



Claiming the ‘Bro Vote’-

A Rhetorical Analysis of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage’s Appearances on Long Format, Digital Podcasts in 2024.

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Unit: POLI31555

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Word Count: 9988

24/25

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of BSc in Politics and International Relations (With Study Abroad)

**I declare that the research contained herein was granted approval by the SPAIS Ethics
Working Group.**

Acknowledgements

To Mum and Dad for your help and guidance always.

A thank you to my supervisor Professor Mark Wickham-Jones for your invaluable help and
time throughout this project.

Abstract

In 2024, both Donald Trump and Nigel Farage enjoyed their biggest ever electoral successes. Trump was elected President of the United States of America, winning the popular vote for the first time after failing to do so in both 2016 and 2020. Simultaneously, Farage became a Member of Parliament in the UK for the first time after several prior attempts. Farage's Reform UK party managed to win a total of 5 seats in the House of Commons, more than any of his previously affiliated parties. One determinant of Trump and Farage's success was the increased support received from young men within their respective electorates. In the 2024 presidential race Trump won 49% of men aged 18 to 29, compared to his opponent Kamala Harris, who claimed only 47%. A clear shift in support from 2020 when Joe Biden won the same demographic 52% to Trump's 41% (Roeloffs 2024). In the UK, 12% of men aged 18-24 years old voted for Farage's Reform party during the 2024 General Election, making them the largest right-leaning party in the UK amongst the demographic. Reform managed to beat the Conservatives who only won 10% (McDonnell 2024), an impressive feat for a fledgling party. Whilst the shift in support of young men to the populist right is evident, few have attempted to explain why such phenomena occurred. This dissertation attempts to unpack the gendered element of the electoral movement, seeking to understand what kind of 'political masculinity' was distributed to the demographic by the populist political actors. This project achieves such task via the rhetorical analysis of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage's appearances on long format digital podcasts- a platform particularly enjoyed by young men. I then situate my findings within a broader question which asks whether 'political masculinity' and populist 'style' are inextricably linked.

Research Questions:

How did Donald Trump and Nigel Farage convey ‘political masculinity’ in their appearances on long format, digital podcasts in 2024?

Is there a clear link between ‘political masculinity’ and populist style?

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Abbreviations:

UFC- Ultimate Fighting Championship

US- United States of America

UK- United Kingdom

JRE- The Joe Rogan Experience

1. Introduction

Donald Trump and Nigel Farage are often considered to be cut from the same political cloth, with previous academic research finding a similarity in their uses of right-wing populist political style and speech (Gonawela et al 2018, pp. 318). In 2024, both Trump and Farage experienced an increase in electoral support from young men, an indicator that their shared populist philosophy was newly appealing to the demographic. Some have situated the electoral movement as a social trend, claiming that a ‘crowd of international right-wing cool kids’ had emerged (Leake 2025). Others have labelled the shift of young men towards the populist right as a ‘Bro-Vote’ phenomenon- where Trump and Farage won over young men via interacting with ‘popular-culture’ enjoyed by the demographic. It is claimed that Trump managed to win the ‘Bro-Vote’ through the forming of public relationships with male influencers, comedians and podcasters (Branch 2024). Whilst Farage’s strategic use of TikTok- in which he has over a million followers- has been used as reasoning for his success with young men (Barker-Singh 2024).

Within this research project, I contend that the long-format, digital podcast was an influential tool of persuasion used by Trump and Farage in their appeals to the demographic in 2024.

Using Martin’s (2014) framework for rhetorical analysis I reveal that both use ‘political masculinity’ within their performances on multiple podcasts. I argue that the ‘political masculinity’ found can in part be used as reason why young men pivoted towards the populist right in 2024. Using Trump and Farage’s rhetorical performances as comparative case studies, I discuss whether political masculinity is inextricably linked to a defined populist style. In this introductory section I outline what is meant by the term’s ‘populism’, the ‘populist right’ and ‘political masculinity’.

1.1 Populism and the ‘Populist Right’

When defining populism, it is difficult to find a consensus amongst academics. This is due to populism's prominence as an 'essentially contested concept' (Mudde 2017, p. 27). Therefore, there are several definitions offered in populist discourse. Differing definitions contain analytical value and insight yet fall short of being able to entirely encompass the concept. The ideational approach has arguably become the most used definition in the field of populist studies. The approach posits populism as a 'thin-centred ideology' which considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite" and argues that politics should be an expression of the 'people's' will (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017, p.6). Mudde and Kaltwasser purposefully make their ideational approach vague to be applicable to the different forms of populism. However, through its vagueness, the approach fails to acknowledge the role of the populist leader.

Rather than the ideational approach, this project defines populism as a 'political style'. The 'style' approach suggests that populism is not an independent ideology but rather a concept that can be attached to different, pre-existing areas of political thought. The political style is employed by the populist leader, he proclaims a rapport with 'the people', creates a 'them-and-us' mentality, and (often, though not necessarily) portrays a period of crisis (Knight 1998, pp. 223). Moffitt adds to Knight's definition by suggesting that populist leaders will use 'bad manners' in their expression which helps to portray threat and breakdown as well as crisis (Moffitt, 2016, p.45). This dissertation therefore defines populism in style terms as: the building of a rapport with the 'people', performance of a 'them and us' mentality, the portrayal of a crisis and the practice of 'bad manners'.

When researching what is meant by 'right-wing populism', there are a few competing theories that feature in populist literature. The Populist Radical Right, as theorised by Mudde, has become one of the most accepted conceptualisations of the populist right. The PRR is defined by three key elements: nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007, p.22-

23). Parties or actors that identify with/ display a combination of the above qualities will therefore be considered as proponents of right-wing populism in this project.

1.2 Political Masculinity:

‘Political masculinity’ encompasses any kind of masculinity that is constructed around, ascribed to and/or claimed by “political players”. (Sauer and Starck 2014, pp. 6). This definition sets out masculinity in the political realm, where it can be assumed the concept is used by political actors to appeal to the electorate (or a certain group within it). The definition also outlines the importance of the political actor/leader as it is them, or rather their perceived performance, which generates masculine effect. Such central role of the leader relates to this analysis’ use of the ‘style’ approach to populism which conceives populism as generated by the populist leader’s actions and self-portrayal.

