

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Ústav cizích jazyků

**The transformation of the Republican Party from the
1960s to the present and its impact on the current
polarized society in the United States**

Diplomová práce

Petr Horák

Učitelství anglického jazyka pro základní školy

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedených pramenů literatury.

V Olomouci dne:

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Petr Horák

I would like to thank my supervisor Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D. for his guidance, advice, and valuable help.

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ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Bc. Petr Horák
Katedra:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.
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Název práce v angličtině:	The transformation of the Republican Party from the 1960s to the present and its impact on the current polarized society in the United States
Anotace práce:	Diplomová práce se zaměřuje na vývoj a proměnu Republikánské strany od 60. let minulého století do současnosti. Práce rovněž přibližuje a zkoumá fenomén současné rozdělené společnosti ve Spojených státech a hodnotí roli a vliv Republikánské strany v těchto procesech.
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Abstract/Annotation

The diploma thesis concentrates on the development and transformation of the Republican Party. Its primary objective is to provide detailed description, analysis and evaluation of the Republican Party's transformation since the period of the 1960s to the contemporary time. Another objective of the thesis is to specify, describe and analyse the phenomenon of the contemporary polarized society in the United States and to assess the role of the Republican Party in the process of the polarization of the American social and political environment. The thesis also provides chapters dedicated to the development of the Republican Party prior to the period of the 1960s. There is also an individual passage associated with the description of the period of the 1960s. Last but not least, the thesis offers a short part dedicated to the potential usage of the topic in the educational environment of the English Language Teaching - "ELT".

Keywords: Republican Party, United States, the 1960s, polarization, society, politics, ideology, presidential administration, transformation, development, Democratic Party.

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1. Introduction

The diploma thesis concentrates on the description, analysis and close examination of the transformation of the American Republican Party since the period of the 1960s to the contemporary time. Simultaneously, the work focuses on the evaluation of the phenomenon of the current polarized society in the United States and assesses the role of the Republican Party in the process of the polarization of the American social and political environment. Thus, the primary objectives of the thesis are to provide the detailed portrayal and precise analysis and assessment of the party's development since the era of the 1960s to the present and to offer a clear description of the contemporary state of the social and political polarization in the United States, specifically in relation to the role of the Republican Party in the polarizing processes. Last but not least, the thesis offers a short part associated with the possible implementation of the topic into the educational environment of the "English Language Teaching" - "ELT". The work also provides passages dedicated to the development of the Republican Party before the period of the 1960s. The specific methods and instruments used for the finalisation of the thesis mostly include the close analysis, evaluations and comparisons of various scientific journals, publications and other articles.

The first chapter titled "The development of the Republican Party before the 1960s" describes the party's transformation during the era prior to the period of the 1960s. The chapter states the most crucial events and major milestones associated with the given period of the party's development.

The next chapter "The social and political changes of the 1960s and the Republican ideological shift" provides a direct insight into the specific period of the 1960s and describes the major events and challenges associated with the period. The section also analyses the internal development of the Republican Party with regards to its ideological structure and position.

The chapter "The transformation of the Republican Party since the 1960s" symbolizes one of the main chapters of the thesis. The passage evaluates and assesses the party's development during the period approximately between the 1960s and the end of the twentieth century.

The following chapter titled “The Republicans during the 21st century” represents another main part of the thesis. It closely describes, analyses and assesses the crucial events, elements and issues associated with the Republican party’s transformation during the first decades of the current century.

The chapter “The polarization of the American society and the role of the Republican Party” closes the main section of the diploma thesis. The phenomenon of the polarized American society is studied and analysed in detail in this chapter. The passage also particularly evaluates the role of the Republican Party in the process of the contemporary polarization of the American social and political environment.

Last but not least, the chapter “Use of the topic in “ELT”” suggest certain variants and options for the potential usage of the topic in the educational sphere, mostly in the environment of the “English Language Teaching” - “ELT”.

2. The development of the Republican Party before the 1960s

The formation of the modern Republican Party may be traced to the mid-nineteenth century. The first hundred years of the existence of one of the two dominant political parties of the contemporary United States were represented by the significant and unprecedented changes and events in the American society that were highly reflected in the development of the Republican Party.

Originally established on the principles of a strong criticism, opposition and antipathy towards slavery, the Republican Party underwent various political and ideological shifts since the time of its initial foundation. From the protection of the rights of African Americans that shaped the core of the Republican political ideology at the time of the party's establishment, the Republicans moved to become increasingly popular among voters that were associated with a business sector and a financial industry by the end of the nineteenth century. The Republican Party remained widely regarded as the party of "the elite" and "the rich" throughout the significant portion of the first half of the twentieth century. The Great Depression apparently weakened the Republican position and it had a major impact on the party's popularity among the American voters during the following years (History.com).

2.1. Origin of the Republican Party and its role in the 19th century

The Republican Party was officially established during the year of 1854. The party's foundation was strongly related to the creation of the opposition against the "Kansas-Nebraska Act" that represented a significant danger in terms of the potential expansion of slavery to the new areas of the United States. The Republican Party's original components included the former members of the parties such as the Free Soil Democrats and the Whigs. The Republican initial political priorities were composed of a strong anti-slavery rhetoric, a vision of the United States that would function according to the "Northern" values, a reform of a bank sector, strengthening the American industry as well as providing a support for the enhancements of the domestic railroad system. The first Republican presidential nominee John C. Frémont entered the race for president in 1856 with a usage of the unique slogan, "free soil, free labour, free speech, free men, Frémont" (Earle, 2011, 11).

The first decades of the Republican Party's existence were associated with a turbulent and highly groundbreaking period with regards to the future development of the United States. The American Civil War began only few years after the party's establishment. The Civil War, together with the following post-war Reconstruction Era, brought enormous changes to the development of the American society. The Republican Party played a pivotal role during both of the events mentioned above. As emphasized by Engs and Miller (2002), the United States changed dramatically between the years of 1850 and 1876. Even though the country more or less occupied the same geographical location in 1876 and 1850, the American society, its values, norms and ideals changed significantly. The Republican Party represented a key pillar in relation to the transformation of the United States during this specific period (Engs, Miller, 2002, 1).

The presidential election of the year of 1860 witnessed a rise of the Congressman and lawyer of railroads Abraham Lincoln. The Republicans entered the presidential campaign with a straightforward and highly symbolic proclamation, "No new slave states" (Earle, 2011, 11). As specified by Earle (2011), the Republicans, especially their leading figure Abraham Lincoln, viewed slavery as a completely barbaric act that was incompatible with their beliefs and opinions. Although not all of the Republican Party's representatives were regarded as vocal critics of slavery, the party was generally associated with an anti-slavery politics. As a result, the Republican anti-slavery rhetoric strongly collided with the traditional "Southern" values and identity in which slavery still represented a vital part of the economic, political and ideological agenda. The "Southerners" mostly feared that a potential Republican victory in the presidential election would lead to a complete end of their traditional way of lives as well as to a disappearance of the "Southern" institutions. On the contrary to the "Southern" states, the Republican party gained a significant popularity and support in the "Northern" part of the country where slavery had been abolished long before the election of 1860 (Earle, 2011, 11-12).

As further explained by Earle (2011), the procedure of both the presidential campaign and the election of 1860 differed radically in the "Northern" and "Southern" parts of the country. While Lincoln dominated the election in the "Northern free" states, the Republican Party's nominee was not even listed among candidates for the presidency in a majority of the "Southern slave" states (Earle, 2011, 11-12). Based on the facts stated above, it appears that the whole presidential race of 1860 was primarily dedicated to the questions regarding the future of slavery and the collision of interests between the "Northern" and "Southern" part of

the United States. These facts may be understood as a demonstrative depiction of an extremely divided country.

At the end, Abraham Lincoln managed to succeed in the presidential election by winning in seventeen “free” states. These victories provided the Republican candidate with 180 electoral votes. However, the victory of Lincoln in the election signaled the beginnings of difficult times with regards to a future unity of the country. The Republican Party, together with its anti-slavery policy, came under a strong “Southern” attack immediately after the announcement of the final election results. As a reaction to the Republican triumph, some of the “Southern slave” states soon announced their intention to secede from the United States. Seven of the “Southern slave” states eventually decided to leave the Union even before the actual inauguration of Abraham Lincoln to the office of president. As a result of the secession of the “slave states” from the United States, the “Confederate States of America” were established in February 1861. Furthermore, the mutual misunderstandings between the “North” and “South” quickly erupted into a violent conflict known as the American Civil War (Earle, 2011, 11-12).

The Republicans proceeded with their anti-slavery campaign during the period of the Civil War. The “Emancipation Proclamation” was issued by president Lincoln in 1863. The document stated that, “all persons held as slaves within the rebellious areas are, and henceforward shall be free” (Archives.gov). Even though the “Emancipation Proclamation” did not lead to a complete abolition of slavery, it undoubtedly represented a crucial milestone in relation to the future course of the American political and social development (Archives.gov). In addition to the “Emancipation Proclamation”, the Republican Party successfully passed the “Thirteenth Amendment” to the United States Constitution during the final stage of the war. The “Thirteenth Amendment” represented a formal abolition of slavery throughout the United States of America (History.com).

The Civil War resulted in the victory of the “North” and the collapse of the “Confederacy” in 1865. The war was followed by the so called “Reconstruction Era”. Its primary aim was to successfully rebuild the post-war United States. As mentioned by Engs and Miller (2002), the Republican Party, as a representative force of the victorious “North”, was expected to play a vital role in the post-war reconstruction process. There were various challenges as well as opportunities that emerged during the period of the Reconstruction (Engs, Miller, 2002, 5).

The question regarding a full integration of former slaves into the American society was perhaps one of the most significant ones. The Republicans showed a certain willingness to introduce the new topics, visions and perspectives to former slaves as well as to white “Southerners”. These topics specifically included the equal protection of laws and the new constitutional vision of a citizenship. However, these Republican efforts more or less failed during the Reconstruction Era. As the party’s main political agenda was represented by the “distribution of freedom”, the Republicans believed that each individual possessed the unlimited right to build his future independently and without an assistance of the government (Engs, Miller, 2002, 5-6).

In addition to the previously mentioned factors, the persistent racial issues were understood as one of the leading aspects with regards to the failure of the Reconstruction Era. The Republicans significantly benefited from the votes of African Americans in the presidential election of 1868. Unfortunately, the officially freed African Americans were becoming once again the victims of violent racial attacks that were happening regularly in the areas of the “American South” during the Reconstruction Era. Since the 1870s, the Republicans slowly began to move their policy away from the needs and interests of African Americans. Even though the “Civil Rights Act”, the document that formally prohibited a racial segregation in the United States, was successfully passed in 1875, the Republican Party started to be associated more with voters from the “Northern” part of the country. This trend proceeded during the following years. By the end of the Reconstruction Era, the Republican Party became much more associated with the sectors of industry and trade (Engs, Miller, 2002, 5-7).

During the 1880s, the “Northern” states generally had a prevailing tendency of voting for the Republican candidates. At the same time, the “Southern” states were mostly in favour of the representatives from the Democratic Party (Wagner, 2007, 41). Nevertheless, as described in the article *Shifting Republican Focus* from *History, Art and Archives of the United States*, the policy of the Democratic Party in the “Southern” states was more or less symbolized by the attempts of the Democrats to formalize racial segregation (History.house.gov).

In the final years of the 1880s, the Republican Party experienced an emergence of the two basic ideological wings. The so-called “Reformers” primarily focused on the issue regarding a full approval of civil rights of African Americans. However, the “Reformist”

faction of the Republican Party was rather overshadowed by the second of the two ideological wings that became known as the “Money Men”. With an enormously increasing power and influence of a business sector, trade and industry, the “Money Men” specifically concentrated on the interests and demands of voters associated with the growing economic sectors. Furthermore, the Republicans saw a significant electoral potential in fulfilling the demands of voters and social classes that were interconnected with these economic interests (History.house.gov).

The last decades of the nineteenth century were represented by major economic, social, cultural and demographic changes that had significant impact on the transformation of the American society. The changes were characterized by an increased tempo of industrialization, significant developments in the American domestic infrastructure, various new findings and inventions in the world of science and massive waves of immigration to the United States. As a result of these developments, the political preferences of the population became highly unpredictable. In this fast changing and relatively uncertain political order of the late nineteenth century, the Republicans declared themselves as the party of business, industry and commerce (History.house.gov). From the perspective of the economy, the Republicans entered the new century with a conservative approach (Wagner, 2007, 50).

2.2. New century, the Progressive Era and World War I

The beginning of the twentieth century was symbolized by an increased participation of the United States in the world affairs. America developed itself into the position of a respected world power. The Republicans were divided on the issue of the American participation in the global affairs. While a majority of the Republicans were supportive of the America’s ambitions on the global geopolitical stage, a certain amount of the Republican representatives opposed the strategy that attempted to establish America as one of the world’s colonial powers (Wagner, 2007, 51-52).

After the assassination of president William McKinley in 1901, the former vice president Theodore Roosevelt became the next president of the United States. Theodore Roosevelt also became a leading Republican politician. He advocated for economic, political

and social reforms that significantly affected the future course of the Republican Party's political agenda (Wagner, 2007, 52-54).

As Wagner (2007) further explains, the "Roosevelt's" Republican Party seemed to accept a more progressive political approach, at least for a short period of time. Nevertheless, due to the mutual misunderstandings and vital differences in the basic political stances among the leading Republican representatives, the party entered a rather chaotic period that eventually resulted in the Roosevelt's decision to leave the Republican Party and to create a new political force in 1912. The Roosevelt's newly formed party would be called the "Progressive Party", as its core political agenda was concentrated on "progress". Even though the Republicans and the newly established "Progressives" shared certain values, political beliefs and initiatives, such as the protection of natural resources, developments of waterways or limits in the funding of campaigns, there were also policies and topics that visibly separated the two political forces. The dividing issues included the different perspectives with regards to the voting rights of women, child labour policy or general enhancements of working conditions (Wagner, 2007, 54-56).

Furthermore, as the Republican Party was severely weakened by the formation of the Progressive Party, it soon became obvious that the Republicans would be unable to successfully compete in the presidential race against the Democratic Party's candidate, Woodrow Wilson. With a contribution of the divided Republican Party, the Democratic nominee Woodrow Wilson managed to succeed in the elections (Wagner, 2007, 56-58).

President Wilson served in the White House during a period of the First World War. He originally campaigned with the promise of no American participation in World War I. However, the promise was not kept as the United States eventually entered the war. At the end of the war, The Republican Party played a pivotal role in the creation of the opposition towards the American enrolment and participation in the organization called the "League of Nations". The Republican highly critical approach and final rejection with regards to the U.S. participation in the organization were widely understood as a significant political loss of president Wilson (Wagner, 2007, 56-58).

As specified by Ambrosius (1972), the Republican Party's position and role during a time of the First World War were generally viewed rather negatively by a majority of historians. As the Republicans stood in the opposition towards the "Versailles Treaty" and U.S. participation in the "League of Nations", they were often regarded as strong isolationist

politicians who in fact initiated the policy of American isolationism that persisted for several years after World War I. Some academics also described the American domestic political situation during the wartime period as a collision of positions and interests between the “Republican isolationism” and “Wilson’s internationalism” (Ambrosius, 1972, 341).

At the same time, as emphasised by Ambrosius (1972), while most of the scholars assessed the Republican policy during World War I. relatively negatively, there were still academic voices that more or less sympathized with the Republican approach during the wartime period. Some academics believed that the Wilson’s plan of establishing the “League of Nations” basically represented a completely utopic idea. Critical voices viewed the establishment of the organization as a highly naive effort to create a utopic international platform responsible for maintaining a universal peace. In contrast to the creation of the “League of Nations”, the Republicans called for the necessity to establish close ties and strong mutual cooperation primarily between the United States and the nations occupying the western part of the European continent. The idea of a universal security system did not seem realistic to a majority of the wartime Republican politicians (Ambrosius, 1972, 352).

