

Faculté de philosophie, arts et lettres

The communication styles of Donald Trump and Barack Obama and their influence on the electorate

**Auteur : Bérangère Hella
Promotrice : Katherine Opello
Lecteur : Sylvie De Cock
Année académique : 2020-2021
Master en Communication Multilingue, finalité langues des affaires**

Faculty of Philosophy, Arts and Letters

The communication styles of Donald Trump and Barack Obama, and their influence on the electorate

Author: Bérangère Hella

Supervisor: Katherine Opello

Reader: Sylvie De Cock

Academic year: 2020-2021

Master's in multilingual business communication

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank Katherine Opello, my amazing mentor, for her great advice and encouragements during the entire writing of my thesis.

I would also like to thank my wonderful friends, Emily and Laura, for their constant help and emotional support.

Finally, I would like to thank my sister, who has been the best writing partner I could have ever wished for, even if she constantly gave me more work than I had to begin with.

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to study the communication style of Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump during their presidential campaign to determine whether or not it had an influence on the electorate, and if yes, to which extent. To achieve this goal, three texts have been selected for both candidates: their announcement speech, their Convention speech, and the speech held at their last rally. By choosing the same speeches for both men, I ensured that the conditions were similar enough to realize an objective comparison. After a methodological and a theoretical section, where I will establish the background of this thesis, I will then analyze the speeches. All speeches will be looked at from a pragmatic, functional, and linguistic point of view, to establish the extent to which language was influential. Furthermore, the personality and political affiliation of each candidate will also be detailed, as they represent a crucial portion of a politician's persona. Finally, a comparative analysis will be made between Trump and Obama's results and characteristics in order to draw conclusions about what communication factors actually influenced the electorate. Results will ultimately show that communication indeed exerts a tremendous influence on the electorate, but not without adaptations according to their audience's expectations.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Abbreviations and conventions	6
Chapter 1: Methodology	7
Section 1: Topic and research material	7
Section 2: Objectives and methodology	8
Chapter 2: Theoretical overview of communication concepts	10
Section 1: Key communication concepts	10
Section 2: Political discourse	14
Section 3: Concept table	16
Chapter 3: Political background	18
Section 1: Overview of the American electoral system	18
Section 2: Ideals and beliefs	19
1. The Democratic Party	19
2. The Republican Party	20
Section 2: Typical electorate	22
1. The Democratic Party	22
2. The Republican Party	24
Chapter 4: A closer look at Obama's 2008 campaign	27
Section 1: Electoral campaign and outcome	27
Section 2: Factors influencing the electorate	30
1. Political affiliation	30
2. Personal factors	32
3. Communication factors	36
3.1. Pragmatic factors	36
3.2. Functional factors	38
3.3. Linguistic factors	44

3.3.1. Verbal language	45
3.3.2. Paraverbal language	50
3.3.3. Nonverbal language	53
Chapter 5: A closer look at Trump's 2016 campaign	56
Section 1: Electoral campaign and outcome	56
Section 2: Factors influencing the electorate	57
1. Political affiliation	57
2. Personal factors	59
3. Communication factors	61
3.1. Pragmatic factors	62
3.2. Functional factors	63
3.3. Linguistic factors	67
3.3.1. Verbal language	67
3.3.2. Paraverbal language	74
3.3.3. Non-verbal language	76
Chapter 6: Comparative analysis	79
Section 1: Divergences	79
Section 2: Similarities	82
Section 3: Results	84
Conclusion	89
Bibliography	91
Research material	91
Sources	92
Appendices	99
Appendix 1: Party preference for the presidential election by political ideology and identification	99
Appendix 2: Likelihood of independent voters to vote for Democratic or Republican candidates during the presidential elections of 2008	100

Appendix 3: Racial overview of the electorate _____	104
Appendix 4: Gender gap in party affiliation _____	105
Appendix 5: Gender gaps across races _____	106
Appendix 6: Influence of education on political affiliation _____	107
Appendix 7: Influence of the generation gap on political affiliation _____	108
Appendix 8: Influence of religion on political affiliation _____	110
Appendix 9: Registered voters more inclined to identify as Democrat during Trump’s 2016 campaign _____	113
Appendix 10: Influence on the living area on the political affiliation _____	114
Appendix 11: Influence of income on political affiliation _____	115
Appendix 12: Influence of citizenship and military service on political affiliation _____	116
Appendix 14: States recognized as solid or lean Democratic during the 2008 elections _	118
Appendix 15: Shepard Fairy’s print of Obama’s 2008 campaign _____	119
Appendix 16: Table of elements pertaining to verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal languages _____	120
Appendix 17: States recognized as solid or lean Republican during the 2008 elections _	121

Introduction

“Participation in public life doesn’t mean that you all have to run for public office”¹ said Barack Obama.

But how exactly is it possible to spark enough motivation to get people to participate? What does it take for people to vote? And, more importantly, what does it take for people to vote for a specific party, or a specific candidate? Being a communication major, all these questions ultimately lead me to think about the exact role of communication in politics. Indeed, communication is a major part of politics, mainly through political campaigns, as the main objective of such an event is to convince people to vote for a particular candidate. But one question remains, as we still do not know what exactly convinces undecided voters to cast a vote for a particular candidate.

To answer those questions, it was necessary to examine what exactly was at stake with political communication. And the best solution to do so was to compare different styles of political communication. To keep my research pertinent and focused, I decided to compare three campaign speeches from Trump and Obama’s campaigns.

Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump both are important figures of American politics. As time went by, they both became famous for their respective accomplishments, be they positive or negative. Their most impressive and main common accomplishment is to have become presidents of the United States of America. As a matter of fact, Trump and Obama went through a lot of political steps to become candidates and, later, to become president. Nowadays, their reputations precede them, and it is almost impossible to find someone who has not heard of Trump and Obama's accomplishments during their respective presidencies. But Trump and Obama are also known for being tremendously different: they represent two opposite poles of a same system. Their remarkable differences actually drove me to work with their speeches, as I assumed they would have pretty distinctive and personal communication styles.

For my research, I decided to select three speeches of each then-candidates to analyze their respective styles. To do so, I not only studied the linguistic features of their language (such as their verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal language), but also its functional and pragmatic aspect, to understand whether or not contexts and objectives had any influence on the electorate.

¹ Juma, N. (2019, May 5th). Barack Obama quotes about change, education, and equality [Online]. Everyday Power. Available at: <https://everydaypower.com/barack-obama-quotes/> [Retrieved on May 15th, 2021].

What really intrigued me was how two people with such different mindsets were able to get elected in spite of their radically different agendas.

It is only then that I finally succeeded in establishing what would be my research question for this thesis: how did Trump and Obama's communication style influence the electorate?

To answer this question, I divided my thesis in six different chapters. My first chapter will describe my methodology, as well as review the main objectives. My second and third chapters will then present an overview of the main theoretical notions linked both to communication and to the American political system. The objectives of these sections are to give the reader the necessary background to fully understand the analyses provided in further sections. Chapter four and five will be in depth looks at Trump and Obama's speeches. These sections will provide a detailed overview of what factors could have been at play in the influencing of the electorate. To corroborate those factors, and precisely demonstrate how they were at play in the speeches, excerpts of said speeches will be analyzed. Finally, the sixth and final chapter of this thesis will provide a comparative overview to establish what Trump and Obama's communication styles have in common (or not). This chapter will be concluded with a summary of the main arguments.

Abbreviations and conventions

GOP: Grand Old Party, other name for the Republican Party.

MyBO: MyBarackObama, a networking site created in 2008 by the Obama campaign to coordinate volunteers and joint efforts.

MIDC: Millon Inventory of Diagnostic Criteria: “the 12 MIDC scales correspond to major personality patterns posited by Millon”.²

DNC: Democratic National Convention, a political gathering where all members of the Democratic Party officially recognize the nomination of their party’s candidates.³

RNC: Republican National Convention, a political gathering where all members of the Republican Party officially recognize the nomination of their party’s candidates.

MAGA: Make America Great Again, the slogan of Donald J. Trump’s 2016 campaign.

² Immelman, A. (2008, July). The political personality of U.S. president Barack Obama [Online]. Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, San Francisco. Available on: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/25/ [Retrieved on December 9th, 2020].

³ Speeches given by several political figures regarding the values and goals of the party are also a major part of the event, but this element will not matter in the rest of the thesis.

Chapter 1: Methodology

Section 1: Topic and research material

In view of conducting an objective comparison, I will look at both Trump and Obama as candidates during their respective electoral campaign of 2016 and 2008. Looking into their public speaking qualities during this particular time is what will enable me to determine what impact their communication skills will have had towards their elections as president of the United States. Restricting the analysis to this particular time will also allow me to reduce the range of available material and to draw similarities between the research material selected for each candidate, as well as allow us to focus on salient moments of the campaigns for each candidate running for president.

To reduce the research field, I decided to focus particularly on oral communication factors⁴, which includes verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal communication cues. Nevertheless, it is important to remain conscious of the impact of the political affiliation of the candidates, as well as the impact of their public character (that is, whom they portray themselves to be on the political scene) on the electorate. Even if not directly part of the communication factors as such, those elements will greatly influence their communication style, and are thus an important part of this research. Therefore, I will conduct additional research in order to properly analyze the importance of those factors.

Accordingly, I decided to look into political speeches of both candidates, which provided elements of all three domains of communication. For each candidate, three discourses have been selected: their campaign announcements, their nomination acceptance speeches⁵, and their final rally speeches⁶. The motivation behind these choices was that all stages of both campaigns would be represented. As a matter of fact, having a broad overview of the campaign would presumably enable me to determine a shift in the communication strategy, in ideas and in arguments used to convince the audience. Moreover, candidates gave these three speeches at key moments of the campaigns, making them particularly relevant in terms of influence and communication strategies.

