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A Readers Guide to Project 2025 *It's not just what is said, but how it's said that matters*

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UNPACKING PROJECT 2025'S PROPAGANDA *A RHETORICAL STRATEGY OF LIES, GASLIGHTING, AND BIAS*

Project 2025's *Mandate for Leadership* is a huge document (887 pages) that gives explicit instructions for how to remake every aspect of the current US government structure in the event that a conservative president is elected. The details of dismantling the government and replacing it with a cadre of political appointees who will do the President's bidding are so shocking that it's hard to see that **there's another structure hiding just below the surface – the structure of rhetoric that indirectly conveys some especially pernicious ideas.**

We need to understand the details of proposed policy changes in order to counter them effectively, but **the underlying ideas also need to be unpacked** because they carry powerful emotional weight that justifies the policies and makes them seem not only palatable, but necessary. It's not just *what* is said that matters – *how* it is said is also part of the message.

While much of the language in Project 2025 may seem inflammatory, it's important to understand the impact on policies and programs. Project 2025's authors deliberately use divisive rhetoric in their manifesto to encourage polarization, to create categories of people who deserve or don't deserve federal benefits, and to demonize and criminalize those who don't fit into the traditional family structure. This language shuts down discussion and makes any possibility of compromise seem impossible. **That is also intentional.**

As readers absorb the conservative playbook, we should also recognize the underlying ideology that is being advanced. This is the basic three-step propaganda strategy of autocracy: pit groups of people against each other; mark vulnerable groups as people to be hated, feared, and seen as a threat to the community; and finally criminalize the members of those groups.

These strategies are the same ones used by autocratic leaders around the world.

To quote American philosopher Jason Stanley, an expert on authoritarianism:



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“Fascism uses propaganda as a way of mobilizing a population behind the leader. Fascist propaganda creates an awesome sense of loss, and a desire for revenge against those who are responsible. [...] The goal of fascist propaganda is to mobilize a population to violently overthrow multi-party democracy and replace it with the leader.”³

The United States has never known authoritarianism, or a dictatorship, or fascism, but the threat is embedded in Project 2025. We have always known racism, white supremacy, gender discrimination, anti-immigration policies, and attacks on the poor. We have had internment camps for the Japanese, and under Trump, would-be immigrants were detained in mass camps. In recent years, conservatives have pushed many of the extremist policies put forth in Project 2025 to reshape America.

It’s critical for readers to be aware of this larger agenda, embedded within its fiery propaganda, name-calling, and wonky policy discussions of proposed GOP reforms. The rhetorical tools of autocracy are at work in Project 2025 proposals, language, and big vision.

7 STRATEGIES TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER

- 1. CREATING FALSE CONFLICTS AND OPPOSITIONS**
- 2. GASLIGHTING**
- 3. BIAS – DEMONIZING SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE**
- 4. APPROPRIATING UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS**
- 5. THE DOUBLE STANDARD**
- 6. RELENTLESS REPETITION OF BUZZWORDS**
- 7. OLD-FASHIONED HYPOCRISY**

³ <https://www.justsecurity.org/74504/movie-at-the-ellipse-a-study-in-fascist-propaganda/>



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STRATEGY 1: CREATING FALSE CONFLICTS AND OPPOSITIONS

This strategy works by dividing all differences of opinion or policy into insurmountable “us against them” conflicts for which there is no possible solution. Everything becomes a war that must be won or lost; there is no room for compromise.

The political landscape is falsely divided into two separate groups with nothing in common, enemies whose beliefs are mutually exclusive. The goal is to polarize people and make them suspicious of the “other side’s” values and agenda. This is a familiar tool of authoritarianism.

GOVERNMENT:

Project 2025 creates a false conflict between two different groups of Americans (conservatives and progressives) and between the federal government and the states. The federal government is portrayed as a centralized power (the “administrative state”) whose main aim is to take power away from “the people” – the “true Americans” who demand their right to determine their own lives.