The era of the so called “Progressive Republicanism” came to its end by the year of 1920. As the former Republican politician and vocal supporter of various progressive reforms president Theodore Roosevelt died shortly after the end of World War I., the progressive ideas more or less disappeared from the Republican political agenda (Richardson, 2014, 188).

As Richardson (2014) further explains, the Republicans eventually decided to return to the policy that strongly dominated the Republican platform at the end of the nineteenth century. As a result, the policy and preferences of the party became once again strongly oriented on a business sector. The Republicans believed that supporting big businesses represented a key pillar with regards to the American post-war economic growth. They followed a formula which stated that business prosperity was in fact a key element leading to prosperity of all U.S. citizens. In other words, the government’s only major function was supposed to be represented by the efforts and ability to provide businesses with enough space and opportunities for an economic growth (Richardson, 2014, 188). In addition to the above mentioned facts, as stated in the article *Republican ascendancy: politics in the 1920s* from *Khan Academy*, the crucial values and ideals of the early post-war Republicans were characterized by the strong support of American businesses and the advancement of a strong, independent and self-sufficient U.S. foreign policy (Khanacademy.org). From a general

perspective, as described in the previous sentences, it seems that some core elements of the early post-war Republican policy were not completely different from the position that the Republican Party has been traditionally occupying since the beginning of the twenty-first century. In other words, there are certain visible features that undoubtedly connect the Republican political platform of the early 1920s with the Republican ideological background during the first decades of the current century. These features appear to be represented by the Republican efforts of constantly emphasising the needs and significance of the domestic economic growth, minimalizing the government's role and participation in relation to the lives of ordinary citizens, or presenting certain isolationist tendencies with regards to the position of the United States in the global affairs.

2.3. Interwar period, World War II and the post-war Republicans

As partially stated in the paragraphs above, the era of the 1920s was symbolized by a strong Republican pro-business economic approach. For the presidential race of 1920, the Republicans selected Warren G. Harding as their presidential candidate, although he was basically unknown to the public as well as many of the Republican representatives. The Republican nominee campaigned with the slogan, "return to normalcy", symbolizing a comeback to the pre-war, late nineteenth century pro-business agenda (Khanacademy.org).

The presidential election of 1920 witnessed a significant weakening of the Democratic Party. The Republican ticket, consisting of the presidential nominee Warren G. Harding and the vice-presidential candidate Calvin Coolidge, absolutely dominated over their Democratic counterparts. An enormous one-sided victory catapulted Harding to the office of president (Wagner, 2007, 60).

One of the most notable accomplishments of the Harding presidential administration was believed to be represented by the establishment of the so called "Bureau of the Budget". It was officially the first office whose primary objective was to create, prepare and control the regular annual budget used by the federal government of the United States (Wagner, 2007, 60). Under the Harding presidency, the national debt from the period of the First World War was reduced significantly (Khanacademy.org). In addition to the previously stated facts, several major companies and large corporations representing various economic fields and

sectors began to emerge during the Harding's time in the presidential office (Wagner, 2007, 60). Last but not least, as far as the U.S. foreign policy is concerned, president Harding did in fact initiate the series of negotiations as well as peaceful talks with the dominant countries of the European continent, including the post-war Germany, with the hope of restoring and maintaining at least a certain formal version of a peaceful international world order (Khanacademy.org).

Nevertheless, the Harding presidential administration was yet to experience its most difficult period. In the year of 1923, the rumours about the corruption present within the highest circles of the presidential administration appeared (Richardson, 2014, 191). As further explained by Richardson (2014), president Harding surrounded himself with various influential and highly powerful figures from a business sector during his time in the office. These wealthy businessmen more or less transformed the power from the government to the hands of the figures representing a business sphere. As one of the wealthiest businessmen of the mid-1920s and the highly known representative of the Harding administration Andrew Mellon proudly announced, "The Government is just a business, and can and should be run on business principles," (Richardson, 2014, 191-193). Not long after an eruption of the corruption scandal, president Harding died. The Harding's departure opened the main door of the presidential office for his vice president, Calvin Coolidge (Richardson, 2014, 193).

As one could have hoped and believed that the power over the country's management would have been returned back to the hands of the government with a rise of the new president, the complete opposite became a reality. As Richardson (2014) further describes, the influence of a business sphere even increased with the arrival of the Coolidge administration. Strengthening the already exclusively pro-business agenda basically represented the only vital element of the Coolidge presidency. The Republicans of the 1920s, including president Coolidge himself, viewed the American society as a space where the business sphere represented the pivotal force that created the so called added value, brought various innovations and created strong leaders. Therefore, the wealthy Americans were seen as the greatest contributors to the national progress as well as to the federal budget. In other words, any obstacles and disadvantages put on shoulders of the wealthiest were believed to represent a major threat to the development of the country's economy and therefore to the growth and prosperity of the country itself (Richardson, 2014, 193-197).

Even though the standards of living significantly improved in the United States during the period of the 1920s, also thanks to the contribution of the Republican Party's pro-business economic policy, the Republican leading representatives opposed certain policies originally targeted at the improvements associated with the issues of social protection. For instance, the Coolidge administration stood in an opposition towards the unemployment insurance. At the same time, president Coolidge supported enormous cuts in taxes (Wagner, 2007, 61).

In the year of 1928, another Republican representative, Herbert Hoover, was elected the new president of the United States. He entered the office of president after Calvin Coolidge had decided not to run for a second term. Hoover campaigned with then original and highly unique slogan, stating that, "poverty was to be banished from this nation," during his presidency (Wagner, 2007, 63). Nevertheless, the initial promise of president Hoover appeared significantly disastrous as the "Great Depression" hit the country shortly after the new president's arrival to the office (Wagner, 2007, 63).

The onset of the "Great Depression" undoubtedly represented a major turnover not only with regards to the general atmosphere in the American society, but also in the development of the U.S. domestic political situation. As the Republican Party dominated the American politics during the era of the 1920s, it became crystal clear what entity was about to be criticized and blamed the most for the arrival of the "Great Depression" by a majority of the public. As Mason (2011) specifically describes, the first signals of the weakening popularity of the Republican Party were detected during the midterm elections of the year of 1930. The country's economic stagnation was generally understood as a failure of the Republican economic policies of the previous years (Mason, 2011, 12-13). As further explained by Wagner (2007), the Hoover administration was not successful in the efforts of mitigating the impacts of the economic crisis. President Hoover followed the original Republican code of the 1920s era, believing and convincing the public that the federal government's role was not to intervene in the domestic economic affairs. Instead, he advised the private sector and regional organizations to actively help and support the citizens who were affected the most by the ongoing crisis (Wagner, 2007, 63).

The trajectory of the Republican declining popularity was intensifying throughout the period of the "Great Depression". With the constantly worsening economic conditions, the Americans went to cast their vote in the presidential election of 1932. Herbert Hoover aimed to secure his second presidential term. The Democratic nominee and governor of the state of

New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt, stood on the opposite side. At the end of the day, the Democratic Party with its candidate Roosevelt achieved an enormous, unprecedented, one-sided victory over the Republican counterparts (Mason, 2011, 13). As Wagner (2007) emphasizes, the Democratic programme attracted various traditional voters and former supporters of the Republican Party, including voters from African American communities (Wagner, 2007, 63). It seems that the era of the Republican political dominance began to fall apart during the early period of the 1930s. The Republican lack of openness, abilities and strategies in tackling the impacts of the “Great Depression” appeared to represent a crucial element of the party’s decline.

As partially mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the period of the early 1930s symbolized a significant turnover with regards to the shifting positions and dominance of the two major political parties of American politics. As specified in the article *The New Deal Realignment*, the period of the “Great Depression” represented the catalyst in relation to the changing direction of the division of power between the Republican and Democratic parties for many years to come. In other words, the “Depression” played a pivotal role in the process of redrawing the U.S. system of political parties. While the Democrats had more or less occupied the role of a minority party in the American politics prior to the period of the “Great Depression”, the Republicans basically dropped to a minority position in the “post-Depression” years (Icpsr.umich.edu).

With the emergence of the so called “New Deal Democratic Coalition” and the following rise of president Franklin D. Roosevelt, the two parties differed dramatically in their views, perspectives and approaches with regards to dealing with the effects of the economic crisis (Icpsr.umich.edu). As further explained in the article *The New Deal Realignment*, the Republican politicians opposed any direct government interference in the economic sphere, even during the period of the “Depression”. From the Republican perspective, any potential act of a federal interference in the economy collided with the original “laissez-faire” economic theory and therefore threatened the natural flow and stability of a free market. During the time of the early 1930s, the Republican agenda was still relatively popular among the middle-class voters, Protestants from the northern parts of the country and most voters from the business circles (Icpsr.umich.edu).

In contrast to the Republican viewpoint, the Democratic Party was in a strong favour of supporting, proposing and initiating several new social welfare programmes aimed to

significantly improve the groping economy through the usage of various federal tools. The Democratic “New Deal” political agenda was mostly symbolized by the government direct support and assistance targeted at the weaker part of the American society. The Democratic liberal economic policy attracted new circles of the electorate representing various segments of the society. The Democrats were able to capture the attention of the working class, citizens of a lower-income background as well as members of various minorities. Among the newly acquired minority voters were the representatives of the American immigrant groups, including the Jewish population of the Southern and Eastern European origin, or the American Catholics. As the Democratic Party had already dominated in the areas of the “American South” in the past, the additional support from the new voting groups significantly increased the Democratic Party’s voting potential and popularity among the U.S. citizens (Icpsr.umich.edu).

Based on the facts stated in the paragraphs above, it can be argued that the period of the “Great Depression” and the following era of the “post-Depression” recovery represented a crucial milestone with regards to the emergence of some of the crucial policies, approaches and topics that the two dominant political parties are still using and maintaining today. In other words, the era of the 1930s appear to symbolise the rise of some of the major issues that kept dividing the two political forces for many upcoming decades. As also emphasised in the article *The New Deal Realignment*, the dividing lines between the Republican and Democratic parties were basically drawn by the late 1930s. There were various differences on both the socioeconomic and ideological levels (Icpsr.umich.edu).

At the same time, it is also worth noting that some of the key dividing issues between the two parties from the period of the 1930s continue to shape the parties’ core political agenda during contemporary time as well. The Democrats do not necessarily oppose the federal government actions if they are meant to provide the public with realistic benefits, enhancements and useful innovations. They are in favour of supporting the government interference in the domestic economy, if it seems necessary, inevitable or urgently needed. On the other hand, the Republicans are still considered to be sceptical with regards to viewing any government economy interference as beneficial. They have been always critical towards higher taxations and business restrictions. The modern day Republicans are also believed to represent the interests of business circles and voters with generally higher salaries (Icpsr.umich.edu).

As Mason (2011) describes, the period of the “Democratic New Deal” represented a difficult time for the Republican Party as a whole. The era of the 1930s established the Republican political force as a minority party of the U.S. political system. The Democratic Party dominated in all the important elections of the 1930s (Mason, 2011, 41-42). As confirmed and emphasized by Wagner (2007), since the year of 1932, the Republicans were unable to succeed in any of the presidential elections during the upcoming two decades. An enormous popularity of president Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic “New Deal” political agenda made it too difficult for the Republicans to regain the popularity they once used to possess. It was the Republican Party that received the largest portion of criticism for the irresponsible policies leading to the “Great Depression” and for the actual impacts and consequences of the “Depression” (Wagner, 2007, 64-67).

With the advent of the Second World War, the majority of Americans was in favour of supporting the “Allied powers” in their fight against the Nazi Germany. However, the U.S. direct military intervention did not represent a majority viewpoint within the population. The isolationist tendencies with regards to the American participation in the international affairs still represented a dominant opinion within the Republican Party at the beginning of World War II. Nevertheless, as the war was evolving and dramatically expanding, the Republican Party was becoming more internally divided on the issues of the American foreign position, role and participation (Mason, 2011, 79-92).

In addition to the issues associated with the questions surrounding World War II., the Republicans experienced a rather difficult period during the presidential election of 1940. The Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt decided to run for an unprecedented third term in the White House. The president’s decision was heavily criticized by some of the Republican representatives. According to some vocal opponents, mostly of the Republican background, the United States was about to adapt to a dictatorship and move towards totalitarian regime, similar to the regimes functioning in the Nazi Germany or Soviet Union. At the end, Franklin D. Roosevelt left the presidential election of 1940 as victorious (Mason, 2011, 92-95).

The Republican international isolationist approach naturally came to its end with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Afterwards, the United States entered the war. The experience united the domestic political scene. The Republicans supported their Democratic counterparts in the war efforts. Franklin D. Roosevelt was even elected to the fourth term in

the office during the wartime period (Wagner, 2007, 64). Nevertheless, he did not manage to complete his last presidential term as he died in the year of 1945.

As far as the idea of American isolationism is concerned, as stated in the article *How World War II Almost Broke American Politics* from *Politico Magazine*, the isolationist tendencies were not exclusively related to the foreign policy of the Republican Party. Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the perspective of American isolationist foreign policy represented a relatively common viewpoint not only among the American public, but also among various U.S. political representatives, regardless of their political origin, preferences or partisanship. The Japanese attack significantly violated the traditional understanding of the concept of American isolationism as the country was basically drawn into the war against its own will. In spite of various social and political challenges, difficulties and divisions present within the American society by the time of the Second World War, the Americans were ultimately able to unite themselves in a fight against the common enemy. Therefore, it might be concluded, the United States underwent a successful process of the transformation into the so called “Arsenal of democracy” during the wartime period (Zeitz, 2019).

After the end of World War II., the isolationist tendencies, originally featured not only within the Republican Party but also among various spheres of the American public, were significantly weakened. As emphasized by Dueck (2010), the Republicans supported the concept of the establishment of the “United Nations” organization. The Republican and Democratic parties were able to cooperate with one another in setting the key pillars of the U.S. early post-war foreign policy. Various crucial elements and policies of the international agenda proposed by the Democratic presidential administration of Harry Truman were initiated with the support of the Republican Party. A majority of the Republican representatives supported the U.S. enrolment in the newly established “NATO” military alliance (Dueck, 2010, 70-73).

Nevertheless, with regards to the domestic political front, it seemed that the Republicans were unable to return to the position of the majority party of the U.S. political system during the first years of the post-war era. The dominant role of the American politics, which used to belong to the Republican Party during the era prior to the period of the “Great Depression”, was still occupied by the Democrats after the end of World War II. As explained by Wagner (2007), the Republicans lost in five consecutive presidential elections since the year of 1928. After Franklin D. Roosevelt had left the White House, Harry Truman entered

the presidential office in 1945. Truman also managed to succeed in the presidential election of the year of 1948, where he stood against his Republican opponent, Thomas Dewey (Wagner, 2007, 65-66).

As further explained by Wagner (2007), with regards to the early post-war political atmosphere in the United States, the Republicans were generally associated with the past domestic political failures that had led to the period of the “Great Depression” and the following major economic and social issues. At the same time, the Democrats were given a perceptible amount of credit for the American successful strategy leading to the final resolution of the Second World War. As a result of the above mentioned domestic social and political developments, the Republican Party’s representatives began the process of reconsidering the original concept of the Republican political approach and campaign. In other words, in order to challenge the Democratic political dominance of the post-war years, it was necessary to reorganize and partially modernize the former Republican political structure, focus and ideology. The new objectives and methods were partially symbolized by the Republican efforts to concentrate more on the specific interest’s divisions of the American electorate, rather than on the electorate differences that were caused by the geographical factors and regional distinctions of the United States (Wagner, 2007, 67).

As Dueck (2010) further describes, the first real momentum for a major Republican political comeback came with the breakout of the Korean War in the year of 1950. As the Democratic presidential administration of Harry Truman was struggling with the selection of an ideal strategy and appropriate reaction with regards to the issue of the American role and participation in the conflict, the Republicans took the opportunity to use the topic of the Korean War in the domestic political competition against the Democratic counterparts. As the procedure of the war and role of the U.S. leadership in the conflict were criticized not only by the Republican Party, but also by a visible part of the American public, the Republicans received a unique opportunity to use the conflict in their advantage on the domestic political level (Dueck, 2010, 79-82).