⁴ François, T. (2019). LROM2660 : Stratégie de communication orale dans l'entreprise

⁵ Also referred to as Convention speeches, throughout the thesis.

⁶ Links to both the videos and transcripts of the speech are available in the bibliography of this thesis in the section "Research Material".

Videos of all six speeches have been chosen to offer the best analysis opportunities possible. In other words, the videos have to provide an overall perspective of the candidate during his entire discourse, preferably close up and showing the upper body of the candidate. Of all videos, only one does not completely comply with those criteria. Barack Obama's announcement speech has indeed been filmed with a dramatic intention, alternatively showing the stage from a front and back perspective, and the audience. Nevertheless, the parts where he is filmed up close remain numerous enough to ensure a complete analysis. All videos have been recovered from YouTube or other streaming websites, depending on which platform has made them available. In the case where several videos were available, the one with the best visual quality was selected.

Focusing on campaign speeches also enables me to easily perceive the influential aspect that communication might have over the masses. In fact, an electoral campaign can be described as "an organized effort to influence the decision-making process within a specific group when seeking election to political office"⁷. Therefore, as campaigns are supposed to be influential per se, it can be deduced that all speeches carried out during their course must somehow have a certain effect on the potential electorate of a candidate.

Section 2: Objectives and methodology

The primary objective of this research is to have a look at Trump and Obama's discursive and communication style, and to determine what impact those factors had on their respective electorate during their campaign. In other words, the question which will guide me through this research is how, despite their many differences, did those two individuals talk the American people into voting for them?

To answer this question, several methods will be used. I will first have a look at their verbal communication, which will be done through a textual analysis of their discourses. The goal is to have an exhaustive look at their rhetoric: What particular words do they use, and how often? Are they more prone to using questions or affirmations?, etc. This part of the research will be conducted through a text analysis program which will enable me to analyze the

⁷ Lumen Learning Team. How voters decide [Online]. Lumen Learning. Available on: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-politicalscience/chapter/how-voters-decide/> [Retrieved on November 10th, 2020].

transcriptions of the discourses to have a more precise overview of how all the speeches are constructed.

Then, to determine whether nonverbal and paraverbal cues had any impact on the candidates' respective electorate, I will analyze the live videos of their speeches. Such analysis might be more complicated to execute, as spotting and interpreting nonverbal and paraverbal cues requires a great deal of attention and precision. To ensure a comprehensive and accurate analysis, I will rely on several articles discussing political speeches, and of the importance of verbal and paraverbal language during such discourse (or in more neutral contexts). I will also take into account several Master's theses looking into Trump and Obama's communication styles.

For instance, in her research, Delmas⁸ proposes a four-step analysis of the political discourse which includes a syntactic analysis, a semantic analysis (to look into the meaning of the discourse as a whole), an enunciative analysis (which tries to identify some of the attitudes of personality traits of the speaker through their speech), and an interactional analysis (which looks into how interactions with the audience are structured). Even though this methodological approach will not be followed as such, all these elements will be included to some extent to ensure a thorough analysis of each speech.

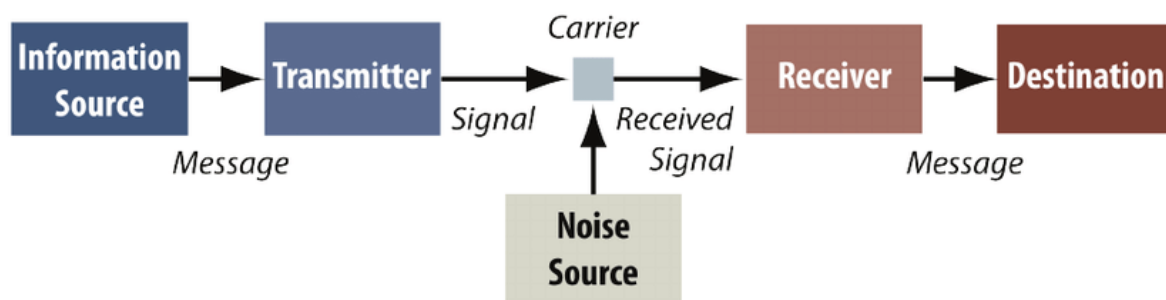
After an in-depth and individual look into both candidates' communication habits and patterns, I will then conduct a comparative analysis to highlight any difference or similarities which will have been discovered during the previous research. It is this comparative section which will ultimately give us an overview of the research as a whole and provide a comprehensive answer to our research question.

⁸ Delmas, V. (2012). Pour une analyse pluridimensionnelle du discours : le discours politique. *La linguistique*, Vol. 48 : pp. 103-122

Chapter 2: Theoretical overview of communication concepts

Section 1: Key communication concepts

If looked at in a strictly mathematical way, communication is a dynamic process involving the transmission of a message from an emitter to a receiver through a particular means of transmission. This aspect of communication was first looked at by Shannon in 1948 as a part of a study surrounding telecommunications. According to him, communication could be summarized in the following manner:



Shannon's theory of communication

Shannon explains that the message is first generated thanks to an information source which gathers elements that might interest him. After picking up a piece of this information, the transmitter turns it into a message and sends it to a receiver. This might be done through various means of communication that are called carriers. It is also important to mention that the sent and the received signals might not always be completely the same due to potential noise sources. Considering this scheme was first built in order to describe telecommunication, it is safe to assume that Shannon was talking about literal noises that could disturb the transmission of the message. However, as time passed and studies regarding communication improved, it was observed that not only could noise influence the correct decryption of the message, but so could other factors such as interpretation, understanding of the used vocabulary or difference in opinions. Those factors are still referred to as noises in most communication schemes and theories.

In spite of being simple and practical, Shannon can be criticized for missing the mark of reciprocity⁹. However, his approach already highlights some key elements of communication, one of which being the message that is being transmitted. Before even properly

⁹ François, T. (2019). Op Cit.

acknowledging the genre of communication that will be included in this research, which would be political speeches, it is necessary to understand that what is being said will have a big influence on the people that the message will reach. In this case, the message itself will be looked at as being a whole factor influencing both candidates' electorate. As a matter of fact, the message transmitted by both Trump and Obama during their speeches are direct verbalizations of their campaigns, their goals, and, mostly of their political affiliations and ideologies. This will thus inevitably influence some people whose political choices might strictly be based on political motivations. It can also be mentioned that the lack of reciprocity does not directly affect our definition of communication as political discourses often remain one-sided, in spite of the ongoing influence attempts¹⁰.

In addition to its purpose of information transmission, communication can also be considered as a social process which emerges from various behavioral manifestations such as gestures, speech, looks, mimics, individual space, etc. According to Delmas¹¹, any instance of communication gathers both a digital aspect, which represents the content or the message of the communication intent (which I mentioned above), as well as an analogical aspect, which represents the relation that the communication intent is maintaining or trying to create. This social aspect of the communication will also be of tremendous importance. In fact, establishing a contact or a relationship through communication will enable different factors to come into consideration when analyzing what is being said. This could, for instance, contribute to the general opinion that people will build of a candidate.

Obviously, there are various types of communications which differ from each other. Nevertheless, both the message and the social aspect remain important no matter the selected means of communication. Another non-removable aspect of communication is language. Even though language might take several forms, it remains the basis of any instance of communication, globally making communication possible as a whole. To better understand its crucial role within communication, three aspects of language will be analyzed: the linguistic aspect, the pragmatic aspect and the functional aspect.

¹⁰ Amossy, R. (2008). *Argumentation et Analyse du discours : perspectives théoriques et découpages disciplinaires* [Online]. *Argumentation et analyse du discours*. Available on: <http://journals.openedition.org/aad/200> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

¹¹ Delmas, V. (2012). *Op cit*.

The linguistic aspect of language comprises all that has a link with the lexicon, the morphological construction of words, and the syntactical construction of sentences.¹² Those elements belong to verbal language. Verbal language can be defined as any instance of information transmission to another being via language. It can be oral or written. It is composed of any linguistic means used to ensure the correct transmission of the information, for instance, articulation, pronunciation, intonation, accentuation and rhythm. Looking at those basic elements of language will enable us to detect patterns that could be used specifically in order to accentuate the influential strength of a speech, as well as to determine the level of preparation behind said speech.

In a wider extent, language also includes nonverbal and paraverbal languages. Nonverbal language looks into anything related to body expressions, such as gestures, expressions of the eyes, facial mimics, distance that one maintains with someone else, outside appearance, and so on. Those elements do not directly belong to language but have an influence on how the verbally expressed elements are going to be interpreted. Gestures are a significant part of nonverbal language. Some are unintentional and translate the emotions of the speaker, which enables their audience to receive important information about how they feel about the interaction going on. Those are called emotional or self-contact gestures. Other gestures might have a definite purpose and be established in advance to accompany a certain part of the discourse or of the thought process of the speakers. Those are much more conscious and controlled and are called referential or rhythmical gestures.¹³ Even more so than any other nonverbal cues, gestures are important because a lack of concordance between said gestures and what is verbally expressed could translate some incoherence or insincerity coming from the speaker. This might also be highlighted by some facial mimics, for example.¹⁴

Finally, paraverbal language refers to elements that may vary according to one's personal style of communication. For instance, it comprises the breath, pauses and delivery speed, the melody, fluency and volume. According to Mehrabian, only 7% of communication effectively relies on verbal language, while 38% rely on paraverbal language and 55% on nonverbal language.¹⁵ This means that paraverbal language could have a great impact on the

¹² François, T. (2019). LROM2670 : Les textes économiques et commerciaux en français : genres de discours et questions de terminologie.

¹³ De Lavergne, C. (2010). La communication non verbale.

¹⁴ Dumitrescu, D. Nonverbal Communication in Politics: A Review of Research Developments, 2005-2015.

¹⁵ François, T. (2019). LROM2660 : Stratégie de communication orale dans l'entreprise.

candidates' electorates, as their personal way of expressing themselves could potentially become an appealing or repellent factor.

