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Candidate session number

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Examination session (May or November)

May

Year

2012

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: English B (group 2)

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Barack Obama's revival of the
American Dream through his successful
presidential campaign in 2008 (category 26)

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: _____

Date: 14.2.2012

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) _____

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

_____ took an effort in choosing his topic by offering different ideas before finally deciding on his focus. While working on his subject, he showed a deep interest in American history, located and used a wide range of sources to enlarge his background knowledge and to prove his view of Obama's successful revival of the American Dream in 2008. During his vice voce he was very convincing due to thorough and well-informed reflection and the ability to highlight relevant historical and political issues necessary to answer the research question.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: _____

Date: 14.02.2012

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number



Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3
A research question	1/	2		2	
B introduction	2/	2		2	
C investigation	3/	4		4	
D knowledge and understanding	3/	4		4	
E reasoned argument	3/	4		4	
F analysis and evaluation	2/	4		4	
G use of subject language	4/	4		4	
H conclusion	1/	2		2	
I formal presentation	4/	4		4	
J abstract	2/	2		2	
K holistic judgment	3/	4		4	
Total out of 36	28/				

Name of examiner 1: _____ (CAPITAL letters) Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 2: _____ Examiner number: _____

Name of examiner 3: _____ Examiner number: _____

IB Cardiff use only: B: _____

IB Cardiff use only: A: 105150

Date: 15/5

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

EXTENDED ESSAY

ENGLISH B / HL

Barack Obama's revival of the American Dream
through his successful presidential campaign in 2008 ✓

Words: 3983

ABSTRACT

How did Barack Obama revive the belief in the American Dream during his successful presidential campaign in 2008?

EQ

The essay examines the topic by first investigating the background of America's national pride, which can be derived from the belief in the American Dream. Economic achievement and military power as well as the belief in Manifest Destiny are also derivatives of U.S. national pride and are all ultimately connected to the American Dream.

✓

It then contrasts the American Dream with the history of racism in America, which has significantly decreased in the last decades. Despite icons of the American Civil Right Movement and desegregation, particularly young African Americans of the 21st century were lacking a person representing the ultimate fulfillment of the American Dream.

The essay then analyses America's situation after the Bush-era, which is marked by economic meltdown, political and military humiliation, a diminishing national pride and a fading belief in the American Dream.

sm.

It then illustrates how Obama re-sparked the American Dream. The promise of health care and new energy was appropriate in light of rising unemployment figures and sustainability responsibilities. The withdrawal of US troops from Iraq was a promise widely accepted since the justification for the war was never found, and human rights abuses publicly humiliated the military. Most importantly, Barack Obama himself was an icon of the fulfillment of the American Dream.

✓

Obama's electoral strategy also proved to be innovative and helped him become the 44th president of the United States.

In conclusion, Barack Obama ultimately revived the belief in the American Dream by becoming the first African American president of the U.S.A. as a result of his successful electoral strategy, and by becoming a paradigmatic icon of the fulfillment of the American Dream.

anal

all present
2
Is Obama as the Am. Dream
being used as the cultural
artifact or icon?
This is not clear

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There might be too much breakdown here.

Oh rather broad background.

1 INTRODUCTION

The story of the first African American President of the United States of America began at Kapi'olani Maternity & Gynecological Hospital, on August 4, 1961¹. Barack H. Obama's mother had no idea that the child she gave birth to would one day be inaugurated as the most powerful man on earth².

The following essay will deal with the question *how Barack Obama revived the belief in the American Dream during the course of his presidential campaign in 2008*. First, it will reflect upon America's situation prior to the election, with emphasis on the American Dream, racism in America, and America's economic, social and political situation after the Bush era. RO

It will then show how Barack Obama gave hope to millions of Americans. The reawakening of the American Dream plays a significant role during the presidential campaign of Barack Obama and is part of the prescribed English higher-level 12.1 curriculum. ?

2 Historical background of America's national pride

It is important to illustrate the historical background of the American national pride, in order to understand how, and why, the American Dream was revived in the hearts of the American people during the course of Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008.

The United States of America and its people considerably emphasize a feeling of national pride. This can be observed at public facilities, where school children regularly chant the pledge of allegiance, as well as in the presentation of the national flag in public and private areas.