“The Republican National Convention”, a platform responsible for selecting the Republican candidate for the forthcoming presidential election, represented a crucial milestone in relation to the future course and development of the Republican Party in the year of 1952. It witnessed a close battle between the two Republican presidential nominees, Robert Taft and Dwight D. Eisenhower (Dueck, 2010, 82-83). Robert Taft was a well-known and

highly respected U.S. senator from the state of Ohio who more or less served as a nominee of the Republican older generation. He was also known as a vocal opponent of the “New Deal” Democratic agenda. On the opposite side, there was the former U.S. army general from the period of World War II., Dwight D. Eisenhower. At the end, the Republican representatives selected Eisenhower as their presidential nominee (Wagner, 2007, 67-68).

The Eisenhower’s presidential campaign was primarily focused around the topic of the American presence and role in the Korean War. As a retired army general, Eisenhower was able to precisely, plainly and calmly describe the situation on the battlefield. He confidently proposed various plans and strategies with regards to the final resolution of the conflict. The high degree of confidence, enormous amount of experience and great ability to explain the complicated issues to the regular citizens significantly helped Dwight D. Eisenhower to strengthen his position in the presidential election. As a result, he was able to convince the American public that he would had been the most competent leader to have found a path to the conflict’s end. The election eventually resulted in a clear Eisenhower’s victory. Thus, the presidential election of 1952 marked an end to the twenty years of the Democratic presidential dominance in the United States (Wagner, 2007, 68-69).

The original pre-election promise of the Eisenhower’s presidential campaign included the final resolution of the Korean War, global containment of communism and domestic fight against corruption. With regards to the foreign policy issues, president Eisenhower stood strongly against the worldwide spread of communism and growing Soviet influence. At the same time, during the first months in the office, president Eisenhower openly deplored the continuing and intensifying arms race between the United States and Soviet Union. As the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin had died at the beginning of the Eisenhower’s presidency, Eisenhower called for the need to use the diplomatic instruments in order to enable and ensure the formation of a prosperous, safe and predictable international world order. The strategy was supposed to include the restoration of the relations and talks between the USA and USSR in order to avoid a potential disastrous nuclear conflict between the two emerging post-war superpowers (Richardson, 2014, 234-238).

As far as the domestic political situation is concerned, president Eisenhower became a leading political figure associated with the term known as “Modern Republicanism”. Under the Eisenhower’s presidency and his ideals of “Modern Republicanism”, the “New Deal” agenda, originally initiated by the Democratic representatives, was not supposed to represent

a subject of criticism any more. In fact, the ideas of “Modern Republicanism” even supported and developed some of the previous agendas and policies of the “New Deal” programme. In this new Republican vision, the private sector was still supposed to play a dominant role in the country’s economic growth. Nevertheless, the federal government was supposed to closely monitor the development and stability of the economy and was allowed to intervene in the economic affairs if it appeared necessary. Furthermore, the ideas of “Modern Republicanism” concentrated on the questions of minimalizing a wide discrimination based on the issues of race and religion (Wagner, 2007, 70).

In order to provide some of the specific examples of the social security programmes created under the Eisenhower’s presidency, as stated and emphasized by Richardson (2014), it is essential to include the establishment of the Education, Health and Welfare Departments. One of the key pillars of the Eisenhower’s presidential period was represented by the major developments in the American infrastructure, specifically in the crucial enhancements of the domestic highway system. The so called “Federal-Aid Highway Act” is believed to symbolize one of the greatest domestic political and economic achievements of president Eisenhower. It enormously improved the opportunities for a comfortable, fast and safe transportation throughout a significant portion of the United States (Richardson, 2014, 239-240).

Nevertheless, in addition to the administration’s successes described in the previous paragraphs, the period of the Eisenhower’s presidency also witnessed a rise of the major collision between the two emerging ideological wings of the Republican Party. As further specified by Richardson (2014), the Eisenhower’s concept of “Modern Republicanism” did not represent the only essential and influential ideological faction within the Republican Party of the post-war era and the following period of the 1950s. While Dwight D. Eisenhower was an open representative of the ideas of “Modern Republicanism”, he was facing a tough internal party opposition from the so called “Taft” wing of the Republican Party during his time in the presidential office. The “Taft” Republicans, also known as the party’s strongly devoted conservatives, were the Republican representatives who had supported the Eisenhower’s opponent Robert Taft as their candidate in the Republican primary elections of the year of 1952. They followed the Taft’s original ideas, opinions, plans and strategies. The two dominant wings of the Republican Party differed dramatically in various economic, social as well as international policies. The “Taft” Republicans supported the strong isolationist American position with regards to the global affairs (Richardson, 2014, 233). Simultaneously, the “Taft” wing of the party shared an opposing viewpoint towards the federal government’s

role in the domestic economic affairs. The “Taft” Republicans were strictly against any government interference in the economic sphere and criticized the growing influence, power and competence of the so called “big government” (Mason, 2013, 515-516).

President Eisenhower ran a successful re-election campaign in the year of 1956. He managed to succeed over his then Democratic opponent, Adlai Stevenson. The issues of civil rights in the United States began to play a more crucial role in the American society and politics during the upcoming years after the Eisenhower’s presidential re-election. The president signed the “Civil Rights Acts” of 1957 and 1960, highlighting the importance of a growing influence of the racial policy issues (Wagner, 2007, 70-72). Still, the following years were yet to fully portray the true impacts of the racial policy issues not only on the general atmosphere in the American society, but also on the future developments with regards to the changing trajectories and transforming preferences of the domestic political sphere.

Based on the facts stated on the previous pages, it can be argued, the Republican Party undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the process of American political, social and economic development since the time of the party’s initial foundation throughout the following first one hundred years of its existence. During the above mentioned period, the Republican Party established itself as one of the two leading forces of the U.S. political system. Thus, together with their Democratic counterparts, the Republicans began to shape the core and basics of the contemporary standards of the U.S. political environment and the current perspective of the modern American political partisanship.

3. The social and political changes of the 1960s and the Republican ideological shift

The period of the 1960s represented a significant, turbulent and highly memorable episode in the development of the modern United States of America. Several key events, both on the domestic and international levels, took place during the era of the 1960s. As Sacquety emphasizes in the article *The Sixties in America* (2008), the period was symbolized by the strengthening and intensifying re-emergence of various crucial topics and issues that had been present in the American social and political environment for several decades prior to the times of the 1960s. Moreover, the so called “Sixties” were sometimes depicted as a direct consequence and certain continuation of the materialistically oriented society of the post-war 1950s. As opposed to the previous decades, the voices of various socially and ethnically diverse groups played a much more essential role during the era of the “Sixties” (Sacquety, 2008).

As further described by Ching Yee Lin in the article *Transformation and Turmoil: How Did 1960s America Become Unforgettable?* (2023), the period of the 1960s is also often understood as an era filled with numerous unprecedented shifts and revolutionary changes in the social and political environment of the United States (Ching, 2023).

3.1. United States and the significant challenges of the 1960s

The American period of the 1960s was preceded by an era of the unprecedentedly strong post-war economic growth. During the 1950s, as a result of the increasing economic prosperity, the American middle class was growing constantly and significantly. A period of the domestic economic boom rapidly improved the quality of life of a vast majority of the ordinary American citizens. They were able to afford to acquire various modern products of a daily usage and to spend a quality time in the different types of leisure centres, private facilities and public institutions (Ching, 2023).

Simultaneously, the post-war period also brought a new wave of the internal as well as foreign obstacles, threats and challenges. The tension between the United States and Soviet Union was evolving dramatically. It was during the period of the 1950s when the Cold War

began reshaping the world order. At the same time, the “Civil Rights Movement” was becoming a much more crucial issue on the domestic level (Ching, 2023).

From a perspective of the domestic political development, the era of the 1960s began on a relatively positive note for a majority of the Americans. In the year of 1961, the young, charismatic and good looking John F. Kennedy, the representative of the Democratic Party, became the president of the United States. His campaign included the promise of bringing and initiating various kinds of policies specifically aimed to eliminate the social inequality and injustice present in the United States. The original set of laws and rules became known as the “New Frontier” domestic political agenda. Nevertheless, the “New Frontier” agenda very soon experienced a strong resistance from the “Southern” wing of the Democratic Party representatives (History.com). The final months of the year of 1963 shocked the American public as the popular president Kennedy was shot dead in Texas. The event had a profound impact on the atmosphere in the U.S. society during many upcoming years (Sacquety, 2008).

In the year of 1964, few months after the Kennedy assassination, the incoming president Lyndon B. Johnson called for the transformation of the United States into the so called “Great Society”. The concept of the “Great Society” included a zero tolerance towards the elements of racial injustice. Under the concept, poverty was also supposed to be vanished from the United States. The programmes initiated by the Johnson administration included the developments of “Medicare” and “Medicaid”, improving the public’s access to affordable health care, “Head Start”, designed for the purposes of children pre-schooling preparation, or “Job Corps”, assisting unskilled labourers and unexperienced manual workers (History.com).

Nevertheless, by the end of the 1960’s decade, the domestic political representation was stuck in chaos. As a result of the domestic social difficulties and the international political issues, troubles and failures, the Democratic Party was greatly divided. Eventually, president Johnson decided to cancel his re-election campaign. His decision paved the way to the presidential office for the Republican representative, Richard Nixon (History.com). The domestic political development, with a specific emphasis on the evolvement and transformation of the two dominant political parties of the U.S. political system, will represent the subject of a closer analysis in the following subchapter (see Chapter 3.2.).

The issues of civil rights undoubtedly began to play a vital part in the American society during the period of the 1960s. As further described by Sacquety (2008), activities associated with the “Civil Rights Movement” took place during the 1950s as well. However,

it was not until the years of 1960 and 1961 respectively, when the civil rights activities received its first real momentum and gained a nationwide attention. The so called “Freedom Rides” were organized by the “Congress of Racial Equality” in order to examine the openness and willingness of the southern states to formally as well as practically desegregate the travelling facilities used for the purposes of the interstate travels. The original group of riders was successful in their efforts until facing a tough opposition when reaching the state of South Carolina. The situation got much more intense and often grew into violence when the group riders were moving towards the region and states of the “deeper South”. From a general perspective, the rides were believed to play a pivotal role in keeping the topic of civil rights on top of the nation’s media coverage and in making the issue one of the priorities of the federal government and the administration of president Kennedy (Sacquety, 2008).

The revolutionary momentum with regards to the issues of civil rights came during the year of 1963. As further specified in the article *The Sixties in America* (2008), the “Civil Rights” leader Martin Luther King delivered his famous speech in Washington D.C. during the month of August of the above mentioned year. In his notable “I Have a Dream” speech, Martin Luther King called for the freedom for all the American citizens, regardless of a particular race, ethnicity or religion. The speech proved to be absolutely ground-breaking and had a tremendous impact on the future transformation of the United States with regards to the issues of civil rights (Sacquety, 2008).

In fact, the Luther’s revolutionary speech is widely believed to represent one of the most crucial events that eventually led to the final creation and passage of the “Civil Rights Act of 1964” and the later “Voting Rights Act of 1965”. The “Civil Rights Act of 1964” symbolized a clear milestone in the American social development as it officially prohibited discrimination on a workplace and formally banned segregation (Ching, 2023). Nevertheless, as stated in the article *The 1960s History*, the issues associated with a racial segregation did not entirely disappear during the following years and decades. Even though the anti-segregation laws were formally applied and generally accepted, various communities of African Americans were still facing serious difficulties with regards to the questions of racial segregation and widespread issues of poverty during the upcoming periods (History.com).

As far as the role of the United States in the foreign policy issues is concerned, the period of the 1960s undoubtedly witnessed several key moments and events related mostly to the growing pressure and uncertainty in the strengthening bipolar world order and the

intensifying competition between the United States and Soviet Union. As described by Ching (2023), the era of the 1960s brought an extremely hazardous incident in the mutual relations between the two superpowers. The event is often depicted as possibly the most dangerous episode of the whole Cold War period. It included the Soviet delivery of nuclear weapons to its allied regime in Cuba and the subsequent American irritation and resistance. Known under the name the “Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962”, the event represented a period when the world was very close to the potential breakout of a disastrous global nuclear conflict. Not only did the incident traumatize the American public, but it also severely threatened the fragile stability of the international order (Ching, 2023). At the end of the day, fortunately for the global community, the cooler heads on both sides of the barricade dominated the diplomatic talks.

In addition to the previously described events and facts, another serious conflict associated directly with the issues of the Cold War shaped the foreign policy agenda of the United States during the 1960s. The Vietnam War began to play a pivotal role in the U.S. international efforts to significantly weaken the universal spread of communism. As specifically stated in the article *The 1960s History*, the region of Southeast Asia had been experiencing various waves of conflicts prior to the period of the “Sixties”. However, the Vietnam War represented a crucial milestone with regards to the direct American military involvement in the regional conflicts. Not long after president Johnson had entered the office, he initiated a direct U.S. military intervention in the conflict of the Vietnam War during the year of 1964. The issue of the American direct military involvement in the conflict significantly divided the country. Massive waves of protests shook the United States as a reaction to the American decision to actively participate in the Vietnam War. The protests were mostly led by young people with the hope of avoiding the military draft (History.com). Furthermore, as the Vietnam War was proceeding, it was also receiving a high attention in the television media coverage. As a result, the American role in the conflict was gradually becoming the subject of various disputes, controversies and critical viewpoints (Sacquety, 2008).

The period of the 1960s was also symbolized by the emergence of the so called “Counterculture movement”. Having risen from the domestic social and political difficulties, combined with the elements of racial injustice and war frustration of the “Sixties”, the movement gained a nationwide attention during the above mentioned period. The certain circles associated with the movement became colloquially known as the members of the

“Hippie” culture. The so called “Hippies” were generally understood as the community that caused various controversies. They were known for the drug experimentation practices, opposition towards traditional social values, interest in spiritual beliefs and many other countercultural phenomena (Ching, 2023). In addition to the previously stated groups and communities associated with the “Counterculture movement”, the “Sixties” also represented a period of the major student uprisings, demonstrations and different forms of activism related not only to the issues of the Vietnam War, but also to many different social problems and challenges. The event widely regarded as the final episode in relation to the “Counterculture movement” of the 1960s was represented by the famous “Woodstock” music festival of the year of 1969. The event took place in the state of New York and was visited by approximately half million of dominantly young people. “Woodstock” is often described as the three day lasting celebration of love, peace and harmony that defined the young generation of the 1960s (History.com).

According to Ching (2023), the era of the “Sixties” ended with a mixture of rather negative feelings and emotions. Still, the major social changes of the period had brought several new ideals, thoughts and perspectives that essentially helped to transform America in the following decades. Some of the original ideas continue to shape the U.S. society during the contemporary time as well. Furthermore, the 1960s period served as an inspiration for various cultural works, including an enormous number of songs, movies and literary pieces (Ching, 2023). From a general perspective, as stated in the article *The 1960s History*, the legacy of the period of the 1960s is often assessed with the combination of positives and negatives (History.com).

3.2. Conservative ideology dominates in the Republican Party

With a dramatically changing social environment of the 1960s, it seemed that the American political representation, including the members and representatives of the Republican Party, had to adapt to the new needs, requests and wishes of the electorate. In other words, the vital changes in the U.S. society were also reflected in the political development of the United States.

As particularly described by Grossmann and Hopkins (2016), there were the two dominant internal ideological factions within the Republican Party during the period between the 1930s and 1960s. While the so called “moderate” wing of the Republican Party was relatively less sceptical towards the Democratic “New Deal” agenda and generally supported a more open approach with regards to the American role and position in the international affairs, the “conservative” movement of the party was extremely critical towards the “New Deal” and heavily favoured a strong isolationist position of the United States in the foreign affairs. The issues associated with the “Great Depression” period and the following World War II. era brought the “moderate” wing to a greater influence within the Republican Party. Nevertheless, the division of influence and power in the Republican Party started to significantly change during the 1960s as the “conservative” wing became the party’s leading ideological faction. In fact, since the period of the 1960s, the policy of the Republican Party has been often described as being very close to the main thoughts and theses of the ideology of conservatism (Grossmann, Hopkins, 2016, 8-9).