Whilst Sauer and Starck’s definition sets out the parameters of ‘political masculinity’, they purposefully do not outline the qualities of ‘masculinity’ which can be constructed around, ascribed to and/or claimed by political actors. This research project narrows their definition and makes the case that there are identifiable categories of ‘masculinity’ which are predominantly used by political actors or attributed to them. The three categories are:

- 1) Hypermasculinity (the exaggerated portrayal of male personality traits)
- 2) Hegemonic masculinity (the suggestion of male dominance over ‘others’)
- 3) Crisis of masculinity (the portrayal that men are in ‘crisis’)

Hypermasculinity:

It is often argued that political leaders emphasise masculine personality traits to win votes- such practice is defined as the use of ‘hypermasculinity’. Roose argues that it was Trump’s hyper-masculinist appeal that won over a base of men in 2016, combining sexist rhetoric and aggressive politics (Roose 2021). There are similar suggestions that Farage portrays a hyper masculinised character through his choice of language and demeanour (Higgins 2020). The ‘masculine’ personality traits that are exercised predominantly include assertiveness, aggressiveness, and the willingness to take a stand (Coffe 2018, pp. 173). These traits can be performed in a variety of ways including verbal and non-verbal actions. The main use of hypermasculinity is to appear relatable to the male electorate or appear as a figure to aspire to. This fits neatly with the populist’s process of building a ‘rapport with the people’ to win favour.

Hegemonic masculinity:

Connell’s theorisation of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is understood as the practice or pattern that allows male dominance over women (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, pp. 832). The notion of hegemonic masculinity often appears within the vocabulary of political actors. The reasoning for its use has been conceptualised as the accruing of ‘masculine capital’ which allows leaders to take ownership of issues that are traditionally masculine (i.e. military and defence) (Cunningham et al 2013, pp. 503), whilst also attempting to appeal to the male members of the electorate. There is also a strong nostalgic undertone, as it suggests that former power structures which previously upheld the dominance of men have decayed. Sauer, in her later work, makes the case that right-wing populism garners support from men as it promises a return to the old male-hegemonic order which stood in place before the neo-liberal and capitalist reordering of the world post-1980 (Sauer 2020, pp. 29). Such promise of a

return to male hegemony is usually accompanied by aggressive anti-feminist policy (Worth 2021, pp. 507) as to maintain dominance, threat must be eradicated. The aim to establish hegemonic masculinity is to create a cleavage in society which motivates a base of voters. The need for a societal cleavage relates to the populist style choice of building a ‘them and us mentality’.

Crisis of Masculinity:

Somewhat ironically, a key element of ‘masculinity’ in the political realm is the performance and portrayal of a ‘crisis of masculinity’. The concept has often featured in both gender studies and contemporary political thought- mainly due to its claimed mobilising effect. Homolar and Loffmann suggest that political leaders weaponise the idea of a ‘crisis in masculinity’ to win votes. Leaders (usually male) claim that there has been a loss of the ‘strong’ man in Western culture and project a period of male dysfunction which resonates with usually non-educated, working-class men to invoke an anger that will galvanise their support and base (Homolar and Loffmann 2022, pp.137). This is coupled with the fact that men perceive bias against men as increasing over time in a zero-sum fashion against the interests of women, intensifying their own perception of a crisis (Green and Shorrocks 2021, pp. 352). The performance of a ‘crisis of masculinity’ is firmly within the set-out framework of populism which states that political actors aim to portray a ‘period of crisis or breakdown’ as part of a populist style.

The three categories of ‘political masculinity’ outlined will act as an analytical framework for Trump and Farage’s use of rhetoric. Guided by the three established categories, it will become evident how ‘political masculinity’ is used by both in their appeal to men. The categories will also allow a comparative analysis of Trump and Farage’s vocabulary found in

the discussion of this research project- assessing whether the actors use the categories to the same amount or effect. As seen, there are also tenuous links that can be made between this project's employed definitions of populism and political masculinity. Hyper-masculinity relates to building a rapport with 'the people', hegemonic masculinity relates to the 'them and us mentality' and the crisis of masculinity fits with the populist portrayal of a period of breakdown/ crisis. These links will be further explored to help answer this project's secondary question of whether there is an existing link between populist style and masculinity.

1.3 Literature Review:

Due to the recency of both the US presidential and UK general election in 2024, there is currently little academic literature that has worked to unpack the experienced electoral shift of young men towards the populist right. Previously, links between the masculine attraction to the populist right have been made but rarely removed from the conceptualisation of an intersectional base. Norris and Inglehart (2019) argued that a base of older non-educated white men mainly delivered the Trumpian form of populism in 2016- conceptualising the movement more generally as a 'cultural backlash' against progressive policies in the US. Whilst in the UK, Ford and Goodwin theorised the 'Left Behind', a group made up of predominantly older, white, working-class men, to describe the voting base of the populist United Kingdom Independence Party under Farage (Ford and Goodwin 2014, pp. 278). As a new younger generation gravitates towards the populist right there is need to further delineate the masculine attraction to Trump and Farage's populist politics away from an intersectional conceptualisation, ultimately revising the link between masculinity and the populist right.

When addressing the style of politics employed by Trump and Farage, academics have at times highlighted the masculine elements of their politics. Trump has previously been suggested to depict himself as the ‘heroic masculine protector’ through his continued claim that he will save America and protect it from ‘invading’ immigrants (Messerschmidt 2019, pp. 24). The suggestion that Trump performs ‘heroism’ relates to ‘hypermasculinity’ as outlined earlier. Trump’s politics has also been argued to mobilise certain emotions such as masculine disempowerment and lowered self-esteem (Johnson 2020, pp. 19)- here a suggestion that Trump performs a ‘crisis of masculinity’. Others have cited Trump as a misogynist (Manne 2018, pp. 88) suggesting that he prescribes to ‘hegemonic masculinity’ and the dominance of men over women. Farage has similarly been framed as misogynistic in reaction to comments he made denigrating women as ‘blokeish’. He also displays hyper-masculinist traits within his politics by publicly partaking in stereotypically masculine behaviours such as beer-drinking, gambling and smoking (de Gues and Ralph-Morrow 2021, pp. 475). Evidently, academics have displayed the masculine elements of Trump and Farage’s brand of politics. However, the literature falls short of conceptualising their rhetoric as the strategic use of ‘political masculinity’ to appeal to men in the electorate, as this project intends to do.

More broadly, there is limited study of the link between theoretical populism and gender (Abi-Hassan 2017, pp. 427). Whilst, as stated, tenuous links between political masculinity and populist style can be made- there is no literature which makes the full-bodied claim that masculinity is a constituent feature of populism and its right-wing variant. The closest to such assertion is made by Mudde and Kaltwasser who identify Populist Radical Right parties as *Männerparteien* (men’s parties) stating populist right parties are led by men, represented by men and supported by men (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2015, pp. 22). Yet despite such observation, their conclusion agrees with the work of Spierings who states that whilst at times

the populist right uses gender as an identity marker, gender (and more specifically masculinity) is not intrinsic to rightist populist ideology (Spierings 2020, pp. 52). After the movement of young men to the populist right and potentially a strengthening of the relationship between right-wing populism and masculinity- there is need to reevaluate Spierings position.