The social aspect of language, as well as the nonverbal and paraverbal elements of communication participate in creating the representation of a political candidate. Representation refers to the way somebody presents themselves to others, but also to the idea that the audience might have of a certain person, product, brand, etc.¹⁶ These representations are going to influence the identification and memorization of the audience, which explains why they are so important for politicians. As a result, there is an entire process surrounding their public image which relies on several elements such as their basic characteristics (who they are, what political position they occupy, what party they are a part of), socio-political characteristics (which is a closer look at their social and political involvement), and personal characteristics (more intimate details).

As politicians are often exposed to very diverse audiences (partners, opponents, press, militants, lobbies, general public, etc.), rhetoric appears as a really important tool for them to reinforce their ideal representation before their target audience. In fact, they will have to act upon all the individual representations that those groups already have to either reinforce, modify or develop them. This can be done by playing on different aspects of the speaker's identity, be it their personality, their relations to their audience, cultural factors which might create a closer bond to the audience, etc. Building a (satisfying) public image becomes really complicated when it comes to political figures. As a matter of fact, even though rhetoric plays a major factor in how politicians portray themselves, they have to deal with elements that they might not be able to control, nor change. The physical appearance¹⁷ or voice pitch¹⁸, for instance might influence the idea that the audience builds of the speakers. Several studies have proven that how someone sounds and looks might actually influence the perception that other people have of them and, in political context, determine whether or not people are going to vote for them. In addition to that, facial and bodily expressions also have to be constrained and controlled in

¹⁶ Ausina, O. (1987). Construire l'image d'une personnalité politique à la télévision. Pygmalion Désarmé [Online]. *Études de communication. Langues, information, médiations*. Available on : <http://journals.openedition.org/edc/2880> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

¹⁷ Lawson, C., Lenz, G. S., Baker, A., & Myers, M. (2010). Looking like a winner: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New democracies. *World Politics*, Vol. 62 : pp. 561-593.

¹⁸ Klostad, C. A. (2015). Candidate Voice Pitch Influences Election Outcomes. *Political Psychology*, Vol. xx, No. Xx.

order to have the desired effect on the audience¹⁹. All those elements will be looked at individually to examine to what extent they had an influence in our particular context.

In addition to its primarily linguistic aspect, language also has a pragmatic aspect, which relies on the fact that language is going to vary according to the situation in which a particular communication is emitted. This implies that the way a piece of information is communicated is also going to depend on who transmits it, and on who is supposed to receive it. In addition to that, disrespecting the conventions for a particular instance of communication might interfere with the completion of the communicative goal.²⁰ For this research, the speeches that will be looked at are public speeches performed in the context of presidential campaigns. While the precise objectives of the speech are not yet taken into account at this stage, there are some rules of public speaking situations that should be respected in order to properly address the entire audience.

Last but not least, language also has a functional aspect which is linked to the particular function of language, or, in other words, to the goals that language has to accomplish. In the case of this research, this function will often be to influence people into voting for one of the candidates. Nevertheless, the function of the discourse might differ slightly (or be double) according to the particular circumstances of each of the individual discourses. To accurately establish the function of political speeches, it is necessary to analyze this genre more deeply.

Section 2: Political discourse

According to Virginie Delmas²¹, a political discourse is any discourse whose topic is a political concern, no matter who actually issues the discourse itself. Brian McNair's theory²² seems quite similar to Delmas's. In his view, political communication comprises three dimensions: any communication emitted by a political figure as to accomplish specific objectives, any communication directed towards political figures by non-political figures, and any communication about political figures and their activities. Thus, he does not seem to pay attention to the sources of the discourse, but rather to the topic itself.

¹⁹ Ausina, O. (1987). Op Cit.

²⁰ François, T. (2019). LROM2670 : Les textes économiques et commerciaux en français : genres de discours et questions de terminologie.

²¹ Delmas, V. (2012). Op Cit.

²² Pelerin, C. (2019). Les voix de Donald Trump lors des primaires républicaines 2016 : Une analyse critique du discours politique.

We can consider political speeches to have several properties. First, Delmas mentions that the goal of such discourse is to influence and convince the audience to which it is presented to make them act, think or believe in a certain way.²³ This property is also backed up by Laswell, and to his 5W theory: Who says what to whom in which channel for what effect²⁴. Moreover, Amossy reinforces this idea by mentioning that just because the goal of a discourse is not to convince somebody as such, doesn't mean that the objective of this discourse is not to somehow influence the listener. As a matter of fact, according to Charaudeau, every single act of language is generated by an individual as a way of dealing with their relationship with other individuals whom they systematically try to influence²⁵. This influential factor is so prominent in political communication that it has led to the establishment of a link between political communication and marketing (and, more precisely, advertising).

The influential factor we attribute to political communication also implies its unequal nature. As a matter of fact, postulating that communication is intrinsically influential implies that the transmitter holds some kind of power over the receiver of the message. The transmitter is also going to behave as to embody this superiority. This power contrast is permitted thanks to the ethos of the speaker, which represents the way they move and behave in public²⁶, or, in a more global sense, how they present themselves in society regarding their social class and position, giving them some kind of legitimacy.²⁷ In American politics, this legitimacy is often (at least partly) acquired through the parties that the candidates are members of, but can also be reinforced by other factors, such as rhetorical factors.²⁸

According to Delmas, political discourses are constructed in the context of a dual influence. As a matter of fact, even though the goal of such discourse is to influence the audience, the way it is constructed will also depend on what the ideals of this audience are, and on how to reach one particular type of people.²⁹ Argumentation will thus also be an important part of the political discourse. According to Ruth Amossy³⁰, argumentation is presumably always a part of any discourse. For this thesis, we will see that it is indeed a good argumentation

²³ In french « le but est d'agir sur l'autre pour le faire agir, le faire penser, le faire croire, etc. »

²⁴ Pelerin, C. (2019). Op Cit.

²⁵ Amossy, R. (2008). Op cit.

²⁶ Melvin (2019). Quelle est la signification de logos, pathos et ethos ? – Aristote. *Tout Comment*. Available on : https://education.toutcomment.com/article/quelle-est-la-signification-de-logos-pathos-et-ethos-aristote-14011.html#anchor_3 [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021]

²⁷ Pelerin, C. (2019). Op Cit.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Delmas, V. (2012). Op Cit.

³⁰ Amossy, R. (2008). Op cit.

which is going to allow the political candidate to wield a certain amount of influence on the electorate.

All these properties of political discourse will be taken into account when making a global analysis of Trump and Obama's speeches.

Section 3: Concept table

The following table will summarize key concepts described in this research project and indicate whether a particular concept will be used later on.³¹

Concept	Definition	Used in the analysis
Communication	Dynamic process involving the transmission of a message from an emitter to a receiver through a particular means of transmission.	Yes
Reciprocity	Idea that communication is always somehow reciprocated.	No
Message	The information that is being delivered and received during the communication process.	Yes
Ethos	How someone presents themselves to the public through his language (be it verbal, nonverbal or paraverbal) regarding his social position, in order to give themselves legitimacy.	Yes
Language ⇒ Verbal ⇒ Nonverbal ⇒ Paraverbal	Verbal language corresponds to any instances of information transmission via language. Nonverbal language refers to body language, including facial expression, distance held between individuals and outside appearance. Paraverbal language regroups elements that tend to vary according to one's style of communication (breath, pauses, speed, volume, etc.).	Yes
Digital aspect of communication	The content or message of the communication intent.	No
Analogical aspect of communication	Relation that the communication is maintaining or trying to create.	No
Linguistic aspect of language	All that has a link with lexicon and syntax.	Yes
Pragmatic aspect of language	Situation or particular context during which language is being emitted.	Yes
Functional aspect of language	Function of the language, the goals it is supposed to accomplish.	Yes

³¹ All sources of the information presented in this table have been added to the bibliography as well as in a footnote in the sections where they have been taken from.

Representation	The way somebody presents themselves to other (brand image) or the idea that people might have of a certain person, brand, product, etc.	Yes
Rhetoric	Someone's particular way of speaking.	Yes
Physical appearance	The way someone looks and dresses.	Yes
Voice pitch	The highness or lowness of someone's voice.	Yes
Political discourse	Any discourse whose topic is of political concern.	Yes

Chapter 3: Political background

Section 1: Overview of the American electoral system

In the United States, the political system is divided between two main parties: the Democratic Party, which is liberal (also called “the left”) and the Republican Party, which is more conservative (also known as “the right”)³². Even if there are other parties, the American political system is built in such a way that those do not have a significant impact during the general election. Nevertheless, the Libertarian Party still elects a candidate to run along the Democratic and Republican nominees during the elections³³.

The process of the presidential elections begins with the primaries, when candidates announce their intention of running for president. In the primaries, any Democrat can decide to compete for the title and there are no restrictions as to how many members of a same party can be candidates during one particular election cycle. There are generally a couple of candidates who stand out in both parties, appearing as the real competition among other less known and less popular candidates from the same party. For instance, in 2016, the two main Democratic candidates appeared to be Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton, but there were about 10 more Democrat personalities that decided to run for presidency that year (most of whom withdrew at some stage of the cycle).

During this first phase of the elections, all candidates will have to compete against each other until only one of them is left to represent the party against the opposite party. During primaries³⁴, the people can vote for whoever they think would best represent the party they are affiliated to. A few states do not hold primary elections, but hold caucuses instead. Caucuses are meetings of party representatives during which the candidate of the party is selected.³⁵ It does thus not involve voters. The goal for a candidate during the primaries is to reach a total of 1237 delegates that support them. Once this number is reached, the candidate becomes the presumptive nominee, meaning they become the party’s official nominee during their party’s National Convention.

³² Dennis, P. (2019). LMULT2421: Economic, legal, social and political issues in English-speaking countries – American Perspectives. Université Catholique de Louvain.

