwhelming support from his CPE fundraisers, taking as an example George Clooney's fundraising event, which netted \$15 million, the question is where a line can be drawn, distinguishing the positive aspects of such actions from the negative, which can be used by a political opponent? In this situation, how the financial support from the Super PAC's is different from the support of celebrity establishment? Academics discuss this state of affairs, by arguing how the media coverage of such events could affect the voters. Marland and Lalancette suggest, that the voter could be brought to thinking, that politics depend mostly on money instead of the causes (2014, p. 142). Obama's campaign staff aimed at both small donors and celebrities, but had to validate the CPE fundraisers's endorsements, by linking them to the causes they would represent.

The key to success, as it has been already argued, is the political motive behind the fundraiser, which lets the voters believe, that the money is a tool to support pursuing the interests of the social group they are representing. The example of such behavior can be drawn in the actions of Ricky Martin, who organized a fundraiser shortly after Obama supporter the legislative actions towards the same-sex marriage. Martin, representing both Latino-American and LGBT community, not only applauded the actions of the president, but also supported his stance by reminding, that "Obama was responsible for the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, which targeted LGBT community in army and the appointment of the first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice" (Bingham, 2012). As it has been analyzed from the social psychology point of research, his celebrity expertise, likeness and credibility were the factors, that would determine the voters to approve his endorsement (Marland, Lalancette, 2014, p. 140). During the 2012 campaign, Obama had to move his attention to Latino voters, who, according to political marketing specialists were supposed to be a group, that would decide on the election results; such approach could be recognized when actress Eva Longoria was appointed as campaign's co-chair along with the Mayor of Los Angeles Antonio Villaraigosa and San Antonio's Mayor Julian Castro (Daunt, 2012). The political actions were followed by the celebrities representing this ethnic group, as Marc Anthony announced his support for Obama in the video message taped for his campaign staff, encouraging the voters to "support the president, as he already supports their (Latino's) back" (McDevitt, 2012). Anthony advocated for Obama by hosting the concert fundraisers during the summer – the importance of his support was recognized, as he sang the national anthem during the Democratic National Convention. Longoria on the other hand, became the most shining celebrity star of the campaign, launching a huge Women Vote 2012 Summit Tour, a nationwide event happening in the most crucial swing states,

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aimed at women and Latino voters. It is interesting, however, how Longoria approached the subject of campaign rally, stating in the interview, that she looks at her philanthropic and political activity as a citizen, not a celebrity (Turits, 2012). While planning to tackle issues important for the communities, such as equal payment for equal work, healthcare matters such as Planned Parenthood, organization, that Obama's opponent Mitt Romney planned getting rid of, or fair education, Longoria admitted, that her recognition as an actress is the key matter, that allows her to reach the voters (2012). Nevertheless, what mattered the most, was the organization of the events, during which celebrities could tackle issues with the community leaders to engage in the discussion on how to sort them out. This approach was covered in the media in the positive light, as it allowed the celebrities engaged in such actions show their "more human face", what could make the voters realize, that celebrities are just like them (Foleyb, 2012). Longoria used the same mechanism during her speech at the Democratic National Convention, when she wanted to present her stance on economic issues by telling a story of two women: Eva Longoria back in her student years and Eva Longoria as an actress and a millionaire, declaring, that as a student working in a burger restaurant she needed a tax break, whereas as an successful actress she is eager to pay taxes as a repayment to the community, that once let her follow her dreams. Furthermore she addressed her student years, when she had to take loans to pay the student debt, to prove a point and send the message to the voters, that she understands the problems they are tackling from her own experience and is eager to help them (2012). This point of direction in the campaign was followed by the campaign spots of Jennifer Lopez, which aimed at two target groups she represents: women and Latino voters. The clip *Latinos for Obama* displays Lopez advocating for Obama, by first addressing her childhood years, during which her family had to work hard to send her and her sister to school, which is later followed by listing the actions the president pursued to improve the social and economic situation of Latino community (Lopez, 2012). The spot also shows Latino volunteer campaign workers in their office and the door-to-door campaigns in Latin communities. The video was followed by *Join Women for Obama 2012* clip, which depicts Lopez talking about growing up with her sisters, while on the right part of the spot the presidential couple is shown, holding their daughters (Lopez, 2012). The same approach is displayed in *Beyoncé in Women's Voices – Join Women for Obama* clip, but appeals to young mothers. As Beyoncé's childbirth became one of the biggest headlines of 2012, the matters of parenthood are used in the clip – as it shows Obama hugging an infant during one of the campaign rallies, singer endorses the president stressing, that she is not only voting for her own cause – she is voting for the future of her daughter (Beyoncé, 2012).

The engagement of Alicia Keys in "Women for Obama" cause through a spot called *We are a Powerful Force*, also shows how the women issues were addressed during the 2012 campaign, but from another corner. From the choice of the singer to the coverage of the clip, the action focused on

aiming Millennial women voters. As a representative of a female R&B/soul genre, Keys with her music and fashion style targets this group from a marketing point of view – her music is soft and feminine, but at the same time addresses girl power, creating for the listener a "no boys club" perception of her music. This thesis is supported by her celebrity artefact, which is her piano and piano skills, often demonstrated in music videos. Even though Keys is not singing in the video, a piano can be heard in the background, which is associated with her music (BarackObamadotcom, 2012). The clip also follows a wider trend, that emerged during the 2012 campaign – the influence of the social media, which is fully described on other chapter. What is important though, is that the clip displays how do the celebrities interact with their users through social media channels – as the spot starts, a Twitter post by Alicia Keys can be seen, asking her followers, whether they would attend the event with her.

This allows us to move to the crucial difference between the 2008 and 2012 campaign. Whereas during 2008 Presidential Campaign, the use of social media was a cool trick to attract the voters (especially approached by Obama's campaign staff), in 2012 maybe the Internet 2.0 tools were lacking the "freshness" effect, but were reaching their climax popularity with more and more people signing to Facebook or Twitter. This became an important channel of communication between the three political actors, that are here analyzed: campaigning politicians, celebrities and the voters. In the past, the endorsement was thrown towards the candidate through interviews, political messages, attending events with the candidate. But now the endorsement was available within one click, and what is more, it could reach all of the fans at the same time, without waiting for the media to create the hype. What is more, new media would allow the celebrities post information about the campaign rallies in their supporter's area. While Youtube already in 2008 was successfully used for the endorsement through viral actions and in the following elections, platforms such as Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, Reddit were becoming a significant source of information for American citizens. The sooner the Election Day was approaching, the more content was posted by the celebrities, showing their campaign work all over the country, such as photo of Mad Men's Jon Hamm on the Instagram, wearing an Obama/Biden button, or Julianne Moore posing with the campaign volunteers, Twitter was flooded with the messages from the celebrities encouraging people to vote, with Longoria posting information about her meetings during the rallies and the endorsements from LeBron James or Neil Patrick Harris, who as a celebrity represents the LGBT community, tweeted that he's voting for Obama, because he votes for equality (Pop Sugar, 2012) (Hernandez, 2012). To show how wide variety of social platforms was used for the campaign, it is also worth mentioning a post in a form of letter on Beyoncé's website, which could be shared on Tumblr, Pinterest or Facebook. The letter, handwritten and uploaded on the internet, manifested the importance of Obama's road to success to further generations, saying "You are the reason my

daughter and nephew will grow up knowing that they can truly be ANYTHING they want to be” (Beyoncé, 2012).

Last, but not least, it is needed to focus on how the acts of a celebrity can negatively affect the campaign of the candidate. As one of the most influential Republicans in Hollywood, Clint Eastwood appeared at the Republican National Convention during his speech, he stunned the delegates by his form of discourse, as he addressed his concerns regarding Obama's administration, by talking to an empty chair, that was supposed to be the metaphor of the president. His monologue was widely mocked even by the Republican supporters; the chair, however, became an artefact, that became the symbol of Romney's failed campaign (Marland, Lalancette, 2014, p. 142).

The presidential campaign for the second term is often perceived as harder, determining the lack of freshness and POTUS facing the challenges he had to face during the first term. Even though Obama managed to win for the second time with the help of celebrities, the forms of endorsement needed to transform in order to appeal to the groups of voters, that have newly emerged as the most important ones. Apart from that, it is harder to entertain the voter with the endorsement, if he already knows the celebrity's political stance. Further explanation to this matter can be found in the conclusions of the chapter, but one thing can be established before moving forward to the last presidential campaign – the increasing role of the social media platforms was the key factor, that would determine them.

#### **4.3 Political entertainment**

“Politics has slowly become entertainment, shouldn't entertainment be politics?”. That's a quote from Leo Braudy, who authored many publications focusing on cultural studies, film and popular culture (2003). Recent years have proven that viewers are getting more and more interested in programs that bring up political topics, while keeping entertainment as their core value. From TV series to late-night shows, everything is “becoming” political at some point, most probably having in mind the ongoing polarization of political views. In this subchapter, various recent cases will be presented, proving that the romance between entertainment and politics is thriving. What is more important is the fact that thanks to this, voters, thanks to media outlets, can get educated on various policies, while not getting that much bored. Because let's face it: who would attract more viewers when giving a lecture about prison reform: some law professor from Berkeley, or Kim Kardashian? This can be strongly linked to habits of news consumption in the US, as television still remains the most preferred platform for news in the United States. Pew Research Center survey that was conducted in 2018 asked “Which of the following would you say you prefer for getting news?”.

44% of respondents states that television is their main source, showing a slight decline when compared with a 2016 survey (46%), whereas 34% of them have chosen online media, which was a slow increase from 28% back in 2016 (Mitchell, 2018). Only 7% of surveyed preferred printed news (4% decline from 2016) and 14% radio (2% increase). What's interesting is the fact that those who preferred watching the news, overwhelmingly chose television (75%) and the respondents, who rather read them, chose online media (63% compared to 17% choosing printed versions) (2018). It's definitely not surprising that among readers, the younger the group was, the more likely the respondents were to choose online media instead of newspapers. Although the transition to digital journalism is a fact, there is still a long way to come for new media to once and for all change the culture of obtaining the news. This can be related to the fact that politics in internet can be a chaos, taking into consideration the inability of the biggest platforms to tackle fake news.

Television with its content framing can definitely be a safer bet, as experienced user is (at least should be) more used to how the platforms are leaning politically. That is, however, what Paul Baran warned about in 1969 already, in his article *On the Impact of the New Communications Media Upon Social Values*. This work is as prophetic as if someone read Stanislaw Lem's works, but instead of science-fiction motives, author describes future in which the fragmentation of political scene leads to the fragmentation of media. Baran visualizes the microclimate in which the increase of numerous media outlets representing political groups of fragmentized voters leads to polarization of their views and media content (1969, p. 252). Author argues that the TV time is a product that can be sold for political advantage, which in other words means the transformation from economic power to political power. Later, he states that TV news are a form on entertainment and the “staged riot” converts energy into political support, which would “galvanize sympathies or inspire fears” (1969, p. 249). Baran feels uncomfortable with this situation, as he believes that the development of new media, combined with the entertainization of political information may be both potential for good and harm. What is interesting is the fact that before concluding, he predicts that this will cause information overload, as the receivers of the content may feel exhausted by the intrusion of undesired communications (1969, p. 254).

Fifty years later, many internet users feel attacked by the disturbing content, which has influence on their mental health, especially in COVID-19 times, where news about death tolls and potential economic consequences of lockdowns are hard to avoid.

Although the idea of entertainment politics and impact of entertainment media on political behavior has been analyzed, most of the researches focus on specific cases and media outlets, another approaches tend to draw conclusions from different scientific fields, such as social psychology or humor studies (Holbert et. al., 2014, p. 427). Many scholars argue that entertainment media are ineffective in terms of spreading political awareness (Chaffee and Kanihan 1997)

(Boukes, Boomgaarden, 2014). On contrary, Moyer-Guse proposes the entertainment-education approach (2008), which shows that audiences can learn from such media. Many scientific works have aimed at researching the influence of entertainment media on political knowledge and behavior, by studying soft news (Baum, 2002) (Brewer, Cao, 2006), primetime drama (Holbert et al., 2003) (Van Zoonen, 2005), or late-night shows (Young, Tisinger, 2006). The results have proven that such media can be as effective as news media (Rasul, Raney, 2016, p. 274). Some studies have aimed at political movies, both fictional and biographical, loosely based on facts (Holbert, Hansen, 2006) (Lenart, McGraw, 1989). As movies that are representing this genre are often met with critical acclaim, they can easily influence the opinion of its viewers (2016). Y. M. Kim & J Vishak argue that entertainment media are influential in forming impressions (2008, p. 342). Their experiment focused on whether different types of media provided different patterns of information processing among their viewers. Study focused on how Bush's nomination for Supreme Court Justice and Chief Justice from July to September 2005 was presented by these media, as they were providing daily updates on this situation. As they collected the news segments from TV news and *Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, they presented them to the participants of the experiment. According to the results, entertainment media were more influential when forming impressions than learning political issues, when being compared to the news media (2008, p. 356). It is worth noting though that this study focused just on one particular TV entertainment show and one political event.

Some of the studies on mass communication from the 1990s argue that different shows attract different viewers. This was highly related to the development of cable TV and internet, which began the fragmentation of audience (Davis, Owen, p. 1998). According to their studies, people, who seek for entertainment, would seek for political news in such TV programs, instead of watching evening news. Parkin, Bos and van Doorn, in their study called *Laughing, Learning and Liking: The Effects of Entertainment-Based Media on American Politics*, present, by analysing the data from Pew Research Center's study from 2000, that young, white males and news junkies tend to choose irregular sources to obtain political information. They also argue that these types of entertainment programs do not provide factual knowledge (2000, p. 25). Although comedic portrayals of politicians often ridiculed them and could affect someone's opinion about them, they did not really affect their political choices. They provide an example of Bill Clinton's impressions in entertainment shows, which would even positively affect his appraisal (2000).

A more recent study from 2017 (Tsfati, Walter), sums up the political outcomes of entertainment effects, by highlighting six differences between them:

- Level of political prevalence – deriving from Holbert (2005), authors argue that entertainment media need to be fragmented, as some of the genres are primarily political (such as fictional political dramas, for example *The West Wing* or *House of Cards*), while in



video games, cartoons or comedy shows, political content is just a part of the content that is presented (2017, p. 3)

- Presence and type of political humor – messages differ as shows represent different genres and carry different political effects
- Type of outcome – long term and short term outcomes may vary, as they can impact one's knowledge, behavior, attitudes and beliefs
- Level of analysis – study needs to take into consideration a multilevel approach, as it affects both individual voters, political groups and political system
- Pervasiveness of influence – some groups may be more influenced than others, for example political satires tend to appeal more to young voters and can affect their political participation
- Intentionality – influence may be intentional or unintentional, depending on the genre and type of entertainment; for example *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* has educational values, as its host, through entertainment, explains the political processes and encourages voters to form opinions and participate. Authors add that this parameter is especially important, since it puts more importance on entertainment television as a part of politics (2017, p. 5)

From this moment of study, the focus will be rather driven to cases than theory, while taking into consideration previous researches regarding the shows or genres. In order to do so, I would like to split the political entertainment media into three sections, which represent media and programs, which primarily focus on politics. These would be late night shows, political news outlets, including opinion series and TV series, representing wide range of genres, from comedies to dramas. Each of them may "hit" the viewer differently, as they communicate differently with them. They all have one thing in common though, which is aiming at educational aspects of entertainment. It needs to be mentioned though, that most of the mainstream late-night shows tend to lean Democratic, which means that the satire would rather attack Republican policies.