After the Eisenhower’s presidency, the Republicans nominated Richard Nixon as their candidate for the presidential election of 1960. The election represented a selection between Nixon and his Democratic opponent, John F. Kennedy. The election of 1960 marked the first time when television as a media service came to play a more significant role in the political environment of the United States. In the relatively close election, John F. Kennedy eventually succeeded and became the next president. Richard Nixon benefited from the Eisenhower’s support in the election. However, it was not enough for Nixon to achieve a victory (Wagner, 2007, 72-74).

The year of 1964 represented a crucial milestone for the Republican Party’s future development. As Wagner (2007) further explains, the party’s two above mentioned ideological factions, the “conservatives” and “moderates” in particular, were arguing with one another over the future course of the party. Eventually, the “conservative” wing succeeded, believing that only the true conservative policy and values represented an ideal strategy of dominating over the Democratic opponents in the following years. For the presidential race, the Republicans selected Barry Goldwater as their candidate (Wagner, 2007, 75-76).

The presidential nomination of Barry Goldwater undoubtedly symbolized a highly revolutionary moment with regards to the future course of the party’s development. Goldwater openly criticized the passage of the “Civil Rights Act of 1964”, calling it

unconstitutional, as he viewed the law as a violation of the rights and powers of the individual states. He was critical towards numerous other policies, plans and strategies of the Democratic Party. During the very chaotic period of the 1960s, Goldwater was often depicted and understood as a loyal defender of various traditional values, calm and order. Even though Barry Goldwater had failed to succeed in the presidential election, his nomination, campaign and political legacy shaped the ideological core of the Republican Party for many decades to come. Since the time of the Goldwater's presidential nomination, the Republican Party's political agenda has been almost entirely defined as ideologically conservative (Wagner, 2007, 76-78). In the previously described section, we might have a unique opportunity to possibly detect a certain parallel between the period of the Republican Party's transformation during the 1960s and the contemporary Republican political platform. The words such as "calm", "law" or "order" are commonly used in the rhetoric of various current leaders and representatives of the Republican Party. In a similar manner, the Republican politicians aim to portray their Democratic opponents as the representatives of many policies that are contrary to the values stated above.

The conservative wave of the 1960s more or less redrew the general classification and concept of the Republican Party's political affiliation. As specifically explained by Grossmann and Hopkins (2016), while the conservative movement began to dominate the party's political platform at the start of the 1960s, and was further intensifying during the period, the conservative ideology became almost synonymous with the Republican identity at the end of the decade. Simultaneously, a majority of the Republican representatives accepted the conservative label by the 1970s. A similar trend, although to the opposite direction, was detected in the development of the Democratic Party. As the Republicans were leaning towards the bases of the conservative ideology, the growing number of Democratic representatives was identifying themselves as ideologically liberal (Grossmann, Hopkins, 2016, 86-90).

The above specified factors naturally changed the voting preferences and election results with regards to the regional diversity and local distinctions of the United States. In other words, the shifting ideological positions within the domestic political sphere had significant effects on the transforming regional role, position and popularity of both the Republican and Democratic Parties. The areas of the so called "American South" may perhaps serve as an ideal example of the locations where the changing social and political environment of the 1960s helped to completely reshape the electoral map. According to

Grossmann and Hopkins (2016), the region of the “South”, once the great sphere of the Democratic Party’s influence and dominance, experienced a period of the transformation from the Democratic stronghold into one of the most devoted and loyal regions of the Republican Party. The process had its roots in the 1950s, when Dwight D. Eisenhower managed to succeed in five “Southern” states during the election of 1952. The number of the “Southern” states voting for Eisenhower grew to eight in the year of 1956. The described trajectory was intensifying during the following years (Grossmann, Hopkins, 2016, 83).

As Wagner (2007) specifically explains, from a perspective of the regional division of political power and influence, the “Southern” region of the United States was gradually becoming the Republican stronghold during the 1960s. This trend was closely related to the strengthening conservative policy of the Republican Party. As Barry Goldwater stood in the opposition towards the “Civil Rights Act of 1964” and generally advocated for various conservative policies, he gained an enormous popularity among voters belonging to the so called “Southern conservative” circles of the electorate. These “Southern” voters were mostly against the support of the “Civil Rights Movement”. The Republican conservative ideas and emphasis on traditional values were popular among these voters. As a result, the Republican Party as a whole was gaining a strong support in the areas of the “American South” during the 1960s. The presidential election of the year of 1968 confirmed the progressing transformation of the “South” into the strongly pro-Republican region. The Republican nominee Richard Nixon won in eleven “Southern” states in the election (Wagner, 2007, 76-80). In this case, it is necessary to state, the Republican Party maintains a strong sphere of dominance and influence in the areas of the “American South” during the current period. In other words, the concept of the “Republican South”, more or less established during the period of the 1960s, definitely represents a vital element of the modern American political environment as the “Southern” region of the United States represents a significant Republican stronghold during the contemporary time.

As far as the development of the Democratic Party during the given period is concerned, the Democrats were facing various tough issues, troubles and challenges during the 1960s. In addition to the serious events and tragic incidents associated with the leading Democratic political figures of the period, the party’s internal difficulties became one of the crucial Democratic issues of the “Sixties”. As described by Grossmann and Hopkins (2016), the Democrats were struggling with the inability to build a party-wide coalition that would have interconnected the interests of both the so called “liberal” as well as “leftist” ideological

factions. Instead of the unification under a one specific ideological platform, the Democratic Party was divided into various social movements based on the specific policy, topic, agenda and interest. These particular movements and organizations included the “anti-war movement”, “movement for women’s rights”, “gay rights movement” or “civil rights movement” itself. Even though the leaders of the stated movements shared similar characteristics, values and priorities, the communities were not capable of functioning as a united entity (Grossmann, Hopkins, 2016, 96-99).

Furthermore, as the Democratic Party was divided into the different voting blocs, mostly in relation to many social issues including the ones presented above, it was more than complicated for the Democrats to find a path to the common political ground and unifying priorities. The growing ideological gap between the two major electoral blocs of the party, the liberal voters with African Americans on one side and the cultural conservatives with “Southern” voters on the other, intensified the party’s weakening position and the declining nationwide influence and popularity during the second half of the 1960s (Grossmann, Hopkins, 2016, 96-99).

The “Democratic National Convention” of 1968 perhaps represented a final endgame to the rather chaotic Democratic political leadership of the second half of the “Sixties”. As specifically explained by Wagner (2007), the Democrats experienced an extremely difficult time at the party’s national convention in Chicago during the year of 1968. There were moments of heavy arguments combined with the elements of fights and violence. In the tense atmosphere and unpleasant environment, president Johnson decided to suspend his campaign for the presidential re-election. Moreover, the Democratic Party was shocked by the assassination of Robert Kennedy, one of the leading figures of the party who was believed to become the Democratic presidential nominee after the president Johnson’s decision to cancel his campaign. With regards to all the major issues, complications and additional circumstances presented above, the Democrats eventually selected Hubert Humphrey as their candidate for the upcoming election (Wagner, 2007, 79).

The Republicans benefited, at least to a certain extent, from the internal difficulties of their Democratic counterparts. At the same time, various domestic as well as international issues associated with the period of the 1960s were generally understood to be closely interconnected with the policy of the Democratic Party. As a result of the above described events, the Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon managed to achieve a victory in

the election of 1968. His campaign mostly focused on the promise of delivering the final resolution to the issues associated with the Vietnam War (Wagner, 2007, 79).

Based on the facts and events presented and described on the previous pages, it may be argued, the revolutionary period of the 1960s undoubtedly had major impacts not only on the development of the American society but also on the transformation of the U.S. domestic political sphere. The era of the “Sixties” is symbolized by various crucial moments, events and changes that significantly transformed both the social and political environment of the United States. Many of the ideas, policies and laws that originated during the period of the 1960s appear to play a certain role in the contemporary American environment. Even though the whole period is usually assessed with a combination of both the positive and negative aspects, the 1960s definitely represents an era that seems difficult to be forgotten.

4. The transformation of the Republican Party since the 1960s

The previous chapters more or less concentrated on the description of the Republican Party's development prior to the period of the 1960s. The previous part also offered a brief description specifically dedicated to the 1960s era itself. The following chapters will represent the main part of the thesis. They will primarily concentrate on the transformation of the Republican Party since the period of the 1960s until the contemporary time. The thesis will also provide a chapter associated with the phenomenon of the current polarized society in the United States. Last but not least, there will be a short passage dedicated to the potential usage of the topic of the Republican Party in the English language teaching environment. The following chapter will specifically focus on the development of the Republican Party during the period from the 1960s to the turn of the twentieth and twenty first century.

4.1. The Nixon years, Watergate case and Gerald Ford

As precisely described in the previous passages of the thesis, the conservative ideological movement gained an enormous influence and strength within the Republican Party's political platform during the period of the 1960s. Furthermore, the power of the conservative movement was intensifying during the upcoming decade. As specifically described by Richardson (2014), the conservative movement strongly dominated the Republican Party's agenda during the era of the 1970s. The growing popularity of the conservative values, thoughts and beliefs, not only within the Republican Party but also among the American public, were believed to represent the reaction and answers to various complicated domestic as well as international issues of the late 1960s and the following 1970s (Richardson, 2014, 272-273). As confirmed and explained by Mason (2005), while the conservative thoughts and values were gaining strength during the above mentioned period, the general public's disillusionment with the liberal policies and beliefs was intensifying (Mason, 2005, 465). Based on the facts presented above, it may be argued, the certain ideological return to the traditional values and thoughts may be understood as an unavoidable reaction to the revolutionary, rather chaotic and highly unstable social and political environment of the 1960s. Different waves of protests, revolutions and other unprecedented

events might have created the impression that the excessive liberalization of the social and political environment may have led to a potential emergence of various social issues and difficulties.

According to Mason (2005), Richard Nixon entered the White House as one of the most qualified and experienced politicians with regards to the knowledge of the specific environment, obligations, procedures and challenges associated with the presidential office. As he served as the vice president under president Eisenhower during the 1950s, Nixon gained a significant amount of knowledge and experience in relation to the highest sphere of political leadership (Mason, 2005, 465). Simultaneously, as explained by Richardson (2014), Richard Nixon strongly benefited from the general atmosphere in the American society during the period of the late 1960s, as the average American voters were attracted by the Nixon's promises of returning to the core traditional values, eliminating chaos and violence and restoring calm and order (Richardson, 2014, 276). These factors more or less confirm the facts and elements presented and described in the previous paragraph. It seems that the general atmosphere in the American society undoubtedly played a vital part in the Nixon's victory in the presidential election of the year of 1968.

As far as the Nixon's presidency is concerned, as particularly described by Richardson (2014), the first real severe issues appeared during the year of 1970. As the Nixon administration appeared unable to fulfil its original pre-election promise of delivering a final resolution to the matters of the Vietnam War, the certain circles of the public became extremely frustrated. It turned out that the situation in Vietnam escalated even more after some of the Nixon's key decisions associated with the conflict. The intensification of the Vietnam's conflict provoked riots and protests at some universities. Nevertheless, an essential part of the public represented the so called "silent majority" and more or less accepted the steps and policies realized by the Nixon administration. The protesting circles of the population, such as younger people, intellectuals or representatives of various minorities, were often described as too sensitive, radical and disloyal to the basic American values (Richardson, 2014, 278-279). In addition to the previously stated facts, the political representatives who criticized the Nixon's approach towards the issues of the Vietnam War were often given the "radical liberal" label (Mason, 2005, 469-471). As described in the paragraph, the topic of the Vietnam War seems to have represented an extremely powerful issue during the period of the Nixon's presidency. It undoubtedly seriously resonated among all spheres of the American public. At the same time, it appears that the topic had a potential

of fully dividing the American society with regards to various factors including the differences in age, level of education, political preference, or ethnical origin. The above described situation regarding the issues of the Vietnam War might in fact represent a picture of the highly polarized U.S. society of the late 1960s and the incoming 1970s. In other words, it seems that the state of a divided society may not be necessarily viewed and understood as a phenomenon that is completely new to the contemporary social and political environment of the United States.

From a global perspective, as far as the U.S. foreign policy issues are concerned, they witnessed a certain turnover under the Nixon presidency. As closely described by Richardson (2014), the relations between China and the United States became one of the crucial foreign policy topics of the administration. President Nixon believed that the growing role and influence of the communist China should not have been ignored. He viewed the establishment of the mutual ties between the two countries as an instrument to challenge the global position of the Soviet Union. Even though not all the Republican representatives were in favour of the president's decision to strengthen the relations with China, the president believed that China should not have been completely isolated. In the close cooperation with his national security adviser Henry Kissinger, president Nixon planned to open a dialogue with the Chinese representatives. President Nixon eventually visited China for a historic and unprecedented state visit in the year of 1972. He met both the Chinese prime minister and the communist leader Mao Zedong, calling the state meeting between China and America as "the week that changed the world" (Richardson, 2014, 280). The president Nixon's decision to establish the mutual relations between China and the United States may be possibly characterized as a strong pragmatic political approach in order to strengthen the American role and position in the world affairs, mainly in the mutual competition with the Soviet Union. At the same time, the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the United States and China could be understood as an attempt to form a potential trade platform responsible for providing space for the future U.S. economic investments not only in China but also in the whole Asian region.

From a perspective of the domestic political stage, the Nixon administration was trying to strengthen the Republican Party's nationwide position and influence by convincing certain representatives of the Democratic Party to switch their political affiliation and enter the Republican Party's platform. In other words, as president Nixon was aware of some of the issues and difficulties found in the internal structure and circles of the Democratic Party, he

openly invited some of the specific members of the Democrats to join the Republican Party. President Nixon particularly aimed to convince the representatives of the so called “Southern conservative” wing of the Democratic Party. He believed that the original political ideology, values and ideas of the “Southern conservative” Democrats were in fact much closer to the Republican conservative ideological movement than to the mainstream liberal political ideology of the Democratic Party. Richard Nixon managed to succeed in some of his efforts as the certain former representatives of the mostly “Southern” Democratic circles eventually decided to join the Republican Party (Mason, 2005, 473-474). These facts more or less confirm the emerging and further intensifying concept of the strong “Republican South” that still seems to represent a vital element in the contemporary political environment of the United States. As the conservative ideological movement was gaining strength within the Republican Party’s political platform of the 1960s and 1970s, the southern part of the United States was gradually transforming into the Republican stronghold of the upcoming decades. It appears that Richard Nixon must have understood the necessity to strengthen the concept of the “Republican South” in order to keep the Republican Party’s nationwide role and position at the highest possible level.

The presidential election of 1972 was generally represented by the relatively safe and comfortable Nixon’s victory. Nevertheless, the shocking information regarding the events closely associated with the pre-election period shook the political as well as social environment of the United States just few months after the election process itself. It was discovered that the Nixon administration was directly involved in the case generally known as the “Watergate” scandal. The case included the sabotage attempts ordered by the Nixon administration to seriously undermine and defame the presidential candidacy of the opposing Democratic Party’s representatives. These efforts even included the burglary in the Democratic Party’s headquarters located in the Watergate complex in Washington D.C. When the crucial information regarding the scandal appeared at the beginning of the year of 1973, president Nixon refused any possible connection between the events and the presidential administration. However, during the following months, the series of other detailed pieces of information and evidence were released. With the growing pressure from the media, public and political representation, it became untenable for the Nixon administration to remain in its position. The Nixon’s vice president resigned during the second half of the year. President Nixon finally remained in the office until August of the year of 1974. Nevertheless, after months of the mutual accusations and political tension from both the internal and opposition

circles, he eventually decided to resign. The Nixon's resignation symbolized the very first moment in the American history when the incumbent president resigned from his position (Richardson, 2014, 281-283). Based on the facts presented in the paragraph, it may be argued, the "Watergate" scandal completely destroyed both the political career and reputation of Richard Nixon. Even though he was respected as one of the most experienced and qualified political figures of the given period, it seems that Nixon was unable to fully tolerate the democratic principles and laws mostly with regards to the position and role of the independent political parties and their participation in the political environment of the United States. In other words, it may be also argued, the certain paranoia from the potential electoral loss undoubtedly represented one of the key factors that stood behind the Nixon's political downfall.