¹ Henig, Jess; Miller, Joe: "Born in the U.S.A.; The truth about Obama's birth certificate" (August 21, 2008) URL: http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/born_in_the_usa.html (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

² Cp. Miller, Kenneth: "The Most Powerful Man in the World is a Black Man" (January 22, 2009) URL: <http://www.lasentinel.net/The-Most-Powerful-Man-in-the-World-is-a-Black-Man.html> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

It appears the American Dream is the focus but there is no real artifact associated - this is not clearly attached to one of the categories directly which would help -

2.1 The American Dream

Perhaps the most significant derivative of America's national pride goes back to the Declaration of Independence, which was issued in order to illustrate American Independence from Britain, as it grants every American certain "unalienable rights", amongst them "The Pursuit of Happiness" and the promise that "all men are created equal"³.

Americans are proud of the foundation of their country, which is evident in the rhetoric they use. They often mention their "Founding Fathers" as well as their "founding documents" in speeches, because they symbolize America's independence from Europe. *sh*

*"[...] we, the people, have remained faithful to the ideals of our forebears and true to our founding documents."*⁴

*"[...] our Founding Fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man -- a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake."*⁵

Since the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, millions of foreigners from Europe and Asia have immigrated to America, as it allowed them to practice their religions freely, escaping from religious persecution around the world. They gathered in a country with their common dream, their "American Dream". The country became a symbol of success and innovation, a country where everything could be made possible. ✓

In modern times, the so-called "American Dream" is the belief that independent of your race, gender, origin or religious views, everything is possible if one tries hard enough.

³ Jefferson, Thomas: "The Declaration of Independence" (1776) URL: http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html (retrieved: April 2, 2011)

⁴ Obama, Barack: "President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address" (January 21, 2009) URL: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

⁵ Obama, Barack: "President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address" (January 21, 2009) URL: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

Oh - good establishment of the 'Dream' as an iconic element Thus a Cat 26 essay

*"[...] our unyielding faith -- a faith that anything is possible in America."*⁶

*"They taught us that if we dreamed big enough and if we worked hard enough, anything was possible [...] we call that the 'American dream' [...]"*⁷

2.2 Economic achievement

In accordance with the American Dream, the American economy has become the largest national economy in the world, with an estimated GDP of \$ 14.53 trillion in 2010⁸. In its history, American entrepreneurs have given way to innovative products, infrastructure and consumer goods that make up the everyday life of the majority of people living in the western world.

Along with actual economic output, the economic development in America has given way to high living standards, attracting many immigrants. Massive immigration has created cultural diversity which has spawned innovative entertainment and music, spanning from Hollywood to jazz and hip-hop/rap.

As a result of the sturdy belief in the American Dream, it is justifiable to state that American national pride is also marked by the economic achievement of its people.

2.3 Military power and Manifest Destiny

Along with its economic achievement, the economy has empowered the American government with enough financial resources to become the world's most dominant military power. In 2010, the country's military expenditures accounted for about 41% of global military spending⁹.

⁶ Obama, Barack: "Speech at Lincoln Memorial concert" (January 18, 2009) URL: <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/01/18/raw-data-obamas-speech-lincoln-memorial-concert/> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

⁷ Obama, Michelle: "Michelle Obama sees the American Dream... in Chile" (March 21, 2011) URL: <http://www.theblaze.com/blog/2011/03/21/michelle-obama-sees-the-american-dream-in-chile/> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

⁸ Bureau of economic analysis - U.S. Department of commerce: "BEA News Release: Gross Domestic Product" (September 29, 2011) URL: http://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/national/gdp/2011/pdf/gdp2q11_3rd.pdf (retrieved: March 30, 2011)

⁹ Wolf, Jim "US, allies' share of world military spending shrinking-study" (July 7, 2011) URL: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/07/military-spending-usa-idUSN1E7661J620110707> (retrieved March 28, 2011)

good sources

This puts America in the position to exercise global military influence. In accordance with the values and beliefs of Abraham Lincoln, the belief in an American mission to promote and defend democracy throughout the world continues to have an influence on American political ideology¹⁰. This belief has originated from "Manifest Destiny". Because of their strong belief in liberty, equality and justice, Manifest Destiny argues that it is America's mission to promote and defend democracy throughout the world.