What's interesting is the result of the survey obtained by *Morning Consult / The Hollywood Reporter* back in 2019, which checked which late-night shows are most favored by the viewers. David T.Z. Mindich in his publication *The Mediated World: A New Approach to Mass Communication and Culture*, argues that Jimmy Fallon's *Tonight Show* is a lot less political than other late-night shows, which, especially nowadays, focus on anti-Trump satire (2019, p. 286). The results of the survey somehow confirm that stance, as Fallon is the most popular late-night host among Republicans (48% favorable rating) and second most popular among Democrats (72%) (Shevenock, 2019). This is obviously heavily connected to the content Fallon is providing, as he said in the interview that he is not a fan of mixing entertainment with politics (Today, 2017). The

survey also asked its respondents about the political leanings of late-night shows: 57% of Republicans and 53% of Democrats agreed that these types of programs are leaning more liberal (2019). It appears that Trevor Noah and Stephen Colbert are most divisive late-night hosts, as the spread between their favorability between Republicans and Democrats reached 38%.

It is crucial to mention that before 2016, such programs did not really focus on politics; it was Donald Trump and his entourage, who brought entertainment politics to the mainstream and as a result, started to provide content for satires and political commentaries. Still, occasionally, hosts focused on political issues. Johnny Carson, who popularized this genre and can be perceived as its "Godfather", talked politics in his monologues, but avoided offending his viewers (Baumgartner, Becker, 2018, p. 47). Jay Leno and David Letterman, who hosted two most popular late-night shows in the 90s, were more politically active, although it was Leno that was highly appreciated in the Republican Party, even though he said numerous times that he has never voted Republican. According to Lichter and Farnsworth, his "humor" was simpler and full of one-liners, which was rather attractive to midwestern, bipartisan audience, than hip New Yorkers (2018, p. 47). As he progressed, Letterman started to engage in political feuds with Republican politicians, which can be observed since 2008 presidential election, when he raged as Republican presidential candidate John McCain cancelled his appearance in the show (2018, p. 48). Center for Media and Public Affairs data shows that in 2007, Letterman's political joke count was 1,208, compared to 3,187 in 2008 and 3,206 in 2009 (2018). Finally in 2013, the host introduced a panel called *Stooge of the Night*, in which he grilled Republicans for their opposition to gun control (2018).

First truly political satire-fueled show was Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, which was took over by him in 1999. In 2004, during CNN's *Crossfire*, Stewart stated that his show is not supposed to shape public discourse, but to entertain Americans, as traditional news media are failing them (Becker et al., 2010, p. 145). However, it was under his tenure, when *The Daily Show* started to engage in political topics: according to Baumgartner and Becker, his show was "more narrowly focused on the world of politics and public affairs than any other television show" and attracted young audience (2018, p. 48). Without a doubt, American politics at that time, provided tons of materials for satire, as soon after he began his journey with the show, 2000 presidential elections were approaching and according to the polls candidates of two biggest parties were going head to head. As a result, a new feature was introduced in the program, called "Indecision 2000", in which Stewart walked his viewers through recent campaign news (2018, p. 48). His way of hosting the show was highly influential, also when talking about how the politicians and public started to perceive late-night shows, as a way to obtain information about the politics. In 2007, when asked about the journalist they most appreciate, Americans named Stewart the fourth most admired anchor. All three journalists ahead of him were real news anchors (Kakutani, 2008). Furthermore, in

a study from 2008 by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, *The Daily Show* was praised for its crucial role in engaging people in thinking critically about politics and engaging in dialogue (2008). Before proceeding to further cases, a very interesting study needs to be introduced, that analyses the relationship between the “third-person effect” hypothesis and *The Daily Show* during Stewart's residence. Amy B. Becker, along with Michael A. Xenos and Don J. Waisanen, in their work *Sizing Up The Daily Show: Audience Perceptions of Political Comedy Programming*, used data from an experimental study that was conducted at a Midwestern university back in 2007 to find patterns for third-person effect that differs from standard hard news patterns (2010, p. 144). According to Davison, third-person effect shows that people tend to believe that the mass communication tools have higher persuasive effects on others than them, as they look at such content more critically (1983). To draw conclusions, this thought needs to be blended with comedy studies; Chattoo and Feldman argue that jokes may allow us to pay more attention towards an individual or group, which results in creating an opinion (2020, p. 43). Furthermore, as comedy is perceived as a less demanding, it is easier for the viewer to become interested in social issues that are presented in such program (2020). There is a paper, however, which critiques Stewart's approach, by accusing him of political cynicism and encouraging his viewers to create an opinion instead of confronting real politics (Hart, Hartelius, 2007, p. 263). Another humor scholar argues that turning an important content into a joke may result in evasion from serious issues (2020, p. 43).

Many researchers argue that the younger audience is the more vulnerable it can be towards the negative influence of media (Eveland et al., 1999) (Lambe, McLeod, 2005). Another study mentioned by Becker shows that “the more socially undesirable the media content under evaluation, the greater the estimate of a third-person effect” (Gunther, Storey, 2003). Cappella and Jamieson (1997) on the other hand have proven that Americans have cynical view of mainstream media and journalists (2010, p. 147). Authors of the aforementioned study have shown the respondents the content regarding the Congressional House debate about the withdrawal of US soldiers from Iraq that took place in February 2007 (2010, p. 149). Two types of materials were presented: hard news from NBC and ABC and a compilation video that was loosely based on *The Daily Show* piece, mixed into one video. Before the presentation, participants were surveyed to check their political interest level, political views, partisan identification and media attention (2010). The result of the study shows some patterns that may prove the point that political entertainment tools can affect one's perception of political content. According to the examination, people, who are more interested in politics tend to think that hard news are more persuasive for others (2010, p. 152). Furthermore, respondents, who identified as Democrats were less likely to see the influence the comedy on third-personas, which can be strictly connected to the simple fact that *The Daily Show* is leaning more Democratic. It is worth noting though that giving rather young age of the respondents, they are

more enthusiastic about this type of entertainment, therefore they may not see how the information are framed in the show. One could assume that the same result would appear if one did a research on right-wing leaning comedy panels. Concluding: Democrats and fans of the show, by agreeing with Jon Stewart's political stances, did not really see the influence he has on public opinion and political engagement (2010, p. 155).

Apart from this study there is another one made in 2011 that needs to be cited. Stacy L. Beavers has been showing clips from *The Daily Show* to 31 students from her class throughout the semester; during the survey, 84% of them answered that they have learned something new about the political issues or current events from the program (2011, p. 418). 27 of them indicated that the show affected their interest about politics. All of them also stated that the program influenced their encouragement to get engaged in politics, rather than discouraged them (2011) (Blakemore, 2015).

But what about Trevor Noah's reign in *The Daily Show*? Stewart left the show in 2015 and once again the political climate helped the new host to establish himself as one of the most recognizable comedians of Donald Trump's era. During a press conference, Noah told the reporters that he would focus less on covering material from Fox News, as nowadays people obtain information from the internet (Hibberd, 2015). Definitely, the perspective was about to change, as from now on, the show was going to have a multi-racial comedian. This, however, did not save him from accusations that his jokes were racist, using the newest favorite tool of "cancel culture" - old tweets. As he took over *The Daily Show*, old tweets of him started to circulate, in which he joked (among other topics) about Israel, which is always a sensitive issue in the United States (Gibson, 2015). Nevertheless, Noah defended his posts and shortly after internet users forgot about it.

Unfortunately there are not any previous studies related to the influence that *The Daily Show* has on its viewers during the new era; that is most probably because nowadays there are many different entertainment media outlets that academics can focus on; secondly, some of the late-night shows are more politically-oriented and partisan-leaning, such as John Oliver's program for instance that will be analyzed later in this subchapter. However, Noah not only reminded Americans about the much needed inclusion of more diverse ethnic representation in such shows, but his ratings were up after the coverage of 2016 presidential elections in the United States. Elections and the campaign preceding them were without a doubt the most entertaining moment in modern history of the U.S. and were deemed a "Democalypse" in the show. Program started to attract younger and more diverse audience, which was also a key to its success. In the interview, Noah stated that this was his goal, to not only inherit fans of Jon Stewart, but also to gain new viewers, who were not used to watching TV (Easton, 2017). In addition, he explained that during Trump's era, comedy can be used by people to cope with current political climate (2017). It was also mentioned that the writing staff has the representation of people with a variety of political views, from conservatives, through

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moderates to liberals, to make sure that every important issue is represented (2017).

What really surprises is the fact that Noah's work is often cited by Fox News, thanks to his open-mindedness and way of hosting the show, which is less partisan-oriented. When browsing through Fox News website's search engine, 764 results can be found for Trevor Noah, often discussing his jokes about the Democrats.

In the interview given to *The Hollywood Reporter* in 2019, he talked about the correlation between living in interesting times and engagement in political processes, also through entertainment media. By using a case of a weatherman that is more eagerly watched when a weather phenomenon is forecasted, audience will more likely obtain political news when something interesting happens (Rose, 2019). The more people will protest, more of them will run for office and watch political news. He also acknowledges the fact that we are living in unhealthy times, during which we are attacked by the realities of the world that can affect our mood and make us less productive (2019). Noah also reminds in the interview that he is not excluding any political opponents from public discourse, as he often reaches out to the Republicans to visit his show (2019).

Concluding his role in this subchapter, it needs to be stressed that without a doubt Noah's sympathetic image comes from the fact that he is a “visitor” from outside of U.S. Politics, simply meaning that he positions himself as a foreigner (Trevor Noah is South-African), who tackles current political issues, which means that his views do not come either from Democratic or Republican surroundings, he is just thinking and presenting the content from outside the media bubble (at least theoretically) (Hurt, 2019, p. 63). Noah stated that since he is familiar with the “strong man” leadership that is popular in South African politics, he acknowledges why do people believe Trump. What is more, Noah differs from late-night show hosts through the fact that he is not fueled by anger and disillusion with partisan leaders, he rather tends to present content in funny way and allows his viewers to think for themselves (2019, p. 65).

Another important late-night host that should be introduced is Stephen Colbert, whose *Colbert Report* ran from 2005 to 2014 on Comedy Central, later moving to CBS for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. As he joined *The Daily Show* in 1997, he created a character (named just like him), which transformed into spin off late-night show in 2005. This persona was a conservative journalist, who interpreted news based on the ideology he represented. His alter ego was a jab at right-wing pundits, who often framed news, so they would match their political views, especially the ones from Fox News.

When studying the educational aspects of Colbert's show, there is one case that I would like to analyze, as it definitely stands out. Before 2012, Colbert already did some memorable stuff that can be perceived as a classic combination of political activism and satire, such as appearing at

White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in 2006 as his conservative character, or launched a presidential campaign in 2008, Colbert's Super PAC is up to date his biggest achievement. Such stunts allow him to reach out to wider audience than just the audience of his TV show and allow him to make a shift from making a comedy towards making a comedy as an act of citizenship (Meier, 2016, p. 263). But what exactly did Colbert do? On 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, 2011, Colbert filed all the needed paperwork to launch a Super PAC. During a conference, in his character, Colbert announced that he petitioned to create a Super PAC to raise unlimited amount of money, which would allow to determine the winners of 2012 elections (2016, p. 269). In order to show, how Super PAC can influence the outcome of the election, Colbert's Super PAC raised donations from thousands of contributors. *Americans for a Better Tomorrow Tomorrow* (Colbert Super PAC), raised over \$1.02 million by the end of January 2012. To prove how absurd the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* ruling was, during the episode of *The Colbert Report* that ran on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2012, Colbert announced that he is running for the seat of President of the United States of South Carolina, showing that he can be an active candidate, while running such organization. Colbert made Jon Stewart the head of his Super PAC, which then changed its name to *The Definitely Not Coordinating With Stephen Colbert Super PAC*. For the sake of satire, Stewart and Colbert used the legal loopholes to communicate between the Super PAC and the candidate: according to the law, such organization can not openly exchange messages with the candidate its donating to, but it may listen to his messages.

His Super PAC ran few satirical advertisements, starting with *Episode IV: A New Hope*, in which Colbert's character encouraged Iowans to write in a candidate named Rick Parry instead of Rick Perry, Texas Governor (2016, p. 271). This was a jab at Perry-related Super PAC organizations, as they attempted to secure him votes (2016). The most popular advertisement was *Mitt the Ripper*, aiming at another Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, which framed him as a serial killer, at the same time mentioning that he is buying companies and leaving them as he drained them (2016).

Each of the segments of *The Colbert Report* was focusing on different aspects of the Super PAC ruling (*Citizens United* ruling) and campaign law. For instance, in one panel Colbert focused on 501(c)(4) organizations; after bragging how much money has his organization raised, he mentioned Karl Rove's Super PAC American Crossroads, which was to raise \$240 million in 2012 (Jones et. al., 2012, p. 50). Afterwards, Colbert explained how did this organization become effective, as Rove created a sister organization Crossroads GPS, which, because of the fact that was a 501(c)(4), did not have to disclose information about the donors (2012). This allowed Crossroads to increase donations from \$200 to \$5.1 million: still in his character, Colbert was praising this idea, while at the same time showing the absurds of such precedents (2012).

The study conducted by Bruce W. Hardy et al., tested whether Colbert's effort increased the knowledge about the Super PACs among his viewers. The results have shown that his way of educating people was more successful than the information viewers obtained through traditional forms of media (2014, p. 329). They even argue that the prank can be perceived as an extended civics lesson (2014, p. 348). The respondents, who were phone surveyed between 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 and 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2012 (1232 adults), admitted that they learned more about campaign financing and Super PAC ruling, than from newspapers, radio shows or Fox News (2014). That is exactly what other scientists think about this experiment: Colbert has shown the absurd of campaign law and how easily such sketchy policies can be executed, also confirming what people, who were already skeptical of Super PAC regulations already knew (Meier, 2016, p. 274). Chattoo and Feldman argue that Colbert presented an issue that is boring for a viewer or citizen, but through his comedy routine, made people to pay attention and learn about politics (2020, p. 42). For further reading about Colbert's program and how it mixes politics and entertainment, it is highly recommended to read a master thesis written by Jarret Geenen, titled *The truth, unfiltered by rational argument: The multimodal construction of contemporary political satire in The Colbert Report*, as although the Super PAC campaign was his most recognizable effort, there are plenty of other interesting cases.

The last popular late-night panel that needs further analysis is the one that in my opinion has the highest educational value. John Oliver, who was a correspondent for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* between 2006 and 2013, got his own show on HBO in 2014. *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* is a left-leaning satire that touches very different problems that United States tackle with, by not only focusing on current issues in shorter segments, but also by choosing one political issue as a main segment of the episode. Researchers state that Oliver's program is a different, better form of the late-night shows it is inspired by, also because of the fact that it is ran by a subscription-based network, which allows it to use explicit language and is not affected by commercial breaks (Zoller Seitz, 2014). That is not the point though, because *Last Week Tonight* is a journalism in a form of satire, which allows to balance the information and entertainment (Kenny, 2014) (Abad, 2016, p. 15). Another important issue is the fact that Oliver is often interacting with the topic and taking action, instead of just commenting it. Mehnaaz Momen, in her book about political satire, argues that Oliver's comedy critiques systematic problems instead of just particular political figures (2018, p. 55). This makes the show even less liberal biased, but rather progressive biased, focusing both on the issues inconvenient for the Republicans and Democrats. Apart from that, the show is a heavy example of how the agenda-setting theory, which relies on a thesis that media show their viewers a specific issues to think about, encourages fans to make judgements about the modern politics (McCombs, Shaw, 1972) (Abad, 2016, p. 15). What is important is the fact that the show is fully

uploaded on Youtube platform after it runs on HBO, which not only highlights the inclusion (as the topics are important, everyone should have access to them), but also allows to make the issues go viral.