Following the Nixon's presidency, Gerald R. Ford became the next president of the United States in 1974. As closely explained by Richardson (2014), Ford inherited an extremely complicated political agenda caused not only by the Nixon's controversial legacy but also by the weakening domestic economy and troubling international situation mostly with regards to the issues of the Vietnam War. The conservative movement still represented a dominant force within the Republican political platform during the Ford's presidential period. Specifically speaking, the mid-1970s were symbolized by the Republican efforts to attract voters belonging to the "white Protestant" circles of the electorate. However, the Ford's first and only regular presidential election of the year of 1976 did not overshadow the significant issues associated with the "Watergate" scandal. The controversies and uncertainties regarding the "Watergate" case, combined with the elements of the domestic economic issues as well as international policy difficulties, played an important role during the election process. At the end of the day, the opposing Democratic Party's ticket, represented by the presidential nominee Jimmy Carter and his colleague Walter Mondale, succeeded in the election during 1976 (Richardson, 2014, 284-286). Based on the facts presented above, it undoubtedly appears that the combination of various domestic as well as international factors led to the Republican loss of the White House during the election of 1976. Nevertheless, the scandalous memories associated with the "Watergate" still seem to have played a pivotal part in the American social and political environment of the mid-1970s. Simultaneously, it also needs to be mentioned, the trend of attracting voters from the so called "white Protestant" communities symbolizes a concept that seems to be present within the current Republican political agenda

as well. In other words, the “white Protestants” are generally believed to represent a significant part of the Republican electorate during the contemporary period.

4.2. Ronald Reagan and the golden age of conservatism

As precisely described by Richardson (2014), although the Republican presidential candidacy was not successful in the year of 1976, the conservative ideological movement was strongly represented within both the American society and U.S. political environment during the period of the Jimmy Carter’s presidential administration. In fact, the conservative ideals and thoughts were growing stronger during the period as the country was facing various domestic economic issues and difficulties. Moreover, coming closer to the end of the 1970s, regular Americans were gaining the impression that the United States was losing its highly privileged position in the global affairs. There were major international troubles that significantly challenged the American dominant international role, such as the issues associated with the Iran hostage crisis, or Soviet invasion to Afghanistan. In the rather unpleasant economic and social environment of the late 1970s, a majority of the Republican representatives, various conservative economists as well as many political observers and commentators viewed the relatively unstable and chaotic atmosphere as a general failure of the Democratic liberal policies. The similar critical perspectives were often shared by ordinary American citizens (Richardson, 2014, 286-288). With regards to the above stated facts and events, it seems that the administration of president Carter was not able to adequately resolve the issues that dominated the American society during the second half of the 1970s. As the international situation was worsening and the domestic economic problems were further intensifying, the Carter administration seemed unable to convince various representatives of the general public that it was competent enough to properly and successfully handle the worsening situation.

In relation to the facts, events and issues discussed in the previous paragraph, it seems more than natural and understandable that the traditional conservative values, ideas and policies were still popular and attractive not only among the Republican Party’s representatives but also among various circles of ordinary citizens of the United States. The conservative values combined with the elements of a strong emphasis on traditions and

religious beliefs perhaps represented at least a potential psychological return to some certainties in an otherwise rather uncertain period.

The crucial event regarding the future direction and development of both the American politics and the Republican Party came during the year of 1980. The presidential election of 1980 was represented by the clear one-sided victory of the Republican candidate Ronald Reagan. As explained by Wagner (2007), the figure of Ronald Reagan was not new to the American political environment. Ronald Reagan represented a well-known and highly respected political figure for several years prior to the election of 1980. In his proclamations before the election, Reagan declared himself as a pure conservative politician. His conservative ideals amazed the Republican representatives and confirmed his presidential nomination. The Reagan's successful candidacy was dominated by the confident promises of bringing a smooth economic recovery and strengthening both the diplomatic and military strength of the United States with regards to the global affairs. At the end, the election of 1980 resulted in the enormous Reagan's victory (Wagner, 2007, 81-82). As further emphasized by Kabaservice (2012), the Reagan's presidential campaign was extremely successful among the "white Southern" circles of the population. In other words, the Reagan's campaign strongly dominated the election in the "Southern regions" of the United States (Kabaservice, 2012, 416). Based on the facts presented in the previous paragraphs, it more or less appears, it was only a matter of time until another conservative political figure manages to enter the White House after a successful presidential race. As various conservative values were still relatively widely represented and broadly appreciated in the American society during the second half of the 1970s, the victory of Ronald Reagan in the election of 1980 seemed almost inevitable. Furthermore, the domestic economic stagnation and traumatizing U.S. participation in the world affairs must have played at least a certain role in the Reagan's victory in 1980.

With the Reagan's victory, the Republicans retook the control over the presidential office after four years of the Jimmy Carter's presidential period. In the inaugural address, Ronald Reagan once again proved his strong dedication to the ideology of conservatism. As explained by Kabaservice (2012), the newly elected president stated that "government is not the solution to our problems, government is the problem" (Kabaservice, 2012, 416). Nevertheless, the Reagan's proclamation had zero connection to the elements of anarchism. In fact, president Reagan carefully explained that he did not intend to do any harm to the government itself. According to Reagan, the government was supposed to function as an instrument that provided citizens with enough time and opportunities of fully using the

individual's potential and creativity to benefit the most from his own skills and abilities. The government was not supposed to represent an instrument that created barriers and obstacles in relation to the free spirit and free will of the fully independent citizens. "Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it, foster productivity, not stifle it" (Kabaservice, 2012, 416). In the Reagan's inaugural address, the ideological elements of the modern conservative movement can be easily detected. The ideas associated with a limited power of the government represent one of the key aspects of the contemporary conservative political ideology. The less the government influences lives of ordinary citizens, the better impacts it has on the creativity, prosperity and happiness of all the society. President Reagan undoubtedly seems to have represented many of the values closely associated with the ideology of conservatism.

As far as the first presidential term of Ronald Reagan is concerned, as described by Wagner (2007), the administration mostly concentrated on the improvements in the American economic sphere. The Reagan administration passed the significant cuts in taxes. The president viewed the major tax reduction as a path to the domestic economic recovery. At the same time, with regards to the international level, the administration heavily invested in the U.S. military. President Reagan strongly benefited from his excellent communicative skills. As the former actor, he was extremely talented in delivering various news and information to different representatives of the general public in an acceptable and well-spoken form and manner. The election of 1984 unequivocally confirmed the Reagan's position and popularity. The president had achieved a dominant victory and moved towards his second term (Wagner, 2007, 82-84). It seems that the first presidential term of Ronald Reagan was almost flawless, at least from the perspective of an average American voter of the first part of the 1980s. Based on the facts presented above, it may be stated, despite all the domestic and international challenges and difficulties of the given period, the Reagan administration seemed fully capable of convincing the public that it possessed all the necessary instruments, knowledge and experience in order to competently and successfully lead the country during a relatively difficult time.

As far as the internal development of the Republican Party during the Reagan's years is concerned, as closely explained by Kabaservice (2012), there existed certain ideological wings within the party during the period of the Reagan's presidency. The Republican Party was still more or less divided into the two basic ideological factions, the "moderate" and "conservative" wings in particular, in a similar manner as it was during the previous decades.

Nevertheless, the “conservative” movement represented a clearly dominant platform within the party during both the 1970s and 1980s. The Republican “moderates” represented a minority wing within the party’s structure. One of the terms that became closely associated with the Reagan’s years in the White House was the “New Right”, a specific conservative movement that built its identity on emphasizing the role of traditional values with regards to the issues of religion, gender, race or sexuality. The movement was gaining strength during the period of the Reagan administration (Kabaservice, 2012, 416-417). It appears that the conservative wing still represented a highly dominant force within the Republican political platform during the Reagan’s presidency. In fact, it seems that it was growing even stronger during the period. At the same time, it appears that the internal division of the Republican Party basically remained unchanged since the time of the party’s major ideological transformation during the 1960s. The party was still divided into the two main blocs, the “conservative” and “moderate” factions in particular. However, as the social and political environment of the United States was evolving dramatically during the previous decades, the party undoubtedly must have adapted to the new needs, requirements and wishes of the electorate.

With regards to the issues of the U.S. foreign policy, several crucial events took place during the Reagan’s presidential period. The development of the relations between the United States and Soviet Union perhaps represented the most crucial aspect of the Reagan administration in relation to the foreign policy issues. As particularly described by Kabaservice (2012), the Reagan administration invested great efforts to the successful mutual dialogues between the American and Soviet representatives, intending to slow down the arms race between the two superpowers. Simultaneously, president Reagan was preparing for negotiations leading to the definite end of the Cold War period. Specifically speaking, during his last years in the office, Ronald Reagan discussed various issues associated with the final episode of the Cold War era with the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. (Kabaservice, 2012, 421-422). In addition to the previously mentioned facts, it definitely should be emphasized, the era of the Reagan’s presidency is usually portrayed and understood as the period that significantly contributed to the fall of the communist regime in countries of the former Eastern European bloc as well as to the final collapse of the Soviet Union. As the fall of communism in the Central and Eastern European region is often described as a gradual process rather than as a short term event, the Reagan administration undoubtedly played a

pivotal role in the events leading to the revolutionary processes associated with the changes of political regimes in the above stated region.

Furthermore, as far as the foreign policy issues are concerned, the Reagan period is also symbolized by the strong transatlantic alliance and mutual cooperation between the United States and United Kingdom. As specifically described and explained in the video *Thatcher and Reagan's special relationship* published by CNN, the close political as well as personal relationship between president Ronald Reagan and the British ruling prime minister Margaret Thatcher represented a key pillar of the international world order during the 1980s. The two political leaders were both representatives of the traditional conservative policies, values and ideas. Moreover, they discussed various crucial international issues with one another. As a result of the facts stated above, the period of the 1980s is often described as the so called “golden age of conservatism” by various scholars and academics (CNN.com). As described in the paragraph, it seems that a close relationship between specific political leaders may potentially lead to the significant enhancements of the mutual cooperation and bilateral relations between particular countries. Specifically speaking, even though the United States and Great Britain were close military allies and economic partners throughout the significant portion of the twentieth century, the solid alliance between the political figures of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher undoubtedly represented an extraordinary political chapter of the second half of the previous century.

As Wagner (2007) further describes, with the president Reagan’s forthcoming departure from the White House, his political legacy was passed on to the administration’s vice president George H.W. Bush. In the election of 1988, George H.W. Bush stood against the Democratic challenger Michael Dukakis. At the end of the day, George H.W. Bush emerged victorious from the election. Thus, the White House remained in the Republican hands for another presidential term (Wagner, 2007, 85-86). As stated in the article *A Party Divided*, the popularity of Ronald Reagan contributed to the final victory of George H.W. Bush in the presidential election (Caldwell, 2016).

4.3. Republican Party and the turbulent 1990s

During the presidency of George H.W. Bush, the international society was witnessing several dramatic changes in relation to the global division of power and influence. As closely described by Wagner (2007), the European communist bloc finally disintegrated and one of the two world superpowers eventually collapsed and fell apart during the period of the Bush administration. Other major international issues associated with the period included various crises in the Middle East including the Gulf War conflict (Wagner, 2007, 86-88). In the fast changing international environment of the given period, the Republicans could have potentially felt as winners of the overall political situation, considering the fact that the two latest American presidents were representatives of the Republican Party. In other words, as the Republican representatives were leading the United States during the period of the final collapse of the European communist regimes and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the party could have possibly claimed the previously stated events as its outstanding political victory.

Nevertheless, the era of the Republican dominance, at least from a perspective of the leadership associated with the presidential office, was slowly weakening during the period of the Bush administration. As closely explained by Caldwell (2016), the domestic economy began to worsen during the early 1990s. The unemployment rate increased (Caldwell, 2016). Moreover, as specifically described by Wagner (2007), as the Soviet Union with its communist regime did not represent a serious international issue any more in the early post-Cold War environment of the 1990s, the Republican Party, including the administration of president George H.W. Bush, began to lose its common political ground. Various original Republican policies, such as the intensive investments in the U.S. military or major tax cuts with regards to the sphere of the business corporations and wealthier citizens, did not resonate among the general American public any more (Wagner, 2007, 88-89). It appears that the significant changes associated with the transforming world order proved to represent a rather mixed political instrument for the Republican Party. With the disappearance of the most visible international threat of the previous decades, the Republican Party and the whole American political sphere seemed to have lost an essential part of the former foreign political agenda. At the same time, it seems that the Republicans were not fully capable of providing the American domestic electorate of the early 1990s with enough reasonable political

perspectives and solutions in relation to the newly emerging and gradually worsening economic crises and other social difficulties.

As a result of the facts and events described in the previous paragraph, the presidential election of 1992 was symbolized by the victory of the Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton, making it the first Democratic Party's victory in the presidential race since the period of the Jimmy Carter administration during the late 1970s. As explained by Caldwell (2016), in addition to the factors of the weakening economy and other domestic social and political issues described above, the figure of a businessman Ross Perot, the billionaire who had run as the third-party candidate in the election, partially influenced the final election results. As Perot openly represented various values and ideas closely associated with the economic conservatism, his campaign was able to attract some of the former Republican voters. (Caldwell, 2016) In this particular case, we might possibly observe the certain parallel and precedent to the Republican Party's future development when it comes to the power and influence of figures closely associated with the business environment. In order to provide the specific example, a figure of the Republican president Donald Trump had also emerged from the business circles and subsequently became the leading political representative of the contemporary Republican Party.

As a result of the above stated Republican political defeats of the early 1990s, the party was forced to partly rethink its concept of the political agenda and identity. As Caldwell (2016) further explains, after the unsuccessful election of the year of 1992, the party mostly focused on bringing the Perot's voters back to the Republican base of support. These efforts were relatively successful as the Republicans made significant gains in the 1994 midterm elections, taking control of the Senate as well the House of Representatives after a long period of time. Furthermore, the Clinton administration passed various relatively unpopular laws and policies that resonated rather negatively among the American working middle class voters. These laws included the "NAFTA" treaty - "North American Free Trade Agreement", which left thousands of dominantly white American men lacking a high school diploma with the feeling of a political alienation (Caldwell, 2016). Nevertheless, the election of 1996 confirmed another presidential term for the Clinton administration.

Throughout the period of the 1990s, the Republican Party has begun to build the traditional core of its voting base that seems to play a pivotal role in relation to the current Republican political platform. As Caldwell (2016) specifically describes, during the second

half of the 1990s, the Republican Party's electorate primarily included the white American voters with religious affiliation and other socially conservative citizens (Caldwell, 2016). In this sense, it may be argued, the stated electoral categories and voting groups more or less represent a key pillar of the Republican Party's support during the contemporary period. Thus, it may be claimed, the traditional base of the Republican support during late 1990s does not seem fundamentally different from the groups and communities of the current followers and supporters of the Republican Party. The emphasis on the role of religion and conservative values in the society undoubtedly play a dominant role in the contemporary Republican political agenda.

5. The Republicans during the 21st century

As particularly described in the previous passages of the thesis, the Republican Party went through numerous specific episodes with regards to its internal development and transformation of its political direction and identity from the 1960s to the end of the twentieth century. The party experienced various positive political periods in relation to its election results as well as the series of major political downfalls and defeats. During the last decade of the previous century, the party began to take its contemporary shape. Nevertheless, several new trends, factors and additional circumstances significantly affected the Republican Party's transformation during the first decades of the current century. These features will represent the crucial part of the following chapter.