*not really relevant?
Re #19*

The profound effects of military advertisements, the sturdy belief in Manifest Destiny, as well as a significantly high proportion of employment in the security sector also contribute to a feeling of national pride.

3 Racism in America

However, these feelings of national pride have not always prevailed for all of America's people. Even in the Second World War, in which America pursued its Manifest Destiny, it did not see its African American citizens as worthy to fight alongside whites, to defend democracy. African Americans and whites fought in segregated army units until 1948.

The seemingly idyllic, and openhearted formulation of the American Dream is not in accordance with racial tensions that have taken place in America's history. In order to understand the true nature of these racial tensions, it is necessary to take a look at American history.

How is this related?

3.1 Slavery and historical segregation

From 1619 up to the end of the American Civil War, Africans were shipped from the African continent to the English colonies, and later the United States of America. These Africans were treated as property; they could be sold, and had no sufficient human rights. They worked on large scale plantations, without pay, and were commonly abused. Eventually, in the 1900s moral arguments against the ownership of slavery were considered in a large scale. The North's wish to abolish slavery, and the South's desire to continue slave work on plantations led to the

¹⁰ Cp. Stephanson, Anders "Manifest destiny: American expansionism and the empire of right" (1996). Hill and Wang.

outbreak of Civil War in 1861. After the defeat of the South, the Emancipation Proclamation announced the freedom of some 4 million slaves, followed by the 13th Amendment which secured the freedom of the rest¹¹.

3.2 American Civil Rights Movement

Since America's civil war, slaves had been freed, but African Americans were still segregated from whites. Restaurants had been labeled "whites only", with segregation taking place in public facilities, public transportation and public services, as well as in restaurants, bars and private providers of goods and services.

African Americans were suppressed which contrasted to what the American Dream seemed to promise. Yet, since the abolishment of slavery, this outright discrimination was continually being reflected upon, as a response to the African American Civil Rights Movement. The rights of all American people, including African Americans began gaining more recognition. In 1904 Charles Follis was the first African American playing football professionally¹², and the color line was crossed in 1946, when Jackie Robinson signed in for the Brooklyn Dodgers¹³. Martin Luther King Jr. dreamt of equal rights amongst all of America's people, and became a national figure supporting racial desegregation. Then Bill Cosby co-starred in "I Spy", becoming the first black person to appear in a starring role on American television¹⁴. The first African American governor followed in 1990, the year finishing off with America's first African American Playmate of the year¹⁵. The trend towards a more openhearted, tolerant America seemed irreversible.

*interesting but
make the
connection
clear*

¹¹ Guelzo, Allen C. "The Great Event of the Nineteenth Century": Lincoln Issues the Emancipation Proclamation" (April 3, 2011) URL: <http://web.archive.org/web/20110430202610/http://www.hsp.org/node/2974> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

¹² Nash, Kimberly. "Breaking Pro Football's Color Line: The Story of Charles W. Follis" (August 1, 2009) URL: <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/228584-breaking-pro-footballs-color-line-the-story-of-charles-w-follis> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

¹³ Lamb, Chris "Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training" (2006). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press

¹⁴ Asante, Molefi Kete "100 Greatest African Americans: A Biographical Encyclopedia" (2002). Amherst, New York. Prometheus Books

¹⁵ Tomlinson, Mark; Playboy Magazine "Jennifer Jackson" (March 1965) URL: <http://wekinglypigs.com/cgi-bin/nand/search/pmstat?browse=%3A%3ACONFIG%3A%3Amodelbrowse&key=jackson%2C+jennifer&limit=0> (retrieved: March 29, 2009)

3.3 The [African-] American Dream

African Americans previously had had little perspective or hope of achieving what they dreamt of, even though laws had been passed to support desegregation. Bright icons of the transition from a segregated, to a desegregated country, like Martin Luther King Jr. had given hope to the African American Civil Rights Movement. The American Dream was starting to be dreamt by the African Americans, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech undermining the belief in racial equality, and the desegregated ability to live the American Dream.

Oh better,

However, African American students in America's classrooms did not have an individual giving them hope, a live individual acting as a role model, depicting what can ultimately be possible in accordance with the American Dream.