There are plenty of cases, when John Oliver's late-night show cause public discussions about the events it analyzed, but the most viral episodes tackled the issue of net neutrality. The segment that ran on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2014, describes that the biggest cable companies want to affect how the internet works, by slowing or blocking the access to the websites that do not cooperate with them, or create additional fees for the internet users and creators of the content just so they would have the access. Time Warner Cable and Comcast, two biggest internet providers wanted to create a monopoly on the web market and their lobbyists cooperated with the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to secure these changes. In the episode, Oliver shows an example of such unfair tactic, by proving that during the negotiations with Netflix regarding the download speeds, between October 2013 and February 2014, Comcast has slowed down the Netflix download speeds for their customers by 25% and increased it after the negotiations ended. Stressing how important it is, Oliver tells the audience that the internet activists started to cooperate with the biggest corporations such as Amazon and Google, which was a very unlikely coalition. Oliver asked the internet trolls to “channel their anger” and flood the FCC's public comment website regarding this issue. (Welch, 2014) As a result, FCC's filing page received 45,000 comments and extra 300,000 comments on the email inboxes that was created for this proposal (Hu, 2014). The data analysis from Sunlight Foundation shows that one-third of the comments mentioned the importance of competition among internet service providers (ISPs) (Lannon, 2014). Moreover, 40% of the comments, mentioned the consumer choice and impact of such regulations on consumer fees (2014).

There is also one survey conducted by the University of Delaware's Center For Political Communication, which's results have shown that 81% of respondents opposed “allowing Internet service providers to charge websites and streaming video services extra for faster speeds”. What is more interesting is the fact that satire shows such as *The Colbert Report* and *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* had a huge impact on their viewers consciousness regarding this issue. 29% of John Oliver viewers and 23% of Colbert viewers stated that they heard a lot about the proposed changes in net neutrality, while only 11% of CNN viewers and 7% of Fox News viewers stating the same (2014). This says a lot about modern media and how the late-night comedy shows shape public opinion.

Nevertheless this was not the end of the war with FCC. As Donald Trump appointed Republican Ajit Pai as a chairman of FCC in early 2017, Pai announced that he would end net neutrality and did some action towards this issue, such as “stopping companies from provided discounted high-speed internet service to low-income users” (Kang, 2017). In May, FCC voted to remove net neutrality



rules, which resulted in the *Net Neutrality II* episode of *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*, which ran on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 2007. In the panel, Oliver informed the viewers that Pai is an ex-lawyer for Verizon. As a result, 200,000 people commented to FCC about this issue within three days and the website became a victim of DDoS attacks, just like in 2014. The battle was lost on 11<sup>th</sup> of June, when the network neutrality regulation ended, as FCC's rules were repealed.

There are plenty of other important issues that John Oliver taught his viewers during the segments of his show, but this is the most recognizable and scientifically analyzed case. Without a doubt, one needs to agree that this form of journalism, which heavily differs from other late-night shows, has influenced modern entertainment programs; Oliver's program is getting worldwide attention and is perceived as a way of gaining knowledge about US politics all over the world. However, the number of cases presented had to be limited, since it generated too much interesting content, which deserves a whole scientific article.

It is interesting, however, that there are not really such programs on the conservative side of media bias. Why is that? Mainly because American mainstream is liberal and so the media are, especially during Donald Trump's era, where he is a political actor that provides entertainment to both sides of political spectrum. There lack of entertainment politics for the right derive from the fact that conservatives, who seek for them, are dependent on mainstream liberal media environment. That is why radio talk shows and Fox News are so popular among them – although they represent more or less 50% of American population, they do not really hear their perspective in popular media outlets. That is also why there aren't any popular studies that track how do the conservatives absorb political information through entertainment. There was one attempt at making a political late-night show though on Fox News. *The ½ Hour News Hour* ran only for few months, between 18 February, 2007 and 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2007 and was panned by critics. That is why modern conservative media rely on the aforementioned radio shows, which instead of satire, prefer to provide entertainment with expressive hosts, who often support conspiracy theories and do not fact-check their information, such as Rush Limbaugh (who was awarded a Medal of Freedom by Trump during this year's State of Union) and Alex Jones, whose *InfoWars* website has been running since 1999 and will be described later in the subchapter about fake news media outlets.

Another important topic for the debate is a lack of conservative comedians in the United States. This may be related to the fact that not only do the liberals dominate media, but also academia, journalism and other creative arts (Morrison, 2015). Dennis Miller, who is a former cast member of *Saturday Night Live* had a weekly panel in Bill O'Reilly's program, but his style of comedy was more ideologically oriented (2015). This may be also the case with the right-wing comedy and the viewers on the conservative spectrum of the media. Michael Loftus also tried to create a political satire for Republicans with *The Flipside*, which ran for three seasons, but was not

really a success (Nevins, 2017). In the article for *Guardian*, Nevins makes a good point that “rightwing comics must contend with not only the presumption that their very existence is an oxymoron, but with a president who is, himself, a sort of 24/7 late-night host” (2017). Without a doubt this may be the case, as the whole political scene is entertained by Trump, regardless what they would think of him. That is why Tucker Carlson, host of *Tucker Carlson Tonight* on Fox News has emerged as a star of this cable television news channel, as his way of presenting political opinion and expressions are very similar to the behavior of Trump.

Are there any talk shows that break the liberal/conservative media bias duopoly? Although there aren't any articles supporting this thesis in the mainstream media, during 2020 presidential campaign, a duo Krystal Ball and Saagar Enjeti started to gain traction, simply because Bernie Sanders supporters have sought for more populist media outlets that would represent progressive bias, especially that the biggest news channels are more liberal oriented. The Hill's *Rising with Krystal & Saagar* is an opinion web series that is uploaded daily on Youtube; although lacking any comedy aspects of political entertainment, hosts take on The Democratic Party and Washington liberal politics, positioning themselves as anti-establishment. It is worth noting that this duo combines a progressive (Ball) and a conservative (Enjeti), which in an interesting way allows them to talk about the narcissism of the rich and media elites, while at the same time creating space for the discussion about bipartisan failures (Guastella, 2020). This show is also worth mentioning, because for the first time in modern politics, leftists have their own populist political channel. Additionally, Enjeti can be perceived as a “likable conservative”, just like Krystal Ball can be perceived as a cool progressive by the conservatives, who think skeptical of mass media and establishment. Last, but not least, the program can be perceived as an answer to plutocratic media bias and the status quo propaganda.

In the last segment of this subchapter, it is crucial to deliberate, whether entertainment politics are always a good thing. Although during Donald Trump's era, entertainment TV has become more political, because as it was previously stated, he provides content for satire, Although political sketches have always been an important part of *Saturday Night Live* sketches, taking into consideration *Weekend Update* segment and memorable satires like Tina Fey impersonating Sarah Palin, some scholars, while comparing late-night political shows to *SNL*, argued that viewing *SNL* “was linked to less political participation” (Pfau et. al., 2005) (Compton, 2016). On the other hand, Mehnaaz Moman stresses the importance of *SNL* as it had a crucial impact on modern satire, as it is a “cultural artifact associated with political analysis” (2018, p. 47). For years, this show has been tackling social issues, it was the first entertainment show that was hosted by a public official. Moman also acknowledges that after Trump's win in 2016, *SNL* instead of expressing shock, ran a sketch in which two black friends are not surprised by the outcome of elections and remind the

viewer of America's racist history (2018). However, Alec Baldwin's Trump portrayal, which at the beginning was seen as a fresh take on presidential candidate, has been deemed as a “crowd-pleaser” and by some journalists is a lazy take on POTUS, which appeals to modern, sophisticated and liberal *SNL* audience (Canellos, 2019). Framing Trump as an incompetent idiot may please the audience that needed to seek for satire after the 2016 presidential elections, but does not really encourage it to think critically about the policies and systematic problems, which did not just appear in 2016. This may be discouraging, when thinking about a rich history of *SNL*'s portrayal of American presidents, such as George H W Bush impersonated by Dana Carvey, or Chevy Chase impersonating Gerald Ford.

This chapter sums up both the history of celebrity endorsement and how the entertainment mainstream was becoming more and more political, and the studies related to the influence that the late-night shows may have on American voter. Without a doubt, entertainment shapes how do the voters perceive causes and political issues, regardless whether they agree with them, or not. Over the year, with the development of mass media, Americans started to enjoy this way of presenting politics and the idea of uploading TV shows to internet platforms such as Youtube allows them to reach wider audience. However, it needs to be discussed, which of the entertainment tools give the viewers lessons on citizenship and which are just made to amuse.

## **Chapter 5. Social media and celebrity endorsement as a challenge for political newcomers in the United States**

### **5.1 Development of new interactive campaign strategies**

COVID-19 pandemic has set a new chapter in modern history, having influence on various aspects of our lives. The emergence of disease outbreak in the United States has also affected the political campaigns, which had to focus on more digital aspects of reaching out to the voters. Social distancing measures have limited the abilities of door-to-door campaigning and rally organising and it is hard to say when will the politicians be able to meet with their voters in real life. Does this mean that until the vaccine for COVID-19 is found out, more and more campaign staffs will turn to social media and internet in order to conduct their campaign? This chapter will consist of the visions and perspectives on the future evolution of modern political campaigns, taking into consideration the evolution of influencer politics and Web 2.0 tools.

The first important perspective that needs to be analyzed is how will the world change after the pandemic and how will the campaigns have to adjust to new safety measures. By the end of July 2020, Donald Trump was losing in most of the swing states and his quite irrational decisions and statements did not help either him or the Republican Party and its candidates taking part in the Congressional elections in 2020. At this point we could only assume that a vaccine for COVID-19 will be developed and offered for public use in 2021 (it was!), which means that if this won't be delayed, 2022 Congressional elections and 2024 Presidential elections campaigns will be conducted in traditional way. In June 2020, Democrats confirmed that the upcoming presidential nominating convention, which took part between 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 in Milwaukee, would be almost entirely virtual. The delegates would not be traveling to Milwaukee, but Biden and his running mate would accept the nomination in person. Events like this will without a doubt go down in history as digital campaign milestones, the question is: will it be a one-time event, or the DNC will find out that there is no need to organize a big "political Coachella" with headliners ranging from the most important members of the Democratic Party to famous celebrities, who support this party? On one hand, nominee conventions are one of the most important political entertainment shows, which can be perceived as a show of strength that can appeal to undecided voters and consolidate the divided

party members. Conventions attract huge audience all over the United States, but do post-convention surveys prove that the conventions help the candidates? A recent article on Fivethirtyeight shows that the post-convention bounces are getting smaller: for example, back in 2000, both Al Gore and George W. Bush earned +8 bounce, whereas from 2012 presidential elections, the biggest bounce in polls that the candidate got was +3 earned by Donald Trump back in 2016 (Skelley, 2020).

The Republican Party was still planning to organize the convention, despite RNC being a potential "high-risk" event. The information stated that the attendees will have to wear masks and their movements will be tracked in order to assure that the event is safe. It was said that Trump will most probably deliver his acceptance speech either from the White House, or from The Great Battlefield of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania (Cathey, 2020). The RNC will be taking place in Charlotte and the question is what will the outcome be of this event and how may it affect the result of the elections and the potential well-being of the attendees. It is said that around 500 people will be attending and the meeting will be more of a "business-only" convention (Harrison, 2020). What does it tell us, when talking about the development of new strategies? Without a doubt it will be easier for the Democrats to (in any case) make another virtual convention in 2024, but let's agree that although internet eases the communication with the voters and allows to lead the campaign in much cheaper way, it is almost clear that (if the vaccine is developed and pandemic is stopped by the end of 2023, which is likely to be) if it will be possible, the main parties will keep up organising traditional conventions. Even if they do not affect voter behaviour anymore, they are still an important way to show consolidation among the party.

Is there a chance that a newcomer will appear that will change the political scene in the United States, through their use of social media tools? If Biden wins this year's presidential elections, he will most probably be the POTUS for one term, simply because he will be 82 years old in 2024. As he announced that Kamala Harris will be his VP candidate, she is the most likely to become the strongest candidate. However, let's take into consideration the fact that the amount of progressive voters among Democrats are growing and the unstable economic situation of Americans combined with the upcoming recession may change the voting behavior of many Democrats, who may become tired of safe centrist doctrines. The question is: is there a politician that is able to mobilize younger generations like Bernie Sanders does?

In 2024, U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez will be eligible to run for the presidential seat, as she will become 35 years old. Her main quality is how easy it is for her to appeal to young voters, especially when having considered her social media use. During livestreams on Instagram she discusses policies and explains how do politics work in the House of Representatives. Over two years since she became a Representative, who became one of the biggest

Instagram influencers, at least when talking about digital activism on this platform. Livestreamed Q&A's are very important for her young audiences, which is more tech-savvy and can definitely be encouraged to get more involved in political processes (Haseman, 2021). One of the most memorable livestreams, was the one, when Ocasio-Cortez assembled IKEA furniture while drinking wine, chatting about Trump's Green Deal proposal (Gonzalez-Ramirez, 2019). Having considered the fact that more and more Americans tend to use social media, streams may become the most accessible way to engage with politicians, of course assuming that they would engage in active discussion with their viewers. Her way of using Instagram became a guiding light for other politicians (especially Democrats, who are more likely to attract younger audience), which was especially seen during the primary presidential campaign in 2020 with some awkward aforementioned cases (such as Warren drinking beer). What's important is the fact that Ocasio-Cortez's social media use looks natural, which is in my opinion her biggest asset. Although all politics on social media networks are made for political entertainment, only the ones led by charismatic leaders can be used to get out the vote.

Let's not forget though, that Web 2.0 networks are the only tools used for political gain and politics and campaigns in the United States are still mainly conducted through traditional media. Another important aspect is the current state of the Democratic Party, which is still led by more centrist politicians, which follow Obama's path. Although Bernie Sanders was at one point close to securing the presidential candidate's seat, the online enthusiasm surrounding his candidacy was not really followed by favorable numbers during the primaries. Ocasio-Cortez would need to build a huge base of volunteers all over the United States, also in swing-states, where Democrats tend to lean conservative.

This is where Beto O'Rourke joins divagations about the future of the Democratic Party. Although his presidential bid has proven that the hype surrounding him after the toss-up Senate elections in Texas in 2018 was not enough to establish him as one of Biden's biggest rivals, he is a tech-savvy moderate, who is also eager to use new technologies to reach out to the voters. The assumption is made just like in Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's case loosely on the analyses of social media use of political candidates, as O'Rourke also has a natural charisma which appeals to Millennials. Both AOC's and his Congressional campaigns in 2018 can be perceived as new milestones in the era of political entertainment, the question is whether he will be able to use it for his gain. O'Rourke is much older than Ocasio-Cortez (47 years old), but he managed to mobilize younger base (also by using celebrity politics) and get it interested in politics, as he has ability to break down complicated political issues into everyday language. There is also one important factor that should not be forget: he already knows what it is like to lose elections. Recent campaign has eased any expectations that were placed on him, so without a doubt he should learn some important

political lessons that can help him in future. Another important thing is that Texas is slowly becoming a swing-state: although according to *270towin* forecast from 16<sup>th</sup> of August, The Lone Star State was leaning Republican, there were some polls suggesting that Biden may win delegates from this state during the 2020 Presidential Elections (he did not though). There was a chance for an upset during the 2020 Senate election in Texas, as Mary Jennings Hegar at some point was earning some important poll points against the incumbent John Cornyn. Ted Cruz's seat will be up for a contest in 2024 and O'Rourke may want to challenge him once again, this time as a much more experienced rival. The shifting demographics can only help O'Rourke, who speaks Spanish fluently, as according to *The Texas Tribune*, the gap between Hispanic and White population is narrowing and over a decade, the Hispanic population in Texas grew by 2 millions (Ura, Novak, 2020). If O'Rourke uses his charisma, he can be Ocasio-Cortez's biggest rival when talking about the future of the Democratic Party. However, the identity politics of the Democratic Party may be one of the components that can stop his road to The White House, as more and more liberal voters are calling for diversity in politics and inclusion of ethnic minorities at the highest ranks of political organizations. Let's face it – O'Rourke is good at bringing down the house, but many young people also believe that the "change" means less white, heterosexual men in party's establishment.

Now let's focus on the future of social media in politics. It is more than reasonable to assume that eventually all political candidates will need to learn how to conduct digital campaigns, but are there any platforms that are more likely to lead this transition? Is there any way to create an ethical approach to campaigning in social media, taking into consideration that we're dealing with the use of data that is given for free to marketing specialists by unsuspecting users? Is it utopian to believe that each candidate should have equal access to new media tools?