³³ Cloud English (2020). How do presidential elections work in America. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOpEBJY2ZQI> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

³⁴ There are several types of primaries (closed, semi-closed, semi-open, open) which will not be described here as it does not directly affect the understanding of the American election system.

³⁵ Definition of caucus adapted from Merriam Webster.

After all those steps, the Presidential campaign begins and will last until election day. During this final stage of the election, only one member of each party is left and the American people now has to either support the Democratic or the Republican candidate.

Section 2: Ideals and beliefs

1. The Democratic Party

Through the centuries, the Democratic Party has tried to maintain and implement new voting and civil rights for all American citizens. They were in favor of a more involved government, which would help people with social justice, finding jobs, etc.

At the present time, the Democratic Party stands in favor of civil and voting rights. Their objective is to empower voters, no matter their sex, ethnicity, socials class, etc. to have access to the same opportunities. As well as their will to maintain current freedoms and rights (freedom of religion or women's rights, for instance), they also fight for a better and easier access to education, healthcare (including birth control and abortion) and retirement funds. They also have a very open mind when it comes to immigration, which they have shown by "fighting for every immigrant who feels threatened by Donald Trump"³⁶. As opposed to the Republican Party, they actually believe that immigration is one of the founding traits of America which should be celebrated and embraced, and one of their goals is to work towards a more comprehensive immigration reform.³⁷ The Democratic Party also embodies this fight against discrimination through an extensive support of the LGBTQIA+ community. During the two terms of the Obama presidency, several acts and bills were passed in order to condemn discrimination, as well as to prevent and fight against harassment based on sexual orientation and identity of LGBTQIA+ people. In 2015, the Supreme court also ruled in favor of the legalization of same-sex marriages nationwide, which Barack Obama described as a "victory for America".³⁸

³⁶ The Democratic Party. Available on: <https://democrats.org/> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

³⁷ The Democratic Party. History.com. Available on: <https://www.history.com/topics/us-politics/democratic-party> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

³⁸ BBC (2015, June 27th). US Supreme Court rules gay marriage is legal nationwide. [Online]. BBC News. Available on : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33290341> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

From an environmental standpoint, they are also determined to minimize the effect of climate change for the future generations through investment and renewable and greener energy sources.³⁹

Democrats are also in favor of a bigger involvement of the Government in an economic system which should provide opportunities for all Americans, regardless of their social class through cutting taxes for families, providing subsidies for small businesses and strengthening consumer protection. This part of their program also includes a reform of the college system, currently leaving thousands and thousands of Americans with mountains of debt. They also support a better training of military officials to enable them to respond to modern threats, as well as continued investment in high intelligence to anticipate terrorist threats, all while rebuilding America's image through the establishment of strategic alliances.⁴⁰

Democrats have also spoken loudly about being in favor of stricter gun control policies. They want to implement background checks to ensure no firearms will end up in the hands of someone with bad intentions.⁴¹ Regarding other major legal issues, such as the death penalty, the vision of the Democrats appears to have shifted overtime. At the beginning of 2012, the Democratic Party indeed still endorsed the death penalty, but also claimed that an adequate and efficient defense system had to be put in place for every suspect, to avoid it being arbitrary. However, their position changed and, in 2016, the Democratic Party started supporting the abolition of capital punishment.⁴²

2. The Republican Party

The Republican Party's concerns are quite diverse. First, they want to revive the economy and create jobs, all while adopting fairer trade deals for American businesses. Through that, their objective is to help Americans to have a better budget, therefore enabling them to live more decently.

They want to allow the average American to have a say in their country, and more particularly in their children's education. They want to introduce competition within school to enable children coming from lower-income backgrounds to break the circle of poverty and

³⁹ The Democratic Party. [History.com](https://www.history.com). Op cit.

⁴⁰ The Democratic Party. [History.com](https://www.history.com). Op cit.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² The Democratic Party. [Democrats.org](https://www.democrats.org). Op Cit.

having a better chance at life. This also arises from their deep valorization of family and family values, according to which if the family prospers, the nation will also prosper.

Republicans also want to break free of the excessive regulations formerly put in place regarding American energy production. According to them, promoting a national production of energy would revive the economy, as well as end the US's dependency on Middle Eastern oil.

When it comes to foreign relations and immigration, Republicans believe in the US as a nation promoting democracy abroad through international relations. Furthermore, in spite of recognizing the “great contributions” made by immigrants throughout the years, Republicans consider that any immigration policy should advantage American citizens first. Only through a complete reform and regularization of immigration policies will immigrants be able to experience the true American dream. While reinforcing foreign relations and regulating immigration, the Republican Party also wants to protect the country from potential outside threats. This also influences the immigration process, as they consider a thorough background check on everyone entering the country (or willing to reside in the country) as an absolute necessity in the context of homeland security.

Republicans formally stand against the Affordable Care Act, established during the Obama presidency. Their wish is to completely dismantle this system to redesign a healthcare system where patients and their doctors get firsthand decision-making power over their health-related issues. In their opinion, a free-market system would be the ultimate solution to propose affordable healthcare and drug costs. The Republican Party also opposes the Democratic Party on issues such as same sex marriage and abortion, which they believe should not be legal.⁴³

To sum up, their word of choice is liberty, as they want to grant and ensure all fundamental freedoms of the bill of rights to American citizens. As stated on their website, “[their] party will always be on the side of the constitution”.⁴⁴ In spite of their own views on their ideologies, it is important that they remain really conservative and that their ideals are often influenced by the Church and the puritan ideals on which their nation has been founded.

⁴³ Diffen LLC (2020). Democrat vs. Republican [Online]. Diffen. Available on : https://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat_vs_Republican [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁴⁴ GOP. Gop.com. Available on : <https://www.gop.com/> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

Section 2: Typical electorate

Lots of people tend to have a definite political opinion, meaning they will support one of the two main parties. Party identifiers, or partisans, can be defined as people registered as members of a particular party, showing a strong tendency to vote for the candidates of their preferred party and inclined to support policies endorsed by their party. For some people, their belonging to a particular party can go as far as to be a part of their social identity, in the same way that some people would identify or affiliate with a religious group. People who consider themselves to be strong partisans of a particular party tend to consistently vote for the candidate of this party, be it during general elections, but also during congressional elections or at state and local level. This trend to vote according to your party affiliation is called party voting.⁴⁵ According to a study conducted by Pew Research Center, in 2008, around 28 to 29% of registered voters identified as Republicans, while around 39% identified as Democrats. The remaining 32% identified as independent, meaning they did not identify to the values of either one of the other parties. However, if strictly asked to choose between the two main parties, around 52% of those voters described themselves as leaning Democrats, while only 40% described themselves as leaning Republican. In spite of the remaining 8% of the voters not being able to clearly establish a tendency in their voting patterns, it is thus still possible to observe a remarkable propensity for the Democratic Party.⁴⁶

1. The Democratic Party

According to a study conducted by Gallup⁴⁷ in 2008 regarding candidate support by political party and by ideology, liberal Democrats, as well as moderate Democrats and conservative Democrats were, not surprisingly, more likely to vote for the Democratic Party (which, at that time, was represented by Barack Obama). On the other hand, liberal or moderate Republicans, as well as conservative Republicans appeared way more likely to vote for the Republican candidate John McCain (appendix 1). Independents (people who do not affiliate with either party) tended to be a fluctuating group. Through the different polls held from August

⁴⁵ Lumen Learning Team. Op cit.

⁴⁶ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on: <https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

⁴⁷ Gallup team (2008). Candidate Support by Political Party and Ideology [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/108049/Candidate-Support-Political-Party-Ideology.aspx>. [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

to November 2008, around 25 to 30% of independents appeared to give their support to the Democratic party. Nevertheless, a bigger fraction of this group (around 30 to 35%) ultimately chose to give their vote to the Republican Party⁴⁸ (appendix 2).

When race is considered⁴⁹, the Democrats' electorate appears to be relatively diverse. As a matter of fact, even though 60% of democratic voters appear to be white, 22% of their electorate are composed of Blacks, while 13% are Hispanics (appendix 3). In spite of their white majority, this means that 4 out of 10 Democratic voters are from another ethnic background. Democrats thus appear to have a more diverse audience with two thirds of Blacks identifying as Democrats and about a quarter to a third of Hispanics doing the same. As for Asian people, even though they mostly identify as independents, a third of the Asian population still identify as Democrats.

From a gender point of view⁵⁰, women appear more likely to affiliate with the Democratic Party. Around 50% of women seem to consider themselves as Democratic or leaning towards the Democratic Party, against around 40% of men (appendix 4). This gender gap can also be observed through the different racial and ethnic group, with an even bigger difference between Hispanic and Black men and women⁵¹ (appendix 5).

Education⁵² also plays a role in one's political choices. While the breakdown seems to be around 50-50 for people with high school and college diplomas, people with a postgrad experience are actually more likely to lean towards or to associate with the Democratic Party (appendix 6).

There is also an important generational factor regarding party affiliation⁵³. In 2008, around 60% Millennials identified as Democratic. By contrast, the difference between Republican and Democratic candidates was way less significant for GenXers, Boomers, and the Silents⁵⁴, with numbers varying from 45 to 50% of the group supporting either party.

⁴⁸ Gallup team (2008). Op Cit.

⁴⁹ Newport, F. (2008), Democrats Racially Diverse; Republicans Mostly White [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/160373/democrats-racially-diverse-republicans-mostly-white.aspx> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

⁵⁰ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on : <https://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

⁵¹ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Op cit.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Op Cit.

⁵⁴ The Silents are the generation preceding the Baby Boomers, gathering people born approximately between the years 1928 and 1945.

Nevertheless, at the time of Obama's election, all those groups appeared to have a slightly bigger proportion supporting the Democratic Party. These tendencies also vary according to the racial disparities inside the group. As a matter of fact, non-white GenXers, Boomers, and the Silents appear way more likely to vote for Democratic candidates than their white counterparts (appendix 7).