2. Methods

This thesis uses long format, online podcasts as the main generator of data to address the research questions set out. Both Donald Trump and Nigel Farage appeared on multiple podcasts in 2024, using the concept as a campaign tool to spread their political message. This chapter outlines the role and importance of the podcast- as well as addressing the broader contextual factors of using the podcast in a political campaign/ movement. Then, there will be a shift in focus to the importance of the language used within podcasts featuring political actors- as well as outlining the employed method for rhetorical analysis.

2.1 The Podcast:

A podcast, at its core, is a composition of downloadable and sequenced audio files available to the public (Lundstrom and Lundstrom 2020, pp. 290). Whilst it may be argued that the podcast is just another form of radio broadcast, it differs and holds its own space in mass media due to the sense of ‘hyper-intimacy’ that it creates (Berry 2016, pp. 666). According to Berry, the podcast generates a hyper-intimacy through the way the listener consumes the media: usually through headphones, listening to human voice who is often a person from a similar community to their own or one that they are interested in. Such hyper-intimacy makes the podcast a good tool for political campaigning and messaging, there are not many ways in which a political actor could connect closer to the public than via the means of a podcast.

Whilst the podcast can be considered intimate and personal, it is also an important political tool to reach the masses. In 2023, roughly half of U.S adults said they had listened to a podcast in the past year, with one in five stating that they listen to podcasts at least a few times per week (Pew Research 2023). In 2024, 20% of UK adults were actively listening to podcasts every week- over 11 million people (Ofcom 2024). The podcast is evidently an

effective mode of outreach- understandably political actors seek to appear on podcasts as their messaging can reach millions on a more personal level than other forms of broadcasting.

Whilst podcasts are reaching many and in an intimate fashion, the use of the podcast in this research project is particularly important due to the demographic of person that the concept is most enjoyed by. Studies have shown that men are more likely to consume podcasts than women- with men being predisposed to listen to podcasts due to their prioritisation of information consumption (Tobin and Guadagno 2022). It is therefore understandable that when political figures agree to appear on a podcast, they are for the most part appealing to the male electorate. This supports the use of the online podcast for an analysis of how populist right leaders attempt to appeal to men.

In this research, three podcasts per political leader have been selected. In the case of podcasts featuring Donald Trump, all took place during the 2024 US Presidential election and feature rhetoric that was prevalent during his election campaign. The podcasts featuring Farage differ slightly, only one of the selected podcasts took place during the UK general election. Despite this, the selected podcasts are still rhetoric rich as Farage continued to campaign on his political message after the general election, mainly to increase party membership as well as prepare for the 2025 local council elections. There are several similarities between the podcasts selected to analyse the rhetoric deployed by Trump and Farage. All the podcasts selected feature male host/ hosts with male centric audiences. It seems likely that the populists were selective of the podcasts that they appeared on to maximise their appeal to young men. Also, all the podcasts selected are long format, allowing both to deploy messaging on several key subject/ policy areas. Finally, all the podcasts were filmed; providing a visual element to the analysis which will aid the overall answering of the research questions set out.

2.2 Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis

To answer this thesis' research questions, rhetoric found in the selected podcasts featuring Donald Trump and Nigel Farage is analysed. Rhetoric can be understood in its original Aristotelian form: 'the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in any given case' (Aristotle 2020, p.15). In his theorisation, Aristotle outlined three forms of linguistic persuasion which construct his rhetorical definition. The three forms of persuasion being: ethos (the use of credibility to persuade), pathos (the use of emotion to persuade) and logos (the use of logical reasoning to persuade). The linguistic rhetoric of contemporary political actors can still be identified through the prism of persuasion and often associated to one of ethos, pathos or logos. In the case of Trump and Farage's appeal to men there is need to address exactly how their language (rhetorical content) attempts to persuade men, and particularly young men, to vote for them.

As well as rhetorical content (what is said), rhetorical style (how rhetorical content is delivered) is of particular importance. In the literature, it is established that populists use style to signal themselves as authentic, and to present their political ideas as legitimate (Lacatus and Meibauer 2022, pp. 438). Rhetorical style can manifest itself in different formats such as tone or the context of language choice. This signalling process goes beyond persuasion, actors aim to signal to the electorate that their persona is the only electable choice. Whilst the rhetorical content and style of language found in the featured podcasts is of most importance, as noted there is a visual element to all the podcasts that have been selected. Visual rhetoric in the age of digitisation is at times just as important as textual rhetoric- the gestures political actors make and the way in which they present themselves can affect their ability to persuade.

All three of Aristotle's modes of persuasion ethos, pathos and logos have the ability to manifest themselves into the visual realm (Miles, 2023, pp.6).

The framework which is used to analyse the collected data is Martin's (2014) method of rhetorical analysis. Martin concerns his analysis with three distinct moments of a speech intervention and uses them as separate areas for interpretation. The three areas being: 1) the rhetorical context, 2) the rhetorical argument and 3) the rhetorical effects (Martin 2014, p. 100). The 'rhetorical context' refers to the time, place and setting of the intervention and the importance attached to such context. Then, a focus on the 'rhetorical argument' of the collected data will situate the 'argumentative appeals, arrangement, style and delivery' of the diction used by Trump and Farage. This will identify what the political actors empirically say and how they say it. Finally, the focus on 'rhetorical effects' will address how Trump and Farage's language was received by the audience- taking a deep look into how and whether their rhetoric had implicit appeals to young men. This research project will also look at the broader effects of how the podcasts were received and acted upon by other actors in the media and public. Whilst Martin's method is originally concerned with the textual elements of rhetoric, it can also be applied to visual elements.

3. Donald Trump

3.1 The Joe Rogan Experience

(Released 26th October, run time: 2 hours and 58 minutes)

Rhetorical Context:

The context of which an orator delivers rhetoric is undeniably important and will often determine how effectively it is received by the intended audience. For this reasoning, political actors will at times use strategically selective contexts to make their arguments seem more plausible than others (Martin 2015, pp. 33). Donald Trump's appearance on The Joe Rogan Experience was a clearly strategically selected context to deploy rhetorical argument to a male dominated audience. Rogan is considered the 'king' of podcasting, his show is downloaded 200 million times a month (Marriott 2024). His audience is also estimated to be 80% male, with over half being aged 18-34 (BBC 2024). It is likely that Trump's campaign team were aware of the outreach of the JRE and selected to appear on it, in attempt to persuade millions of men to vote Republican.

Furthermore, Joe Rogan has unparalleled cultural significance amongst men and young men. Such significance stems from the success of his podcast but also his role as a lead commentator on the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), as well as his prevalence as a stand-up comic (Wolfson 2024a). With Rogan's cultural significance, Trump's appearance on his podcast made for a 'popular culture' moment. The importance of popular culture in political engagement should not be understated- findings suggest that popular culture can provide young people with the resources needed to engage in politics (Inthorn et al 2012, pp

.348). The podcast was also released just under two weeks before the presidential election-making it relevant on election day.