In contrast, state governments are portrayed as doing the bidding of “the people” and reflecting their values. For example, the Project 2025 authors plan to abolish the Department of Education because, as a federal agency, its goal is to impose “woke ideology” on all students, against the will of their parents.

Example: “The department [of Education] is a convenient one-stop shop for the woke education cartel, which – as the COVID era showed – is not particularly concerned with children’s education. Schools should be responsive to parents, rather than to leftist advocates intent on indoctrination – and the more the federal government is involved in education, the less responsive to parents the public schools will be. This department is an example of federal intrusion into a traditionally state and local realm. For the sake of American children, Congress should shutter it and return control of education to the states” (p. 285).

This rhetoric creates fear – for example, a fear that the federal government will indoctrinate children. Thus, the federal government represents a threat. This rhetoric builds a foundation for the right wing’s promise to “dismantle the administrative state.”

A second step after divisiveness is to demonize and then criminalize the “other.”



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Example: “The United States belongs to ‘We the people.’ [...] But too often, [progressive elites use] rhetorical terms concealing their true intention – stripping ‘we the people’ of our constitutional authority over our country’s future” (p. 10).

Effect: See how this rhetorical strategy works? First the right wing creates a false conflict – institutions vs. parents, the federal government vs. the states, elites versus “we the people” – then it makes false statements and asserts a false harm (e.g., parents and children are being actively harmed by the Department of Education). These false statements provoke an emotional response – a fear of being stripped of our Constitutional power. This is misinformation that works as political gaslighting.

THE ELITE: THE MEDIA, THE UNIVERSITIES – EVEN LIBRARIANS:

Project 2025 portrays only two possible sides: trustworthy regular Americans who know how to govern themselves and arrogant elites (corporations, academia, the media, and even librarians) whose goal is to deceive and manipulate those regular people. Regular Americans share wholesome, traditional values: they believe in American exceptionalism, a work ethic, a binary sex/gender system, and communities made up of churches, nuclear families, and parent-controlled schools with no government interference. The elites, on the other hand, wish to impose globalism, anti-Americanism, and “woke ideology” to achieve power.

Example: “Today, America and the conservative movement are enduring an era of division and danger akin to the late 1970s. [...] Look at America under the ruling and cultural elite today: Inflation is ravaging family budgets, drug overdose deaths continue to escalate, and children suffer the toxic normalization of transgenderism with drag queens and pornography invading their school libraries” (p. 1).

What you see here is a lie coupled with an exaggeration. Note the conflation of real concerns (drug overdoses) with caricatured bias (drag queens invading libraries). The point is to make a false statement connecting transgenderism, pornography, and school libraries.

Example: “America’s corporate and political elites do not believe in the ideals to which our nation is dedicated – self-governance, the rule of law, and ordered liberty.” Instead, they believe that “the ‘enlightened,’ highly educated managerial elite runs things rather than the humble, patriotic working families who make up the majority of what the elites contemptuously call ‘fly-over country’” (p. 10).

Effect: These are examples of the same divisive strategy used to suggest harms based on lies. Project 2025 authors choose a social issue to target, create a bogus conflict between two



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parties, then make up lies, presented as facts, that claim “ordinary” Americans are under threat or being harmed.

STRATEGY 2: GASLIGHTING

*This strategy works by claiming that **any mention of race, sex, ethnicity, etc. is in itself discriminatory.***

RACE: Astonishing though it may seem, the conservative authors of Project 2025 claim to be carrying out the aims of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., while portraying leftists and progressives as racists. How does this work? It’s a bold form of gaslighting. Referring to King’s dream of a “colorblind” nation in his “I Have a Dream Speech,” Project 2025 distorts King’s *actual* meaning by assuming that the dream has been achieved and we can now simply move on as if racism no longer existed.⁴

Further, simply talking about racism is portrayed as destructive because that would somehow cast us back into a racist past. Going against what King himself argued in that same speech, Project 2025 takes the extraordinary position that even to recognize race as a category is *in itself racist*, a form of discrimination. Thus any Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts to promote better understanding of how racial inequality persists in the present day are racist and should be eliminated because DEI is, they claim, illegal.