Religion can also influence political affiliation⁵⁵. While Catholics tend to be almost evenly split between the Republicans and the Democrats (again, this can vary in function of ethnicity within the Catholic group; Hispanic Catholics, for instance, are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates compared to their white counterparts), Mormons tend to be solid Republican partisans. Jewish voters, on the other hand, seem more likely to affiliate with the Democratic Party (appendix 8).

2. The Republican Party

According to Pew Research Center's data⁵⁶, Republicans tended to be a minority of registered voters around the 2016 elections. As a matter of fact, only around 25% of registered voters identified as solid Republicans, against around 35% of both independents and Democrats. Even after asking independents whether they lean Democrat or lean Republican, this number could only be brought up to 42% of Republicans, thus making up a smaller portion of voters (appendix 9).

From a gender point of view⁵⁷, men appear slightly more likely to affiliate with the Republican Party, even though the difference does not seem to be extremely significant between the two parties. Women, on the other hand, have consistently been observed to favor the Democratic Party (appendix 4).

Regarding the generational factor, only Millennials appear to have a strong affiliation with the Democratic Party, while other generational groups tend to be quite equally divided among Republicans, Democrats or independents (appendix 7).

As far as race is concerned, the Republican electorate is far from being as diverse as the Democrat's. If looked at carefully, the proportion of Whites identifying as Republican does not appear much bigger than the proportion of Whites identifying as Democrats (around 33 to 34%

⁵⁵ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Op cit.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

against around 26%). Nevertheless, white people voting for the Republican Party represent the vast majority of the party's electorate. When looking at the voting tendencies of other ethnic groups, it can be seen that only 14% of Hispanics, 3% of Blacks and 12% of Asians identify as solid Republicans (appendix 3).

It is important to mention that the gender gap mentioned hereabove can also be observed throughout those different ethnic and generational groups, with men always being more likely to support Republican candidates.

Even though a higher level of education is often associated with a Democratic affiliation⁵⁸, this tendency is actually quite hard to verify. While most people with a postgraduate experience clearly seem to identify with or lean towards the Democratic Party, this difference more subtle among college graduates. As for people with only some college experience, a high school degree or an even lower education level, the proportions of solid Democratic or Republican supporters are virtually the same. If only considering white voters, however, there seems to be a more significant contrast with people with only some college experience, a high school degree or an even lower education level clearly affiliating with the Republican Party (appendix 6).

From a religious point of view, it can be observed that white evangelical and mainline Protestants seems to affiliate with the Republican Party. However, in spite of their religion, Black Protestants remain faithful supporters of the Democratic Party, even though they only account for a small portion of the Democratic electorate. As for white Catholics, they appear quite evenly distributed between both parties, while Hispanic Catholics remain strongly in favor of the Democratic Party. As for Mormons, they always have been and still remain an important group of Republican supporters (appendix 8).

It has also been observed that people coming from rural areas tend to be more likely to support the Republican Party rather than the Democratic Party. As for people living in suburban area, they seem to be evenly divided between the two parties (appendix 10).⁵⁹

In their exit polls, the CNN also pointed out that people with higher income usually tended to associate with the Republican Party, while people earning less tend to be more likely

⁵⁸ CNN Team (2016). Exit polls [Online]. CNN. Available on: <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/national/house> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

⁵⁹ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Op cit.

to vote for the Democratic Party, even though the difference of proportions between groups was not enormous (usually with an opposition of 45% against 55%) (appendix 11).⁶⁰

Other factors such as having been a part of the US army or being born a US citizen also seem to influence one's vote. As a matter of fact, active members of the army slightly favor the Democratic Party, while veterans are way more likely to support the Republican Party. The difference in party affiliation among people born US citizens was not significant. Nevertheless, people who were not born US citizens were more likely to be democrats (appendix 12).

Finally, 78% people from the LGBTQ+ community tend to support the Democratic Party, while only 18% support the Republican Party (appendix 13).⁶¹

⁶⁰ CNN Team (2016). Op Cit.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Chapter 4: A closer look at Obama's 2008 campaign

Section 1: Electoral campaign and outcome

Obama's campaign officially launched on February 10th, 2007. At this point, he was not yet guaranteed to be the final Democratic candidate and was competing against several others, including Hillary Clinton, who was his biggest opponent.

About a year later, on January 3rd, 2008, Obama won the Iowa Democratic Caucus, also known as the "first in the nation caucus". This first victory was then followed by numerous other victories and some occasional defeat. A few weeks later, on Super Tuesday⁶², 24 states held their Democratic primaries, 13 of which were won by Obama. In the coming weeks and months, Obama won over an additional dozen state primaries, in addition to the Democrats Abroad primaries⁶³, the US Virgin Islands Democratic Territorial Convention and the Guam Democratic Territorial Convention (which he will win by only 7 votes).

On June 3rd, Obama's campaign hit a turning point: thanks to his victory at the Montana Democratic primaries. He reached the crucial number of 1237 delegates supporting him and became the Presumptive Nominee of the Democratic Party. Four days later, Hillary Clinton finally conceded the Democratic nomination and publicly endorsed Obama.

Two months later, on August 23rd, Obama introduced Joe Biden as his running mate. A few days later, they were both officially nominated as the party's candidates for the general election. A number of speeches and debates ensued up until Election Day, when Obama defeated his Republican opponent, by winning 364 general electors of the Electoral College⁶⁴. In spite of his victory being accepted by the majority of officials and citizens, the birther movement⁶⁵, of which Trump was a Member, raised the question of Obama's citizenship, without which he would not have been eligible for the presidency.⁶⁶ The Supreme Court met to investigate those rumors and, on December 8th, declined to rule on the President Elect's

⁶² A Tuesday during the primaries were the largest number of states simultaneously hold their primary elections.

⁶³ Primaries held in other countries in order for delocalized American citizens to vote.

⁶⁴ Goddard, T. 2008 Electoral Map [Online]. Teagan Goddard's Electoral Vote Map. Available on : <https://electoralvotemap.com/2008-election-results/> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁶⁵ A movement gathering people doubting Obama's (and later other candidates, such as this years VP nominee Kamala Harris) citizenship, originally based on an article mentioning his lack of American roots, referring to his childhood in various countries.

⁶⁶ CNN (2016). Timeline of the "Birther Movement" [Online]. Available on : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzYVwVR-Rek> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

eligibility⁶⁷. On January 20th, 2009, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States of America.⁶⁸

Obama's campaign was not easy and he had to deal with some major rumors, which almost cost him the presidency. Nevertheless, his election is a landmark in American History as he successfully became the first Black President of the country. What was also remarkable about the 2008 election is that it generated the biggest voter turnout in 40 years and was the first to truly benefit from the internet as a means of publicity, mostly thanks to the growing numbers of blogs, which helped circulate information, be they false or accurate.⁶⁹

It is important to mention that Obama won nearly all major demographic groups (including 56% of women and 49% of men, who generally appear to favor the Republican Party). However, white voters remained predominantly in favor of the Republican candidate, John McCain. Obama also convinced a lot of young voters by winning all age groups except the 65+ group.⁷⁰ On top of these groups, he also won a majority of the Black population, as well as upper income and highly educated Whites, which have remained crucial groups for the Democratic Party ever since.⁷¹

Obama's campaign was also unprecedented in many ways. Even though he was not the first Black candidate to ever participate in the presidential race (as Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and Reverend Jesse Jackson had tried before him in 1972, and 1984 and 1988⁷²), he was nevertheless the first Black person to have ever been nominated by one of the two main parties⁷³, which on its own made the election unique and new. Obama also made a point in distinguishing himself from candidates that came before him, as well as from his opponent John

⁶⁷ McClatchy Newspapers (December 4th, 2008). Supreme Court to consider taking up lawsuit challenging Obama's citizenship [Online]. The Guardian. Available on : <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/04/barack-obama-citizenship-supreme-court> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁶⁸ Wikipedia. Timeline of the 2008 United States presidential election [Online]. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Available on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2008_United_States_presidential_election#2008 [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁶⁹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020). United States Presidential Election of 2008 [Online]. Encyclopedia Britannica. Available on: <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-2008> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁷⁰ Goddard, T. Op Cit.

⁷¹ Brownstein, R. (2019, march 12th). The Key demographics of the Democratic Party are fragmenting [Online]. CNN. Available on: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/12/03/politics/2020-democrats-campaign-barack-obama/index.html> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

⁷² New & Notes (May 27th, 2008). The history of Black Presidential Candidates. [Online]. NPR. Available on : <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90856052> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁷³ Sandbox Networks (2020). Presidential Elections, 1789-2020. InfoPlease. Available on : <https://www.infoplease.com/us/government/elections/presidential-elections-1789-2020> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

McCain. In addition, he marked a considerable distance from the Bush administration. He also gained popularity with the average Americans by being more sensitive about the harsh economic realities at the time, as opposed to McCain, whose comments had made him seem out of touch with the life of average American citizens. His campaign was focused on the change he could bring to the nation.⁷⁴

Furthermore, the campaign was characterized by an enormous level of engagement, mostly due to the use of the internet and social media, which enabled him to reach out to a younger audience.⁷⁵ Indeed, Obama made sure to be active and prominent on various social media such as *Facebook*, *MySpace*, and *Twitter*, and repeatedly posted videos of his speeches and events on *YouTube*. Obama was obviously not the only one using such tools and relying on technology and the internet, but he was the one to truly make those tools a crucial part of his campaign and to “properly manage the networks of supporters they help[ed] organize.”⁷⁶