4 America's situation after the Bush-era

Along with the lack of an ultimate icon for young African Americans, America faced a reality that was characterized by economic meltdown, political and military humiliation and a dwindling belief in the American Dream, in the aftermath of the Bush-era.

There is no need for action with for such short memory

4.1 Economic meltdown

After the collapse of the U.S. housing bubble, the value of securities tied to real-estate pricing tumbled, damaging financial institutions globally¹⁶. This led to the economic recession after 2007, having major effects on the U.S. economy.

This involved a decrease in actual growth, along with a decrease in investment. A further implication of the recession was the rise of unemployment figures.

4.2 Political and military humiliation

Adding to the economic problems, America had begun fighting a war in Iraq, which was justified by the possibility of Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction. The humiliation of never finding these weapons of mass destruction seriously damaged the reputation of American foreign affairs.

¹⁶ Glass, Ira ""This American Life": Giant Pool of Money wins Peabody" (April 5, 2009) URL: <http://www.pri.org/stories/business/giant-pool-of-money.html> (retrieved March 29, 2011)

America's national pride was tainted with this political humiliation, and by the fact that the military was engaging in an unjustified war.

Human rights abuses in Iraqi prisons, the most scandalous having taken place in Abu Ghraib were the cause of further humiliation for the American Armed Forces.

4.3 Belief in the American Dream was fading

As a result of the economic meltdown, and of the political and military humiliation, American national pride was thinning. Along with it, the thought of everything being possible was becoming irrational, in the light of rising unemployment figures. The historical belief in the American Dream was diminishing.

a longer paragraph of the above to get to the conclusion would be more effective

5 How Obama re-sparked the American Dream

In the light of a financial catastrophe, an unfinished war and a politically divided America, along came a 46-year-old African American Senator promising "Change"¹⁷.

5.1 Yes we can!

With George W. Bush Jr. having served his final presidential term, the American people were expecting a change in policy. Republicans and Democrats had very different opinions in national, political, economic and social issues, yet Democrats arguably had more fundamental changes in mind.

*"For everywhere we look, there is work to be done."*¹⁸

5.1.1 Health care & New Energy

With it being one of his key strategies, creating affordable and accessible health care for all was to reshape the vulnerability of American citizens without health

¹⁷ Cp. Obama, Barack: "Full Text - Senator Barack Obama's Announcement for President" (February 10, 2007) URL: <http://usliberals.about.com/od/extraordinaryspeech2/a/ObamaAnnounce.htm> (retrieved: March 30, 2011)

¹⁸ Obama, Barack: "Inaugural Speech" (January 21, 2009) URL: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

insurance. In light of the economic meltdown, and rising unemployment figures the possible change in the insurance system gave hope to millions of Americans.

Before his election, American citizens without insurance had to accept the risk of injury, without proper treatment because they could not afford to pay the medical bill.

When talking about health care, Obama used emotional examples to illustrate the need for "Change";

*"And as someone who watched my mother argue with insurance companies while she lay in bed dying of cancer, I will make certain those companies stop discriminating against those who are sick and need care the most."*¹⁹

American dependence on fossil fuels, as well as significantly more public attention on climate change became increasingly important in American politics, and Obama laid out a new plan with Joe Biden, titled "New Energy for America".

When oil prices continued to rise, worries about dependence on foreign oil steadily became more significant on the agenda of politicians.

Obama's plan aimed at decreasing foreign oil dependence, increasing investment in renewable resources, reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as creating jobs²⁰. In order to reduce the reliance on foreign oil, the plan aims at saving as much oil as the United States of America currently imports from the Middle East and Venezuela in 10 years²¹. To develop clean energy sources and technology, and support the creation of five million new jobs, the plan proposes investments of \$150 billion dollars in private efforts in these fields²². A reduction of greenhouse gases by 80% should be made possible by a cap-and-trade program

Very broad approach here

¹⁹ Obama, Barack "Barack Obama, nomination acceptance speech" (August 29, 2008) URL: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08242/907981-470.stm?cmpid=elections.xml> Retrieved 31.3.2011 (retrieved: March 30,2011)

²⁰ Cp.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environment/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

²¹ Cp.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environment/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

²² Cp.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environment/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

that promotes emission efficiency in the industrial sector²³. This cap-and-trade principle is a market-based approach providing economic incentives for the reduction in pollutants, and is a form of carbon pricing²⁴.