Over the years, U.S. politicians either learned how to use internet data for their gain, or turned to hiring professional marketing companies in order to collect and analyze data. Ever since Obama's campaign used big data during the U.S. Presidential Campaign in 2012, experts began to wonder whether this will spoil politics. Without a doubt, with every new election, the algorithms, which allow voter microtargeting, will process even bigger amounts of data.

The example of Donald Trump's campaign shows that when talking about advertising, the campaign staffs are testing different variants of one post, to check the preferences of the users. These tactics differ from classic voter targeting, because they are more manipulative and limit free choice of a user (Pawelczyk, Jakubowski, 2017, p. 40). Over the years, political campaigns tended to professionalize their digital outreach tactics by combining their own data on voter behavior with the data sets that were available from private companies (Bartlett et al., 2018, p. 28). We can only predict that this trend will still develop; however, machine learning and the automatic segmentation and the role of private vendors in this processes may and definitely should start a serious discussion

about profiting from private data.

Some theorists believe that citizens should be recompensed for the data that has been obtained from users of social media platforms and apps. Although right now this may sound like an utopian dream, a tax on such corporations could have limit such practices, leading to more fair relations between the user and creator of the website. Renata Avila in her piece for *OpenDemocracy* describes the role private vendors have in influencing modern politics. A project created by *Transparency Toolkit*, called *Data Politics*, has been collecting information regarding the services for digital campaigns. The process has been split into three phases:

- collecting voters' data – *DataPolitics* state that there is an unhealthy balance between specifics used for political purposes and used for commercial ones that include details on profiling the customers. These information are sold to those, who run the campaigns. *DataPolitics* also names *Social Listening Companies*, which analyze the discussions led on social media in order to examine trends and potential influencers. Others that have been named are *data brokers* that combine information with more detailed data (demographics, browsing data). Finally, the newest addition are *Political Psychology Companies*, which create psychological profiles of customers, including both voting behavior and personal opinions. These tools are specifically used for voter targeting.
- Segmenting and targeting the voters – as voter segmentation process has already been described in this book, there is no need to get into details with this term, however, the data that has been already collected, is later merged and presented through campaigning tools to visualize the outcome (with maps, charts etc.) The modern role of political marketing companies is to process this data; as their size ranges from international companies to local ones, the bigger companies often outsource their work to the smaller ones in order to hide their involvement. It needs to be stressed that not all companies work in such shady way, as some of them follow the electoral law and use data that is transparent. *DataPolitics* advise that there are not enough data protection authorities that would evaluate microtargeting practices and this may allow some organizations to manipulate with the election mechanisms and outcomes.
- Message delivery and voter influence attempts – it is stated in the report that professional campaigns are allowed to not only post content through their original sources, but they can also affect voters through bot and troll accounts. Without a doubt we can agree with this thesis, taking into consideration that negative campaigning of campaign staffs are just a tip of the iceberg, if we have in mind the volunteer troll army each of the candidates may have on social networking websites. According to the study presented in this report, 32% of respondents that use social media, are not able to distinguish the promoted content from the



one shared by their friends (Avila, 2019).

Although in September 2020, the report is no longer available on *Data Politics'* website and this book can only rely on the article from *OpenDemocracy.net*, we can draw some conclusions from the aforementioned cases. It can be observed that "theoretically", political marketers soon may not be needed anymore, as technologies and algorithms allow campaign staffs to create solutions just based on data and numbers. The authors of the report argue that because of the uneven access to such tools, campaign rivalry between the candidates may be unfair.

Social media and other new media tools have established themselves as political actors and their role will only grow bigger. However, there are some issues that should and definitely will be discussed as the world will keep on changing. The transparency of the algorithms may be the most important part of this task, as it would make sure that no candidate would have any advantage during the campaign process. This of course should be somehow regulated by law, as it would be naive to believe that politicians would create a fair play book by themselves. Authors of the research also propose requiring the campaigns to display the data they are using, used or planning to use and as a result making it public (Avila, 2019).

It is important to stress that the weaker democracy is in state, the more likely it will be to manipulate with such tools. It is clear how much do this changes affect American politics, so how hard may it be to control in a state where the culture of using internet is not that much developed? The nationalization of data could be the answer. In the interview for London School of Economics, Ulises Mejias talks about a term he introduced in his 2019 book *The Costs Of Connection*, called "data colonialism". As internet users are becoming more dependent on modern technologies, they lose control of their data and become dependent on private sector that exploits them; for example by agreeing to Facebook terms, we agree to use it for free and being tracked at the same time (van der Spuy, 2020). While his stance is that the idea of the users being recompensed for the data they are providing is neoliberal, there should be some forms of change that has to be introduced. As companies make profit by exploiting the data of foreign countries, the countries should tax the corporations simply for using such resources (2020). In his recent article, Christian Fuchs also tackles this issue: discussing Georg Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness* and adjusting it to modern times of digital capitalism and internet technologies, he tries to find some solutions to this issue. In conclusion, Fuchs argues that the big data analytics disregard science and qualitative research methods, favoring the quantification and instrumental knowledge that works in the service of dominant interests (2020, p. 16). As a result of a Cambridge Analytica scandal, a case in which millions of users got their personal data used and sold to Cambridge Analytica, organization which targeted them with fake news to influence the elections, social sciences started to focus on the potential outcomes of the development of post-truth politics and internet campaigning tools.

Targeted advertisements, which use the data one agrees on sharing when accepting the rules of the website, allow to manipulate us and "colonize the public sphere" with propaganda (2020, p. 10). What Fuchs means that this situation benefits elites and it is needed to transform the capitalist form of internet into more common based (2010, p. 17).

Whenever the potential automation of works is being debated, one may think of various industrial jobs, which by introducing the Artificial Intelligence may result in hiring less people. However, if campaigns would only rely on big data, less people may be needed to form a good campaign staff. What also might be worrying is the fact that an easy access to large uncontrolled databases is poisoning good democratic practices, as getting citizens involved in ground campaigning. Not making any adjustments may result in the further decrease of trust in political institutions. It is believed that when talking about the United States, more and more states will introduce state laws that will make it much more difficult to run campaign ads. Since the General Data Protection Regulation has been introduced in Europe, both lawmakers and private companies started to treat this issue more seriously.

The most important updates that should be introduced, would need to be adjusted to Facebook and Google, as these companies are the most important digital actors. Although we can not imagine banning political advertisements on Facebook, it is still hard to believe that running campaign ads is not possible on Twitter anymore. Google has also introduced some restrictions on targeting, for example voter file targeting or political affinity audiences are no longer available (2021). This means that campaign staffs will rely on geolocation, demographics and proxy-based targeting; for example people who are looking for cannabis shops are more likely to engage with an advert recommending a candidate that supports the liberal platform; people, who are buying vegan food are more likely to engage with Green politician's ad, etc.

It is hard to predict how will these regulations work in the future, however, let's make few assumptions on which types of new media may become the most important political actors in the future. Younger voters, who are interested in politics tend to turn to Instagram, Snapchat or Tiktok to express their political views and engage with such content; digital activism on these platforms is thriving and these should be crucial tools when talking about the mobilization of young base. Political advertising is important, but connecting with voters through official campaign profiles are more likely to get them interested in political processes.

The case of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez shows that American politics need representatives who reach out to citizens and educate them. Generation of Zoomers is more likely to engage in political activism, also because citizens are becoming more aware of dangers the world it facing. Social media have to combine the entertaining and educational functions of politics and it would be possible only with charismatic leaders that allow people to be a part of Washington politics.

Instagram is a perfect tool for such revolution, as it allows sharing various important features of modern visual communication: sharing pictures, videos, livestreaming. The presented cases in this research show that it works best when the online identity of a politician matches their behavior in real life. Web 2.0 tools have to present their work, but also their personal side, so the followers would feel a connection with them – just like with the celebrities and influencers. As the followers buy the products recommended by the influencers, they may adopt support for the policies presented by a politician, if they show it in a way that allows to understand them.

However, with the development of new technologies we need to remember about the digital exclusion. Although most Americans use social media on a daily basis, platforms like Instagram are not and most probably will not repeat Facebook's success within older bases. At that point of the research it is hard to predict how will the COVID-19 pandemic affect future social interactions, but we can expect returning to traditional canvassing and rallies around 2022/2024. What is going to change is the groundwork organizational aspects when talking about campaigning. As more companies have been introducing remote work and finally figured out that some aspects or organising do not have to be led in person, campaign management can also be and will be digitalized. If we take into consideration local campaigning, such platforms as Slack or Zoom can help introduce volunteers to campaigning plans and set them some tasks without leaving house. It works the same with online events and rallies that can be set up on such platforms or for instance on Facebook. Even if social distancing guidelines may limit door-to-door campaigning, there is still plenty of work the volunteers can do in digital.

And what about TikTok? In previous chapters, this platform was being praised as a newcoming phenomenon that is used as an educational tool by young activists; however, Donald Trump plans to ban the app because of the fact that it is Chinese. Is he right? Will TikTok still be allowed in the United States? Why does it matter?

During summer of 2020, Trump's administration wanted to ban TikTok and WeChat unless the apps would be sold to a US companies by 14<sup>th</sup> of November. POTUS stressed his concerns that Chinese platforms may be used for disinformation and spying. In theory this may not be that bad idea taking into consideration the fact that foreign sources have been interfering in 2016 U.S. elections with the spread of fake news. On the other hand, these apps have become victims of a cold war between Trump's administration and China, which has deepened during the pandemic. Furthermore, one can not shake off the feeling that TikTok is shaping modern politics and could only become a more important political actor, maybe even leading a change in digital activist "balance", remembering that Facebook is without a doubt responsible for the rise of right-wing populism on the American web. At the end of September, court has blocked Trump's order that was supposed to ban TikTok from U.S. app stores (Paul, 2020). Regardless of the fact who will win this

year's presidential elections, regulations should be introduced for the apps that are developed outside of the United States for the sake of the data privacy and being assured that no state would start manipulating with it.

There is one part of social media campaigning that has not been fully analysed, since it was supposed to be delivered on the very end of this academic work, in the fifth chapter: candidate apps. Growing digitalization of campaign content and worries about campaign ethics lead to the assumption that the best idea for future campaigns is investing in dedicated apps in which candidates can share content and at the same time collect data provided by the people, who agreed to the app terms. This is of course a solution for more tech-savvy citizens who are interested in new technologies, but let's face it: there is a growing number of young people getting involved in politics and if they were provided a social media app that would let them interact with peers, who share the same beliefs, they would be more eager to volunteer during the campaign trail. There is still plenty of work to do when talking about the development of such apps: although Joe Biden has launched a *Vote Joe* app, there was a bug discovered in the middle of September that allowed anyone to have access to sensible data (Whittaker, 2020). The second issue is that politicians like Joe Biden do not really need getting that much involved in modern technologies during campaign trail, as his assets are different target groups.

This leads us to another conclusion: does every politician need to focus on digital campaigns? Is it really that important to show more personal side of a candidate on social media? The cases that have been presented in the previous chapters show that basically any digital campaigning is good and can help the candidate – however the campaign staff needs to deeply analyze the pros and cons of fully engaging in such tools. For one candidate, livestreaming the dentist appointment or drinking wine at home while assembling IKEA furniture may be an entertaining way to engage with the voter, while others may be laughed at for their attempts at being perceived as cool. This of course is also heavily related to the age of the candidate – although no one likes ageism, internet is a very sarcastic place, which is waiting for some campaign bloopers to make them viral for user's entertainment. Political marketer's role is to adjust the digital campaign program to the candidate, so they would reach out to the highest possible number of voters.

Ever since 1990s, internet has played a huge role in election outcomes in the United States, whether it was just launching campaign websites, or focusing on all the new technologies possible. New media started revolution in political marketing that will not be stopped and let's face it: every politician needs to adjust to current trends in order to stay relevant. Facebook or Instagram should no longer be perceived as innovative tools, as the role of campaign staffs is to keep up with new tools that will allow them to attract voters. As online community has become polarized, politicians from far left and far right find it easier to engage with their base, which can become staff's "online

army” that is always willing to fight for their candidate. The behavioral data that is obtained from social media users allows parties and candidates to create more effective campaign ads; what is more, when talking about American politics, campaigns and candidates nowadays need to target the voters through content in various languages that represent ethnic groups that create American society, putting emphasis on content in Spanish language, remembering that with every year the amount of Latin and Hispanic voters in the United States is growing and considering current political climate it is more likely for them to vote for the Democrats. This can be observed in Texas, where Beto O'Rourke almost won Senate seat in 2018 and Joe Biden may change it into a swing-state in 2020 already.

Future political marketing studies definitely need to put an emphasis on further analyses of these trends not only for the sake of predicting outcomes of the elections, but also in order to have resources to influence more transparent ways of conducting digital campaigns. The more trust citizens have in public institutions, the more eager they will be to participate in politics and engage in grassroots activism. It would be very interesting to conduct studies that would further focus on social communication of photography; although Elisa Serafinelli has written a very interesting book about Instagram, more case studies are needed that could further confirm the claim made in this research, that ”more personal content sharing is met with bigger outreach”. It is quite obvious at this point and has been confirmed by smaller parts of the research, such as in the articles about 2018 elections, but unfortunately I was not able to find any other articles that could confirm that.

The interest in Web 2.0 tools and their use in political marketing is thriving and without a doubt, American politics have once again proven that marketing experts are once again many steps ahead of political campaigns in other countries, so further researches could form very useful handbooks that would allow young social scientists to become pioneers in this subject. Last (but not least), a deeper research should be conducted on tackling fake news, especially when talking about the potential threats of manipulation of information through deep fakes, taking into consideration the fact that the technologies are developing every year and the line between real world and virtual reality is becoming more and more blurry. Through these studies, science and power of content analysis may tackle the big data and algorithm politics, which endanger quality of academic research in political marketing.

## **5.2 Framing the American voter in new perspective**

Although today's America seems to be divided on many issues, as Trump's tenure took polarization to an extreme level, it is needless to say that the level of civic engagement in politics

and social issues is growing, also because of the development of internet. As it has been presented, over the years, American internet users have not only expanded their community, but started to use internet for political communication and to obtain political news. Social movements have never perished in the United States, but is inarguable that they are currently on the rise because of the fact that internet allows to organize and exchange content within a second. In this subchapter I will focus on how Americans are and could be using these tools for their political gain and to engage more in political activities.

According to the study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania Annenberg Schol for Communication, there are two groups of citizens participating in social protests: core group, which attends demonstrations, spreads the message and is active on the street and the periphery, which is less-committed to real time activism, but is echoing and sharing the message through social media. These periphery activists (slacktivists), play critical role in extending the information outreach by liking, sharing and commenting on the content (Barbera et. al., 2015). Omar Wasow in his recent article for American Political Science Review, analyzed the agenda seeding for black-led protests between 1960 and 1972 to find that different types of tactics may have affect on different media issue frames (2020, p. 639). His research has shown that more violent protests may have had bigger impact on the Republican shift among white voters, whereas peaceful protests had an effect on the Democratic shift. During an interview he argued that it was social media that has helped and is helping to popularize and share materials on police brutality – it also played an important role in gathering public support for the protesters' goals (Ovide, 2020). Back in the days it were the traditional media outlets that covered the protests and thanks to them people could learn about brutality of Jim Crow; Rodney King's beating was filmed by George Holliday with a Sony Video8 Handycam and was broadcasted by news stations; in 2020, George Floyd's death was recorded by Darnella Frazier and shared all over the world through various social media platforms (for which she received much unnecessary online hate, as many expected the 17 year old to intervene and accused her of recording one's death for clout). Smartphone cameras have become a tool to combat racial oppression, whether they are used as an evidence, or just to share political messages.