This flawed logic has serious consequences: it results in the criminalization of any discussion about race and of any attempt to address racial inequities. The focus on DEI is a less visible way of advancing the pernicious white supremacy agenda. It erases discussion of black and brown lives and history.

Effect: The result? Race is thus removed from public discourse: it becomes a taboo topic (again, polarization). *And if discussion of race is criminalized, then people who continue to discuss it can be criminalized too:* teachers, professors, historians, school librarians, etc. This erasure extends into the past as well as the present and the future: school curricula should not discuss the history of slavery in the US, and there should be no mention of the ongoing effects of systemic racism.

History has shown that control of public information is often the first step toward autocracy: Project 2025 is taking that step.

⁴ See also analysis by Russell Contreras in Axios: <https://www.axios.com/2023/01/16/martin-luther-king-dream-speech-colorblind-racism>.



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Project 2025 applies similar *ahistorical arguments* to other categories of inequity – gender, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical ableness, etc. **This viewpoint is a form of sociopolitical gaslighting – turning the naming of the harm (the accusation) back on those who suffer from it.** Even to mention these categories would be criminalized, which would make it easier to criminalize people who discuss or do research on them.

We've seen that in history too: the end result of criminalizing discussion is to criminalize the group being harmed. It's a neat trick.

FALSE DEFINITION OF "CRITICAL RACE THEORY":

Project 2025 refers to Critical Race Theory 94 times (plus four mentions using the acronym CRT): this is extraordinary, considering that the term "Critical Race Theory" was until recently used mostly in academia to refer to a specific group of writings that examine the category of race itself and how it functions historically and in the present in the US. In Project 2025, Critical Race Theory is used instead as a blanket term of contempt for any policy that takes systemic racism into account. CRT is labeled "racist" because (see race, above) it analyzes how the category of "race" came into being (as a historically specific social construct rather than a biological "immutable characteristic"); how it was used to discriminate between groups of people (and continues to do so through ideas deeply embedded in, for example, the legal system); and how implicit bias continues to function today.

Example: "Eliminate Racial Classifications and Critical Race Theory Trainings: The Biden Administration has pushed 'racial equality' in every area of our national life, including in employment, and has condoned the use of racial classifications and racial preferences under the guise of DEI and critical race theory, which categorizes individuals as oppressors and victims based on race. Nondiscrimination and equality are the law; DEI is not" (p. 582).

Effect: This strategy is all about playing on white people's fear – the fear of being called racist, of losing privilege (white fragility), or of being injured by racial equity. It echoes the "great replacement" theory – the fear that the white majority will become a minority. Stoking fear pushes people to demand action.

STRATEGY 3: BIAS – DEMONIZING SPECIFIC GROUPS OF PEOPLE

*This strategy works by portraying certain groups of people as **unnatural, problematic, and less worthy of rights and protection**; the rhetoric turns these into groups to be feared, making them less than human.*

SEXUALITY/LGBTQ+ ISSUES:



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At the very beginning of Project 2025 the anti-LGBTQ+ agenda is made clear: “In many ways, the entire point of centralizing political power is to *subvert* the family. Its purpose is to replace people’s *natural* loves and loyalties with *unnatural* ones” (p. 4). This return to an old, outmoded claim of non-heterosexual (or any non-reproductive) sexuality as *unnatural* allows Project 2025 to propose that protections for LGBTQ+ people should be eliminated and that hetero-normative families should be prioritized.

Once a group is labeled “unnatural,” it is easier to see its members as less deserving of rights and protections; the group can then also be criminalized. Once again, this is the criminalization of the other, a typical strategy used by autocrats. It focuses on what divides people.