By investing into a sunrise industry, Obama aimed at not only securing the jobs of future generations, but at readjusting the American economy to the sustainability requirements of the 21st century.

*How did this
rekindle the
dream?*

5.1.2 Withdrawal of US Troops from Iraq

The invasion of Iraq on March 20th, 2003 had been highly disputed in America, with many opposing the multinational military campaign. Pictures of airplanes flying into buildings distorted the ideals of the American people. A new inferiority was founded, and the “War on Terror” was born. America’s people found themselves confronted with an enemy that did not abide with the rules of war, and they were tempted to fulfill their manifest destiny, as in spreading democracy throughout the world.

gd pt.

America invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, followed by Iraq in 2003. With the aim of confiscating “weapons of mass destruction”, George W. Bush began his war on terror.

Barack Obama had opposed the Iraq war since its authorization through the joint resolution in Congress on October 2nd 2002²⁵, and had delivered a speech against it on that very day, to a Chicago anti-Iraq war rally²⁶. In March 2003 he re-

*excellent use
of language*

²³ Cp.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environment/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

²⁴ Cp.: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/energy-and-environment/> (retrieved: March 31, 2011)

²⁵ American Congress “AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2002“ (enacted October 16, 2002) URL: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ243/pdf/PLAW-107publ243.pdf> (retrieved March 31, 2011)

²⁶ Ritter, Jim: "Anti-war rally here draws thousands" (March 17, 2003) Chicago Sun-Times: p. 3. Retrieved February 3, 2008. URL: http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=CSTB&p_theme=cstb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=headline%28Anti-war%20rally%20here%20draws%20thousands%29%20AND%20date%28all%29&p_field_advanced-0=title&p_text_advanced-0=%28Anti-war%20rally%20here%20draws%20thousands%29&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_d (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

reduce

affirmed his position against the Iraq war, in another anti-war rally. He claimed that "it's not too late" to stop the war²⁷.

Obama laid emphasis on ending the Iraq War, and repeatedly stated this.

"Change is a foreign policy that doesn't begin and end with a war that should've never been authorized and never been waged" ²⁸

5.1.3 Barack Obama as an icon of the American Dream

Barack H. Obama was born in Hawaii, the child of Barack Obama Sr. and Stanley Ann Dunham. His father was a black economist who grew up in Kenya. Stanley Ann Dunham was white, and was born in the American State of Kansas²⁹.

His heritage is the first aspect of his life, which can be related to the belief in the American Dream. As an African American, Barack Obama was faced with an environment still characterized by discrimination and prejudice. Even though paradigms had shifted significantly, since the American Civil Rights Movement, a taste of racism towards African Americans remained.

But nonetheless, after finishing high school, Barack Obama majored in political science at Columbia University, specializing in international relations. After being a community organizer in Chicago, he entered Harvard Law School and graduated with a J. D. magna cum laude in 1991. After having been elected as the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review, he gained national attention. This led to the publishing of his first book, a personal memoir called "Dreams from my father" in 1995³⁰.

Oh this is better! but what of the campaign?

²⁷ Ritter, Jim: "Anti-war rally here draws thousands" (March 17, 2003) Chicago Sun-Times: p. 3. Retrieved February 3, 2008. URL: http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=CSTB&p_theme=cstb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=headline%28Anti-war%20rally%20here%20draws%20thousands%29%20AND%20date%28all%29&p_field_advanced-0=title&p_text_advanced-0=%28Anti-war%20rally%20here%20draws%20thousands%29&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_d (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

²⁸ Obama, Barack: "Victory Speech at St. Paul" (June 3, 2008) URL: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/06/03/obamas-nomination-victory_n_105028.html (retrieved: March 28, 2011)

²⁹ Price, Joann F. "Barack Obama: A Biography" (2008) Greenwood Press, P.5

³⁰ Niven, Steven J. "Barack Obama: A Pocket Biography of Our 44th President" (2009) Oxford University Press

His educational achievement undermines the thought that everything is possible if one tries hard enough. While being a typical African American, he managed to graduate at one of America's most notable universities. That can also be interpreted as a true fulfillment of the American Dream.

He was elected as a senator of Illinois in November 2004, his successful candidacy for senate initiating speculations about a presidential future³¹.