From their very beginning, social media were praised for their ability to allow users for organizing, which can fuel political participation and strengthen democracy through direct democracy and bypassing mass media gatekeeping (Uldam, Vestergaard, 2015). Much studies have been conducted, especially in recent years, trying to measure how can online civic engagement influence the trust in politics, ability for change, encouragement to engage in real time political activities (Warren et al., 2014) (Haro-de-Rosario et al., 2016) (Rice, Moffett, 2019) (Hwang, Kim, 2015).

What does it mean to political marketing and world of political campaigns? The success of

#OccupyWallStreet, #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter movements (or Q-Anon if one would provide an example from the extreme right side of the spectrum) on social media shows that people like to share political messages and indeed more and more of them will engage in digital activism. Before establishing any conclusions, it is crucial to "dig" more into these movements to show actual trends in social media activism, which allowed and will allow for change in American politics. The Q-Anon movement's case will on the other case show how social media can affect ones' perception through access to fake news, in order to finally establish what's good and what's bad about having 24/7 365 access to political content.

It is worth to consider and note that this research only focused on the United States, whereas there are tons of materials supporting the thesis that Web 2.0 tools have helped users all over the world to combat censorship and totalitarian regimes, whether we're talking about the Arab Spring or the uprising in Belarus. For the United States, it was quite surprising to see the use of such tools thriving in (more/less) free speech society. The Occupy Wall Street movement through blogs, Twitter hashtags and Facebook pages allowed internet users not only to organize and exchange political content, but also to form alliances and strategies. What is more important, it also allowed the movement to decentralize, by creating fanpages for local organizational structures. Groups were created in 872 cities across the United States, thanks to the Occupy Together website, which performed as a central hub (Ngak, 2011). One also needs to remember that it was 2011 and many people did not have the smartphones yet, which would allow them to use internet on their mobile devices in much easier way. Not as many already had Instagram, Twitter or less popular social media tools. With more tools and higher level of social media users, public awareness regarding the issue can be increased, as more people are exposed to the cause.

In some cases, social media movement can be the beginning for a collective work in real life, without large engagement in large protests, as its specifics allow the cause to work better in the digital environment. For example, #MeToo movement, which uses a phrase first used in this context on Myspace by Tarana Burke in 2006, began many years later a social media trend in order to empower women (and other people), who were victims of abuse (Ohlheiser, 2017). The hashtag generated millions of mentions on social media, ended careers of many predators and sparked a discussion on sexual harassment. Alyssa Milano's tweet leveraged the hashtag to a new level and made people aware that everyone can become a victim of harassment, regardless their sex, social status or age. What is interesting is that this led to a creation of a movement that was a response to the digital original, which focused on raising legal defense funds and helping survivors. This case shows how powerful a message or post on social media can be and how can it can strengthen the fight for an issue that every person in the world was already familiar with, but not as many decided to speak up against. It is needless to say that this could have not happened if it wasn't for Trump's

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presidency, which triggered nationwide resentment toward how women are treated, this movement may have not reached such momentum. That is especially rewarding for the democratic system if one considered the rise in women activism that was observed during Trump's tenure, which is unquestionably related to Trump's tenure and his view on sex equality. According to Facebook's data, more than 45% users of this network were friends with a person that posted "Me Too" status or hashtag within the first 24 hours the movement started gathering traction (Franke-Ruta, 2017). However, although commercially the #MeToo movement and Time's Up can be perceived as one of the biggest female-led political actions in 21<sup>st</sup> century, let's not forget about the "Pantsuit Nation", Facebook group consisting of 3 million group members that was planning to celebrate the first female POTUS – Hillary Clinton. When Clinton lost the elections, members of this group started to create local Pantsuit Nation pages that were supposed to fight with Trump and his policies – when the leaders stopped the decentralization of the group by establishing an organization, activists formed groups such as Together We Will, Suit Up Action Network or Action Together Network (Poloni-Staudinger, 2017). And what about the Women's March in Washington, which was (most probably) the largest single-day demonstration rally in modern American history? (Chenoweth, Pressman, 2017). Authors of the article for Washington Post have created a spreadsheet in which they tried to collect data and make assumptions about potential results, which allows us to think that on best guess, over 4,1500 000 Americans took parts in marches across the US with events being held in 654 towns. Most of the data is provided with the details took from local news sources and social media and it is strongly recommended to have a look at this, because this effort is spectacular (2017). Emily's List, an organization that supports female candidates in elections, with every year reports that more and more women are interested in taking active part in elections and the case of Alabama's Special Senate Election shows that suburban, moderate women may decide on the outcome of elections if the candidate is accused of being a predator and is closely alligned to Donald Trump (Tomaszewski, 2018).

Without a doubt, currently the biggest influence on modern American politics has the Black Lives Matter movement. Social media platforms allowed to spread public awareness about police brutality; hitherto, the information about police brutality was widely covered with some of the cases being recorded, but why didn't this movement get this much momentum after the death of Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile and many other African-Americans? The issue is that with every year, more and more Americans are using social media to obtain political information and the way that George Floyd's death was captured on video and then the material was shared across new and old media, allowed more citizens to get involved, which finally made BLM go mainstream. Although this organization was already set up in 2013 and was arranging demonstrations all over the US, it was just a matter of time that it would start to receive its momentum. It is also all about sharing the

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image; whenever people hear about the important issue, they could become interested in such topic, but when they are provided with a graphic image or video, they could become more attached to it (Granillo, 2020). It is also needless to say that not only the development of internet tools allowed to start this revolution, since it was also the issue with the modernization of devices. Introduction of smartphones and mobile internet services allowed the creator of the content to cover the event in real time and streaming raised importance of the content, since the recipients of the message could interact with it while the event was actually happening. It changed the way people experience events (Serafinelli, 2018, p. 69).

There is a recent Pew Research Center study that confirms this thesis, as 23% of social media users state that the content from platforms made them change their views on particular issues, compared to 15% in a study conducted in 2018 (Auxier, 2020). This pattern is especially visible with young Black social media users. Overall, 48% of Black social media users stated that they posted pictures to support the cause. (2020b) Black users were generally more likely to take action on social media and encourage others (45%), compared to White (30%) and Hispanic (33%) users. However, it is needless to say that there are different ways people were using these platforms to spread awareness on racial inequality in the United States, as they shared petitions, anti-racism reading lists, lists of organisations to support (and Black-owned businesses), explanations of problems on graphics, such as prison abolition or white privilege (Gawthrop, Illingworth, 2020). This led for example to rise in sales of anti-racist books by Ibram X Kendi or Reni Eddo-Lodge (Flood, 2020). Eddo-Lodge even asked people, who purchased the book to match the price with a donation to Minnesota Freedom Fund (2020).

The increased political participation on social media will without a doubt have measurable influence on how Congress will evolve in next elections. It is quite obvious to establish that if it wasn't for identity politics and #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movement, there would not be such pressure on Joe Biden to choose a female vice-presidential candidate, which is also representing POC. It is also a reminder that nowadays anyone can become an activist or a politician if they choose to form a collective action on an issue: in Nashville, teens organized a huge Black Lives Matter protest that was attended by 10,000 people, by simply becoming friends on Twitter. (Baker 2020) After the protest, students pledged to continue their alliance and are sharing content on their Instagram page and other social media platforms (2020). This creates some further discussion on how social media allow to shape nationwide and local coalitions, which are significant for making and sustaining movements (Mundt et al., 2018, p. 2). It is also worth noting that there were plenty of other movements that grew thanks to social media, such as Climate Strike, Standing Rock or even the Q-Anon movement, which will be discussed later in order to try explaining how social media can affect political participation in bad way.

That is because the verification whether the content is true is harder to track for people, who are not used to internet tools. Although scientific work should not be biased, it is very clear to distinct the movements fighting for a cause from the ones supporting conspiracy theories. The rise of far-right activism in social media can be linked to many different variables: Trump's presidency, political polarization or simply the issue that social media platforms tend to promote more liberal values, which allow more conservative users to seek for political information that would suit them without fact-checking them. As a matter of fact, the critique of such movements is important, because nowadays the United States do not really suffer from terrorist incidents related to far-left ideologies; according to the report published in October 2020 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, white supremacist groups were responsible for 67% of terrorist plots and attacks in the US during first eight months of 2020. The radicalization of online discourse can be linked to the fact that internet allows people with extremist views to cooperate on much higher level, which is the main negative aspect of social media's coalition-building abilities.

A study from 2000 says that back in the days, white nationalist online activity was heavily decentralised, as it was isolated from Republicans and Christian Right (Burris et al., 2000). The development of social media tools play important role in radicalization of U.S. extremists, in 2016 it was measured that the result of the effect was around 90% (Jensen et. al., 2020). Internet was becoming an echo chamber for like-minded people, who did not know each other in real world (Ahmed, Pisoiu, 2019). There are three tactics that were isolated from the statistics analyzing hashtags on Twitter:

- piggybacking – using trending hashtags in order to add an extremist hashtag to have influence on a topic
- backstaging – blending and joining series of hashtags, which would link to external website
- narrating – blending hashtags to flip the debate, so it would fit the extremist ideas (Graham, 2016, p. 33-35)

Of course this would not be possible if it wasn't for the radicalization of young people through imageboards. 8Chan, currently 8kun, which was launched by Fredrick Brennan as a response to banning topics on the most popular imageboard 4chan, has attracted internet users, who through "defence of free speech" started to organize and exchange political views on this platform (although it is worth noting, that 4chan.org/pol is also home to alt-right and nationalist content). The website was already shut down few times and was a place where the white terrorist manifestos were uploaded, for example before the mass shootings in Christchurch or El Paso (Wong, 2019). The genesis of imageboards becoming home for online (and real life) extremists can be found in 2014, when GamerGate happened, when a discussion about the role of females in gamer community became a ground for online harassment.

It is also needless to say that the Qanon movement, which supports conspiracy theories started on the political board of 4chan. Posts made by an „anon” (anonymous person posting on the internet) were made viral by a YouTube video creator and two moderators of 4chan website, through creating videos and a Reddit following (Zadrozny, Collins, 2018). A conversation that was sparked around the posts of an internet user claiming to be a high-ranking military officer („Q”), who knows about a pedophile sex-ring in the Democratic Party, started to attract cult following, which led to creation of new conspiracy theories, which concluded in the 2021 Capitol Attack. But let's wait for a second, shouldn't the biggest social media platforms tackle fake news and extremist posts in their community?

Although Big Tech (pressured to do so) started to introduce moderation schemes and algorithms that would stop the spread of such content, the answer to this problem lies beneath the organizational aspects of big social media companies, which work in order to generate profit. In 2019, Facebook banned some of the right-wing publicists, who spread conspiracy theories, such as Alex Jones from *Infowars*, Milo Yiannopoulos who worked with *Breitbart*, or Paul Joseph Watson. But this can be perceived on one hand as a way to silence the most popular influencer profiles that share fake news, instead of looking for long-term solutions (Nieto, Valor, 2019). This yet again sparks a conversation on how should the social media be regulated and at the same time, what should we do about the idea of free speech? Most of the alt-right and nationalist audience started to look for alternative social media platforms such as Parler or Gab. What is more, political celebrities such as Sean Hannity from Fox News, Representative Devin Nunes or Candace Owens played huge part in promoting them, which brought together Trump voters, mainstream conservatives and white supremacists (Newhouse, 2021). This is where such internet users had place to exchange conspiracies regarding the outcome of the 2020 presidential elections and kept more and more becoming convinced that the elections were rigged, which led to the Capitol Attack. Although Gab has been attracting far-right militias for some time now, Parler had less than 1 million users until early 2020, when it started to become a hot trend among conservatives. Ted Cruz, who seems to have started already his 2024 presidential bid, states that Parler is the next bastion for conservative speech (2021). This is of course a reaction to the biggest social media outlets banning Qanon content on their platforms and other conspiracies (such as holocaust denial).

This leads to a broader discussion on how to suppress such views, by maintaining the democratic nature of public discourse. Donald Trump for years has been posting content that was violating terms and conditions of social media platforms and without a doubt thanks to the entertaining features of his account, reached out to a new wide base of potential conservative voters. It would take additional five pages to just name the most popular cases, but for example: in May 2020, during Black Lives Matter protests, Donald Trump (let's not forget, at that time POTUS),

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posted "when the looting starts, the shooting starts". Many observers were plainly disgusted that Facebook did not remove this post, which may have threatened violence against the protesters. Zuckerberg did not remove the post stating, that it did not violate platform's rules (Roose et al., 2021). It had to take to numerous fake claims that he won the presidential elections and violence at the Capitol for Facebook and Twitter to ban him permanently (with first decision banning him for 24 hours). It is quite easy to observe that such action can be the result of the Congress becoming blue (with Democrats winning two Senate seats in Georgia), which can ease the backlash from the conservatives, at least until 2022. Let's not forget that these platforms earned huge amount of money because of the controversial content posted on their websites. Users have very little control on how the platforms are working, but it is needless to say that one can oppose such content and at the same time tackle the issue of tech companies censoring public voice whenever it suits them (Aschoff, 2020). The main action that Big Tech should conduct in order to tackle online harassment and trolling is simply to hire experts, who instead would fight with the marginalization of digitally excluded groups, who can be especially vulnerable to such content. The idea of trainings for teachers and volunteers, who would work as "librarians" of the content and would teach next generations media literacy and how to distinct message from a marketing message is a nice way of doing that. The myth of free speech is elitist, as it allows the most controversial and at the same time profitable (?) individuals to silence others through these platforms (Burgis, 2021). Journalists and researchers, who study how the platforms are developing and behaving should be funded in order to create research results, which would allow to transform the internet community and make it a much safer and understandable place. The priority of social media engagement allows the most "edgy" content to become popular, whereas experts do not attract such wide base (2021). This of course also may mean changes to the algorithms, which support hate and hate ideologies, while as a matter of fact they should reward most internet users working on debunking post-truth and viral fake news.

This most probably means adjustments to Section 230, law developed in 1996, which protects publishers from liability for content that their users are posting (Siripurapu, 2020). However, although internet has much changed over the course of last 25 years, it is not the law's fault that it is not adjusted to modern digital communication, it is still the fault of the companies, which did not implement any rules that would tackle users that are breaking the rules. Internet should be a place, where everyone can freely express their opinion, but at the same time need to take responsibility for the content and the repercussions of their activity.

Where does the average internet user in the United States stand now? Without a doubt, someone who is not tech savvy could get confused when trying to understand modern debates around the social media and internet, as primarily they were supposed to connect friends and allow

them to communicate in digital ways. Is internet becoming a bad place for modern democracy and political behavior?

It does have pros and cons and it has to be underlined that current crisis is related to the fact that regulation of internet is going to be a growing concern for lawmakers. But if they will overcome this obstacle, social media can become a perfect place for political education and increase of public participation. Modern social movements rely on either social media platforms or message apps such as Telegram or Whatsapp and help to tackle undemocratic regimes all over the world. Focusing on these aspects of social media development can give hope for future academics, both providing them with content for analysis and research, but also allowing them to play much more important role in the community. This is strongly related to the fact that anyone can be an influencer on social media if they gather following and because of that fact, also science and publications are becoming more accessible. It can be observed, especially among younger community, that internet users want to learn new things and not only follow celebrities, but also "woke" content, which educates them on topics of inequality, race, gender and many other aspects, which were not as popular some years ago. A perfect example of how a Youtuber can tackle modern ethical topics such as cancel culture, philosophy or politics is *Contrapoints*, channel ran by Natalie Wynn, which has over 1,18mln subscribers. Her channel shows that although attracting liberal left-wing communities, her viewers are open for discussion outside the media bubble they are in.

What can be predicted for social media? On one hand, Web 2.0 tools will be becoming more and more popular with politicians and their campaigns, but also among politically active citizens, who will be able to form alliances and decentralized forms of organizations that they belong to. This also means that less and less people will be digitally and politically excluded, because through web they will have access to news and tools of participation. No one knows yet how will the COVID-19 pandemic affect real life engagement in political protests or movements, but without a doubt it only fastened the process of encouragement for change and American citizens are becoming more and more aware of the problems their communities are facing.

