Donald Trump's And Boris Johnson's Rhetorics In Election Campaigns: A Comparative Analysis

The presidential campaign of Donald Trump and his subsequent election, as well as Boris Johnson's rise to prime minister are both heavily labeled as controversial campaigns, riddled with similar titles of racism, fascist, and classist views. With Boris Johnson being one of the most notable figures of Brexit and the Trump's administration micro-focus on mass deportation of undocumented immigrants and incapacitating them from entering the country, both figures have helped popularize far-right wing populist views in their respective countries, and internationally. Therefore, comparing and contrasting the rhetoric of both Boris Johnson and Trump will allow better insight into how right-wing populism gains attention and support.

In 2016 Trump entered into politics with his presidential bid. Quickly headlines regarding his presidential bid shifted on to his controversial comments in one of his rallies, in which he stated "They're (Mexicans) bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Trump, 2016). This statement quickly shifted the media attention towards Trump's presidential bid, and not only did it solidify a large amount of criticism, but also a large number of supporters. Trump's rhetoric also shifted on to one of the leading promises in his campaign, which was to make Mexico pay for a border wall. Trump's inner focus on antagonizing Latinos and describing them as criminals and emphasizing the importance of building a border wall highly attracted voters with more authoritarianist views. Authoritarianism is a form of government characterized by "oneness and sameness over freedom and diversity" (Jacobs, 2019). Due to the emphasizing of assimilation to being the same and/or similar, politicians with authoritarian views typically reject large influxes of immigration as it rejects or complicates the notion of an America that is "one and the same" in regards to its inhabitants. Furthermore, Trump's description of Mexican immigrants as rapists and criminals as well as constantly enforcing the necessity of the border uses a fear tactic to emphasize the notion that Mexican immigrants are a threat to everyday American lives.

Another important aspect of Trump's presidential campaign and subsequent presidency was his known slogan "Make America Great Again". This slogan brought up various questions, such as what specific time in America is Trump referring to when he says "Make America Great Again". This also brings up the factor of how immigrants and minorities come into play in trump's slogan. From Jim Crow Laws to Japanese internment camps, mistreatment of minorities and immigrants have been a staple in American history. Therefore, to analyze Trump's slogan regarding bringing America to a supposed better time, we have to understand the social, economic, and political undertones to the slogan that titled his campaign. It is important to recognize that Donald Trump did not coin the phrase "Make America Great Again", the phrase was popularized by former president Ronald Reagan. Though Trump states he came up with the term after Mitt Romney's loss to Barack Obama in 2011, the term was actually first used by Ronald Reagan during his 1980 presidential campaign. For Trump, his slogan meant to capture the main focus of his campaign, which included anti-immigration views, negotiating/withdrawing from international trade deals, aggressive foreign policies in middle east, and bringing job backs to "native" Americans.,etc Therefore, when Trump refers to Making America Great Again, he refers to a period in time that highlights these factors in American history. Unfortunately, going back to times in America that included factors such as

these meant discrimination and exclusion of various minorities and immigrants.

Boris Johnson, who is the current prime minister of the U.K is known as a highly controversial figure in current political times. He is known as a divisive figure in the U.K, most popularly known for his controversial views on various social issues, specifically racism, sexism, Islamaphobia etc. In regards to his views, Johnson believes in lowering taxes for the wealthy, and although has stated anti-immigrant rhetoric, he is pro-immigration (Luke McGee, 2019). Throughout his political career, Boris Johnson has emphasized his goal of uniting the country, despite his highly divisive comments towards minorities and women. Aside from his consistent controversy due to comments regarding various social issues, He is also highly known for his support towards UK leaving the European Union, also known as “Brexit”. According to the Wall Street Journal, Johnson’s support for Brexit stemmed from “frustration with EU’s economic management, nanny-ism, and overregulation” (Phillips, 2019). Johnson emphasized the UK’s opportunity to have new free-trade agreements, as opposed to the restrictions placed by the EU. He further has tried to show an economic growth from Britain leaving the EU by promising 300,000 new jobs in Britain leaves the EU (Nelson, 2016). Johnson believes that UK leaving the EU will eventually lead to new trade deals with growing economies, that will lead to growth in jobs and opportunity in the UK. This reasoning is used as a forefront in various arguments towards support for Brexit.