Example: “The next secretary [of Health and Human Services] should also reverse the Biden Administration’s focus on ‘LGBTQ+ equity,’ subsidizing single-motherhood, disincentivizing work, and penalizing marriage,’ replacing such policies with those encouraging marriage, work, motherhood, fatherhood, and nuclear families” (p. 284).

Note the lies about the intent of Biden administration policies, which is coupled with the claim that some people are unworthy and don’t deserve benefits. At the same time, the rhetoric promotes the idea that only hetero-normative married couples deserve rights.

Effect: Stripping LGBTQ+ people of their rights.

TRANSGENDER ISSUES

A foundational concept in Project 2025 is that sex and gender are inextricably linked and are strictly binary: that is, there are only two sexes, clearly and simply separated through supposedly measurable biological traits, The binary theory also asserts that gender is inherently connected to sex (femininity is necessarily part of being a woman, and masculinity is a part of being a man). Although current scientific research reveals biological sex to be a spectrum rather than a binary,

Project 2025 rejects this as “junk science.” Project 2025 also rejects the idea that gender may not be attached to sex, and denies any possibility of gender fluidity.

Example: “Allowing parents or physicians to ‘reassign’ the sex of a minor child is child abuse and must end” (p. 5).



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Effect: What's the result? This leads to an elimination of any protections for those whose gender identity does not match their assigned sex. It also criminalizes parents, physicians, and teachers.

Example: "The CDC should immediately end its collection of data on gender identity, which legitimizes the unscientific notion that men can become women (and vice versa) and encourages the phenomenon of ever-multiplying subjective identities" (p. 456).

Effect: The result? If you don't collect any information about people for whom gender identity is an issue, they can't be protected.

This is, once again, a nuanced form of gaslighting. Instead of responding to actual discrimination against trans kids, *Project 2025 presents the vulnerable person as a threat to others.*

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Project 2025 promotes a very narrow view of sex – it defines "sex" under Title IX to mean only "biological sex recognized at birth," and rejects any extension of this into gender identity (p. 333). The narrow definition of the term *woman* is also very restrictive: the authors see women's role as primarily focused on motherhood.

Example: "Families are the basic unit of and foundation for a thriving society. Without women, there are no children, and society cannot continue" (p. 259).

Project 2025 claims to support women, and to uphold the gains made for women and girls though Title IX; the authors claim that the Biden administration has distorted the true meaning of the term *woman* in an unnatural fashion.

Example: "The progressive Left has so mis-used and altered what the definition of what a 'woman' is that one of our U.S. Supreme Court Justices was unable to delineate clearly the fundamental biological and sexual traits that define the group of which she is a part" (pp. 258-9).

Example: "The President should direct agencies to rescind interpreting sex discrimination provisions as prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender status, sex characteristics, etc." (p. 584).

Effect: By insisting on using binary rhetoric for discussion of sex, and denying the distinction between sex and gender, Project 2025 returns the proper role of women to a nostalgic vision of a narrow, traditional past.



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REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS:

Project 2025's ideological rhetoric about reproductive rights focuses on banning abortion; it also promotes a return to the "rhythm method" (renamed as FABM) as a replacement for modern methods of birth control, a move that lays the foundation for a future attempt to ban contraceptives.

Example: "CDC should update its public messaging about the unsurpassed effectiveness of modern fertility awareness-based methods (FABMs) of family planning and stop publishing communications that conflate such methods with the long-eclipsed 'rhythm' or 'calendar' methods. CDC should fund studies exploring the evidence-based methods used in cutting-edge fertility awareness" (p. 455).

As part of the rhetoric of banning abortion, Project 2025 recasts the language of reproductive health to restrict what "health" refers to.

Example: "Abolishing the Gender Policy Council would eliminate central promotion of abortion ('health services'); comprehensive sexuality education ('education'); and the new woke gender ideology, which has a principal tenet 'gender affirming care' and 'sex-change' surgeries on minors" (p. 62).