This also means that the political polarization will only be growing, having considered how the nation was divided during the 2020 presidential elections. Although many Qanon followers started to cut off from this ideology after failed coup, it shows how easily people can be manipulated through posts on social media. Companies will come up with new tools to combat fake news, but the further development of alt-media may be inevitable, considered the fact that Parler is now banned from Amazon, Apple and Google store. The political tensions will be growing, but at the same time because of the movements, especially on the liberal side, the inequality will be tackled with much more serious efforts, having considered the pressure from the community. When Black Lives Matter blocked Bernie Sanders's speech in 2016, they did not have that much power

and were perceived as the ones, who are aiming at wrong people. Now, more Americans are leaning to the left side of the spectrum and although still more moderate Democrats are competitive with Republicans, it is needless to say that social media allow to influence the user awareness on social issues.

In further studies, it would be interesting to check how this will develop, both with the observation of how the alt-media will be growing, as considerably more right-wing users will be leaving the big tech social media platforms and with the issue of online activism leading to real life engagement. Studies show that even "slacktivism" allows to create buzz for socially aware content, therefore regardless the fact whether someone takes action in order to organize strike in their local area or another user simply shares instastories from protests or other media content, it helps the cause. Modern American voters, especially from the Zoomer generation, will be much more informed about the politics and news, simply because of the fact that they will seek for such information on the internet. That is where the responsibility lies, within politicians, big tech companies and influencers, to fix the democracy and allow creation of modern political participation, where hitherto excluded groups will have the same level of awareness about the political topics as an average American.

### **5.3 Tendencies of social media and celebrity endorsement development**

The main problem with finishing a thesis and making assumptions after analyzing it in year 2020 is the fact that not only the 2020 Presidential Campaign in the US is unbelievably extraordinary, but it also happens during the largest pandemic in 21<sup>st</sup> century, which heavily affected Americans. The entertainment industry was always supposed to cheer ordinary people and let them (for at least some time) forget about everyday struggle. The issue is that the pandemic has also affected this industry, with thousands of concerts cancelled and film industry putting on hold many of their blockbuster projects. Why mention it at the very beginning of this final subchapter? That is because in my opinion, the one of the powers that lie within celebrity endorsements are public appearances during rallies. They are not happening anytime soon, at least not during this campaign trail. There are, however, many ways the celebrity endorsements can strengthen the relationships between the politician and the voter, even during the pandemic. How is that possible? First the historical overview of this type of entertainment politics will be summed up, in order to draw some more conclusions and try to put them into perspective.

The influence of celebrities has been growing accordingly to the development of media, as thanks to them they were able to reach out to their fans. The first celebrity endorsers used such

media as radio, television or newspapers to express their political views and recommend the candidates that they are going to vote for. Although the endorsement was somehow related to their political views, at the beginning, celebrity support was at that time heavily relating on acquaintances and the current state of Hollywood's political forces, as from time to time, as most important people in the industry tended to switch their party affiliations. It is worth noting though that even if it was not meant to be, entertainment always was political, the underrepresented communities from the industry just needed their candidate, so they could fully throw support behind them. That is why Obama's 2008 presidential campaign can be established as a milestone, as he earned endorsements from hundreds of celebrities. Having in mind the transfer of meaning theory created by Grant McCracken, which describes how the meaning of the culture is transferred to brands through advertisements and later to consumers, we can once again confirm that this model perfectly works when describing political endorsements, as candidates also represent surroundings that can relate to the receivers of the content. Obama was luck enough to run a campaign on many digital platforms that were not available yet few years ago, what is more, because of that fact the endorsements for the first time had such huge outreach. Hitherto the celebrities were also able to communicate with their fans, but they did not really have any good medium with which they could share updates and freshly made content. Let's think for example about Youtube, which was founded in 2005 – fifteen years later it is still the biggest online video-sharing platform and is eagerly used by many, whereas in 2008 it was already acquired by Google and was perceived as a cool way to connect with people through videos. American citizens could obtain information about the endorsements either from traditional media, or from the internet tools such as subscription emails or campaign websites. With the further introduction of social media, celebrities were now more able to interact with their fans and as a result strengthen their relationships with them. What is important is the fact that this applies to few assumptions.

First of all, with all the digital tools available, politicians could act as celebrities, by sharing content on social media and entertaining their followers. Second of all, celebrities, apart from organizing fundraisers and appearing during campaign rallies, could endorse politicians through web, reaching out to the larger audience with less time spent on the creation of content. Finally, as the visual platforms have been introduced, politicians and celebrities could cooperate by uploading endorsing campaign spots or pictures. This option was much cheaper than running TV ads and internet users could search for them, share them and interact with them anytime they want to.

Obama's links to hip-hop genre may be perceived as a cheap shot at attracting black community, but it was a sign of a much wider trend that dominated celebrity politics. United States are a diverse state that was built by different communities and even though they were not rewarded with equal access to tools for democratic participation, the members of these communities, who

were lucky enough to succeed, can fight for their rights and publically express their concerns. That is at least an utopian description of what a celebrity should do.

Having considered this, it is clear that the first official African-American Democratic presidential nominee would have such huge following among celebrities representing this group. What can be learned from this campaign is the fact that as the celebrity politics started to play an important role during presidential campaigns, a supercelebrity emerged that was supposed to become a symbol of Obama's campaign endorsements. Jay-Z not only endorsed Obama numerous times, but also engaged in his campaign by appearing at the rallies. Numerous rappers also decided to take active part in the campaign, for instance YG or Nas. Hip-hop as a genre returned to its political roots, communicating needs of the excluded society and Barack Obama was its ideal candidate. It is also worth noting that Obama himself started to „play this card” during the campaign and long after it ended; his campaign artefact was an iPod playlist, which was meant to demonstrate not only the music he is listening to, but also his character, framing him as a “hip” and “cool” candidate, opposed to John McCain. This era has also brought us the only study that at least tried to measure the importance of celebrity endorsement; Tim Moore's and Craig Garthwaite's study on the Oprah Winfrey's endorsement of Barack Obama during Democratic Primaries suggested that she may have earned approximately 1,000,000 additional votes for Obama.

What could be discovered next was the fact that in 2012 Obama's campaign staff wanted to repeat these tactics, focusing on Latinx and Hispanic celebrity endorsers. This time, Eva Longoria can be described as a supercelebrity for this campaign, as she served as a co-chair of the president's re-election campaign. However, another assumption can be suggested when analyzing the 2012 presidential campaign: celebrities rather tend to engage in endorsements of the candidates, who are running for the office and their excitement is much lower, when they endorse a candidate that is running for re-election. 2012 presidential campaign was much different than the one in 2008, as Obama's staff already knew that they have to mobilize voters by attracting famous members of smaller communities. For the sake of this research this can be described as celebrity targeting; knowing that they need to get out the vote in particular groups, politicians underline the support from the celebrities, who represent them. Already having support among African-Americans, Obama did not have to appeal to young Black voters through iPod playlists, etc.; instead, his campaign staff released a „product” that was supposed to be sold to different communities with Bruce Springsteen (blue collar workers), Ricky Martin (Latinx and Hispanic voters), or even Arcade Fire (youth). Celebrities communicated with their followers through Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, traditional media; appeared on campaign rallies, gave concerts or organized fundraisers. Instagram was a quite new campaigning feature, which was supposed to soon become very popular among political actors.



The most important lessons that we could learn from the 2016 presidential campaign is the fact that the political polarization could more than ever be observed also among celebrities, especially during the Democratic Presidential Primaries. The endorsers have split into two groups: Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton supporters and another interesting pattern could have been observed. The more celebrity was involved in civil right activism, the more they were likely to endorse Sanders, for example Mark Ruffalo, Spike Lee, Oliver Stone. Progressive celebrity endorsers seemed to fight for the causes they are interested in, while Clinton's campaign staff was rather collecting endorsements like Obama's campaign in 2012, creating a kind of celebrity „Avengers” campaign, running against an evil (Donald Trump). Bernie Sanders had his supercelebrity during the 2016 campaign, as rapper Killer Mike, member of hip-hop duo Run The Jewels, became at one point his biggest celebrity spokesman, helping Sanders to ease the backlash from Black Lives Matter activists by stressing his credibility on numerous occasions. Even though Killer Mike is not as famous as Jay-Z, he definitely is one of Atlanta's most powerful celebrities and this would not be a surprise if at some point he became one of non-traditional Black community leaders.

On different perspective, Donald Trump won the presidential elections by positioning himself as a celebrity, knowing that he does not really need any endorsements and that most probably he won't receive any, running on a Republican ticket. First of all, he used his status as a celebrity to generate an enormous outreach on social media and somehow ”transform” his online followers into his voters. Being a successful businessman he was able to show them that he knows how to run economy in the state and at the same time could as well communicate with the voters as a celebrity, reaching the peak of entertainment politics. On the other hand, he could as well position himself as someone, who does not care about the celebrity endorsements, stressing the fact that he is more interested in getting the endorsement from the ordinary voter. This anti-establishment tactic was a key to his win, as conservative voters were annoyed that rich people were telling them for whom should they vote.

Having made these conclusions, it is needed to confront them with 2020 Presidential Campaign and the future of American politics. First, the current state of celebrity politics will be described and how year 2020 has affected them. Then the research will focus on the ways celebrity endorsements work nowadays, as both celebrities and campaign staffs learned their lessons from previous campaigns and they know much better how they want to communicate the issues they want to deal with.

First conclusion that comes to mind is the split of endorsements between the Democratic Party candidates during the primaries. It is needless to say that 2020 Democratic Presidential Primaries were the most competitive of all time, taking into consideration the fact that eleven

candidates entered them with many important Democratic Party politicians withdrawing before they even started. Many young politicians that were perceived as "fresh" and "cool" managed to attract a following, also within celebrities – just like Andrew Yang, who appeared out of nowhere with the idea of universal basic income. Having considered this as his main platform, he managed to attract celebrities, who would rather choose more popular progressives, for example comedians Hannibal Buress or Donald Glover. During the primaries, we did not really have such celebrity segmentation that focused on collecting „political assets" that represented different communities. Of course, it obviously was a goal from the very beginning, but it just did not really work out for those that counted on "playing that card". Shouldn't Kamala Harris or Cory Booker be collecting endorsements from Black celebrities then? Why didn't Julian Castro attract the attention of Latinx and Hispanic celebrities? Wasn't it surprising that Pete Buttigieg did not really have support of the queer community? Well, it is not always that easy. Identity politics play very important role, especially in such multicultural country as the United States, but being a member of a community does not mean that the politician will automatically win its support.

Over last few years celebrities became very cautious of their endorsements and they started to focus more on the platforms of the candidates, elevating them as the main issues if they decided to endorse. This of course describes the political climate before the pandemic and George Floyd's death. The final „battle" took place between Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden, which was framed by some media as the "battle for the heart of the Democratic Party". Just like in 2016, progressives tried (and almost managed) to hijack the nomination from the moderates, who supported Biden. This fight was quite uneven, as almost all of the candidates that withdrew from the primaries, endorsed Joe Biden, stressing the importance of consolidation between the factions. Sanders earned celebrity endorsements from "fresh" public figures that emerged between 2016 and 2020, such as Dua Lipa, Cardi B or Ariana Grande, which is worth mentioning as it shows how progressive politics became a national topic over past four years. Without a doubt, his social democratic policies were much more understood during this campaign trail and his moderate success allowed to move the presidential program a bit to the left side.

If the campaign had stopped at that moment, conclusion could be made that nothing much changed in celebrity politics: they are still used to mobilize voters, especially younger base; that they are an important part of modern politics in the Democratic Party and that politicians learned their lessons from Obama's campaigns and want to shine bright in the media with the help of entertainment industry. That is all truth, however, the events that happened in American politics since March 2020 allow us to believe that with the power of the endorsement also comes the educational aspect, as celebrities just like citizens started to become more socially aware. It would be hard to highlight one supercelebrity that helps Joe Biden tackle Trump during the final part of the

presidential campaign, but it is needed to highlight a whole group, which are African-American celebrities, who began (more than ever) to use their platform in order to talk about problems their community has been tackling for years. And let's face it – this is heavily related to voter encouragement and mobilization.

Although Colin Kaepernick's protest prior to the game in 2016 gained nationwide attention, his actions were misunderstood and the issues he was defending did not get enough media coverage, especially taking into consideration the fact that it happened few months before the 2016 Presidential Elections. Having already learned from these elections it is needless to say that at that time the Democratic Party feared supporting Black Lives Matter's platform, which's activists appeared during campaign rallies, for instance when they interrupted Bernie Sanders's speech in Seattle back in 2015 and Hillary Clinton's in 2016. Considering the political polarization that has been escalating in the United States on an enormous scale, it is not surprising that African-American community finally had enough and its voice was finally heard. This issue of course is much more complicated and America needs to face the harsh reality that its community was built on the misery of some ethnic groups; current political climate however, allows to focus on new forms of social activism on social media in the final subchapter. A group of celebrities can be distinguished, that became the political actor in 2020 or maintained their status during the period of presidential campaign.

George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Their deaths became a symbol of police brutality in 2020 in the United States and triggered political unrest that (apart from COVID-19) dominated the presidential campaign. Many artists decided to take active part in the protests organized all over the United States, and as a result attracted wider media attention to them. Celebrity activists shared content from the marches all over Instagram and other visual platforms; Michael B. Jordan, Zoe Kravitz, Kanye West or Jamie Foxx took part in the demonstrations and organized fundraisers for black causes (Harper, 2020). Kehlani, Tinashe, Ariana Grande and many other popstars also attended protests. Their examples are just a tip of the iceberg, but show that even during the era of social distancing, they decided to attend the protests in person instead of just sticking to the digital activism. As a result more celebrities started to get involved in the Black Lives Matter movement and their followers started to educate themselves on the issues of inequality in the United States. Political content took over the social media and the celebrities began to hand over their accounts (especially on Instagram) to various Black activists in order to amplify their voices (Walsh, 2020). Selena Gomez for example, invited the co-founder of Black Lives Matter, Alicia Garza, to talk to her followers and advise them how could they help Black community; Garza suggested to support Black Futures Lab, an organization that helps to transform the political power in the United States. Lady Gaga on her Instastory shared the list of organizations she supported and later promised to use

her social media accounts to promote change and "inspiring groups within Black community" (2020).

Hitherto, celebrities used their platforms to endorse the candidates and causes, but for the first time on such big scale, they resigned from posting their content, in order to give the voice to the communities. Although one could predict how would the celebrity politics transform in the upcoming years, it is quite surprising and heartwarming that this change happened that quickly, as celebrity political actors start to play more educational part in the political process. What is also interesting is the fact that more mainstream celebrities started to follow this trend, as previously I would rather identify it with progressive influencers. It is heavily linked to the fact that progressive issues are becoming a part of mainstream American politics, especially within younger base.

Aside from demonstrations, political protests took over most parts of the entertainment industry in the United States with the restart of NBA as a main example. Although many owners of NBA teams support the Republican Party, the league, players and the supporters are perceived as liberal, compared to NFL. Let's face it, if Colin Kaepernick was a basketball player, his protest would be more likely to succeed and would be met with much bigger understanding by the fans.

Many NBA (and WNBA) players have been addressing police brutality previously and worked with the organizations that promote gun control. What is important is the fact that the demographics help amplifying activist voices in NBA, as it has the youngest audience in professional sports in the United States with 45% of viewers under 35 and also 45% of viewers being black (Thompson, 2014). Also the league is dominated by black players (on contrary to owners); according to the analysis from 2020, 74% of players are African-American (Gough, 2020). Before the season was meant to be restarted, NBA agreed on the messages that would be displayed on player jerseys. NBA's website actually displays all of the players that have chosen to have statements: Black Lives Matter slogan dominated the jerseys, but there were also many others political phrases such as Education Reform, How Many More, I Can't Breathe, Say Their Names (NBA.com).