Specifically, as Sarah Stirland points out “Obama is the first to successfully integrate technology with a revamped model of political organization that stresses volunteer participation and feedback on a massive scale”⁷⁷. As a matter of fact, Obama relied on phone banking throughout the entire campaign, but particularly towards the end of it, in the hope of convincing individuals who had not voted yet.⁷⁸ Such action required a lot of volunteer work, which was organized thanks to Obama’s own networking website: *MyBO*. The platform allowed volunteers to register according to their region, which enabled the campaign team to divide them into groups that would later accomplish a particular task in order to recruit voters or prep for the next step of the campaign. This “political machine”⁷⁹ thus primarily relied on technology, first through those phone calls, but also with web capacity, teachout recalls and a text messaging service.⁸⁰

However, this major reliance on technology could not have happened without the Party’s access to major voter databases. The Democratic Party (as well as the Republican Party) has databases filled with all the information they could possibly gather about voters over the years. Thanks to those lists, campaign staff are able to learn what those potential voters care

⁷⁴ Lumen Learning Team. Op cit.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Talbot, D. (2008, August 19th). How Obama Really Did It [Online]. *MIT Technology Review*. Available on: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/410644/how-obama-really-did-it/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

⁷⁷ Stirland, S. L. (2008, October 29th). Obama’s Secret Weapons: Internet, Databases and Psychology [Online]. *Wired*. Available on: <https://www.wired.com/2008/10/obamas-secret-w/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Talbot, D. (2008, August 19th). Op Cit.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

and worry about and use it while phone banking, for example. This data was also made partly available to campaign volunteers who could then focus on potential voters in their area and try to convince them to vote for Obama. For instance, thanks to the “neighbor to neighbor” tool, volunteers could pull up the names and address of 25 neighbors to call, while veterans were recruited to call other veterans (mostly in swing states⁸¹) to convince them to vote for Obama.⁸²

Furthermore, the main campaign website allowed supporters to donate money to the Obama campaign. Money is a tremendous element in a political campaign, as it finances all the advertising and staff. The websites gave people the possibility to either make a one-time donation or to register to be a monthly donor for the entire length of the campaign. This fund-raising element was also present on the *MyBO* website, where supporters could set their own goal and organize their own event to gather funds that they would later donate to the Obama campaign.⁸³

Section 2: Factors influencing the electorate

1. Political affiliation

Obama was the candidate of the Democratic Party, which was his first way of establishing an electorate. During the 2008 elections, a Gallup poll⁸⁴ revealed a general preference for the Democratic Party. The Gallup team was able to identify almost 30 states as being solidly Democratic, and six more as leaning Democratic (appendix 14). Considering the outcome of this research, it can be argued that Barack Obama could have won many more states than he actually did (he won 28 states and the district of Columbia, as opposed to 22 for his opponent John McCain). This can probably be explained by the Republicans’ higher tendency to vote, or by the fact that the specific characteristics of the two candidates might have influenced people’s vote on levels other than their political ideology. Nevertheless, Obama still managed to win over several states such as Colorado, Indiana, Nevada and New Mexico, which typically tend to lean Republican.⁸⁵

⁸¹ States where voters’ tendencies vary and that could thus end up favoring either candidates

⁸² Talbot, D. (2009, February 24th). Personalized Campaigning [Online]. *MIT Technology Review*. Available on: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/412208/personalized-campaigning/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

⁸³ Talbot, D. (2008, August 19th). Op Cit.

⁸⁴ Gallup team (2009). State of the States: Political Party Affiliation [Online]. *Gallup*. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/114016/State-States-Political-Party-Affiliation.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020]

⁸⁵ Goddard, T. Op Cit.

Party affiliation alone is not enough to retain the attention and support of every elector. What the candidates choose to endorse or advocate for at a political level is tremendously important. Voters have to elect the person who will better represent their personal interest and individual liberties, as well as who will better fight for issues whom they might be concerned with or involved in. At an individual level, Barack Obama has always been quite liberal, even being qualified by his opponent, John McCain, as a socialist at one point⁸⁶. This voting pattern is called issue voting and is characterized by the fact that some voters chose to vote for a particular candidate solely based on their stance regarding certain political issues. Issue voting has become the norm over the year as it enables voters to identify as independents. In spite of being an increasingly popular way of voting, it remains quite complicated as the choice of the voter depends solely on their ability to elect a candidate whose ideas seems the closest to their own.⁸⁷

Regarding issue voting as a strategy, the political agenda of a candidate appears to be a crucial element of his winning the people over. As a matter of fact, a significant number of potential voters can be convinced by the highlighting of a particular political issue that is important to them and their values. Moreover, the idea of prosperity is often put forward by candidates as an ideal that can only be achieved by their party. This idea also has a tremendous influence on potential voters.⁸⁸ For instance, one of Obama's main goals and fuel of his campaign was his reform of the healthcare system, which he wanted to make available and affordable for all.⁸⁹ Within his health program, Obama also defended a safe access to abortions for all women and put the emphasis on their right to choose and on their health. He also advocated for the use of a guilt-free vocabulary regarding abortion policies. Obama was also in favor of a bigger budget going towards sexual education and birth control to avoid teen pregnancies.⁹⁰

Other important elements of Obama's political agenda were taxes, energy, education, social security and foreign policies. Regarding taxes, his objectives were to implement an important tax reform supposed to favor small businesses and companies creating jobs within the country instead of shipping them overseas. He also promised tax breaks for working

⁸⁶ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020). Op Cit.

⁸⁷ Condon, S. (2012, September 4th). Obama's 2008 promises: kept or broken? [Online]. CBS News. Available on : <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/obamas-2008-promises-kept-or-broken/> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

⁸⁸ Lumen Learning Team. Op cit.

⁸⁹ The Democratic Party. History.com. Op Cit.

⁹⁰ Condon, S. (2012, September 4th). Op Cit.

families. Regarding environmental policy, Obama sought to decrease the United States' oil dependency on the Middle East and to develop cleanest and greenest ways to produce (renewable) energy at a national level. Another one of his objectives was to retool the automobile industry to enable them to build fuel efficient cars that would be affordable for the American people. Obama also valued quality education and wanted to better the work conditions of all teachers. He also wanted to make college affordable for Americans of all backgrounds. In addition, Obama wanted to work toward a better social security system for all workers to enable them to have access to paid sick leaves and family leaves. He also supported an equal pay system for people of all sexes and ethnicities, mentioning during his campaign that he wanted his daughter to "have the exact same opportunities as your sons"⁹¹. Finally, Obama sought to end all unnecessary wars, while creating new partnerships to fight against "the threats of the 21st century"⁹² (terrorism, nuclear proliferation, poverty, climate change).⁹³

Throughout his campaign, Obama also gathered quite a few influential supporters. Among the people who endorsed him during his campaign were Caroline and Ted Kennedy, Oprah Winfrey, Hillary Clinton, Bill Richardson⁹⁴, John Edwards⁹⁵, etc. Be they political personalities, celebrities, or socialites, the support of well-known personalities can convince someone to vote for a particular candidate because it will reinforce their trust to know that influential people will be voting for them too. During his campaign, Obama was also endorsed by two important Republican personalities: Colin Powel, the former Secretary of State under George W. Bush, and Ken Duberstein, the former White House Chief of Staff under President Reagan. Earning the support of people who are seen as supporters of the opposing party might also have benefited Obama, as it might have persuaded independent voters to vote for him, voters who might otherwise have voted Republican.

2. Personal factors

As fewer people tend to affiliate with a particular party and issue voting has started to become the norm, another influential factor regarding voters' choice appeared: the personal traits of the candidate. As a matter of fact, even though political factors remain predominant while choosing a political candidate, their personality seems to have a greater influence in some

⁹¹ Condon, S. (2012, September 4th). Op Cit.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ A former Democratic candidate

⁹⁵ A former Democratic candidate and 2004 VP nominee

circumstances. For instance, a voter identifying as independent might be unable to politically identify or align with either of the candidates running for president, be they Democratic or Republican. In that case, they might turn to more individual characteristics of the candidates to determine whether they should vote for them. These characteristics might either be based on personal or demographic traits of the candidates.⁹⁶ Personal traits are directly linked to the personality of a candidate. They might be linked to their passions, hobbies, studies, the importance of their families, of their faith, etc. They are based on elements that are specific to a person and that do not have a direct link to their political affiliation. Demographic criteria are “characteristic used to classify people for statistical purposes, such as age, race, or gender”⁹⁷. Those criteria generally seem to be used not only to create similarities with some parts of the electorates, but also to discredit other candidates by emphasizing how they would be unable to relate to certain demographic groups.⁹⁸

Of course, personal traits vary according to the candidates. For Obama, the most prominent one would be his race. In 2008, artist Shepard Fairey created a colorful print of Obama featuring the word “hope” at the bottom (appendix 15). The goal, through this print, was to depict the symbolism of Obama’s personality and accomplishments and to have him be remembered as an “eloquent, thoughtful, humane and likable symbol of racial progress”.⁹⁹ This personification of racial progress is the reflection of the most remarkable and important personal factor that might have influenced the electorate: he is Black. As a matter of fact, the color of Obama’s skin is one of the first features that the public notices, and it obviously had, in a country where racism is still very much present, a tremendous impact. Barack Obama is thus the first Black president of the United States, and, globally, the first leader of African descent of a Western nation. The color of his skin seemed, at the time, not to be accepted by some Americans. In fact, the start of his presidency was marked by a lawsuit, during which the Supreme Court had to decide whether or not his election was valid based on false claims that he was not actually an American citizen. Once this issue finally got sorted out and The Supreme Court had decided not to further investigate on Obama’s citizenship, thousands of Americans protested against his election, holding signs urging him to return to Kenya, encouraging his deportation or telling him to “hang in there”, an allusion to the practice of lynching of Black

⁹⁶ Lumen Learning Team. Op cit.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Good, C. (2017, October 20th). The Legacy of Hope [Online]. *U.S. News*. Available on: <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/debate-club/articles/2017-01-17/obamas-rhetoric-and-symbolism-will-give-him-a-positive-legacy> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Americans.¹⁰⁰ Obama thus gathered a lot of detractors just because of his race, but also a lot of supporters. As a matter of fact, Obama won over a great number of people of color during his campaign, with Black people accounting for 20% of his total electorate in 2008 and Hispanics accounting for 11%.¹⁰¹ This represents more than 80% of registered Black voters and over 55% of Hispanics voters identifying as Democrats or leaning Democrats.¹⁰² Thus, despite his detractors, the election of President Obama ultimately represented racial progress.¹⁰³

Another personal trait that is worth being noted is Obama's close ties to his family. His wife, First Lady Michelle Obama, played a particularly important role in the popularity of the Obama family, as she appeared to be quite relatable, being a politically and professionally successful working mother. She never took herself too seriously and appeared on the Jimmy Fallon Show as well as on Ellen. This positive image of goofiness and being an ordinary person allowed people to connect to the Obama family.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the Obama family appeared tight-knit throughout his entire campaign. The strong bond between Barack Obama and his family was evident during his campaign speeches, where he almost always took a moment to thank his family for their unconditional love and support.