While single-mindedly pursuing a ban on abortion, Project 2025 proposes much broader restrictions on which elements of women's reproductive rights can even be discussed.

Example: The next conservative Administration "should remove all references, examples, definitions, photos, and language on USAID websites, in agency publications and policies, and in all agency contracts and grants that include the following terms: 'gender,' 'gender equality,' 'gender equity,' 'gender diverse individuals,' 'gender aware,' 'gender sensitive,' etc. It should also remove references to "abortion," "reproductive health," and "sexual and reproductive rights" and controversial sexual education materials" (p.259).

The rhetoric about reproductive rights conflates a series of very different terms: sex education, abortion, general reproductive rights, and gender-affirming care.

Effect: All aspects of reproductive rights are grouped under the heading of abortion, and are thus set up to be criminalized.

STRATEGY 4: APPROPRIATING UNIVERSAL CONCEPTS



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*This strategy works by taking important broad social concepts (**family, freedom, patriotism, etc.**) and defining them in a narrow way that excludes large groups of non-conservative and non-Christian Americans.*

FAMILY:

The term *family* is clearly defined throughout Project 2025 as nuclear and heterosexual: father, mother, and children. One of the stated goals of Project 2025 is to “restore the family as the centerpiece of American life and protect our children” (p. 3). In this portrayal, the traditional family is the one that right-thinking, “regular Americans” belong to, and by extension implies that any other family structure falls outside the norm and is inferior or problematic (unnatural, not normal).

However, **that’s not correct**. The fact is that the percentage of “traditional” households has continued to decline – in 2020, only 53.2% of U.S. households (families) were headed by a couple: householder plus spouse or partner.⁵ Of these, only 45.7% were opposite sex couples. In other words, the “traditional” family structure that Project 2025 promotes is now in the minority in the US. The number of same-sex couples with families continues to rise.⁶

The Great Replacement Theory: In fact, this is exactly why arch-conservatives are pushing back so hard. It reflects a *sense of loss* and *fear of losing power* that infuses the rhetoric in discussions of family.

This is also where Project 2025’s rhetoric reveals a veiled current of whiteness – or white supremacy – that lurks underneath pro-family arguments. It is a fear that *white America* is losing ground, linked to racism, and linked to a right-wing conspiracy theory that says there is a plot to diminish the influence of white people. Scholars call this **The Great Replacement Theory**. That fear also drives the anti-immigration attacks in Project 2025.

Effect: Note the false statement about which form of “family” is more common. What’s at stake? The promotion of the traditional family translates into policy. For example, Project 2025 advocates for restricting benefits to “traditional” families (for example, they should jump to the head of the queue for public housing, p. 503). At the same time, it designates other families as invalid, and denies them access to family benefits.

PATRIOTISM and AMERICAN VALUES:

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/05/coupled-households-declined-in-2020.html>

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2019/same-sex-households.html>



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In the Project 2025 narrative, only conservatives are patriotic; progressives, by contrast, are labeled as woke and thus inherently unpatriotic. By extension, a concern about racism is unpatriotic – this is a deeply disturbing suggestion, and a striking logical flaw.

Example: “Left to our own devices, the American people rejected European monarchy and colonialism just as we rejected slavery, second-class citizenship for women, mercantilism, socialism, Wilsonian globalism, Fascism, Communism, and (today) wokeism” (p. 14).

This conflates “wokeism” with fascism.

Example: “Future IC [intelligence community] leadership must address the widely promoted ‘woke’ culture that has spread throughout the federal government with identity politics and ‘social justice’ advocacy replacing such traditional American values as patriotism, colorblindness, and even workplace competence” (p. 204).