Rhetorical Argument:

The first rhetorical argument made by Trump was his self-portrayal as the ‘strongman’ candidate choice. ‘Strongman’ leaders mobilise emotions as political forces, at times aiming to create anger or ‘other’ enemies (Gabriel 2024). After discussing the assassination attempts on his life, Trump repeatedly amplified the danger associated with running for and winning the presidency. On becoming the President, he stated that ‘other than going to war and being a firefighter or being a cop. It's the most dangerous’ (Trump, 2024a, 00:25:32). Yet despite the associated danger, he claimed ‘I do things (...) that don't necessarily make me so popular. I just do what's right’ (Trump, 2024a, 00:26:21). The association of running for election with going to ‘war’ or being a ‘cop’ is a purposeful attempt by Trump to categorise himself as a ‘strongman’ who does ‘what is right’ in the face of violence. Trump also makes constant references to the UFC during the podcast episode- often using the sport as a metaphor for his own political fight. This is used to bolster a strongman image, but also to relate to the audience who are likely fans of the sport due to their demographic and Rogan’s UFC association. Furthermore, Trump attempted to construct a ‘strongman’ persona through his portrayal of interactions that he had with other world leaders during his first term. Trump claimed that ‘Russia would never have gone into Ukraine’ if he were President, and the reasoning why Putin had not invaded prior to 2022 was because ‘I (Trump) said don’t do it’ (Trump, 2024a, 01:25:33). Trump’s suggestion that only he stopped Putin from invading Ukraine is the ultimate example of his desire to appear as a strongman to Rogan’s audience.

The second key rhetorical argument found within the podcast is Trump's consistent degradation of Kamala Harris' competency as a candidate for the presidency of the United States of America. First, he attacked Harris' appearance on '60 Minutes' claiming that her answers to the host's questions showed 'she's essentially incompetent' (Trump, 2024a, 00:30:43). Later in the podcast episode, Trump argued that 'Kamala is a very low IQ person' suggesting that she 'should have a (cognitive) test because (...) there's something wrong with her' (Trump, 2024a, 01:23:33). Trump went on to reference her 'low IQ' multiple times. Trump uses a combination of ethos and logos appeals to the audience suggesting that he is a stronger, more credible candidate than the Kamala (ethos), who could not become president due to her 'low IQ' (logos).

Rhetorical Effect:

The main effect of Trump's strongman rhetoric was to produce a hyper-masculinist appeal. Trump's portrayal of his role as equitable to a soldier going to war or a police officer serving justice, plus the suggestion that he strong-armed the Russian President, was a strategic attempt to exaggerate his own masculine personality traits to an impressionable young male audience. This effect did not go unnoticed in the traditional media. Bernstein (2025) in the New York Times suggests that Trump's hyper masculine appeal entrenched the leader into the 'Manosphere'. The Manosphere is an often-referenced phenomenon which describes the online area where disengaged men gravitate towards to receive advice from influencers displaying highly masculine traits. The disengaged men often support and are loyal to those who influence the Manosphere.

The intended effect of Trump's attack on Harris' competency was to challenge her credibility as a presidential candidate. Whilst it is not unusual for Trump to attack the intellect of a

political rival, his scathing commentary on Harris contained a gendered element. Despite Harris being a lawyer, former Attorney General and Vice-President, Trump consistently claimed that she had a 'low IQ' making her unsuitable for the presidency. The claim was an implicit relighting of traditional gender stereotyping which prescribes to the belief that women lack the requisite intelligence and rational to enter politics (Dolan 2014, pp. 23). The use of traditional gender stereotyping to discredit Harris produces a 'hegemonic masculinity' effect, as gender stereotyping supports the traditionally established hierarchy of male dominance.

3.2 The Lex Fridman Podcast

(Released on the 3rd of September 2024, run time: 1 hour and 4 minutes)

Rhetorical Context

The Lex Fridman Podcast is mainly concerned with politics and philosophy, often taking a more serious tone than Rogan's podcast. Previously, Fridman's podcasting style has been accredited with having a 'zen-like quality', whilst providing earnest and intellectual conversation (Stanley 2025). Despite such praise, Stanley also makes the claim that Fridman may be 'the world's most dangerous podcaster' as his podcasts often come across as 'softball' interviews where guests can spread an agenda unchallenged.

The visual and audio content of Fridman's podcast with Trump is more reminiscent of a traditional television interview than Rogan's podcast, making the the episode seem 'ceremonial' in comparison to the messaging found on the JRE. Ceremonial rhetoric (often referred to as epideictic rhetoric) is the selected use of discourse to commemorate or signify a

topic in a rigid format with little room for debate (Watt et al 2017). Rogan's fluid podcast style, with little to no structure made it impossible for the use of ceremonial rhetoric. Despite such difference between the podcasts, Fridman is friends with Joe Rogan and the hosts have appeared on each other's shows numerous times. Their public connection has established Fridman as part of the 'Rogansphere' - an ecosystem of podcasts that often interact with one another, headed by Rogan. The 'ecosystem' is where young men will often go to receive commentary on current affairs, it is comparable to Fox News in the US for the older generation (Wolfson 2024b). The Rogansphere can be considered the podcasting component of the broader 'Manosphere' mentioned earlier. By appearing on Fridman's podcast Trump was able to penetrate the Rogansphere and inevitably communicate with large numbers of men.

Rhetorical Argument

The rhetorical argument made by Trump during the Lex Fridman Podcast surrounds political ideology. In essence, Trump uses a 'logos' appeal to the electorate, suggesting his ideological worldview was the logical answer to the nation's issues whilst his opponent's was not. When defining what is meant by 'ideology', Heywood offers a simplistic approach: a 'coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action' (Heywood 2021, p. 7). The 'coherent set of ideas' are usually identified in contemporary politics via a 'left-right continuum' ranging from communism to fascism. Trump made the ideological case that the 2024 election was the most important election in the nation's history because if Harris were to win America would become 'a communist country or close' (Trump, 2024b, 00:37:15). He backed his claim by stating that Harris was a 'Marxist' and that all her policies- despite not providing evidence- would lead to communism. He later made the argument:

We have an enemy from the outside and we have an enemy from within. And in my opinion, the enemy from within are radical left lunatics (Trump, 2024b, 00:39:16).

The idea of an ‘enemy within’ who subscribes to a left-wing ideology echoes the historical American phenomenon of McCarthyism. ‘McCarthyism’ is best defined as an American political attitude of the mid-twentieth century which feared the threat of internal communists within the government and public. The claim was initiated and pursued by Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy (Fried 1997, pg. 1). Trump evidently attempted to emulate a similar fear based on ideological lines, this attempt is best framed as a ‘pathos’ appeal.