Moreover, Obama could be described as realistic and determined. During his announcement speech (which will be discussed in further details below), he stated: "I know that I haven't spent a lot of time learning the ways of Washington. But I've been there long enough to know that the ways of Washington must change"¹⁰⁵. Here, Obama conveys the idea that he is conscious of his lack of experience compared to other political figures, and that it could disadvantage him when it comes to serving in office. Yet, he conveyed the impression to be very aware of the people's will and necessity for change and involvement. However, in spite of his lack of extensive experience in politics, his legal background gave him a thorough knowledge of the Constitution, which remains non-negotiable when it comes to serving the people.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Good, C. (2017, October 20th). Op Cit.

¹⁰¹ Newport, F., Democrats Racially Diverse; Republicans Mostly White [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/160373/democrats-racially-diverse-republicans-mostly-white.aspx> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

¹⁰² Pew Research Center Team (2018). Op Cit.

¹⁰³ Good, C. (2017, October 20th). Op Cit.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁵ Balz, D.; Kornblut, A. E. (2007, February 11th). Obama Joins Race with Goals Set High [Online]. The Washington Post. [Retrieved on October 20th, 2020].

¹⁰⁶ Friedberg, M. (2008, March 21st). Barack Obama's Integrity [Online]. HuffPost. Available on : https://www.huffpost.com/entry/barack-obamas-integrity_b_92750?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZWNVc2lhLm9yZy8&guce_referrer_sig

A psychodiagnostics case study realized during the 2008 campaign by Aubrey Immelman¹⁰⁷ also highlights another important aspect of Obama's personality: ambition. Obama's ranking on the ambitious pole of the MIDC¹⁰⁸ suggests a confident, socially poised and assertive personality. Such individuals tend to appear and be confident when it comes to communication and expressing themselves. This is also reinforced by an assertive personality, enabling them to stand their ground and to opt for a persuasive approach when it comes to their interpersonal contacts. The ambition scale is also usually correlated to a calm temperament and a very self-composed, serene, and optimistic behavior under all circumstances, as well as with conscientiousness and respectfulness (often reinforced by a higher score on the conscientiousness scale, but on which Obama only has an average score). In spite of this well-developed confidence, another element standing out of his psychological profile are his accommodating tendencies. This part of the profile shows a greater tendency to compromise and to cooperate, which, associated with his ambitious pattern suggests a "confident conciliator personality composite"¹⁰⁹. Sounding confident and having the ability to stay composed under pressure are, without a doubt, qualities that encouraged the electorate to trust Barack Obama during his campaign. Besides, Independent or Republican leaning voters may have been attracted to the fact that he conveyed an ability to compromise.

Finally, Obama had already published a book before becoming president: *Dreams from my Father*¹¹⁰. He wrote his book to introduce himself as a man, caught in between two different worlds that were his parents' respective cultures, and the struggles he experienced growing up without a father. These questions regarding his identity and his anger towards his absent father fueled his will to get involved, be it socially or politically. Indeed, in addition to his political career, Obama first was a community organizer in Chicago, which demonstrates his social involvement, as well as his desires to help others reach compromises. He described himself as a mature person, able to understand other people's point of view, and good at gathering people. He also mentioned his ambition regarding his political career and his convictions. The fact that

[=AQAAALBC_glGDVFICYhbhdw53gKUmdlBo325DPgPGkUHDvLIFDtI5NS18rpqW8dRw7-744NoQCj2hfNQNDY5EI7AHTWNgi5MigQiRvLMXzqMtx6E2pjRUHvtl4xJUlBYMAC2w8p2fgmPfiOuDspWJ6-wJsy74EjOqWyMjtwdXB6HRKS](https://www.immehuman.com/psychodiagnostics/psychodiagnostics-case-study-realized-during-the-2008-campaign-by-aubrey-immelman/) [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

¹⁰⁷ Immelman, A. (2008, July). Op Cit.

¹⁰⁸ Due to the restricted interest of this thesis for psychological analysis per se, I will mostly rely on major elements highlighted by some MDIC characteristics and not on the complete MDIC profile, which consist of a complex mix of various psychological criteria and variations.

¹⁰⁹ Immelman, A. (2008, July). Op Cit.

¹¹⁰ It was first published in 1995 and then reedited in 2004 after his election to the Senate.

such information was gathered in a book also gave insight into his personality to people who were considering voting for him.¹¹¹

Thus, Obama, through his use of verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal language, presents himself as a strong, self-confident and ambitious Black man and appears determined and committed to prove his worth to and fight for his fellow Americans.

3. Communication factors

For this section, I will analyze the communication factors of three speeches from the 2008 Obama campaign. I selected those speeches with the objective to build a comprehensive overview of the campaign by focusing on some of its key moments.

The first speech is the announcement speech of Obama's Campaign. This speech was a 20-minute speech given outside at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois. The second speech is Obama's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention. It lasted around 40 to 45 minutes and took place at Invesco Field, a football stadium of Denver, Colorado. Finally, there is the speech Barack Obama gave at his last rally. This speech lasted around 45 minutes and took place at the Prince William County Fair in Manassas, Virginia.

3.1. Pragmatic factors

Pragmatics is the study of language in context. Its focus relies on the meaning of a specific utterance of language in a given and precise context, and does not attempt to draw any general conclusions per se. Pragmatic factors are thus elements that are directly related to the situation in which the communication occurs, and that will play a role in the meaning or understanding of what is being said.

The most impactful element regarding the pragmatics of campaign speeches (be they Trump or Obama's) is the fact that they have all been composed and designed to be used during the candidates' political campaigns. Without even considering the goal of a campaign speech in itself, it is easy to postulate that having a preset goal might have influenced the writing of those speeches to fit the particular context of a campaign rally or convention. As a matter of

¹¹¹ Weisberd, J. (May 19th, 2009). La vraie personnalité d'Obama [Online]. Slate. Available on: <http://www.slate.fr/story/5499/la-vraie-personnalite-dobama> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

fact, I chose to investigate these speeches because they fit into the pragmatics category of analysis.

Another element that has to be taken into account regarding the audience of such speeches is the fact the presidential elections are an extremely important national event, and that the rallies are often held in big strategic cities that might not be accessible to most Americans. A lot of the political communication that happens during a campaign is thus broadcast on television¹¹². Given that these speeches were broadcast by a television network, and that such broadcasts are not controlled by the candidates, it might be difficult to make sure that people watching from home get the right feeling and perception of the speeches, as all facial features and/or physical gestures might not be displayed.

Furthermore, Obama's announcement and last rally speeches were given at events organized by Obama's campaign team, while the acceptance speech was held at the Democratic National Convention (DNC). The physical conditions in which Obama's speeches were held are thus very different. As a matter of fact, the DNC is a major political event and is thus carefully organized to allow all spectators to be seated and gathered within a certain radius of the speaker. For the other two speeches, however, the circumstances appear not to be the same. Both speeches took place outside (in front of the Old State Capitol of Springfield, Illinois, and on the Prince William County fair), in areas allowing as many people as possible to attend the event. This meant that the public was dispersed around the area, which might have caused quite a bit of chaos around the stage. Similarly, like people watching from their homes, people standing furthest away from the stage might have difficulty perceiving some of the emotions or body language accompanying the speech. As we will establish later, nonverbal language is of tremendous importance when it comes to fully understanding any form of communication. Thus, not having correct access to those elements because of the speech's physical context might influence the understanding of its original meaning.

In summary, the writing of the speeches was, without a doubt, intended to be convincing as they should be in the context of a presidential campaign. The particular context of people gathering to listen to a political candidate that they most likely support (to various degrees) might also have reinforced the power of the speeches to convince the audience. Moreover, the physical organization of the events might have influenced the availability of certain linguistic or gestural factors: some people in the audience might have been too far to hear properly or to

¹¹² Proof is, all footage of Obama's campaign speeches were retrieved thanks to C-span broadcast of the events.

perceive the voice changes or body language of the speaker, which might have, in turn, affected their understanding of the discourse.

3.2. Functional factors

In addition to its pragmatic function, language also has a functional aspect. This refers to the function of language, or, in other words, to the goals it intends to accomplish.

The function of campaign speeches is to convince potential voters to support a certain candidate. It follows then that the main purpose of such a speech is to convince people to engage in actions that will serve one's party. We can thus categorize campaign speeches as argumentative discourses because their final objective is to provide convincing arguments that will, in turn, lead to actions. These objectives are thus to be accomplished through the language used in those speeches. As per the nature of political speeches, we can also assume this convincing process relies heavily on political information, or, more precisely, on information regarding the political ideals and goals of the candidates. According to Rob Kroes, "Obama finds his place in America's great tradition of the statesman as public orator and master of rhetoric. In that role, he explains, renders accounts and invites the public to reflect."¹¹³ This also shows in the process he uses to convince his audience.