Mr. Obama announced his candidacy for president in Springfield, Illinois on February 10th 2007³², and prepared to run as nominee of the Democratic Party for the presidential election of 2008. He had published his second book titled "The Audacity of Hope" a little less than three months before³³.

As the first nominated African American candidate for presidency, Barack Obama became the national icon for young, African American students striving to fulfill the American Dream. His extraordinary achievement spelt the rekindling of the American Dream, which had been wavering significantly in the aftermath of the Bush era.

5.2 Electoral strategy

Barack Obama was truly an icon representing the true achievement of the American Dream. However, his presidential campaign, and his ultimate success may not have been made possible without a truly extraordinary electoral strategy. And without his ultimate success, the revival, and his representation of the American Dream may have not reached the climax it did reach, in the hearts of the American people.

Therefore it is important to emphasize Barack Obama's road to success, by shedding light on his innovative electoral campaign.

³¹ Davey, Monica "As quickly as overnight, a Democratic star is born". (March 18, 2004). The New York Times: p. A20. (retrieved: March 28, 2011)

³² Cp. Obama, Barack: "Full Text - Senator Barack Obama's Announcement for President" (February 10, 2007) URL: <http://usliberals.about.com/od/extraordinaryspeech2/a/ObamaAnnounce.htm> (retrieved: March 30, 2011)

³³ Cp. History.com "Barack Obama's "Dreams from My Father" is published" URL: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/barack-obamas-dreams-from-my-father-is-published> (retrieved March 31, 2011)

5.2.1 Fundraising

Among the things that sparked fascination amongst Americans, is the fact that Obama rejected public financing of his campaign. On June 19th he turned down public financing, arguing that “public financing of presidential elections as it exists today is broken, and we face opponents who've become masters at gaming this broken system”³⁴. In doing so, he became the first major-party presidential candidate to raise all money for his campaign without public financing³⁵.

connect to the dream

5.2.2 Usage of the new media

The Obama campaign raised a large portion of money over the internet. So-called “micro-giving” led to about half of all the money collected, to have been made in donations of less than \$200³⁶. It was increasingly easy for donations of even less than \$20 to be made, with the option of making these payments reoccurring³⁷. The possible option of making monthly contributions was popularized over the internet, and new outlets, such as an online store supporting the Obama Administration put Obama in a financially secure situation in the presidential campaign of 2008³⁸.

The extraordinary use of modern technology, with high-profile web developers supporting the campaign gave way to the first privately financed, and ultimately successful presidential campaign. Obama even had Chris Hughes, a co-founder of

³⁴ Salant, Jonathan D. “Obama Won't Accept Public Money in Election Campaign (Update3)” (June 19, 2008)

URL: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aNi.G0PhWnFw> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

³⁵ Salant, Jonathan D. “Obama Won't Accept Public Money in Election Campaign (Update3)” (June 19, 2008)

URL: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aNi.G0PhWnFw> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

³⁶ Cp.: Deerickson, “Barack Obama’s Online Fundraising Machine” (January 1, 2009) <http://e-strategyblog.com/2009/01/barack-obamas-online-fundraising-machine/> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

³⁷ Cp.: Deerickson, “Barack Obama’s Online Fundraising Machine” (January 1, 2009) <http://e-strategyblog.com/2009/01/barack-obamas-online-fundraising-machine/> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

³⁸ Cp.: Deerickson, “Barack Obama’s Online Fundraising Machine” (January 1, 2009) <http://e-strategyblog.com/2009/01/barack-obamas-online-fundraising-machine/> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

facebook.com, and a supporter of the Obama campaign help design his website (www.barackobama.com)³⁹.

5.2.3 Reaching young voters

The internet played a significant role in involving and reaching young voters. A major factor increasing Obama's popularity was his involvement in social networks. Obama created accounts in social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace, making it possible for supporters to share ideas, communicate and "socialize"⁴⁰.

*'How is the
the dream?'*

John McCain, his electoral opponent made comparatively little use of the internet, in fundraising or in building connections with younger voters⁴¹, giving Obama considerable advantages.

5.2.4 Transparency

Obama also offered updates via text messages to subscribers of his political party. These updates could also be received via email. In comparison with the McCain campaign, Barack Obama made all of his policies available online.