Project 2025 pits “traditional American values” against “woke culture,” which it equates with fascism and communism (extreme negatives). It pits white traditional families against everyone else (read non-white) who are suspect. Traditional values are portrayed as good, and so by extension progressives are evil and a threat. Note once again the use of conflation.

Effect: This rhetoric aims to create an unbridgeable divide between “regular Americans” and the left. Progressives are portrayed as so far outside the norm that there can be no compromise with them.

STRATEGY 5: THE DOUBLE STANDARD

This strategy identifies a problematic action being taken by the right wing and claims that progressives practice it instead. It is another form of gaslighting.

BOOK BANNING AND CENSORSHIP:

Conservatives claim to support the First Amendment (freedom of expression).

Example: “The First Amendment prohibits it [censorship]. The United States is the world’s last best hope for self-government, and its survival relies on the ability of our people to have healthy debate free from government intervention and censorship” (p. 550).

Yet Project 2025 calls for book-banning, regulation, restriction of big tech, banning of TikTok, and suppression of any curriculum that discusses the evils of slavery.



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Effect: Due to conservative advocacy, almost 1500 books were banned in the US in the second half of 2023 alone.⁷

Book banning is specific; the proposed censorship covers much broader issues.

Example: “Pornography, manifested today in the omnipresent propagation of transgender ideology and sexualization of children, for instance, is not a political Gordian knot inextricably binding up disparate claims about free speech, property rights, sexual liberation, and child welfare. It has no claim to First Amendment protection. Its purveyors are child predators and misogynistic exploiters of women. Their product is as addictive as any illicit drug and as psychologically destructive as any crime.”

“Pornography should be outlawed. The people who produce and distribute it should be imprisoned. **Educators and public librarians who purvey it should be classed as registered sex offenders.** And telecommunications and **technology firms** that facilitate its spread **should be shuttered.**” (p. 5).

This is an extreme example of **conflation** leading to censorship. “So-called “transgender ideology” is conflated with pornography (no explanation for this is given); pornography is criminal and should be severely punished (logicians call this the fallacy of the undistributed middle).

Effect: Talking about transgender issues becomes a criminal act with severe punishment. Educators and school librarians should be penalized for allowing children to see any book that includes transgender issues.

POLITICIZATION OF PARTS OF GOVERNMENT:

Project 2025 condemns the “politicization” of the Department of Justice.

Example: Gene Hamilton accuses the Biden administration of “brazenly partisan and ideologically driven prosecution of an Administration’s perceived political enemies” (p. 557).

Yet Hamilton simultaneously lays out plans to launch a thorough course of revenge if a conservative president is elected.

⁷ https://www.statista.com/statistics/1310288/school-book-bans-us-by-state/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI69zxp3vgwMVV0xHAR3K2gJfEAAYBCAAEgJUxvD_BwE



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*Project 2025 also calls for the shrinking of government. Yet it plans to combat this by a vast expansion in the cadre of unelected political appointees to carry out Project 2025. It also calls for private sector access and decision-making authority to replace government positions and departments. **The hypocrisy is extreme.***

RELIGION:

Project 2025 argues that religious freedom should be supported for those who oppose abortion, but not for those who support it. Project 2025 cites the Constitution but applies it selectively. Anti-abortion Christians, for example, should be allowed to discriminate against those they disapprove of; Christians in general should be able to refuse service to groups they disapprove of (e.g., LGBTQ+, feminists, non-religious Americans).

Example: “A new conservative president should “make clear via executive order that religious employers are free to run their businesses according to their religious beliefs, general nondiscrimination laws notwithstanding.” Accommodation practices for employees “also apply to issues related to marriage, gender, and sexuality” (p. 585).

Put in plain English, this means that people could use their faith as a justification for discriminating against or withholding services from others. This destroys the separation of church and state.

STRATEGY 6: RELENTLESS REPETITION OF BUZZWORDS

This strategy works by repeating buzzwords that are shorthand for policies, ideas, or groups that conservatives oppose. This normalizes biased ideas and presents outrageous claims alongside reasonable concerns as if they were connected.