Rhetorical Effect

When implementing ideology within rhetoric, the ‘ideologue’ is not only attempting to appear as an ‘expert’ but as the ‘sort of person’ that possible adherents to the ideology could look up to and trust (Finlayson 2013, pp. 207). Trump was certainly attempting to construct such effect and appeal to the politically interested Friedman audience. However, his use of ideology can be considered to have had a more specific and intended effect.

Trump’s rhetorical argument that Harris was a communist had the intended effect of ‘redbaiting’ - falsely convincing the American voter that Harris was a far left radical who would destroy their way of life (Krugman 2024). Trump’s ‘redbaiting’ effect featured on the Friedman podcast can be considered part of a grander Republican strategy of the time and resulted in 1 in 5 Americans believing Harris to be a Marxist prior to the election (Orth and Bialik 2024). Red baiting is used by Trump to suggest that the nation is at risk of having its traditions destroyed, a claim which aims to frame the presidential debate as a moment of crisis. The messaging draws connotations of the ‘crisis of masculinity’ element of political masculinity as outlined earlier.

3.3 FLAGRANT

(Released on the 9th of October 2024, run time: 1 hour 28 minutes)

Rhetorical Context

On Spotify, 'FLAGRANT' is described as 'a comedy podcast' marked with the disclaimer 'if you are sensitive this podcast is not for you', the podcast is hosted by comedians Andrew Schulz and Akaash Singh (Spotify 2025). Schulz, the podcast's co-host, is a prominent stand-up comedian and has previously released televised comedy specials. During the podcast with Trump, several topics were covered in an unserious manner with no structured format- a contrast to the more formal arrangement of the Lex Fridman podcast. The podcast also has an online connection to Joe Rogan, who appeared on FLAGRANT. Schulz has also appeared on The JRE several times.

During the podcast, Trump was seen sat on a 'sofa' opposite Schulz and Akaash and with other (exclusively male) podcast guests sat to his right. The image portrayed something more akin to a group of friends talking in a household living room, rather than an interview of a presidential candidate. Such a setting has an unlikely but significant impact. A 2023 survey carried out in the US revealed that 65% of men aged 18 to 23 said that 'no one really knows me well', with 30% revealing that they did not interact with someone outside their household within the previous week and 50% believing that online connections are more engaging than real life ones (Equimundo 2023). The 'FLAGRANT' setting would likely break through to the group of young men experiencing such high levels of isolation due to the podcast's emulation of social interaction. This allowed Trump to deploy rhetoric in a considerably

intimate setting where isolated young men go to seek not only information but companionship.

Rhetorical Argument

The argumentative arrangement of Trump's rhetoric on the FLAGRANT podcast is best defined as the use of 'low politics'. Low politics is a theorised category used to describe differentiation in political appeals, it works in contrast to 'high politics' as part of a high-low dimension. 'Low appeals' are used to make an actor more personable and relatable to the average citizen, an essentially 'pathos' appeal as the politician seeks an emotional connection to the voter. Political actors on the 'low' use 'a language that includes slang or folksy expressions and metaphors [...] and display more raw, culturally popular tastes' (Ostiguy 2017, pp. 78). Trump's appearance on the podcast is itself a performance of low politics as he engages in a media more attached to sensationalist comedy than political insight. He also uses consistent sporting metaphors in the podcast as part of a 'low' appeal. Trump used a golfing analogy when speaking of the assassination attempt on his life- he stated that the 'shooter' missed the equivalent of a 'one-foot putt' (Trump, 2024c, 00:18:51). He also later compares the Harris replacement of Biden to a combat sport claiming it's like 'fighting and the one guy's getting killed and they say [...] let's put in another fighter' (Trump, 2024c, 00:22:50). Both serious matters but simplified to metaphor as part of a rhetorical argument.

Rhetorical Effect

The use of 'low appeals' has a fundamentally populist effect, Ostiguy states that populism is best defined as the 'flaunting of the low' (Ostiguy 2017). The flaunting of the low is a stylistic notion of populism and works in conjunction with the already outlined 'style'

definitions provided by Moffit and Knight found within this project. There is also a gendered connotation to Trump's choice of low appeals. When politicians attempt to associate themselves or their campaign with the dynamics of sport, they are tapping into a longstanding tradition of male sporting charisma (Bonde 2009 pp. 1550). Trump's consistent use of sporting metaphor is an exaggeration of the 'male charisma' which Bonde sets out- creating a hyper-masculinist effect upon the audience.

Trump's appearance on the 'comedy' podcast also has effect upon the outlined issue of young-male isolation. When politicians appear on platforms inclusive of comedy they can exhibit thoughts and emotions that they would not necessarily be able to do through traditional means (i.e. debates and rallies)- creating a much closer connection with the electorate than previously possible (Smith and Voth 2002, pp. 127). Young-men who witnessed Trump in a relaxed environment infused with comedy would likely feel a stronger online connection to the Republican- which as earlier stated, is significant for the demographic.

4. Nigel Farage

4.1 The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast

(Released on the 3rd of July 2024, Run time: 47 minutes 47 seconds)

Rhetorical Context

In his work that focuses on understanding the issues facing young men in the modern era, Richard Reeves states that Jordan B. Peterson's appeal to the demographic is 'an important datapoint' (Reeves 2022, pp. 91). Peterson, originally a Canadian psychologist, has become an influential figure for many young men. His fame stems from the public controversy surrounding his refusal to use the preferred pronouns of one of his students, after which he released several books and started a podcast. Reeves states that Peterson's audience is 80% male and the reason men flock to him is because he does not mock or patronise them but rather makes them feel heard (ibid.). Such notion has led enthusiastic young male followers of Peterson to believe they have identified an 'idealised father' willing to guide them through the modern crisis of masculinity (Nebitt-Larking 2022, pp. 318). On the featured podcast with Farage, Peterson takes an agreeable tone with the Reform UK leader. Farage therefore can speak freely on a podcast with a host friendly to his cause, that subsequently has mass outreach to young men. The podcast was released just one day before the UK general, a potential last-ditch attempt to convince young men to turn out for Reform.

Rhetorical Argument

Martin, in his hermeneutical approach, states that a key function of rhetoric is to orientate an audience towards an identified problem or circumstance, rather than a fixed tradition or

doctrine (Martin 2020, pp, 174). Such suggestion applies to Farage in his podcast with Peterson, with the Reform leader's main focus on orientating the audience towards several identifiable 'crises' that the UK faced. This strategically appealed to the emotions of the electorate and can be considered a 'pathos' arranged argument. Farage first made the case that the youth were in crisis, stating: 'our kids could not aspire to own a home' but rather they are subjected to an overall 'feeling of betrayal' by the political class (Farage, 2024a, 00:09:00). Later in the podcast, the crisis of political division was covered- the Reform leader warned that growing societal cleavages would see 'trans-ideology in the ascendancy' and 'more legislation to divide us up into groups'. Farage went on to argue that 'young men are being told that they can't be men'- as they were being told 'please don't drink too much beer, please don't chant in the stadiums, please don't sing songs that are funny but might cause offense, please don't be young lads!' (Farage, 2024a, 00:32:38) whilst attending live football matches. In essence, Farage made the case that men, and their traditional masculine hobbies, were in crisis.