5.1. George W. Bush and the emergence of elements of populism

As Kabaservice (2012) precisely describes, the Republicans nominated George W. Bush, the governor of the state of Texas and son of the former president George H. W. Bush, to the presidential election of the year of 2000. George W. Bush stood against the Democratic candidate and vice president of the Clinton administration, Al Gore. From the contested and extremely close election, George W. Bush eventually emerged as victorious (Kabaservice, 2012, 434-436).

Prior to the election, George W. Bush was generally viewed and understood as the Republican representative who did not share the typical features and characteristics of a strongly devoted conservative politician. He was selected by the Republican Party's committee with the intention of unifying the "conservative" and "moderate" wings of the party. In the presidential campaign, the future president Bush, perhaps rather surprisingly, called for the overall improvements and modern innovations associated with tackling the issues of global warming. However, just few months after the election, the reality seemed completely different. In cooperation with his vice president Dick Cheney, president Bush openly questioned the scientific findings with regards to the issues of climate change. During the following months of the Bush's presidency, it became more than obvious that the Bush

administration did not have any major interests in setting any degree of compromises between the dominant “conservative” and minority “moderate” representatives of the Republican Party (Kabaservice, 2012, 436-437). It appears that there existed a certain effort to unify the two ideological factions of the Republican Party at the beginning of the current century. The selection of George W. Bush as the party’s presidential nominee possibly signaled the necessity to connect the interests and perspectives of the two wings at least with regards to the major political issues. Nevertheless, it seems that the Bush administration did not really share the party’s initial efforts of building at least some degree of compromises between the two factions.

In fact, as closely analysed by Kabaservice (2012), the Bush administration eventually moved ideologically to the right with regards to various social and political issues. Furthermore, during the president Bush’s eight years long period in the White House, the whole Republican Party’s political platform was gradually becoming the space designed for the conservative policies, ideas and values only, forcing the already minority representatives of the party’s “moderate” wing to have a limited influence and voice within the party’s internal structure or to leave the Republican Party entirely. As a result of the ever-decreasing number of the party’s “moderate” representatives, it became much harder for the remaining part of the Republicans to achieve any meaningful agreements and compromises with the opposing Democratic Party (Kabaservice, 2012, 435-439). Here, we might possibly observe the first roots of the major polarization of the U.S. political spectrum that we are witnessing today. In other words, once the “moderates” begin disappearing from the structure of any major political force, the party significantly loses its potential of negotiating compromises with the opposing political power. It seems that the Republicans selected, perhaps unintentionally, this direction of their future political development, regardless of the effects it may potentially have on the global political environment of the United States.

As further explained by Kabaservice (2012), during the second term of the Bush administration, the issues of both the internal party and cross-party political polarization were increasing. Coming to the end of the Bush’s presidency in 2008, the president made an attempt to heal the wounds of the increasing polarized political environment of the United States, stating that the Republican Party should not have represented a platform composed entirely of the “conservative” representatives (Kabaservice, 2012, 439). “It’s very important for our party not to narrow its focus, not to become so inward-looking that we drive people away. We shouldn’t have litmus tests as to whether or not you can be a Republican”

(Kabaservice, 2012, 439). Nevertheless, it seemed that it might have been too late for any potential enhancements in relation to the declining American political culture after years of the growing animosity among various representatives of the public service (Kabaservice, 2012, 439). The facts, events and circumstances presented above clearly demonstrate the incipient trend of the gradually intensifying political tension and mutual hostility within the contemporary U.S. political environment. As the “moderate” political figures began disappearing from the Republican political circles, it appears, it was only a matter of time until the whole situation escalates into an extreme form. It is also worth noting that it is more than understandable that once the real “moderate” politicians completely disappear from both the major political platforms, the Republican and Democratic Party in particular, the overall American political sphere may easily end up in serious troubles and major difficulties.

The Republican Party of the first decade of the twenty first century was not struggling only with the issues associated with the mass exodus of the “moderate” politicians. As specifically explained by Caldwell (2016), there were also significant concerns with regards to the growing mutual alienation between the political establishment of the Republican Party and its traditional voting core. As the social and demographic structure of the American society was going through major changes during the period, mostly in relation to the massive immigration waves, the average white working class citizens suffered from a sense of anxiety, fear and social insecurity. The socially conservative white working class citizens traditionally represented a vital part of the Republican electorate. As the economic crisis shocked the United States as well as the international community during the final months of the Bush administration, the above mentioned social classes, mainly the circles of white blue-collar workers, were heavily disappointed by the Republican approaches towards the effects of the crisis. As the sphere of the big businesses and wealthiest citizens benefited the most from the Republican crisis support, the regular average citizens were often left with the feelings of a major discontent (Caldwell, 2016). In this case, it may be argued, the Republican Party more or less distanced itself from one of the key pillars of its traditional voting base. In the time of a major crisis, the party did not provide this particular social class with any significant support or assistance. Thus, the mutual symbiotic relationship seemed to be severely damaged, at least for some period of time. Furthermore, as the economic crisis stroked the country during the last months of the Bush administration, the Republican Party was perhaps one of the very first entities blamed for the arrival of the crisis.

The Republican suffering deepened with the presidential election's victory of Barack Obama in the year of 2008. As Caldwell (2016) describes, Barack Obama was catapulted to the White House by a wide coalition of the women voters, African Americans and Latino voters. These facts further contributed to the growing alienation between the circles of the white men voters and the traditional political establishment. The anxiety of being socially and politically left out was steadily growing. Moreover, the effects of the economic crisis severely hit the social class of the white working men without a university degree or high school diploma. According to the specific data, the unemployment rate grew the most among this particular social group (Caldwell, 2016). The above described facts more or less illustrate that the event of the Obama's election victory and the major impacts associated with the economic crisis had significant effects on the citizens belonging to the so called "white working men" category of the American society. Based on the issues stated above, it seems that this particular group of the U.S. electorate might have felt relatively uncomfortable and isolated from the mainstream flow of the American politics and society. It is also worth noting that once a certain group of the population feels psychologically left out, it may easily try to search for a different political alternative. At the same time, these voting circles may simply become a target of various populist political forces.

As the election of the year of 2012 was coming closer, the Republicans nominated Mitt Romney as their candidate for the upcoming presidential race. Unfortunately, as closely explained by Caldwell (2016), a businessmen Romney did not really appeal to a majority of voters belonging to the above specified electorate circles. As a wealthy figure, Mitt Romney was generally viewed as a representative of the political status quo, who was relatively isolated from the everyday reality of the average American citizens. As a result, it was very difficult for the Republican voters of the above described groups to fully identify with Romney and accept him as their political leader (Caldwell, 2016). Possibly as a result of the facts described above, the election of 2012 eventually confirmed another term for the incumbent president Barack Obama. It seems that the Republicans were still unable to successfully interconnect with the interests and demands of the significant part of their electorate. Or, alternatively, perhaps the party was not capable of selecting an appropriate and acceptable communication form to attract its former voting base.

One of the crucial aspects of the Republican Party's recent development and form is associated with the issues of strengthening political populism. Although the issues of political populism are widely represented throughout democracies all across the globe, the intensifying

impacts of populism on the transformation of the modern-day Republican Party may be relatively easily detected and observed. As specifically analysed by Sustar (2013), the emergence of the contemporary Republican right wing populism may be traced to the rise of the so called “Tea Party” in the year of 2009. The “Tea Party” represented a populist movement within the Republican Party’s structure that heavily criticized the Democratic Party including the Obama administration and aimed to particularly attract the dissatisfied circles of the American society during the period of the economic crisis. Furthermore, as the negative impacts of the crisis significantly affected various citizens belonging to the American working middle class, the space and potential for a strengthening right-wing populist political alternative were steadily growing (Sustar, 2013, 58-63). Here, we may perhaps find one of the original roots of the modern perception and form of the right wing populism that seems to occupy a noticeable position in the contemporary Republican political agenda. It also needs to be emphasized, once the middle class representatives appear in serious issues of social instability and uncertainty, the whole society naturally becomes much more vulnerable to various forms of political populism.

In fact, the above stated hypothesis is supported by Sustar (2013), who warns that a long term economic crisis with its unpredictable impacts and a subsequent potential downfall of the middle class might provide a ground for a growth of the extreme right in the United States. Simultaneously, Sustar mentions a potential emergence of various forms of violence and other socially pathological phenomena (Sustar, 2013, 63-64). As the journal article was published during the year of 2013, it might be argued, in association with the contemporary political environment of the United States, it seems that Sustar presented a relatively precise portrayal of the current dangers and threats with regards to the issues of the extreme right in the American society and politics.

As far as the role of the middle class in the U.S. political and social environment is concerned, its position and significance are emphasized by Caldwell (2016). Once the middle class finds itself in an uncomfortable state, the political situation and social atmosphere open gates for politicians who claim to possess simple solutions to very complex questions and issues (Caldwell, 2016). These factors more or less confirm the above specified facts and theories. As the modern history teaches us, the struggles, difficulties and sufferings of the middle class often led to an eruption of various forms of political populism.

5.2. Contemporary Republican Party and the figure of Donald Trump

The U.S. presidential election of the year of 2016 symbolized a significant milestone with regards to the transformation of the current Republican Party. The party nominated a publicly well-known business figure of Donald Trump as its presidential candidate. Even though Trump was generally viewed as a political outsider prior to the presidential race, he eventually managed to triumph in the election, achieving a victory in the close race against the Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. As particularly described by Hull (2020), Donald Trump significantly benefited from the support of the non-college educated white voters, as he vocally emphasized their economic concerns during the campaign. Trump also targeted the emotional sphere of the white working class, often calling and portraying the American political circles as the corrupt political establishment. Last but not least, the Trump campaign included the slogan of “Make America Great Again” - “MAGA”, awakening the potentially imaginary sentiment of a stolen “Great America” (Hull, 2020, 11-12). It seems that the selection of Donald Trump as the Republican presidential candidate came partially as a reaction to the previous unsuccessful Republican period with regards to the presidential elections. Additionally, the Trump nomination might be understood as a rather sad portrayal of the broken internal structure of the Republican Party, as the political entity was not able to generate a strong and representative political figure from its mainstream political platform. At the same time, it may be argued, from the clearly political perspective, the selection of Donald Trump in 2016 appeared as a relatively successful, pragmatic political decision, considering the final results of the election. However, the following years were yet to fully portray the real impacts of the Donald Trump’s politics on the Republican Party’s platform as well as on the whole American political environment.

As Hull further explains (2020), from the very beginning of his term, president Trump aimed to fulfil some of his pre-election promises. He initiated the major tax cuts and advocated for a more intensive border security agenda. However, the real impacts of his policies remained relatively mixed. The Trump administration managed to improve the economic indicators in some specific categories, on the other hand, various other economic fields remained in stagnation. The COVID-19 pandemic appeared to represent the most severe issue of the Trump’s presidency. As the issues of the pandemic shocked and significantly influenced the whole international community, the United States belonged among the most

affected countries in relation to the total death rate associated with the disease. As far as the role of the presidential office during the pandemic is concerned, the Trump administration stood in the opposition towards various suggestions and policies aimed to significantly slow down the spread of the coronavirus. President Trump openly criticized the idea of social distancing. Instead, he repeatedly called for a fast reopening of the different sectors of the economy with the hope of restoring the domestic economic growth and prosperity. The COVID-19 episode had tragic impacts on the American society, leaving thousands of people dead. The issues of the pandemic are believed to represent one of the key factors of the Trump's unsuccessful re-election campaign in the year of 2020 (Hull, 2020, 12-14). From a general perspective, although the COVID-19 pandemic may not necessarily represent the universal factor of the Trump's electoral loss, it undoubtedly essentially contributed to the final results of the 2020 presidential election. As president Trump was often hostile towards the recommendations, advice and suggestions of various experts as well as scientific workers and academics, the COVID-19 period shall be definitely remembered as one of the leading aspects that cost Donald Trump a second presidential term.

As far as the role of the Trump administration in the foreign policy affairs is concerned, there were several crucial events and moments that dominated the U.S. foreign policy under the Trump's presidency. As specifically described by Mayer (2018), from a global perspective, the crucial foreign policy agenda included a more assertive U.S. approach towards the member states of "NATO" - "North Atlantic Treaty Organization", in relation to the fulfilments of the specific requirements and obligations of the members of the alliance. Suspension of the American direct participation in the Paris Climate Agreement symbolized another significant milestone of the U.S. foreign policy during the Trump era. In addition to the previously described events, the American trade wars against China and the European Union became closely associated with the Trump's foreign policy agenda. From the position of the U.S. presence in the region of the Middle East, the United States moved its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to the holy city of Jerusalem. Last but not least, the Trump administration withdrew America from the Iranian Nuclear Deal (Mayer, 2018, 6). It is also worth noting that president Trump seemed to have initiated a relatively more open, willing and tolerant approach towards some of the totalitarian and authoritarian leaders. These examples may specifically include the Trump's recurring encounters with the Russian president Vladimir Putin or meetings with the North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un. Considering the overall evaluation of the Trump administration's role in the global affairs,

from the perspective of the author of the thesis, the assessment would have to be mostly negative. While convincing the partners and allies in “NATO” organization of the necessity to responsibly fulfil the original obligations of providing the specific percentage of the national GDP to the military purposes appears to represent a very rational and highly pragmatic stance, the U.S. suspension of the participation in both the Paris Agreement and Iranian Nuclear Deal seem to have represented the move in a negative direction. However, it needs to be emphasized, the United States re-joined the Paris Agreement after the president Trump’s departure from the White House in the year of 2021.

As far as the political legacy of the Trump administration is concerned, unfortunately, it will be mostly remembered for the events and moments surrounding the aftermaths of the presidential election of 2020. As president Trump refused to accept the legitimate final results of the 2020 election, he severely undermined the basic pillars of the traditional American democratic political structure and environment. At the same time, the Trump’s post-election stances and proclamations significantly contributed to the eruption of political populism as well as to the widening gaps in the American society. As Mounk (2021) closely analyses, the era of the Trump presidency symbolized the strengthening tendencies in relation to the role and position of political populism within the U.S. social and political structure. Mounk describes Trump as the authoritarian populist politician. According to Mounk, the violent riots at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, the place that undoubtedly represents one of the key pillars of the American democracy, might be seen as an understandable, inevitable and expected consequence of the Trump’s four years presidential term, rather than as a highly unpredictable and shocking event. The fact that some American citizens were able to attack the building of the U.S. Capitol, believing the Trump’s narrative of the “stolen election”, signaled the growing populist trend among the American electorate. Nevertheless, as Mounk also explains, it is important to remember that the vast majority of the U.S. population was completely shocked and disgusted by the events surrounding the Capitol riots. Thus, it shall be stated, the events surrounding the election of 2020 and the following aftermaths, riots and violence do not represent the overall realistic portrayal of the contemporary political environment of the United States (Mounk, 2021, 1-2). With regards to the issues specifically described above, from the perspective of the author of the thesis, the situation associated with the 2020 post-election development could be mostly assessed as the individual failure of president Donald Trump with regards to his inability and unwillingness of accepting the political defeat in the presidential race. It seems that president Trump did not realize that once

an individual is in possession of an enormous political power, he also needs to own a great amount of responsibility in order to fulfil his task and obligations adequately, appropriately and respectfully towards the opposition circles. In other words, the increasing trends of both political populism and the widening gaps in the American society can go hand in hand, at least to a certain extent, with the particular offensive rhetoric of the figure of Donald Trump.

At the same time however, it should also be mentioned that the Republican Party as a whole appeared to have shown only a limited effort to at least partially correct the Trump's offensive and undermining proclamations and statements with regards to the position and stability of the American democratic institutions. In fact, as stated by Mounk (2021), the significant amount of the Republican representatives supported the Trump's narratives of the "stolen election" (Mounk, 2021, 3). This fact unfortunately confirms that there exists a serious issue within the Republican internal political structure that seems to represent a major threat to the stability of the American democracy even during the current political period. As of the first half of the year of 2024, Donald Trump is highly likely to represent the Republican candidate in the upcoming U.S. presidential election. We may only assume what the procedure of this year's election may eventually look like. Nevertheless, we can definitely learn a lot from the recent historical knowledge.