LeBron James was the leader of the change all that time, being one of the biggest outspoken critics of the systematic racism. Being one of the most recognizable sportsmen in the world, he is using his agenda to somehow compensate Kaepernick's broken career. 2016 seems like a distant time and many celebrities started to rethink their role in the society and how can they affect and inspire young people. What is crucial is the fact that due to 2020 events many Americans started to rethink the issues Kaepernick was protesting against. After Jacob Blake was shot by the police in Wisconsin, players called for the boycott of play-offs, but during the closed meeting only teams from Los Angeles voted to cancel the season. One of the results of the strike was NBA agreeing to create a social justice coalition that would be represented by owners, coaches and players with a

goal to tackle social issues (Mannix, 2020). The statement also said that „In every city where the league franchise owns and controls the arena property, team governors will continue to work with local elections officials to convert the facility into a voting location for the 2020 general election to allow for a safe in-person voting option for communities vulnerable to COVID. If a deadline has passed, team governors will work with local elections officials to find another election-related use for the facility, including but not limited to voter registration and ballot receiving boards” (NBPA.com, 2020).

This case highlights the most important role the celebrities have during presidential campaigns: voter encouragement. The material from the presidential campaigns show a particular pattern: during primaries, celebrities tend to focus on the support for their candidate, whereas during the final chapter of the elections, they are more likely to focus on the issues and getting out the vote for the candidate of the party they are supporting. However, learning from the data provided, it is very easy to draw conclusion that getting out the vote through celebrity social media channels is much more effective with Democratic base, which is quite easy to expect having considered the fact that most of the celebrities these days are liberal.

The development of social media allows celebrities to create as big outreach as possible and (obviously) each one of them, on one hand wants to attract voters for the candidate of their choice, but on the other hand want to attract deals and new fanbase to their profiles, in order to maintain the establishment status. Whether it's a campaign, or a National Voter Registration Day (celebrated on the fourth Tuesday of every September), or and EDR (Election Day voter registration allowed in 20 states and the District of Columbia), they tend to find new innovative ways to reach out to their fanbase, outside of their social media platforms. Celebrities closely related to politics can especially be helpful in such cases. For instance, Michelle Obama in 2018, in order to celebrate the anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, travelled all along the U.S. in order to register new voters, being the part of When We All Vote Week of Action (Schaffstall, 2018). There is also one case worth mentioning, as Julia Louis-Dreyfus (known by younger audiences from *Veep*, political comedy series), encouraged voters to register through the Multiply Your Vote platform through a video, depicting her accompanied by other volunteers (2018). These are just two of many examples from the past, but let's move to 2020 elections and try to estimate how else could celebrities encourage higher voter turnout in the United States.

In 2016, Tina Fey, joked that the real reason Hillary Clinton lost the elections with Donald Trump was that not enough celebrity-filled music video P.S.A.s were made. This is actually where the celebrity political marketing may be heading and the Instagram seems to be the perfect platform to do that. On Twitter, Kerry Washington encouraged her followers to register by uploading a post with a link, which should lead to the trailer of the *Scandal* movie. Instead, it linked to When We All

Vote website (Carras, 2020). Sterling K Brown, Kylie Jenner, Michael B. Jordan were one of many celebrities, who decided to post "thirst traps" on their social media platforms with copy linking to voter registration platforms. Although this may seem as a shallow effort, it worked (Jennings 2020). Diplo showing his butt cheeks, Lizzo twerking as Uncle Sam, celebrities posting a joined effort on Youtube named *These Naked Celebs Have an Important Message for Voters*, this is visual social communication taken to an extreme level (2020). According to Rosemary Clark-Parsons, although clickbaiting may attract followers' attention, it can direct it away from the message and onto celebrities themselves (2020). Efforts to get out the vote, can very often have some targets to be met, just like in product marketing campaigns; for instance let's bring the case of Samuel L. Jackson's Instagram and Twitter, where he pledged to teach to swear in 15 different languages, if 2500 different users would click on the Voter Action Goal linking to the HeadCount platform, which is a non-profit organization that promotes participation (L.Jackson, 2020). The Vote.org website started to give personalized link to the celebrities, who shared them on their social media platforms, in order to measure their influence on getting out the vote. Frank Ocean managed to deliver 700 new voter registration by sharing his unique link, whereas Kylie Jenner got at least 2,000, before switching to sharing the generic link in her bio. (Ali, 2020). Vote.org seems to be the best organized effort for this job, as on their website they inform about the resources that were created in order to assure that everyone that wanted to vote, would be able to. This means combating disinformation in communities, where there could be attempts on voter suppression, or sending food trucks to serve meals to voters waiting in lines. Or even lobbying companies to encourage their employees to vote and give them paid time off for voting (Vote.org, 2020). The power of celebrity endorsement means that they do not only provide the political message to the follower directly, but may encourage them to get involved in political participation. In the future, it would be a cool idea to measure not only the number of getting out the vote through unique links, but also how many followers did more for the community thanks to this message, through engaging in volunteering during the elections or campaign trail. Another important campaign that only now started to get its momentum is LeBron James's *More Than a Vote*, which helped to register citizens with felony records in Florida, by forming alliance with NAACP Legal Defense Fund and recruiting 40,000 volunteers to do that (Medina, 2020). Although James stressed that this initiative's goals is to educate and not tell who to vote for, he is anti-Trump and it must have somehow influenced his followers. This organization is especially focusing on African-American voters, focusing on combating systemic voter suppression by educating the community (More Than a Vote, 2020). This was especially important during 2020 elections with COVID-19 outbreak affecting Black communities on much higher level. It's worth noting that this is actually the effort that encouraged NBA stadiums to become the voting areas! The outcome of the elections has proven that African-

American voters helped Joe Biden, because if it wasn't for their voting in urban areas such as Atlanta, Detroit, Philadelphia or Milwaukee, it would be much harder for him to win (2020).

To be honest, the finish of this scientific work brings only skeptical conclusions about the concept of celebrity endorsements and their influence, as although they provide entertaining content to their followers that may fulfill some educational roles, also when talking about politics, the agenda it was pushing did not really have much impact, especially considering Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016. But celebrities learned their lessons and their tactic was much different in 2020, as the content they provided related to the elections was much more serious and considered more education than entertainment, which is a good thing and overall it would be heartwarming to watch it expand its influence in the future.

This approach was quite effective in 2020, as celebrities focused on democracy itself instead of candidates, especially when talking about the general elections. Although Bernie Sanders is perceived as a "cool uncle" by many young people, it would be hard to position Joe Biden this way, having considered that his first appearances on streaming platform during the lockdown were quite frightening. What is also needed to be written is that Hillary Clinton was never perceived as "cool", and when celebrities tried to frame her as one, they failed. It is also worth discussing what in this case can a celebrity present as appealing for young people. Maybe it is democracy itself? Without a doubt, people aged 18-21 are now more politically conscious than modern 30 years olds when they were their age. Proportionally, teen popstars are more involved in politics than they used to be. Let's also not forget that nowadays it does not take much to become a worldwide celebrity and good marketing and image can make an upcoming artist relevant. Billie Eilish has become unarguably the most popular teen on earth and her message for fans (especially first-time voters just like her), recorded for the virtual Democratic National Convention was one of the most memorable moments from this event. Eilish also launched a voter registration initiative, announced on an Instagram video post. She asked her followers to text BILLIE to 50409 in order to register or check the follower's voter registration (Eilish, 2020).

The growing role of Youtube personalities shows how the idea of being a celebrity has developed over the years. Are people, who create video content artists? Without a doubt. Do they have a fanbase? They may have an enormous one and if they use it for good things (and increasing the level of political participation is without a doubt one of them), their role in American politics can only grow. For example, YouTube creator David Dobrik, who has over 14,4 million followers on Instagram and 18,7 million subscribers on YouTube, took part in the #GoodToVote campaign, which featured plenty of other celebrities (Samuel L. Jackson's case was already presented). He organized a Tesla giveaway, which during 24 hours resulted in over 120,000 Americans registering to vote and 250,000 verifying their registration status. According to HeadCount's website, this was

the largest and most effective celebrity-led voter engagement campaign (2020).

There is one aspect that has to be taken into account when analyzing this celebrity politics engagement in 2020. Trump, being simply himself, which means being the most polarizing political figure of 21<sup>st</sup> century, encouraged many people to vote, regardless of the fact whether they perceive themselves as Democrats, Republicans or Independents. Compared to 2016 presidential elections, slightly over 23 million Americans voted in 2020, increasing the turnout from 54,8% to 62% (electproject.org, 2020). Famous actor and wrestler Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, who is the most followed man on Instagram, having currently (12.01.2021) over 211 million fans and was previously known for being an Independent, decided to endorse Biden and Kamala Harris on social media (Instagram and Twitter), uploading his conversation with the Democratic candidates. The post has over 1,263,000 likes and begins with Johnson addressing the fact that he is a centrist and an Independent, having voted bipartisan for many years (Johnson, 2020).

Not all celebrities were voting for the first time because of their age, like Billie Eilish (or a supermodel Kaia Gerber). Selena Gomez, Tyler the Creator, Snoop Dogg, Shaquille O'Neal and many others have enormous fanbases and admitted that this was the first time they went to the polls to cast a ballot, mainly because of the fact that they believed that their vote alone would not mean anything. Some of the celebrities did not ever check their voting status, believing that if they had felony charges, they would not be eligible for the registration (Cho, 2020). The question is, would they vote if it wasn't for Trump's failed tenure and the atmosphere around the 2020 elections, also in the liberal establishment? The mobilization against the Trump in the celebrity environment reflects the mobilization among the Americans (and vice versa).

In 2022, when (supposedly) the COVID-19 outbreak situation would go back to normal and the midterms will be taking place, there should be more material on the celebrity endorsement when talking about engaging in more traditional campaigning activity. Because of the lockdowns there were not many campaign rallies which have always been a nice way to be introduced before a speech by someone famous, or to organize a music event combined with canvassing. For what it's worth, Donald Trump did not resign from organizing rallies and managed to provide some content for this subchapter, by appearing with celebrities during meetings with voters. Apart from Kid Rock, who performed at Trump's rally in Detroit, young rapper of Latinx descent Lil Pump showed up in MAGA hat during president's final rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This event will definitely go down in history of modern hip-hop as one of the most memorable moments of presidential campaign, as Trump mistakenly introduced rapper as "Little Pimp" (Moreau, 2020). When analysing the list of political endorsements of Trump's campaign, when talking about non-political personas, an observation can be made that indeed there was some kind of plan in Trump's actions when talking about using these endorsements to attract wider voter base. Apart from the already



Trump-aligned public personas such Phil and Willie Robertson of TV show *Duck Dynasty*, Rick Harrison of *Pawn Stars*, Chuck Norris, Kevin Sorbo, James Woods, Roseanne Barr or Jon Voight, there is a small, but well-known representation of POC on this list. Conservative values have always been rather typical for genres like country or rock (Ted Nugent and Gene Simmons are standout examples of celebrities endorsing Trump), but also the world of hip-hop has provided some surprising names announcing their voting decision, such as Kodak Black, Asian Doll, Waka Flocka Flame or Tekashi 6ix9ine. Lil Wayne uploaded a picture with Trump on his Twitter, supporting Trump's "Platinum Plan" for black community and his criminal reform (2020). But has this been an honest opinion or just a calculation? Kodak Black and Lil Wayne have been on a list of people pardoned by the POTUS before his departure from the White House. This only add up to the wilderness of this campaign and set up quite dangerous precedents in which celebrities would manipulate their fans to fulfill their interests (and haven't they been doing that all along? Surely they did!). To conclude this thought, yet again it needs to be said that the Democratic Party should not expect POC to vote for them and should fight for their votes just like for anyone else's, as they would not just vote for them not being Republican. This is especially relevant when talking about Latinx and Asian American voters, who very often are assumed as a whole group, whereas voters of different descent vote in different ways, such as Cuban-Americans voting Republican in Florida, or Vietnamese and Korean-Americans in Orange County, who also tend to vote conservative. During the campaign trail, it became hot news that Ice Cube is supporting the "Platinum Plan", which led to dragging him all over the media for working with Trump. Indeed, Ice Cube, through his initiative Contract with Black America decided to cooperate with Trump, but as he announced he was willing to work with anyone that would help the case (Jabali, 2020). Although Ice Cube's liberal critics might have had valid concerns about his and his initiative's role in becoming the poster for Trump administration's solution plan for Black community, they did not acknowledge the fact, that the Democratic Party during Obama's tenure did not do much either (2020).

What about Kanye West's presidential bid? Some of his fans really believed that he would have chance to play an important role during the 2020 presidential elections and it does not surprise me, as Donald Trump also leveraged his political career from the status of a celebrity. The main difference between these gentlemen was that even though both of them wanted to promote themselves, Trump's campaign was rather planned and not rushed – at the very beginning he did not have the support of the Republican Party, but once the members have noticed that his plan may be efficient, they decided to join him. Kanye West was running as a third-party candidate and the whole buzz around his candidacy was nothing more than a publicity stunt that was most probably fueled by a manic period of bipolar disorder. Regardless of this fact, he managed to make people think about his candidacy and he even had quite decent number in the polls. However, it is more

than likely that he was just promoting his music, as during the campaign he released a song and bragged about an upcoming album. He did not even care (or did not know) about the registration deadlines, as he missed them and qualified for ballots in only twelve states.

What lesson can be learned from his candidacy? It is more than obvious that more and more celebrities will use elections for their own promotion, by actively engaging in the political process as candidates, even if they do not plan to win them. Political campaigns, especially in the United States are widely covered by both traditional and new media and it is a really good occasion for some publicity, especially if the popularity of an artist is starting to fade. Many pundits believe that Donald Trump did not want to win the elections, he was just pushing his amusement to the extreme level. What if the campaigns in some cases will only fulfill the entertaining role? That's an interesting question, as this may spoil the level of civic participation, but on the other hand, it would be interesting to measure how many people became interested in presidential elections because of Kanye West and his bid?

The world is changing so fast that at the end of this work one may have more questions than answers, but without a doubt the role of celebrities will only be growing, as they seem to finally understand where their true influencer power lies, as instead of telling people for whom they should vote (although they still do it), they encourage people to take part in elections and get out the vote. Their engagement in Senate elections in Georgia on the other hand, shows a wider pattern, which allows to estimate that from now on not only will they focus on the nationwide elections, but they will also focus on more local aspects of campaigning.

## Summary

This work focuses on the history of + modern and future perspectives for the internet use in political campaigns in the United States of America. Apart from that, it also takes into consideration the influence of celebrity endorsements on voting behaviour. The study aims at being the relevant take on the analysis of such influence, especially when considering the academics in Poland. The relevancy focuses on the new types of patterns in Web 2.0 and celebrity politics usage in political campaigns and the changes in political behaviour among actors involved in internet politics. Its goal is to find some key patterns that would allow to increase voter participation, especially among young people, by implementing new media features and the profiles of famous people that they are following. Although it is not stated in the title of the study, the main timeframe of the analysis can be established between the beginning of the 2008 presidential campaign and the end of the 2020 presidential campaign. This is mainly because during these 12 years, both celebrity endorsements and the use of social media increased its visibility in politics, thanks to the development of technology (especially the mobile one). Social media mobile apps and mobile browsers allow to have access to campaigning tools and news 24/7, various visual material such as photos and videos can be browsed while using public transportation, waiting for dinner in the restaurant, or while shopping. Because of that fact, modern political campaigns have an entertaining role, as having access to so many devices at the same time, the receiver of the content, needs to be focused and attracted to it within a second. The result of the research also shows that such tools can also play an educational role, since modern celebrities tend to get involved in social causes and because of that, through the content they are posting, their followers can learn about the issues. Social media also allow celebrities and politicians to limit barriers between their followers and voters, as they are more accessible and they can interact more with them.