Furthermore, Farage was seen to be sat in front of a large Union Jack flag throughout the episode, adding to the podcast a visual element of rhetorical argument. The flag mainly draws connotations of patriotism and the argument that one should love their country. However, its large display can also be viewed as an attempt to produce 'rally-round-the-flag' sentiment. The phenomenon, usually associated with the US, entails increased patriotism in a time of national crisis usually pursued by governments/ political actors (Feinstein 2022, pp. 3). The use of the Union Jack is to emphasise the need for a renewed sense of nation and unity against the several crises outlined by Farage.

Rhetorical Effect

Crises are ‘socio-rhetorical constructs that call for extraordinary action and resources’ (Kiewe 1998, pp. 80). It is this effect which Farage aims to pursue through his consistent portrayal of the United Kingdom in crisis. The ‘extraordinary action’ desired by Farage is for the listenership to vote for Reform UK - a party with no experience in governance but with a strong outsider message. Farage’s rhetorical argument also has the effect of adding to the often performed ‘crisis of masculinity’. By warning of trans-ideology ascendancy and suggesting that young men are being stopped from partaking in traditionally masculine activities, Farage aims to flaunt a broader notion that man’s traditional position in society is under threat- in other words a ‘crisis of masculinity’.

With the podcast only being released a day prior to the election, it is difficult to suggest that it would have swung many voters Farage’s way who were not already voting for Reform.

However, what is indisputable is that it helped to entrench Farage in the world of online male figures influencing young men. Farage has since appeared alongside Peterson, most recently at the 2025 Alliance for Responsible Citizenship (ARC) conference at the ExCeL Centre in London, which has been labelled an ‘alt-right heaven’ (Crace 2025). The conference is run by the ARC organisation co-founded by Peterson, who aim to ‘save the west’ by reinstating traditional structures such as the family and Judeo-Christian values (Dawson and Boscia 2023). The organisation’s want for the revival of traditional structures draws connotations of hegemonic masculinity which desires the same outcome, but primarily for male dominance.

4.2 TRIGGERnometry

(Released on the 31st of July 2024, Run time: 1 hour 6 minutes)

Rhetorical Context

The ‘TRIGGERnometry’ podcast is co-hosted by political comedians Konstantin Kisin and Francis Foster and is UK based. On the show’s website it outlines their mission to provide ‘truth’ through having ‘open, honest dialogue with figures from both sides of the aisle’ (TRIGGERnometry 2025). Despite such self-proclaimed neutrality, in November 2024 co-host Kisin revealed that he was ‘relieved’ Trump was elected in a YouTube video titled ‘Fine, Call Me Right-Wing’ (Kisin 2025). Kisin, the more prominent of the co-hosts, also attended the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship conference, delivering a keynote speech at the event (Mason 2024b). Kisin’s attendance at the conference places him and his podcast into the world of ‘alt-right’ masculine-influencers alongside Jordan B. Peterson. The featured episode took place after the UK election, situating Farage’s rhetoric outside of an election, allowing him to cover a broader range of topics- such as the US election. The podcast is set in a traditional studio setting, with the hosts sat opposite Farage.

Rhetorical Argument

Early in the podcast, Farage argues the case for why Donald Trump should be elected President of the United States- and more specifically why Kamala Harris should not. Farage draws upon logos and ethos in his argument, making the case Harris was not credible due to logical reasoning of her being ‘way out there on the Liberal wing’ due to her views on ‘Critical Race Theory [...], Trans Rights [...] (and) support for Black Lives Matter’ (Farage, 2024b, 00:08:00). Despite Farage’s claim, there is no mention of Critical Race Theory, Trans Rights or Black Lives Matter in the Harris/Walz 2024 eighty-two-page document outlining their election promises (Kamala Harris 2024). The Reform leader also labelled the then vice-president as ‘inconsistent’ and stated, ‘I don’t think she’ll bear scrutiny’.

Later in the podcast, focus was shifted to the UK and Farage once again referred to the contemporary 'crises' that the country faced. Farage claimed that 'there is a massive identity crisis' in the UK, where individuals are confronted with the questions 'what are the values we stand up and represent?', 'what is our place in the world?', 'why is the town twenty minutes down the road literally unrecognisable?' (Farage, 2024b, 00:19:37). Farage's consistent constructing of crisis is an effort to argue his case as the political answer. It is such notion which overarches the entire podcast aptly named 'My Big Plan to Rescue Britain - Nigel Farage'. Similarly to his argument made on the Jordan B. Peterson podcast, Farage's referral to crisis can be considered a 'pathos' appeal.

Rhetorical Effect

Similarly to Trump, Farage claims that Harris has personal, far-left ideological views which ultimately discredit her as a candidate for the presidency. This argument has the intended effect of an 'ad hominem fallacy', which consists of attacking the individual characteristics/credentials of a person to undermine the broader political argument they put forward. The attack is often devoid of evidence but believed by a vulnerable audience (Riquelme, 2022, pp. 111). Farage also attacks Harris' candidacy by claiming that she is 'inconsistent' and not able to 'bear scrutiny'. Here, via his rhetorical argument, Farage aims to project Harris as the 'stereotypical woman' who changes her mind and lacks presidential 'toughness'. Toughness has masculine associations, and the more a candidate is perceived to be 'tough' the more likely they are to be successful (Duerst-Lahiti 2014, pp. 39). Farage doesn't evidence his claim of why he sees Harris as lacking toughness but rather relies upon gender stereotyping to make his assertion. Gender stereotyping is reflective of a hegemonic masculinist outlook of

the world-which uses stereotyping surrounding gender to support the notion of male dominance.

Farage's latter use of the rhetorical question 'what is our place in the world?', whilst in the context of the nation's 'identity crisis', would have particularly resonated with a young male audience. Young men in the UK, are subject to a changing economic situation, where their traditional position as the economically dominant gender within the workplace is no longer a fact of modern life. The number of men aged 18-24 out of work, education and training increased to 14.4% in 2024 – overtaking women of the same age group of which 12.3% were out of work, education and training (Office for National Statistics 2025). Young men's increasingly precarious economic position would lead them to ponder their own position in the world, a feeling that Farage aims to tap into with the above rhetorical question. The feeling is also reflective of the broader 'crisis of masculinity' which political actors aim to sell in their appeal to men in the electorate.

