Ronald Reagan in 2016: The Symbolic and Political Uses of Collective Memory

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Abstract
While not all references are as blatant as Donald Trump’s slogan, “Let’s Make America Great Again,” it is hard to deny that Ronald Reagan is everywhere in the 2016 Presidential campaign. Whether it is the Republican primary debate in front of his Air Force One, Jeb Bush’s “Reagan-Bush 80” t-shirt, or the frequent rhetorical evocations by the candidates, it is hard to miss Reagan’s shadow hanging over the Republican candidates, their policies, and their visions for America. But how exactly are these candidates using Ronald Reagan? What kind of role do these references play in overall campaign strategy? What can this study reveal about the use of historical figures in modern day politics? This paper will take up these questions and analyze the rhetorical use of Reagan in the 2016 Republican Primary thus far.

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Ronald Reagan used the word “freedom” more than any other president in American history, but it's interesting to think about what he meant by the word "freedom." Because as we've seen in American history freedom has meant lots of things to lots of people. Is freedom, freedom from government tyranny? Or is freedom government protection from hunger and homelessness and military attacks? Do governments ultimately restrict freedom or provide it? Now there's no question that the federal government that Ronald Reagan inherited would have been absolutely foreign to President Ronald Reagan helped redefine the purpose of government and pressured the Soviet Union to end the Cold War. He solidified the conservative agenda for decades after his presidency. Governorship and Presidential Bid. Reagan stepped into the national political spotlight in 1964, when he gave a well-received televised speech for Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, a prominent conservative. Two years later, in his first race for public office, Reagan defeated Democratic incumbent Edmund "Pat" Brown Sr. by almost one million votes, winning the California governorship. His wife Nancy died of heart failure in 2016 at the age of 94 and was also interred at The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Center for Public Affairs. Fact Check. Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, is perhaps the second most popular and consequential Republican President after Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, Reagan’s careful rhetorical style proved deeply persuasive to the American people and earned him the
name of “Great Communicator.” That is now the conservative position. The liberal used to believe in freedom under law. He now takes the ancient feudal position that power is everything. Reagan’s governorship was also notable for his confrontation with student radicalism on California’s university campuses and for signing a law liberalizing abortion (which he later regretted) and the nation’s first no-fault divorce law. View Ronald Reagan Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. While the last few decades of political economic history give the impression that the logic of neoliberalism is inexorable, this article argues that once we look further backwards and dig into recently declassified archives documenting the early days of neoliberal theory and practice, we find a messier picture. The key ideas that they drew on and the policies that they used to put them into practice sought to transform the economy indirectly, through a set of performative policy devices that they believed would generate a dramatic shift in people’s inflationary expectations, lowering inflation without provoking a major recession. Photos: Ronald Reagan’s life and career. Outgoing President Jimmy Carter, left, sits with president-elect Reagan in the back of a limousine en route to Reagan’s inauguration on January 20, 1981. Hide Caption. 12 of 23. Photos: Ronald Reagan’s life and career. Reagan and the first lady wave immediately following his swearing in. Hide Caption. 13 of 23. While no one doubts Reagan’s importance to the conservative movement, some political figures wonder whether the revolution that he spawned has changed to such an extent that he’d feel uncomfortable in the current Tea Party era. “Reagan couldn’t have made it,” 1996 GOP nominee Bob Dole told Fox News Sunday in 2013 when asked whether the conservative icon would fit in today.