This made the young senator seem more trustworthy, and the issuing of regular updates also acted as a mechanism of defense, when rumors were deliberately spread by Republican groups about Obama's history. Obama launched the "Fight the smears" website (www.fightthesmears.com) in order to counter any false information Republican groups had issued about him.

He proved that he was born in America, by publishing his birth certificate on the website⁴². He also spread the word about fake text messages claiming that the last

³⁹ Memmot, James: „Facebook co-founder helps Obama build support on the web" (July 10, 2008) URL: <http://news.muckety.com/2008/07/10/facebook-co-founder-helps-obama-build-support-on-the-web/4011> (retrieved: March 29, 2011)

⁴⁰ Cp.: <http://www.facebook.com/barackobama>, <http://www.myspace.com/barackobama>, <http://twitter.com/#!/BARACKOBAMA> (retrieved March 30, 2011)

⁴¹ Cp. CBSNews "Obama Poised To Turn Down Public Financing" (February 11, 2008) URL: http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-250_162-4004908.html?pageNum=2&tag=contentMain;contentBody (retrieved April 1, 2011)

⁴² Henig, Jess; Miller, Joe: "Born in the U.S.A.; The truth about Obama's birth certificate" (August 21, 2008) URL: http://www.factcheck.org/elections-2008/born_in_the_usa.html (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

day to vote for the president was earlier than it actually was⁴³. Apparently, Obama was referring to voter suppressing efforts, aiming at keeping Obama voters from the polls. Other accusations claiming that Obama is a Muslim, not a Christian were also disproved by the website⁴⁴.

This section is also interesting but the argument could be more direct - The section on Obama's life + actions as revelation - The Dream has potential -

⁴³ Cp. www.fightthesmears.com (retrieved March 30, 2011)

⁴⁴ Cp. www.fightthesmears.com "The truth about Obama's faith"

URL: <https://my.barackobama.com/page/share/christian> (retrieved March 30, 2011)

6 CONCLUSION

Amidst the shaky economic, social and political circumstances, Obama revived the belief in the American Dream, by showing Americans the extent of their abilities; he was a 46 year-old African American proposing change; in a land where a mere 60 years ago, his father might not have had the same privileges and freedoms as he enjoyed in his youth⁴⁵.

*"For African Americans, it removed beyond a shadow of a doubt the unlimited possibilities that lie ahead"*⁴⁶

The economic downturn had caused high unemployment, making Americans continuously skeptical about the fulfillment of the American Dream. Barack Obama gave hope to the millions of Americans whose fate had been refined by the drastic effects of the financial crisis, initiated in 2007.

He gave hope to the families of soldiers who had volunteered to fight, and sacrifice for their country, in a war that was justified by the threat of inexistent "weapons of mass destruction"⁴⁷.

Obama gave hope to the believers in climate change, to the parents that wanted their children and their grandchildren to experience the same America that they had experienced in their youth. With his proposals for a cleaner, more efficient America he was to set the building-blocks for a renewable future.

His ultimately successful campaign was an idyllic accomplishment of the "true" American Dream, the belief that independent of race and heritage, anyone can achieve their goals if they try hard enough. Obama's successful campaign for presidency helped brighten the hopes of all Americans; it helped the American people to 'think big', to 'dream big dreams', to dream the American Dream.

The RQ is stated in such a way that it is not apparent which category of essay is being attempted - there is perhaps too much historical background not directly connected to the RQ, and the argument only brushes on the campaign itself. The language & references are excellent.

⁴⁵ Cp. Miller, Kenneth: "The Most Powerful Man in the World is a Black Man" (January 22, 2009) URL: <http://www.lasentinel.net/The-Most-Powerful-Man-in-the-World-is-a-Black-Man.html> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

⁴⁶ Miller, Kenneth: "The Most Powerful Man in the World is a Black Man" (January 22, 2009) URL: <http://www.lasentinel.net/The-Most-Powerful-Man-in-the-World-is-a-Black-Man.html> (retrieved: March 27, 2011)

⁴⁷ Nelson, Bill: "New Information on Iraq's Possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction" (January 28, 2004) URL: http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/2004_cr/s012804b.html (retrieved: April 7, 2011)

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