Boris Johnson has promoted far right wing views various ways in UK. To further analyze what his views are, it is important to analyze views he’s emphasized since his career as a journalist for the popular Newspaper The Daily Telegraph. In this newspaper he vouched for various controversial topics, with use of language that could be referred as islamophobic, misogynistic, as well as racist. An example is him referring to women who wore burqas as “letter boxes” and “bank robbers” in an article for the Telegraph (Raphael, 2019) . Furthermore, he refused to apologize for his language, despite immense criticism. Johnson’s language represents the level of intolerance and fear of Muslims in Europe, as a woman wearing a traditional religious headpiece is deemed as dangerous and intimidating by Johnson. By promoting intolerance towards Muslims, Johnson benefits from the growing rate of Islamophobia in Europe, a central theme in many populist right politicians. Another important theme Johnson highly supports is the concept of assimilation. Many right-wing populist politicians benefit from pushing the narrative that immigration is a threat, or that non-assimilated immigration cause harm to the nation that it is occurring in. Assimilation is viewed by various right-wing population as the only “acceptable” way for immigrants to live in a nation. Johnson stated in a 2019 speech “there are too often parts of our country…where English is not spoken by some people as their first language.”.(Johnson, 2019) . He also stated that the most important priority for immigrants is to be and feel, a frequently used language amongst right wing politicians. Emphasizing that it’s important for immigrants to speak English and be is a justification used for encouraging and pressuring immigrants to give up their own culture and ethnic identity to “fit in”. Alongside Johnson’s comment regarding women wearing burkas, his comments regarding the importance of immigrants “acting” highlight his belief in immigrants not practicing their own cultural identity and prioritizing Western ideals as it’s perceived as less threatening.

Boris Johnson and Donald Trump have various similarities in their politics and rhetoric. One common similarity both politicians share is establishing an “us vs. them” mentality, frequently using language that satisfy their white conservative supporters and angering minorities and marginalized groups. Both Trump’s comments regarding Mexicans being “rapists and criminals” and Johnson’s comment referring to Muslim women with Burkas as “letter boxes”

and “bank robbers” highly angered minorities and liberals, yet helped encourage many right-wing voters to support them. This is most closely related to the fear tactic that is common amongst many right wing populist politicians. By establishing an “us vs. them” rhetoric, politicians identify who belongs in the “us” group, while excluding those they do not consider to be a part of them. Furthermore, they use harmful stereotypes to maintain exclusion and fear of these marginalized groups from the public. While Trump never provided evidence that majority of Mexicans entering the country are rapists and criminals, he still sparked a wave of racial verbal and physical attacks towards Latinos. Johnson comparing burkas to bank robber masks is reflective of the high amounts of muslim intolerance in the UK. Therefore, by using an “us vs them” mentality, both Boris Johnson and Donald Trump are able to capitalize on the harmful stereotypes and fear/hatred of marginalized groups to gain supporters.

Another similarity that both Donald Trump and Boris Johnson share is their continuous promise and claims of representing the “common man”. A large amount of trump voters where blue collar workers in middle America. An example of the influence of types of voters on Trump’s election is the amount of rust belt workers who voted for him during the 2016 election. Rust belt workers are workers from the east to Midwest who have been affected by the economic decline and globalization. According to “Disaffected rust belt voters embraced Trump. They had No Other Hope” by Richard C. Longworth, many rust belt workers shifted from voting for Barack Obama in 2012 to Trump in 2016 due to Trump giving them representation and echoing their grievances in speeches, which Hillary had failed to do in 2016, Mitt Romney in 2012, and John McCain in 2008. Trump’s promise of bringing jobs back into America, and campaigning in these areas led to the sense of representation that led many rust belt voters to support Trump. As for Boris Johnson, his campaigning and consistent support for Brexit gave a sense of hope for individuals who blamed the EU for the declining of their jobs. Whether it be from the globalization or free movement of workers, EU was blamed heavily for loss of industrial jobs and reduction of wages. Therefore, a large amount of Trump and Johnson supporters come from individuals who have felt left behind by the growing pace of globalization and free trade as well as democratic candidate’s focus on social issues.

While Trump and Johnson are similar in their fear tactic rhetoric and capturing the votes of “common men” who feel under-represented and left behind by the ever-growing pace of the economy and globalization, there are various differences the politicians share. One difference between Trump and Boris Johnson is Johnson having a slightly more liberal stance on immigration. Although Johnson has used language that is offensive to minorities and immigrants and has also heavily pushed for assimilation of immigrants to “act”, he still advocated for a more liberal immigration approach than the former prime minister Theresa May, who planned to cut the overall number of migrants to the tens of thousands. This is significantly different to Trump, who has taken a zero tolerance approach to illegal immigration, refusing vast amounts of people seeking refuge from Mexico and many central American countries. Although Johnson uses fear of immigration as a tactic to push for support towards the EU, he has shown support for giving amnesty to illegal immigrants, signifying his more liberal stance on immigration. Therefore, although Trump and Johnson share a similar rhetoric that deals with using the fear tactic of “us vs. them” to gain supporters amongst conservatives, Johnson has shown a significantly more liberal stance on immigration.

To conclude, Donald Trump and Boris Johnson have risen as some of the most controversial politicians of the 2010’s. They have shown various similarities in their use of fear tactics and dog whistle tones to maintain fear and exclusion of immigrants and minorities, as well as

claiming to stand for the “common man” industrial workers who have been left behind by by the effects of neoliberalism and jobs going abroad to other countries. Although they differ in levels regarding tolerance towards immigration, With Boris Johnson being one of the most notable figures of Brexit and the Trump’s administration micro-focus on mass deportation of undocumented immigrants and incapacitating them from entering the country, they both provide an insight into how right-wing populism gains attention and support. Using an “us vs. them” fear tactic to ensure who is considered a part of the nation and who is to be excluded, as well as claiming support to the “common man”.