## The verification of hypotheses and answers to research questions

H1: Celebrities, who create social reality, have their place in the political anthropology of electoral affairs, therefore their participation is not selfless, since by acting on behalf of the candidates of their choice, they take into consideration their interests

### Research questions:

**In modern American politics, how did celebrities redefine their role in the society as new**

## **actors on the political scene?**

### **What is the role of modern political endorsements and can they play more educational than entertaining role?**

Ever since the radio started to become an important medium, through which Americans could obtain news, politicians started to treat celebrities as about equal actors on the political scene. The more the media began to become an integral part of politics, the more often celebrities showed up in the company of politicians. A few decades ago, at least in JFK's time, this type of relationship was mainly driven by vanity and the need to satisfy one's ego - fans of the president could learn that he was showing up with famous people (example: The Rat Pack), and celebrities also benefited from acquaintances with the political elite. It is worth mentioning here a TV spot of JFK featuring an African-American actor Harry Belafonte, which clearly shows how much the assassinated president was ahead of the trends in political campaigns, also taking into account segmentation of celebrities and targeting voters by demographics. The career of Ronald Reagan, who was a celebrity actor turned politician, may also be a good example to support this hypothesis. During his time, celebrity conservatives were starting to come out more and more in Hollywood to reflect a trend among voters who were turning to the right. Although the acting community was considered liberally defined, names such as Eastwood, Schwarzenegger, and John Wayne (before he lost his battle with cancer) were associated with right-wing values. The careers of the former two began to flourish and certainly their views may have helped them to establish their position in Hollywood. On the other hand, during the Vietnam War, celebrities became involved in social movements and the fight for equality. In this case, they were viewed very differently, and it is safe to say that this is when the idea of the relationship between celebrities and politics stemming from ideas was born. The community recognized that celebrities taking part in demonstrations and protests were taking the side of the common people and they were not likely to be seen as part of the establishment. It is also worth noting how the position of black celebrities began to evolve at this time - the growing importance of politically charged music from African-American culture, being inspired by Malcolm X, Martin Luther King or even Fred Hampton. In this case, celebrities also pursued their own interests, but these were social interests, and their very involvement in politics made them much more important actors on the political stage.

Referring back to the old days, it is easy to see how the above examples fit into any contemporary presidential campaign in the United States. Especially after Barack Obama's victorious 2008 presidential campaign, one can see a rise in activism among celebrities and an increased interest in politics. This is due to the fact that, on the one hand, they can pursue their social goals and, on the

other hand, remind themselves or feel part of an important event and shoot a buzz around their person. The contemporary artist community has turned more or less to the left (still having in mind the compass placed in the reality of American politics), so it is easier to articulate support for candidates who are more media-savvy and perceived as cool - in this case having in mind the Democratic Party candidates. On the other hand, Donald Trump's campaign has shown how easy it is to use this situation to portray celebrities as part of the liberal establishment that wants to defend its interests - Trump, being a celebrity himself, did get his chunk of celebrity endorsements, but it was only a small percentage of the number of people that Hilary Clinton was able to gather around her. He therefore positioned himself as the candidate of ordinary people, knowing that outside of the celebrities with whom he has known and been friends privately for years, he would not be able to count too much on the power of endorsement.

Trump in general is a great example to confirm the first hypothesis: consider that even when he became the Republican candidate to take the presidential seat, he was still campaigning more like a salesman than a politician. Let's face it, is there a more commercial project in the history of politics, in terms of campaign merch, than the Make America Great Again hat? Well, there isn't. These types of goodies were available for purchase on Trump's Facebook and fueled his 2016 campaign, even becoming a symbol of a rebellion against the liberal media bias. However, it is worth considering that in the world where everyone takes a public stance on something and defends their interests and profits by creating a buzz around their person, there is a growing awareness among celebrities about their role in society. With each presidential election, a growing group of celebrities is becoming more aware of this, being involved in the campaigns of candidates who had a more characteristic agenda. It is safe to say that the more to the left a candidate had an agenda, the more the celebrities who supported them had sincere intentions about their campaign and became involved in it, having shared their views on social and identity policies. This is an important issue when it comes to analyzing the voting behavior of celebrities and their segmentation, as there is clearly a more progressive-minded group that is aware of their privileged position in society and wants to tackle it. When combined with the political situation in the U.S. nowadays and the growing influence of social movements and online activism, it is more than obvious that modern celebrities have discovered that they can get the voters to vote for their causes by engaging in grassroots organizing by themselves. Having realized the liberal positioning of Hollywood and its biggest celebrities, it is easy to conclude that most of the voters, who follow them, have similar views. The key, however, is to make sure that the followers would become interested in the election and start to feel that their vote matters. That is why modern politics have to entertain as well as educate, because only by combining these two features, one can create an attractive product that can interest a potential voter (consumer of content). How do celebrities redefine their position in the political arena? I believe

that more and more of them have political ambitions that may go a tad beyond the world of mere endorsement; given the social capital they will collect during their careers, it is safe to assume that their political candidacies will be more than a trivia. Note how different the prospects for Kanye West's (2020 presidential candidate) future political career are from LeBron James's; still a top basketball player who simultaneously founded More Than a Vote, an organization that aims to prevent African-American voters from being disenfranchised and to support black candidates. When Ohio Senator Rob Portman announced he would not seek re-election in 2022, James was one of the more interesting potential candidates coming from the Democratic background. However, it cannot be ruled out that in 2028, when his NBA career is certainly over, he will desire new challenges. Let us also not forget about all the celebrities emerging because of the social media, who soon can use their recognition for a political career. Further development of social media tools will only fuel this trend. The wave of digital activism is incoming and I would recommend to be better prepared for that.

H2: Modern American campaigns involve a new way of influencing not only the mass voter or even the social media voter, but they also focus increasingly on smaller scale target groups with stronger internal ties and more permanent networking

**Research questions:**

**Does the development of Web 2.0 tools not only allow the campaign staffs to reach out to the voters, but also let the voters influence and shape the political campaign by themselves?**

**Will the increased use of social media in political campaigns in the United States allow politicians to slowly resign from the traditional ways of canvassing?**

The year is 2021 and the internet is in the vast majority of American homes. Which political message would reach them most easily - a unified one designed to reflect on common goals, or a diverse one focused on the segmentation of smallest possible social groups? Although it is safe to say that both of these options have strong arguments, the second one seems more efficient during the internet era.

The development of social media has allowed the internet users to organize themselves into groups and get involved in social issues, also through the development of digital activism, which has been flourishing all over social media accounts on Instagram or TikTok. Platforms such as Facebook have become a modern agora, where not only users exchange their opinions digitally, but also take some action, which has its reflection in real-life events. Finally, people were able to

start organizing on a whole different level, meaning the decentralization of social movements and contemporary political campaigns, having turned to the variety of events in different locations. This would not have been possible if it was not for the introduction of social media and Web 2.0; the main fanpages or accounts only tend to carry the idea supported by the followers, whereas the local branches in individual locations fill in more organizational role. Although social protests were not invented in the 21st century, thanks to modern technology, they can be much more efficient – because of that fact, (theoretically) this allows further integration between the members of the social groups. Not long ago, if someone had different views and grew up in an environment with certain values, they felt isolated. Nowadays, just by going online and joining a social media group or subscribing to a profile, one can find like-minded people in the same city or location, who can encourage that person to become more politically active. The internet thus becomes the main tool in which the voter can help a politician create the perfect campaign - the decentralization of social movements also means the decentralization of campaigns: in fact, anywhere in the U.S., fans of a particular politician are able to organize themselves over the net, having enough coordination to create a rally or connections to encourage others to vote. What is more, with the ability to create a viral post, basically anyone on planet Earth can have an affect on one's political campaign and its digital outreach.

Of course, this works both ways, because as it was aforementioned many times before, modern politician, thanks to access to the Internet, can reach more voters in a much shorter time and with less money. While electoral segmentation is not a new issue and for years political staffs have been trying to reach as many social groups as possible to determine how they will vote, the internet has helped revolutionize this by providing a mass of material to analyze, often dispassionately thrown into algorithms (big data) designed to "spit out" the outcome and potential value of the voter. On the other hand, by organizing, voters can create social movements or interest groups whose goals could be supported if a candidate reaches out to them.

Black Lives Matter, MeToo, and other social movements that have broken taboos about racial inequality or sexual harassment and woman's role in the society, wouldn't have the clout if it wasn't for the internet. Previous chapters have shown how Americans interacted with each other through the first online forums and chat rooms, where they slowly started to exchange their views. This is why social media is a milestone on the timeline of new media. They allowed people to start organizing themselves on an unprecedented scale, thanks to the increased prevalence of the web in the United States, especially in the second decade of the 20th century. However, this does not mean good news all alone, as events such as the attack on the Capitol in January 2021 certainly would not have reached such publicity and organizational level if it were not for social media. In today's political arena, social media is becoming a double-edged sword that on one hand, increases political

participation among young people but, on the other hand, also encourages extremism. These situations are exploited by politicians, who through their social media campaigns, encourage polarization, wanting to create the most viral content possible.

To conclude, nowadays a politician and his staff (as never before!) have to listen carefully to the needs of their voters, because thanks to the new media they are closer to the people. All it takes is one unfortunate tweet or post on Facebook and they will be pinned down by an army of internet users who can have an affect on the fate of their election campaign. They can also promote candidate's content, which will result in a greater outreach of their post, and thus, more new people will learn about their activities and program.

But will the digitization of campaigns cause politicians to start moving away from traditional media and campaign tools on a massive scale? The COVID-19 pandemic has in a way forced campaign reform in the United States, at least on the Democratic side, where rallies and door-to-door campaigning have been abandoned in favor of telephones, streaming of speeches and increased activity of Get Out The Vote campaigns on the internet. Trump, on the other hand, disregarding the threat of a virus that has taken a huge toll on the United States, held election rallies knowing that speaking and public appearance was his main asset.

It seems that despite the situation that politics had to face, traditional forms of campaigning will not disappear soon. The vaccination program in the United States is so well organized that the midterms in 2022 should already be conducted in the normal way. It is worth noting, however, that many of the changes used in the 2020 presidential campaigns will stay with us - for example, there is open talk of moving party conventions to the internet. Certainly with each successive presidential election, election campaigns will rely more and more on the internet and its advantages, while the case of the 2020 presidential election shows very well that nothing can replace real campaign rallies. The increasing number of social media platforms and their ubiquity means that a voter can afford to glean campaign news from the internet alone, while there is still a very sizable number of U.S. residents who are digitally excluded in some way, and they should be kept in mind as well. It is difficult to predict how election campaigns will look like in 10-20 years, while in the nearest perspective there are certainly plans to return to the times before COVID-19. The real challenge that politicians will face will be the economic crisis that will result from a pandemic, and in such situations personal contact with voters will be much more appreciated than stream. Successful politicians of the younger generation such as Beto O'Rourke or much younger Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez know this very well and both use the tools provided by Instagram and Facebook to describe the mechanisms of power in a more accessible way, but they also realize that in politics the most important thing is to work at the grassroots - O'Rourke is even in the state of permanent campaigning, traveling around Texas, helping people and encouraging them to participate in the

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elections in 2022.

**Auxiliary hypothesis: The evolution of the political campaigns in the United States can also be foreseen on the Senate level**

This brings us to another topic that was included in the auxiliary hypothesis. Because of the fact that modern voters tend to be much more informed on how does the political system work in the United States, they started to get more involved and interested in Senate elections, knowing that without the majority votes from the Senate, POTUS won't be able to implement any reforms. This trend can especially be observed since 2018, when O'Rourke's Senate bid and finally loss to Ted Cruz was watched by millions of Americans all over the states. Many experts acknowledged the fact that hitherto voters were not really interested in the midterms; this time it was different. This trend was more visible in 2020, when many Americans not only followed the presidential elections, but also campaigns in some of the battleground states such as Georgia or Arizona, where the Democrats made a slight upset and won Senate seats. It is important to stress that Senate elections act as a link between state-level elections and local ones; on one hand, candidate needs to know the cultural and sociological conditions of their state, but on the other hand their colleagues from all over the country can visit their state in order to canvass with them. More local aspects of the campaign mean that local celebrities may engage more in endorsement acts during the campaign trail, as having similar cultural background, they would be more trustworthy in their voting district than a celebrity residing in let's say Hollywood. Such endorsement can even have negative connotations, as voters may feel that an external influence can affect politics in their state and the process of choosing its representatives to Washington D.C.

Further studies may as well find such patterns during the campaigns for the seat in House of Representatives, however their specifics very often put light on party primaries, since there aren't many of the congressional districts are rated as a toss-up and as a result *entertaining* for people, who follow politics. However, we can soon observe more celebrity endorsements and social media engagements in party primaries, where older party favourites will be contested by young emerging activists, who know well how to attract voting base through social media tools. Party status-quo is often contested in constituencies, which are safe for the ascribed party, therefore many pundits believe that efforts of progressive Democrats trying to tackle moderates in primaries are not efficient when talking about unseating Republicans in toss-up campaigns, where running on a left-oriented ticket would probably be met with failure. The decline of old-fashioned politics (especially!) in the Democratic Party is however inevitable, considering the fact how identity politics and need for equality are shaping modern debates. Without a doubt, in 2022 many Americans will be following battleground Senate races in North Carolina, Pennsylvania or even Wisconsin, but it's worth noting that many party primaries and House of Representatives elections

may be as much entertaining. To prove a point, it is strongly recommended to follow Nina Turner's Congressional bid in OH-11, as she emerged as one of the most passionate Bernie Sanders supporters, which elevated her to nationwide recognition and created much hype around her.

### **Future research perspectives**

Although any predictions on how the political campaigns would be conducted in next decades were described briefly in the fifth chapter, it is worth noting what further academic plans could be established to continue the research. Without a doubt the main disadvantage of this analysis is that no experimental study or survey was conducted to support the thesis, as with the limitations faced, the content for analysis was already published, from which the essential materials could be extracted on celebrity endorsements topic and social media use during presidential campaigns in the United States. What would be a real achievement here and with any future studies, is the aim at measuring the importance of the endorsement, through segmentation of the celebrities, which could allow to check their influence in a voting district of choice. Furthermore, the issue with the analysis of Web 2.0 use will always be out of date, because with every new elections, new social media tools are emerging, which change the way political campaigns are perceived - no one would expect that TikTok would be an efficient asset among digital activists; what is more, over the next few years politicians will be learning what they can and can't do on this platform in order to stay reliable.

Exceptional attention should also be put on Congressional campaigns, leading to less focus on Presidential elections, where patterns are more obvious and drawing more attention towards battles for House of Representatives seats, especially during party primaries. Modern celebrities already know for whom their voters are voting, so the impact of their message is not put on the struggle between the Democrats and the Republicans, it is put on the fractions of the parties they are supporting. This means more entertainment for the voters, who, as a result, would more eagerly take part in the primaries.

Also worth noting is the fact that during the times of permanent campaign, the social media use and celebrity endorsements will not just be limited to the campaign trail, as many politicians that are in office, may measure the voter satisfaction with online conferences or by using celebrities as mediating actors. Modern politicians should stay in touch with their base during their tenure and social media are the best way to learn about their work and the policies they are preparing. This of course means that the focus should also be aimed at any forms of digital activism, which, supported by a larger online group, can make an actual change in politics. Sometimes, as it has been proven in the research, a group of people can have a bigger influence on a policy or a social issue than a person in the office. It is also worth noting that it is crucial to measure the substantive evaluation of

the content posted on social media by politicians, voters and celebrities, to check what kind of content has the biggest chance on having the biggest amount of interactions.

Future researches will also focus on the relationship between the entertaining and educational aspects of modern politics, which (what we learnt from this study) can cooperate in order to spread knowledge about the voting rights in the United States. Taking into consideration that in 2021, American politics still tackle issues such as redistricting or voter suppression (read more regarding new strict voting law in Georgia), many Americans are still facing limits to their access to voting ballots and on one hand it is state's responsibility to assure that every citizen has right to vote, but on the other hand it is a responsibility of whistleblowers to share information regarding this issue, so all of the voters would know how to make sure that their vote counts. It is easy to argue that celebrity politics and social media can spoil modern politics and distract voter's attention from the policies and political programs, but the history proves that they can be a massive tool if used for good.

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