As far as the trend of the growing populism within the social structure is concerned, as already partially covered on the previous pages, the trajectory is influenced by various different factors including the difficulties and challenges of the middle class. The hypothesis is supported by Mounk (2021), who states that the aspects of the declining living standards of regular citizens may essentially contribute to the rise of populism. Other significant factors might include various fast changes in relation to the demographic and cultural structure or the intensifying role of social media in the society (Mounk, 2021, 5). The above stated factors more or less confirm the pivotal role of the middle class citizens in the economically advanced democratic countries. As also partially mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the growing and economically strengthening middle class appears to represent a crucial pillar of the country's predictable and stable political environment.

Even though the Trump administration's overall assessment should not be limited only to the events and issues surrounding the 2020 presidential campaign, election and its direct aftermaths, the serious dangers and major threats associated with the Trump's strongly irresponsible offensive rhetoric should not be forgotten. As demonstrated in the previous

paragraphs, the period of the Trump's presidency led to the rise of the intensive wave of populism, severe undermining of the basic democratic values, principles and institutions, strengthening divisions in the already highly divided U.S. society and extreme radicalization of the certain groups of the American population. As some of us may be wondering what the future course of the Republican Party's transformation may look like, there are numerous possible scenarios of the party's potential future development. One of the options was specifically described by Parmar approximately three years ago, when the issues associated with the Trump's refusal to accept the final results of the election still dominantly resonated within the American political spectrum and society. According to Parmar (2021), the so called movement of "Trumpism" was about to represent the leading ideological base of the Republican Party even during the post-Trump presidential period. The party ended up in a severe internal crisis as it accepted various Trump's narratives as its mainstream political agenda. The Republican Party as a whole accepted the policy of political extremism and the return to normalcy appeared unattainable at that moment (Parmar, 2021, 35-36). Unfortunately, with regards to the factors stated above, the Parmar's analysis appears to represent a relatively precise portrayal of the contemporary Republican Party's platform. As we are currently more or less in the middle of the voting year of 2024, the Republican Party rallies around the figure of Donald Trump, despite of his numerous unprecedented legal charges and other major social and political accusations and controversies. However, the Republican Party was unable to generate a different political leader who would have successfully stood up against Donald Trump and challenged his political dominance within the contemporary Republican Party's structure.

In fact, the previous statements are supported by White (2024), who mentions that the current Republican Party's platform is basically synonymous with the Trump's agenda. The Republicans do not represent the vocal supporters of the free trade policies anymore. Furthermore, the Republican Party no longer functions as a force that would challenge the Russian influence in the regions of the Eastern Europe and others. At the same time, the party's continuing inability to distant itself from the figure of Donald Trump symbolizes its contemporary state of representing a threat to the democratic pillars of the whole American politics. The potential victory of Donald Trump in the upcoming presidential election would further support the party's transformation into the political entity dominated by the one particular person (White, 2024). The facts presented above clearly demonstrate the current state of the Republican Party's position in the political environment of the United States.

Unfortunately, the Republican internal political structure appears to be severely broken, as the party does not seem to offer any significant relevant opposition towards the dominant figure of Donald Trump. Over the past years, the Republican Party seems to have transformed from the traditional conservative mainstream political force into the party of the right wing political populism and partially closer to the position of the political extremism. Thus, the future development of the Republican Party remains unclear. Nevertheless, it seems that the Republican Party's return to the "old political normalcy" appears to be more distant than ever before.

Based on all the relevant pieces of information presented on the previous pages, it may be stated, the Republican Party has experienced several key moments and crucial events with regards to its transformation since the period of the 1960s. The era of the 1960s set the Republican Party on the course of the conservative ideological values and policies that significantly resonated within the party's political agenda during the remaining decades of the twentieth century. The ideological movement of conservatism became closely associated with the Republican Party's political platform and is still widely believed to represent the crucial pillar of the contemporary Republican economic and social policies. Nevertheless, as stated in the previous passages of the thesis, the last decades and years were symbolized by the strengthening role of political populism within the party's platform and the internal political structure. These days, the party appears to be submitted to the interests of one particular man. Thus, it is now up to the Republican Party itself to rise from the ashes and regain the recognition, value and credit it once used to possess.

6. The polarization of the American society and the role of the Republican Party

The recent development of the Republican Party goes hand in hand, at least to a certain extent, with the phenomenon of the contemporary polarized society in the United States. Even though the elements of polarization have always been present in the American social and political environment, the current period seems to intensify the concepts of both the political and social polarization as well as radicalization of the American environment. This chapter specifically aims to analyse the main factors, causes and other aspects associated with the contemporary polarization of the American society and to provide a certain evaluation of the current Republican Party's role in the polarizing process.

6.1. Polarization and the role of the extreme political figures

As far as the polarization of the American society is concerned, as closely analysed and explained by Kleinfeld (2023), the U.S. voters are generally less ideologically divided than they actually believe. In other words, there are certainly various different opinions and perspectives with regards to numerous social and political issues among representatives of the American electorate. Nevertheless, the average voters tend to share a relatively similar opinion and viewpoint in relation to many of the crucial issues, difficulties and challenges present within the U.S. society. On the contrary, there exists a much greater division among representatives belonging to one of the two dominant political forces of the United States. The political party's representatives are much more likely to feel the mutual antipathy against one another than the regular citizens. Within the political sphere, the mutual animosity naturally grows if we are moving from the party's moderate politicians to the representatives occupying the more extreme positions. In relation to the Democratic Party's platform, the extreme positions are occupied by the so called "Progressive Activist" circles of the party's structure. On the Republican side, the extreme positions are represented by the "Devoted Conservative" structure (Kleinfeld, 2023, 1). Based on the facts presented in the paragraph, it may be more or less stated, the certain extent of social as well as political polarization seems completely natural and acceptable. The worldwide advanced democracies built their social and economic

success and development on the consistent exchanges, dialogues and constructive arguments with regards to the different topics, values and agendas. The opinion multiplicity and diversity naturally serves as a core pillar of the politically successful governments and socially and economically prosperous countries. However, once a mutual relationship between the different ideological groups grows into a state of an open hostility, the key democratic elements and principles are seriously endangered. The American politics of the past years seems to have undergone precisely this kind of transformation.

With regards to the polarization of the U.S. society, based on the facts presented in the previous paragraph, it seems that the political figures rather than representatives of the general public stand behind the more intense waves of polarization. In fact, this hypothesis is further supported by Kleinfeld (2023), stating that the ideological polarization of the American politics has reached an extreme level, as politicians from both sides of the ideological spectra were gradually moving from the moderate positions to the more extreme ones over the past years and decades. Kleinfeld also mentions that the process of nominating the more extreme politicians to the public institutions does not represent a new trend in the current American political environment. The trajectory of nominating the more extreme figures to various spheres of the public service was steadily increasing since the period of the 1980s (Kleinfeld, 2023, 2). Here, we may see the direct effects when the majority seats in the party's political platform are occupied by politicians from the extreme ideological wing. As also partially stated in the previous sections of the thesis, the lack of moderate political figures within both the Democratic and Republican platforms understandably leads to the intensifying tensions on the American political stage. As the two parties are mostly composed of representatives leaning to the more divisive political positions, it appears extremely difficult to set any degree of the cross-party political compromise. Moreover, the unfortunate impacts of the highly divided American political sphere may be observed on daily basis, as the Republicans and Democrats are barely able to agree with each other on any of the major domestic as well international political issues.

In addition to the above described facts, as also specified by Kleinfeld (2023), the political parties nominate the extreme representatives primarily with the intention of receiving as many votes as possible in order to achieve the best possible election result (Kleinfeld, 2023, 2). In other words, it seems that the parties generally believe that only a strong, charismatic, confident, straightforward and often extreme candidate has the greatest potential and ability to attract the voting masses that the party needs to achieve a political triumph. At

the same time however, it appears that the political parties do not realize the actual threats and potential dangers that may easily emerge when the extreme candidate is not aware of the safe boundaries with regards to his rhetorical statements and presentations that may significantly undermine the crucial democratic pillars and institutions of the country. In other words, as particularly explained by Kleinfeld (2023), the contemporary level of the polarization in the United States is specifically driven by the political parties and mostly by their extreme candidates and politicians (Kleinfeld, 2023, 2-3). Thus, it may be stated, the essential part of the political responsibility in relation to the current state of the American polarized social environment goes to members of the two specific political parties. Nominating the more polarizing and extreme figures to various spheres of the public service undoubtedly leads to another intensification of the current polarization of both the social and political American environment.

As far as the polarization itself is concerned, as carefully explained by Kleinfeld (2023), although the real ideological polarization among the regular American citizens is not that excessively high, as particularly described in the first paragraph of the subchapter, the trajectory of the so called “emotional polarization” has been increasing. The “emotional polarization”, known officially as the “affective polarization”, represents the individual’s strongly negative emotional image of the opposing political party and its representatives. In addition to the role of the political parties, the sphere of the media is believed to play an important role in these processes (Kleinfeld, 2023, 3). Thus, it may be stated, after the political parties themselves, the media of all kinds seem to represent another catalyst of the growing polarization within the current American social and political environment. In other words, as the media platforms from both sides of the ideological spectrum broadcast and vocally support the statements and proclamations made by their favourite political representatives, the supporters and followers of the given political force may easily gain the intensified negative impression of the opposing political entity. Furthermore, the undeniably growing role of the social media might perhaps represent a separate negative chapter of the whole issue.

With regards to other elements and factors associated with the polarization of the American social and political environment, there are several equally important aspects that play an essential role in the polarizing processes. The ideological differences represent just one of the crucial elements in relation to the social and political polarization of the United States. There are certainly several other key factors, such as the differences in the age

structure, level of education or religion affiliation, that contribute to the polarization of the American environment. As specified by Scala and Johnson (2017), other major aspects might include the gender differences, specific racial preferences or differences based on the regional diversity of the United States. Scala and Johnson specifically concentrate on the aspects caused by the differences between urban and rural areas of the country. Generally speaking, while the liberal voters usually tend to live in the larger urban areas, such as the metropolitan areas surrounding the bigger American cities, the conservative citizens prefer to live in the more rural areas of the country, where the towns are more distant from one another. However, as also stated by Scala and Johnson, the place where voters live represents only one piece of the whole story. The individual's particular lifestyle perhaps represents even a more significant factor. At the same time, it would be too simple to set the clear lines between the liberal and conservative citizens only on the differences between the urban and rural areas. Considering the great regional variety of the United States, creating the universal boundary between the rural and urban America seems rather inaccurate (Scala and Johnson, 2017, 163). It seems that there are numerous factors that play a certain part in the process of the social as well as political polarization in the United States. It also needs to be mentioned, the polarization with regards to many of the factors and elements presented above appears to represent a completely natural process, as there will always be some opinion differences between representatives of the different generations, cultures or educational levels. The differences in viewpoints should be fully acceptable as long as they do not collide with the basic democratic values, violate the implemented laws or escalate into an open hostility.

Based on all the facts and pieces of information described in the previous paragraphs, from the perspective of the author of the thesis, it may be stated that the contemporary form of the social and political polarization in the United States is primarily influenced by the inappropriate political behaviour of both the major American political parties. With the decreasing number of the moderate political representatives and the simultaneously increasing amount of the extreme political figures, the American political climate seems to be heading towards the unpredictable, darker and highly risky period. The offensive rhetoric of the leading political representatives combined with the irresponsible form of broadcasting and communication of some of the party's allied media services create serious social barriers that leave the American society much more vulnerable to various forms of political populism and radicalism.

6.2. Republican Party and the tendencies of the far right politics

As specifically described in the previous paragraphs of the chapter, the political parties appear to play a significant part in the process of the contemporary polarization of the American society. Through the nominations of the extreme political representatives, the parties essentially contribute to the intensifying polarization of the American social and political environment. As far as the particular role of the Republican Party is concerned, there are some potentially worrying trends in relation to the contemporary deterioration of the American social situation.

First of all, as closely explained by Parmar (2021), the already formed divisions within the U.S. society were further deepened during the presidency of Donald Trump, mostly during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by the Trump administration's inability to handle the situation appropriately. Furthermore, the Trump's "post-truth" proclamations regarding the "stolen election" intensified the tensions and dividing tendencies within the American society. Parmar specifically described Trump as "a divisive, authoritarian and incompetent president" (Parmar, 2021, 37). In addition to the previously stated facts, back in the year of 2021, there was another very worrying trend detected among the American citizens. It seemed that a significant portion of Americans was not really convinced about the future prosperity and stability of the United States. As Parmar (2021) mentions, "Almost 80 percent of Americans agreed that their country was falling apart" (Parmar, 2021, 37). Based on the issues presented above, it needs to be said, various malfunctions, failures and imperfections associated directly with the Trump administration definitely led to another wave of deepening the trenches within the American society. Thus, the period of the Trump's presidency may be viewed, primarily with regards to the American domestic environment, as a major failure of the then ruling political establishment. At the same time, the public's rather negative emotions and perspectives regarding the future development of the country may be partially viewed as an understandable reaction to the chaotic, unpredictable and highly unstable times associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the following "post-Covid" years. In other words, the "Covid" years undoubtedly represented an extremely difficult period not only for Americans but also for citizens of various other countries throughout the whole world.

In addition to the previously described facts, there is another visible trend within the contemporary Republican Party's platform. It seems that the Republican Party's mainstream political core has been steadily moving towards the extreme right sphere of the political spectrum over the past years. In fact, the observed trend is supported by Parmar (2021), stating that the Republican Party as a whole political entity has ideologically moved further to the right more than the party's average voters and supporters. As a result, the party's gradual shift to the right paved the way for the emergence of the more radical political representatives including the figure of Donald Trump. Moreover, the above specified processes have led to the rise of the right wing populist propaganda, intensification of the right wing extremism and arrival of the so called "post-truth" politics (Parmar, 2021, 39-40). Furthermore, the dangers and threats associated with the intensifying right wing extremism in the United States were closely described and analysed by Adolph (2021), offering the information that between the years of 2015 and 2021, there were more than 250 incidents directly associated with the issues of the right wing extremism in the United States (Adolph, 2021, 25). Based on the facts presented above, it may be stated, the recent development of the Republican Party has been responsible not only for the intensifying divisions in the American society, but partially also for the growing issues associated with the right wing extremism in the United States. In this case, we may perhaps again witness the direct effects of the party's ideological shift closer to the more extreme position of the ideological spectrum.

In addition to the issues associated with the extreme right in the United States, as Parmar (2021) also mentions, the contemporary Trump's Republican Party as a whole might be understood as a representation of the extreme right, considering some of its anti-government stances, white supremacy tendencies or conspiracy theories. The party seems to have adapted to some of the authoritarian ruling elements. The Republican Party is likely to remain in such conditions unless the elements of "Trumpism", including the figure of Donald Trump himself, completely disappear from the American political sphere (Parmar, 2021, 41-42). The question of the far right is also studied by Adolph (2021). According to him, the far right part of the Republican Party now has a potential of dismantling a significant portion of the U.S. government. By following the narrative of seeing the federal government as the number one enemy, the traditional democratic values and institutions are severely endangered. At the end of his research, Adolph compares the policies and issues associated with the extreme right as well as the extreme left. He states that there undoubtedly are representatives as well as vocal supporters of the extreme left agenda in the United States. Nevertheless, the

total number of major violent incidents associated with the extreme left is much lower than in the case of the extreme right (Adolph, 2021, 28-29). The presented facts more or less suggest that the growing presence of the extreme right is likely to represent a major social, political as well as safety issue in the United States during the following years. Moreover, once a certain part of the public begins seriously undermining the core democratic values and primary functions of the democratic institutions, the whole society might easily end up in a serious crisis. In other words, democracy is only as strong as the country's citizens are willing and determined to defend it. If the public's willingness to defend the country's key democratic values, pillars and institutions diminishes, the democratic governance is about to experience a much more difficult period.