4.3 The Winston Marshall Show

(Released on the 16th November 2024, Run time: 53 minutes and 49 seconds)

Rhetorical Context

Winston Marshall and his podcast inhabits a controversial space online, mainly due to the complex background of the host. Marshall, originally known for co-founding the famous rock band Mumford and Sons, faced controversy in 2021 for congratulating the conservative journalist Andy Ngo on his book which decried the left-wing protest anti-fascist movement also known as antifa (Beaumont-Thomas 2021). Off the back of the controversy, Marshall left Mumford and Sons. Furthermore, Marshall is the son of hedge fund manager Sir Paul Marshall, who is the founder of conservative publisher UnHerd and a major investor in the

right-wing outlet GB News, on which Farage featured as a paid anchor (Earle 2023). Earle also reveals that Paul Marshall helped to organise and fund the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship conference. Winston Marshall, through his father, has strong links to the right-wing sphere of influence headed by platforms like GB News and individuals like Peterson and Farage. The podcast took place after the US election where the populist right arguably won its biggest ever victory via Trump. Off the back of victory, Farage naturally takes on a more confident tone as he covers a variety of topics. In terms of visual impact, the podcast looks like the TRIGGERnometry setting- a sit-down interview within the confines of a traditional studio.

Rhetorical Argument

Farage's main rhetorical arguments on the Winston Marshall show surrounded the UK's economy and policy on immigration. Farage expresses the opinion that Prime Minister Starmer had mishandled both issues and offers his alternative view to the audience. On the economy Farage argued for 'free trade' (mainly with America), whilst stating his concern that Starmer did not 'think like an entrepreneur' and he 'would be surprised if anyone on the frontbenches [...] thinks like an entrepreneur' (Farage, 2024c, 00:23:06). After arguing the case for free trade with the US, Farage was then asked where his confidence came from for getting and delivering the free trade deals. In response, he simply claimed 'I know it. End of.' Farage's response exercised a very confident tone, despite not substantiating his claim with any evidence. Farage aimed to suggest that not only did he have the 'entrepreneurship' required to correct the economy, but he also has the insider knowledge of how to do so.

On immigration, Farage makes the case for deporting illegal immigrants. When asked about what would qualify an individual for deportation (as well as arriving illegally) Farage

answered: those ‘who have committed crimes’ and those who ‘have point blank refused to integrate’ (Farage, 2024c, 00:33:33). For Farage, refusing to integrate consisted of ‘being here for 10 years’ and ‘not being able to speak a word of English’. Later in the episode he returned to the topic of integration when asked what it means to be British. He stated that if you ‘do not speak the same language, you’re done’, claiming that Britain is united by a ‘shared sense of history’ citing the Commonwealth and the ‘shared sense of suffering in two World Wars’ as an example (Farage, 2024c, 00:49:55). Farage makes it clear that to solve the immigration issue, those who arrived by illegal means must be removed. However, he may make exceptions for those who have assimilated to British language and culture.

Rhetorical Effect

Farage’s unevidenced claim that he could deliver a free trade deal with the US had the intended aim of projecting himself as a ‘deal making’ entrepreneur in contrast to the Labour leadership, who he framed as the exact opposite. Such notion has a particular hypermasculine element, as when political actors emphasise ‘deal making rhetoric’ they situate the debate into the heteronormative masculine world of the businessman-where typically masculine personality traits are exaggerated and enshrined (Achilleos-Sarll and Martill 2019).

Furthermore, Farage’s argument on immigration has an effect of ‘Othering’ individuals who can be considered outside of the dominant British culture. The process of othering is defined as ‘representing an individual or a social group to render them distant, alien or deviant’ (Coupland 2010, pp. 244). Farage ‘Others’ immigrants who do not speak English or integrate into the dominant British culture- suggesting to the audience that these individuals should be deported or at the very least excluded. Farage’s ‘Othering’ of immigrants has connotations of hegemonic masculinity due to the shared exclusionary processes supported by both concepts.

5. Discussion

5.1 Trump and Farage's Political Masculinity

Theoretically 'political masculinity', according to Starck and Sauer (2014), can be regarded as any kind of masculinity that is constructed around, ascribed to or claimed by political actors when appealing to the electorate. This project narrows such definition, making the case that political masculinity is mainly identifiable when political actors use or have ascribed to them notions of hypermasculinity, hegemonic masculinity and/or the portrayal of a 'crisis of masculinity'. During long format, digital podcasts featuring Trump and Farage, both political actors use/produce notions of all three categories in their rhetorical appeal to young men- as revealed via the use of Martin's (2014) framework of rhetorical analysis.

Hypermasculinity was used by both Trump and Farage in their appeals to the audiences of the featured podcasts within this dissertation. However, use can more often be ascribed to Trump than Farage. Trump projected a notion of hypermasculinity on the Joe Rogan Experience (JRE) via his 'strongman' self-portrayal, aiming to convince the audience in an 'ethos' centric manner that he was the only credible candidate due to his characteristic strength and opponent's suggested weakness. Trump also uses the category of political masculinity during his appearance on FLAGRANT, his frequent use of 'low appeals' surrounding sporting metaphors exaggerated a traditionally male charisma and essentially produced a hypermasculine effect. Farage uses a hypermasculine appeal in his appearance on The Winston Marshall show, he emphasises his own 'deal making' ability in contrast to the weak entrepreneurship of Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Both Trump and Farage use a brand of hypermasculinity which is already prevalent in the online spaces cohabited by the podcasts that they featured on. Coffey (2024) displays how young men are already subject to hypermasculine traits and teachings by controversial figures such as Andrew Tate. Despite Tate's controversy, he remains popular with many young men. Trump and Farage to a certain

extent emulate figures like Tate in their hypermasculine appeal, as they too seek the attention and enjoyment of young men.

Both Trump and Farage use the notion of hegemonic masculinity within their rhetorical appeal, but to a much less explicit extent than their uses/construction of hyper-masculinist effect. They both exhibit notions of hegemonic masculinity through their implications of gender stereotypes when making arguments against Kamala Harris and her candidacy for President of the United States of America. On the JRE, Trump continuously suggested Harris had a low IQ without reason, which was suggestive of the traditional stereotype that deems women not intelligent enough for high office. On TRIGGERnometry, Farage used an unevicenced argument to frame Harris as lacking toughness for the presidency- another gender stereotype traditionally used to prevent the likelihood of women gaining power. The use of gender-stereotyping by both politicians aimed to reinforce the traditionally male power hierarchy which excluded women from office and other institutional functions. Hinojosa argues that young men enjoy partaking in structures that promote male hegemony as they often serve men with economic and cultural security (Hinojosa 2010, pp. 180). It is likely that the isolated and economically precarious young men in both Trump and Farage's electorates listening to podcasts would prescribe to a politics which offers them what male hegemony promises- and likely made them more attracted to the populist right.