Example: “Inflation is ravaging family budgets, drug overdose deaths continue to escalate, and children suffer the toxic normalization of transgenderism with drag queens and pornography invading their school libraries” (p. 1)

This opinion presents bias as fact, conflates bizarre claims with reasonable concerns, and makes the biased claims seem rational while discouraging closer examination.

WOKE:

There are 35 *mentions* of this term in the document, which does not define its meaning except by allusion or implication; it appears as “woke culture warriors, “woke bureaucrats,” woke propaganda,” etc. By implication, *woke* appears to stand for policies or people who address systemic racism in American society. Project 2025 never defines the term *woke*; however, by implication it refers to a belief in the existence of systemic racism in American society.



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Example: “Contemporary elites have even repurposed the worst ingredients of 1970s ‘radical chic’ to build the totalitarian cult known today as “The Great Awakening” (p. 1).

Effect: Via repetition, the term *woke* is now negative – and worse. Repetition also distorts its meaning. *Woke* is a good example: it was first used to describe folks who were “awake,” who were aware of racism. Now *woke* is linked in popular culture to liberal excess and a leftist threat. Repetition is a tool of **weaponization**.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY: *(see above)*.

ENVIRONMENTALISM: A “WAR ON FOSSIL FUELS”:

The assigning of extremism to known social problems or issues such as climate change is deliberate and designed to present them as not mainstream and in fact something to be feared.

The Biden administration’s climate policies are repeatedly labeled as “extreme” and “radical.” These terms are applied to any policies that address or attempt to rectify climate change, its causes, and its effects.

Project 2025 denies that climate change is a serious issue, or that it affects life in the US or globally.

Example: “Environmentalism “is not a political cause, but a pseudo-religion meant to baptize liberals’ ruthless pursuit of absolute power in the holy water of environmental virtue. At its very heart, environmental extremism is decidedly anti-human” (p. 10).

*Note again the creation of polarizing language: **us against them**. In this formulation, environmentalists are now less than human.*

Example: “The aid industry claims that climate change causes poverty, which is false” (p. 257).

Effect: What is the result of this lie? It minimizes the actual impact of climate change on people’s lives both in the US and in less resourced communities and countries, which are known to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change

STRATEGY 7: OLD-FASHIONED HYPOCRISY

*This strategy works by claiming conservative policies **are helpful**, while in reality, **they cause harm**. It combines gaslighting and conflation.*



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CHILDREN:

Project 2025 claims to care about children – however, their policy focus is on banning abortion rather than helping children after they are born. The policies conservatives propose are arguably damaging to children and poor families. A slew of reforms will have a devastating impact on poor families, single mothers, and children.

Examples of these new policies are: tightening eligibility for food stamps (SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and adding a new work requirement; loosening regulations covering baby formula (a safety issue); reducing availability of free school meals; ensuring that Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs do not “promote” sex or abortion; and removing any “sex-promotion” textbooks should be removed from sex education curricula (p. 476) while also considering the future possibility of banning birth control.

Finally, faith-based adoption agencies would be allowed to limit adoptions to homes that have a married mother and father, excluding single parents and LGBTQ+ families.

The general argument of Project 2025 is that public benefits for families create “poverty traps” and are an obstacle to family formation; such benefits should thus be eliminated as much as possible.

Example: “HUD programs tend to perpetuate the notion of bureaucratically provided housing as a basic life need and, whether intentionally or not, fail to acknowledge that these public benefits to often have led to intergenerational poverty traps, have implicitly penalized family formation in traditional two-parent families, and have discouraged work and income growth, thereby limiting upward mobility” (p. 503).

Effect: What’s at stake? Removing sex and health education is a tactic to oppose access to family planning, including abortion. Rather than helping, Project 2025’s proposals would harms families and children by removing essential food and housing services that are key ingredients of family stability.

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