Last but not least, with regards to the role of the Republican Party in the process of the polarization of the American society, it appears that the devoted supporters of the current Republican Party live in the completely different realities than the sympathizers of the Democratic Party. As specifically described by Parmar (2021), the divisions between the two ideological bases are enormous. Each of the two ideological forces seems to share different fears, anxieties as well as preferences and priorities. At the same time, they even appear to believe in different things or accept different versions of truth and facts. In other words, they seem to live in the mentally two isolated worlds (Parmar, 2021, 43). In this case, it could be argued, the above specified facts and processes may not necessarily be understood as the particular failures of the current Republican Party's platform. There are certainly other factors that might be associated with the above mentioned issues. However, the simple fact that the two different spheres of the one same society appear hardly able to find any unifying lines, elements, values or themes seems more than disturbing for any devoted supporter of the democratic governance.

Considering all the facts presented in the previous paragraphs, it may be said, the modern-day Republican Party plays a vital part in the process of the contemporary polarization of the American social and political environment. Even though there seem to be other major factors that need to be taken into account, such as the intensifying role of the social media, generational divisions, educational barriers and many others, the Republican Party and its policy of the contemporary days undoubtedly contribute to the current polarization of the American society. Furthermore, there are some seriously worrying trends in relation to the development of the current Republican Party, including the strengthening power and influence of the extreme right political agenda, increasing role and position of the

right wing populism and growing tendencies associated with the process of undermining the basic democratic pillars and institutions of the United States.

7. Use of the topic in “ELT”

First and foremost, due to a relative complexity of the specific topic of the thesis, the direct implementation and usage of the topic in the “English Language Teaching” - “ELT” environment, mainly with regards to the purposes of the lower secondary education, appear rather limited. For the purposes of the upper secondary education, the topic seems more appropriate, acceptable, feasible and understandable. Still, even if used in the secondary educational environment, the topic would have to undergo a certain reduction and simplification in order to fulfil the lesson’s pre-defined needs, requirements and objectives. As a result of the specified issues, the author of the thesis decided to use the rather non-standard technique and instruments in order to at least partially interconnect the topic of the thesis with the “ELT” educational environment of the particular age groups.

The original topic of the thesis was significantly shortened and simplified in order to fulfil the needs of the lower and upper secondary educational environment. The modified version of the topic includes a short combined introduction to the theme of the American political environment, specifically to the positions of the two major political parties in the United States. Particularly speaking, the following passage offers the two short separate informative worksheets, first for the purposes of the lower secondary education and second for the usage in the upper secondary educational environment, with the primary intention to briefly introduce the topic of the Republican and Democratic political parties to students of the respective educational levels. Under ideal circumstances, the worksheets could potentially function as a complement to the lessons dedicated to the topic of the United States, American politics, American political partisanship and so on.

The worksheet number one is intended to be used in the lower secondary educational environment. It mostly fulfils the informative function. Simultaneously, it provides students with the opportunity to develop their searching skills.

DEMOCRATIC

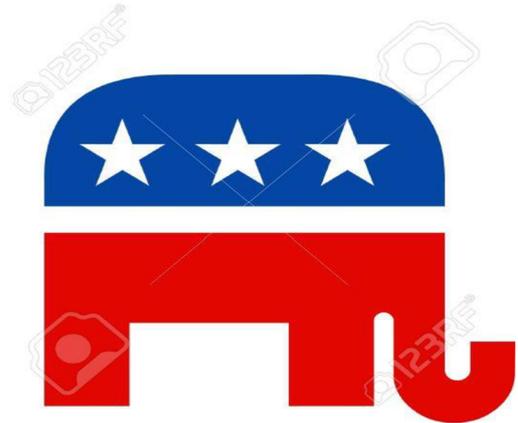
X

REPUBLICAN

Party



Party



(123rf.com)

DEMOCRATIC Party received its contemporary name in the 1830s. Between the years of 1836 and 1860, the Democrats won almost all presidential elections. The party was also successful during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Democratic Party of the current period supports the power, competence and interventions of the federal government. The party aims to partially regulate business and industry. At the same time, the Democrats strongly support many public social programmes. The party also aims to provide social services and government assistance to the disadvantaged parts of the society. It tries to protect the weaker social groups.

The Democrats have many followers and supporters mainly in the bigger cities and larger metropolitan areas of the United States.

The party's famous political figures include Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy or Barack Obama.

(Britannica.com).

REPUBLICAN Party was established in the year of 1854. The early Republicans criticized slavery in America. The party succeeded in a majority of the presidential elections during the period between the years of 1860 and 1932.

The modern-day Republican Party opposes the increased government spending and stands against the government regulations. The Republicans support traditional values and conservative ideas. At the same time, the party supports big tax cuts, business and opposes the government interventions in the domestic economy. The party also aims to strengthen the national military of the United States.

The Republicans are traditionally strong in the American rural areas and smaller towns. The party has many supporters in the region of the American South.

The party's famous political figures include Abraham Lincoln, Richard Nixon or Ronald Reagan.

(Britannica.com).

A) In the word search, find names of these eight American presidents:

BUSH, COOLIDGE, CLINTON, TRUMP, JOHNSON, CARTER, WILSON, FORD

S	D	F	V	N	Z	G	X	E	R	H	S	J	P	W	R	M	J	E	I	K	L	E	H	A	L	O	P	H	V	D	S	T	B		
A	R	N	R	O	X	E	F	Z	G	K	N	U	R	F	O	W	L	G	P	C	Z	G	E	L	N	A	P	Y	P	S	B	L	U		
L	T	A	U	L	H	T	U	P	K	V	V	I	R	B	S	M	P	R	D	H	K	Z	D	M	S	C	Y	L	R	U	A	L	H		
J	A	T	E	G	J	H	S	W	Z	V	B	U	R	T	A	Y	H	K	I	D	H	S	I	K	S	M	S	Y	O	T	H	S	H		
G	N	O	T	N	I	L	C	B	T	W	S	R	L	E	L	T	E	W	K	L	J	K	R	L	K	I	E	L	U	P	S	P	E	S	
D	K	R	E	W	N	D	H	U	L	L	P	S	W	A	C	H	L	P	R	S	X	U	P	O	J	E	F	T	U	O	P	Z	U		
S	C	T	D	R	W	K	O	L	G	I	D	M	A	X	Z	E	M	T	F	H	M	U	S	O	S	Y	E	M	A	Z	B	B			
C	E	R	H	F	U	E	R	T	E	J	Z	L	A	I	E	P	L	M	E	R	C	A	X	I	J	K	C	I	Z	R	B	W	I	X	U
K	U	U	L	O	W	O	L	A	Z	W	K	A	L	O	P	D	G	S	C	N	T	R	C	O	F	K	E	L	Y	Z	D	P			
S	H	M	L	I	O	W	J	O	H	N	S	O	N	F	E	Q	O	P	P	L	I	V	E	R	C	Z	L	I	T	E	H	E	R	Z	
I	L	I	P	I	R	G	F	W	D	F	A	S	I	O	O	P	H	F	V	X	N	W	K	L	O	P	F	R	R	T	I	S	H	J	
O	L	L	I	C	U	H	H	J	R	E	C	Z	N	O	S	L	I	W	L	M	U	K	H	W	S	K	N	A	J	K	L	T	E		
Z	E	H	J	T	Q	T	K	I	O	B	R	D	C	K	Z	N	R	M	Z	Y	K	O	L	N	T	M	G	C	J	H	E	W	I		
J	T	D	J	O	Z	O	L	P	F	S	V	N	Z	E	M	T	X	M	U	R	C	V	B	S	D	K	O	P	O	L	E	V	H		
V	F	G	I	O	B	S	J	K	T	U	O	L	H	S	H	E	R	L	A	K	L	L	A	U	D	C	R	P	O	R	F	C	B	I	

**B) With your partner, find out what political party each one of the presidents belongs to.
There are four presidents for each of the two political parties:**

DEMOCRATIC:

REPUBLICAN:

The worksheet number two is intended to be used in the upper secondary educational environment. It should be implemented as a potential short complement to the lessons dedicated to the topics of the American Politics and other similar themes. It mostly fulfils the informative functions. The informative part of the sheet represents a directly cited material from the website *Britannica.com*, particularly from the articles *Democratic Party summary* and *Republican Party summary* respectively, in order to provide students with a summarized but at the same time relatively detailed pieces of information with regards to the topic of the lesson. During the lesson, students are asked to watch the two videos that are closely interconnected with the topic of the Republican and Democratic Parties. The videos may be found under the following links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6R0NvVr164>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8VOM8ET1WU>

Before you watch the videos and read the articles, take a short quiz in order to revise what you already know about the topic of the two major American political parties:

- 1) What party is the contemporary American president from? DEM X REP
- 2) What party is typically associated with the colour of RED? DEM X REP
- 3) Which one of the two parties is associated with the ideological movement of conservatism?
DEM X REP
- 4) What party did president Abraham Lincoln belong to? DEM X REP
- 5) What party did president Barack Obama belong to? DEM X REP
- 6) Which one of the two parties is currently more successful and popular among citizens belonging to various ethnic minorities? DEM X REP
- 7) What party is the symbol of elephant associated with? DEM X REP
- 8) What party is traditionally more successful in the states such as Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska or Oklahoma? DEM X REP
- 9) Which one of the two parties is associated with the ideological movement of liberalism?
DEM X REP
- 10) What party is typically associated with the colour of BLUE? DEM X REP
- 11) What party does the former president Donald Trump belong to? DEM X REP
- 12) What party is traditionally more successful in the states such as New York, California, Illinois or Massachusetts? DEM X REP
- 13) What party is the symbol of donkey associated with? DEM X REP
- 14) What party does stand against the government regulation of the economic, business or industry sphere? DEM X REP
- 15) What party did president Ronald Reagan belong to? DEM X REP

Democratic Party is one of the two major political parties in the USA. Historically the party of labour, minorities and progressive reformers. The party adopted its present name in the 1830s, during the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Democrats won nearly every presidential election in the years 1836–60, but the issue of slavery split the party. As a result, in 1860 the new antislavery Republican Party won its first national victory under Abraham Lincoln. From 1861 to 1913 the only Democratic president was Grover Cleveland, in these years the party was basically conservative and agrarian-oriented, and its members were opposed to protective tariffs. It returned to power under Woodrow Wilson, instituting greater federal regulation of banking and industry, but the Republicans' frank embrace of big business drew voters amid the prosperity of the 1920s. Democrats became dominant again in 1932, electing Franklin D. Roosevelt. A coalition of urban workers, small farmers, liberals, and others sustained Democrats in office until 1953, and the party regained the presidency with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960. In the 1970s and '80s the Democrats held the presidency only during the single term of Jimmy Carter. They regained the presidency in 1992 with the election of Bill Clinton. In the presidential election of 2000, Clinton's vice president, Al Gore, was defeated by Republican George W. Bush. In 2004 the party's presidential nominee, John Kerry, was defeated by Bush. In the 2008 presidential election Democratic nominee Barack Obama defeated Republican John McCain. Barack Obama was successfully re-elected in 2012, succeeding over the Republican candidate Mitt Romney. Hillary Clinton lost in the 2016 election against Donald Trump. The Democrats returned to the White House in 2021 with the presidential victory of Joe Biden. The modern Democratic Party generally supports a strong federal government with powers to regulate business and industry in the public interest, federally financed social services and benefits for the poor, the unemployed, the aged, and other groups; and the protection of civil rights." (Britannica.com)

“Republican Party is one of two major U.S. political parties. It was formed in 1854. The new party opposed slavery and its extension into the territories. Its first presidential candidate was John C. Frémont in 1856. Its second, Abraham Lincoln, won the 1860 election. Republican candidates won 14 of 18 presidential elections between 1860 and 1932, through support from an alliance of Northern and Midwestern farmers and big-business interests. The Republican Party’s inability to counter the impact of the Great Depression led to its ouster from power in 1933. In 1953, the presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower brought a moderate wing of the party to prominence. The party’s platform remained conservative, emphasizing anticommunism, reduced government regulation of the economy, and lower taxes, many members also opposed civil rights legislation. In the 1950s the GOP gained new support from middle-class suburbanites and white Southerners disturbed by the integrationist policies of the national Democratic Party. Richard Nixon, who narrowly lost the 1960 presidential race, won narrowly in 1968 and by a landslide in 1972, but he was forced to resign in 1974 as a result of the Watergate scandal. Ronald Reagan won the presidency in 1980 and 1984. He introduced deep tax cuts and launched a massive buildup of U.S. military forces. Reagan’s vice president, George Bush, was elected in 1988 and enjoyed enormous popularity after success in the Persian Gulf War, but an anemic economy led to his defeat in 1992 by Democrat Bill Clinton. In 2000 George W. Bush narrowly won the presidency in one of the closest and most controversial elections in U.S. history. In 2004 he won re-election. In the 2008 presidential election Republican nominee John McCain was defeated by Democrat Barack Obama. The Republican Party regained the presidential office in 2016 with the election victory of Donald Trump. The current Republican Party continues to emphasize tax cuts, traditional social values, and a strong national defense.” (Britannica.com)

8. Conclusion

The primary aim of the diploma thesis included the close examination, description and evaluation of the transformation of the Republican Party during the period from the 1960s to the contemporary time. This particular objective was fulfilled by providing the chronological narration, analysis and assessment of the most significant events, facts and issues associated with the Republican Party's development during the above specified period. Another main objective of the thesis was to precisely describe the issue of the current polarization of the American society and to analyse and evaluate the role of the Republican Party in the current polarizing processes of the American social and political environment. This aim of the thesis was fulfilled by providing the detailed characteristics, analysis and assessment of the current phenomenon of the polarized society in the United States and offering the specific evaluation of the Republican Party's role and position in the process of the social and political polarization in the United States.

The minority objectives of the thesis included introducing the reader to the issues related to the time of the Republican Party's development before the period of the 1960s. The thesis also offered the specific description and characteristics of the most significant issues and challenges associated with the period of the 1960s. Last but not least, the work provided a short passage dedicated to the potential usage of the modified version of the topic of the thesis in the English Language Teaching - "ELT" environment.

In conclusion, the Republican Party undoubtedly went through many stages of its political and ideological development since the time of the party's initial foundation in the middle of the nineteenth century. In relation to the party's transformation since the period of the 1960s, the Republican Party's development was mostly specified by the strengthening influence of the conservative ideological movement within the party's structure. After the revolutionary period of the 1960s, the party established itself as the clear pillar of the American conservative ideals, policies and values. The political entity experienced periods dominated by the party's enormous political successes, such as the era of the Reagan's golden age of conservatism, but it also witnessed times of the significant political downfalls, including the scandal around Richard Nixon or the turbulent period surrounding the emergence of the populist right wing political platform leading to the subsequent rise of the

figure of Donald Trump. The story of the transformation of the modern-day Republican Party seems to partially reflect the story of the recent development of the whole American society. The Republican Party of the contemporary time does not appear to struggle with the lack of political support or popularity among the American citizens. Nevertheless, the current divisions between the two sides of the ideological spectrum of the American society and politics seem to have grown more than ever in the past. The Republican Party, as one of the two dominant political forces in the United States, definitely carries a great degree of responsibility with regards to the contemporary state of the American society.

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Resumé

Diplomová práce se primárně věnuje tématu vývoje a proměny Republikánské strany v období od 60. let minulého století do současnosti. Práce popisuje, hodnotí a analyzuje hlavní klíčové události a momenty transformace Republikánské strany ve výše uvedeném období. Popis, hodnocení a analýza daného vývoje je následně doplněna o vlastní komentáře autora práce. Současně se práce zaměřuje na popis, hodnocení a bližší analýzu současné polarizované společnosti ve Spojených státech. Následně je hodnocena a analyzována konkrétní role Republikánské strany v těchto polarizačních procesech. Práce zároveň nabízí pasáže, které blíže přibližují vývoj Republikánské strany v období před 60. léty minulého století. Práce je rovněž doplněna o krátkou pasáž věnující se případným možnostem implementace modifikovaného tématu práce do vzdělávacího prostředí výuky anglického jazyka. Primárními nástroji a metodami pro vypracování práce jsou akademické články, odborné publikace a jejich následná analýza a komparace.