The portrayal of a 'crisis of masculinity' is the final category of political masculinity established in this project. Nigel Farage, in his rhetorical appeal, used the notion of a crisis of masculinity to a much greater extent than his political contemporary Donald Trump during the featured podcasts. Farage explicitly suggests that men are in crisis on the Jordan B. Peterson podcast, claiming that the demographic is being warned against partaking in traditional masculine activities. Farage's TRIGGERnometry episode had a more implicit signalling of a crisis of masculinity through the rhetorical effect of framing the UK in an

‘identity crisis’. Through highlighting the crisis’ facing men, Farage made many young men feel finally heard- he also aimed to position himself as the remedy to such crises. His offer of a solution to their ills makes Farage a more attractive prospect to disillusioned men. Trump doesn’t make an explicit argument of a crisis in masculinity in any of the podcasts he featured on, the closest he gets to such suggestion is on the Lex Fridman podcast. Trump’s suggestion that Harris’ ‘communism’ would cause an American crisis had only preliminary connotations of a crisis in masculinity.

It is important to note that the podcasts themselves had a strong masculine element. As outlined, both sets of podcasts are interconnected to one another and appear as a network of podcasts from the outside. Podcasts which Trump featured on are part of the ‘Rogansphere’, while Farage appeared on podcasts linked through their association with the Alliance for Responsible Citizenship organisation. Both online podcasting networks are headed by masculine figures, who exert masculine traits and have predominantly male audiences. The simple appearance and engagement of Trump and Farage in these online spaces is arguably an exercising of political masculinity, as the podcasts physical make-ups are hypermasculine and the exclusionary male space they inhabit draws the connotation of hegemonic masculinity.

5.2 ‘Political Masculinity’ as Populist Style

As outlined in the introductory section of this dissertation, there are tenuous links that can be made between theoretical notions of populism and political masculinity. This section will discuss whether the rhetorical findings reinforce such links or dismiss them.

The hyper-masculinist appeals made by Donald Trump during the featured podcasts contained a ‘strongman’ appeal to the electorate, as well as the use of sporting ‘low appeals’. The use of sporting ‘low appeals’ is, as stated, inherently populist. As Ostiguy (2017) notes,

the use of low appeals to the electorate is to appear as personable and as a man of ‘the people’. Through making a leader more personable, the ‘low appeal’ essentially satisfies the ‘building a rapport with the people’ element of this dissertation’s definition of populism. Trump’s ‘strongman’ self-portrayal is also arguably a byproduct of his populist nature. Allen argues that the logic of populism which is to identify ‘the people’ against a common enemy (the creation of a ‘them and us’ mentality) often leads to an authoritarian tendency. The tendency occurs as it is required to keep the common enemy away from decision making, naturally empowering leaders who project ‘strongman’ qualities as the ‘people’ need protection (Allen 2023, pp.2). Therefore, Trump’s hyper-masculinist features are arguably interlinked to his populist style.

When it comes to Farage, he uses ‘deal-making’ to stress his hyper masculinity. It can be argued that Farage’s emphasis on ‘deal-making rhetoric’ enshrines the world of the businessman, a somewhat unusual trope for a populist. Often populists will evoke hostility to business whom they may see as the ‘elite’/ blockers of the people’s will (Feldmann and Morgan 2022, pp.253). Another reading of Farage’s ‘deal making’ offers the view that he is aiming to appear as the ‘hero’ who will make the ‘deal’ which saves the UK. Kelsey (2015) has previously argued that ‘hero mythology’ was often used by and constructed around Farage in his populist quest for Brexit. His more recent deal making conveyed a similar message that he as a populist would serve the ‘people’ with a better ‘deal’ than what the elites currently offer. Whilst it is possible to classify the ‘deal making’ rhetoric as the practice of populist heroism, it is not certain. Therefore, Farage’s rhetorical hypermasculinity cannot indefinitely be described as the use of populist style.

As outlined, both Trump and Farage used implicit gender stereotyping in their arguments against Kamala Harris’s presidential candidacy, which connotes a hegemonic masculine sentiment. The implicit suggestion that Harris is ill suited to the presidency on the grounds of

gender casts her, and her gender, as an ‘other’ excluded from the processes of power. This is usual practice for right-wing populists, who often use gender as part of the populist ‘we’ and ‘other’ dynamic- referred to a ‘them and us mentality’ in this dissertation- which is fundamental to populist discourse. They also use gender as a ‘meta language’ to pursue the populist desire of a defined cultural hegemony (Dietze and Roth 2020, pp. 14). Cultural hegemony is important to all populist leaders as they need to identify a ‘people’ with somewhat homogeneous features to be the ‘voice’ of and lead against an ‘elite’. However, populists can (and do) draw upon several different political, societal and cultural factors to construct their ‘homogenous’ people. Therefore, male hegemony whilst linked to the populist process of constructing a ‘people’ is not inherent to populist style, as populists can vitalise hegemony through other means such as ethnonationalism or economics.

The crisis of masculinity, as used predominantly by Farage in the featured podcasts, has a clear and obvious link to the populist ‘style’ definition which outlines the ‘performance of a crisis/breakdown’ as one of the concept’s fundamental aspects. Interestingly, Trump does not produce a similar effect in the featured podcasts. Without the unified use of the crisis of masculinity, it is difficult to make the case that such element of political masculinity is inextricably linked to populist style. Overall, the links made between populist style and political masculinity at the beginning of this dissertation remain tenuous at best. Outside of Trump’s hypermasculine effect, it is not possible to suggest wholeheartedly that the political masculinities exercised by the populists was a natural byproduct of their populist style.

6. Conclusion:

In conclusion, this dissertation has achieved its primary aim of outlining how Trump and Farage, as right-wing populists, invoked 'political masculinity' in their appearances made on long format digital podcasts in 2024. The intention of this process was to begin to reveal the reasons why in the year of 2024, both the US and UK witnessed an electoral shift of young men towards the populist right. I also made the case that the political masculinities found within Trump and Farage's rhetoric were not necessarily directly caused by their populist 'style' but rather generated by a separate motivation. Despite this there are still tenuous links that can be made between the two concepts of populist style and political masculinity.

This study provides grounds for further research into why young men have taken a turn to the populist right, a key limitation of my study is that it features no first-hand interactions with young men who voted for Trump or Reform in 2024- who could provide insight into why they voted the way they did. The sample size of data used in this research is also arguably small, future research could cover a broader basis of how Trump and Farage interacted with young men on a wider variety of platforms. There is also room to expand upon the secondary question asked in this project of whether populism and political masculinity are inextricably linked. My research only contained the use of two populists but to get a more full-bodied answer to the question, rhetorical analysis of populists outside the Anglo-American sphere would add further value.

Overall, this dissertation provides a good platform for future assessment of why young men are turning to right-wing populists. It has successfully identified how the uses of hypermasculinity, hegemonic masculinity and the portrayal of a 'crisis of masculinity' are employed at different times by Trump and Farage in their efforts to appeal to men within the electorate. It has also outlined the importance of the long format digital podcast in the

political world- an importance which is likely to persist as younger generations go to the polls.

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