In argumentative discourse, several linguistic processes can be used to influence the audience. In Obama's speeches, parallelisms are the most frequent figure of speech inducing persuasion. Parallelisms appear as a way to insist on a particular word or group of words by reusing them in several sentences.¹¹⁴ In most cases, that group of words is situated at the beginning of a sentence or paragraph, but can also be found inside sentences. Obama used this stylistic element to highlight key people, places, moments or other elements that are tremendously important to his political agenda, in order to create a relationship with his audience.

For instance, in his announcement speech, Obama addresses reasons bringing people together as follows:

¹¹³ Kroes, R. (2012). The power of rhetoric and the rhetoric of power: Exploring a tension within the Obama presidency [Online]. *European journal of American studies*. Available on: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/9578> [Retrieved on the April 10th, 2020].

¹¹⁴ Équipe de professeurs Cours Louis Blanc. Procédés pour persuader [Online]. Available on : <http://courslouisblanc.free.fr/fiches.pedagogiques/procedes.pour.persuader.htm> [Retrieved on February 21st, 2021]

*“You came here because you believe in what this country can be. **In the face of** war, you believe there can be peace. **In the face of** despair, you believe there can be hope. **In the face of** politics that shut you out, that’s told you to settle, that’s divided us for too long, you believe that we can be one people [...].”*¹¹⁵

By insisting on this particular construction, Obama gives his audience the impression that he understands them. By introducing a first-person plural pronoun and mentioning the possibility of becoming a united people, Obama also introduces the idea of togetherness. This impression of togetherness is actually emphasized through parallelisms several times throughout the speech, as for when he mentions in his announcement speech:

*“**We’ve been told** that climate change is a hoax. **We’ve been told** that tough talk and an ill-conceived war can replace diplomacy, and strategy, and foresight. [...] **We’ve been told** that our crises are somebody else’s fault.”*¹¹⁶

Later in the same speech, he also introduced the idea that all the people supporting him and his will for change belong to a same generation:

*“**Let us be the generation that** reshapes our economy to compete in the digital age. [...] **Let’s be the generation that** ends poverty in America. [...] And **let’s be the generation that** finally, after all these years, tackles our health care crisis. [...] **Let’s be the generation that** finally frees America from the tyranny of oil. [...] **Let’s be the generation that** makes future generations proud of what we did. [...] **Let’s be the generation that** never forgets what happened on that September day and confront the terrorists with everything we’ve got.”*¹¹⁷

By emphasizing those particular phrases, Obama makes sure that they will resonate with his audience. By focusing his parallelism on the words “Let us be the generation”, which fully includes him in said generation, he creates an effect of togetherness and a connection with the people he is talking to. He shows them that no matter their differences, they can still all relate to each other and come together in their hope for a better future for America.

¹¹⁵ Obama, B. (2007). Campaign Announcement Speech [Online]. Available on: <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobamacandidacyforpresident.htm> [Retrieved March 20th, 2020].

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

While parallelisms are also present in Obama's Convention speech, they do not focus on that particular aspect of togetherness. Instead, they tend to refer to Obama's political agenda and to his particular goals if he becomes president of the United States:

***"It is a promise that** says each of us had the freedom to make of our own life what we will, but that we also have the obligation to treat each other with dignity and respect. **It's a promise that** says the market should reward drive and innovation and generate growth, but that businesses should live up to their responsibilities to create American jobs [...]. **Ours is a promise that** says government cannot solve all our problems, but what it should do is that which we cannot do for ourselves – protect us from harm and provide every child a decent education [...]. **That's the promise of America** [...]. **That's the promise** we need to keep [...]."*¹¹⁸

Although the idea of a single and united people can be perceived in this excerpt, it is not the main point, which is rather what would be implemented if Obama and the Democratic Party were elected. That can surely be explained by the more formal character of the Democratic National Convention, for which a more factual approach is more suitable than an emotional one. In spite of using the first person in all speeches, we can also notice that the Convention speech is the only one during which Obama used the first person singular to insist on what his actual objectives are. In the other two speeches, Obama favored the first-person plural to focus on a common goal for him and his supporters that can only be achieved by working together as a nation. However, using collective pronouns might also constitute a persuasive element¹¹⁹, as it involves the audience and creates the impression that they are actively taking part in something.

In his parallelisms, Obama also focuses on time, which leads to the idea that there is a certain urge to act for a better future and for laws and regulations that would truly favor the country. For instance, in his Convention speech, he uses several structures such as "it's time" and "now is the time", showing a certain sense of urgency. Similarly, in the speech made during his final rally, he several times insists on "tomorrow", referring to the day of the election, encouraging his audience to participate in the changes that they want to see:

¹¹⁸ Obama, B. (2008). Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Denver: "The American Promise" (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-accepting-the-presidential-nomination-the-democratic-national-convention-denver> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

¹¹⁹ Équipe de professeurs Cours Louis Blanc. Op cit.

*“Tomorrow, you can turn the page on policies that put greed and irresponsibility before hard work and sacrifice. Tomorrow, you can choose policies that invest in our middle class, create new jobs and grow this economy [...]. Tomorrow, you can put an end to the politics that would divide a nation just to win an election [...]. Tomorrow, at this defining moment in history, you can give the country the change that we need”.*¹²⁰

Another persuasive element of Obama’s campaign discourse is his reference to emblematic political figures that have been important to the American people. For instance, in his announcement speech, he makes several references to Lincoln, the Founding Fathers, and Martin Luther King Jr. For example, in his announcement speech, he said:

*“And that is why, in the shadow of the Old State Capitol, where Lincoln once called on a house divided to stand together, where common hopes and common dreams still live, I stand before you today to announce my candidacy for President of the United States of America. [...]. That’s what Abraham Lincoln understood. He had his doubts. He had his defeats. He had his skeptics. He had his setbacks. But through his will and his words, he moved a nation and helped free a people.”*¹²¹

Mentioning Lincoln’s hope of uniting the nation implies that Obama relates to that particular objective. Moreover, calling people’s attention to Lincoln’s doubts and weaknesses also echoes his own recognition of the “certain presumptuousness”¹²² and “audacity”¹²³ of his candidacy and legitimizes his own actions. Nevertheless, Obama also establishes authority by referring to his own expertise, in spite of showing awareness of his potential flaws. In fact, he does not just introduce himself as Barack Obama, the presidential candidate, but also as Barack Obama, the lawyer. Presenting himself as something other than a politician also gives him legitimacy.

Similarly, in his Convention speech, Obama takes the time to acknowledge and thank other Democratic candidates having either paved the way for his political career or somehow participated in his electoral path:

*“Let me express my thanks to the historic slate of candidates who accompanied me on this journey, and especially the one who traveled the farthest – **a champion for working Americans and an inspiration to my daughters and to yours** -- Hillary Rodham Clinton. To*

¹²⁰ Obama, B. (2008). Op Cit.

¹²¹ Obama, B. (2007). Op cit.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

*President Clinton, who last night made the case for change as only he can make it; to Ted Kennedy, who embodies the spirit of service; and to the next Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, I thank you. I am grateful to finish this journey with one of the finest statesmen of our time, a man at ease with everyone from world leaders to the conductors on the Amtrak train he still takes home every night.”*¹²⁴

Taking the time to not only address those political figures, but also to compliment them and their accomplishments, allows Obama to reinforce a certain ideal or vision of the Democratic Party which, in turn, legitimizes him as a Democratic candidate.

On rarer occasions, Obama asks rhetorical questions in his speeches¹²⁵. Even though no real answer can be given to those questions, they enable the speaker to connect to their audience by highlighting underlying facts or enabling pertinent deductions. For instance, in his Convention speech, he mentions:

*“[...] John McCain has voted with George Bush 90 percent of the time. Senator McCain likes to talk about judgment, but really, what does it say about your judgment when you think George Bush has been right more than ninety percent of the time?”*¹²⁶

*“Why else would he define middle-class as someone making under five million dollars a year? How else could he propose hundreds of billions in tax breaks for big corporations and oil companies but not one penny of tax relief to more than one hundred million Americans? How else could he offer a health care plan that would actually tax people's benefits, or an education plan that would do nothing to help families pay for college, or a plan that would privatize Social Security and gamble your retirement?”*¹²⁷

It appears that Obama used those rhetorical questions to raise doubts about his opponent's convictions and ethics. In spite of not being able to actually answer these questions, the audience is given a moment to ponder what John McCain truly means, which enables them to imagine how he would actually act.

Obama's final rally speech strongly differs for the other two. Indeed, Obama employed fewer persuasive techniques, which could simply be explained by the fact that it was his last rally, and thus most of the persuading had already been done. For this reason, the speech has

¹²⁴ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit.

¹²⁵ Équipe de professeurs Cours Louis Blanc. Op cit.

¹²⁶ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

only one instance of repetition and one instance of parallelism which is far less significant than those found in previous speeches. Nonetheless, this speech acts as a strong means of connection between the candidate and his supporters, as it relies almost entirely on storytelling. Storytelling is a technique that consists in the telling of an anecdote to create a deeper connection with the audience, and, in turn, acts as a persuasive technique. Actually, it allows the audience to relate to the person telling the story without being polarizing or marking a strong opposition to other experiences and opinions.¹²⁸

Storytelling is not uncommon in Obama's speeches and can also be observed in his announcement speech, for instance, but not quite in such developed form. During his last rally, Obama took the time to tell a story where he portrays himself as an ordinary, tired, unmotivated person, suddenly 'bought back to life' by an old woman's energy. Without being intrusively persuasive, this story is a great way of creating a bond with his audience and to put forward their undeniable common denominator: they are all human beings.

Another way of convincing people to vote for a certain party is to discredit the opponent's party. The words chosen by a candidate to describe his opponent are bound to have an effect on his supporters, but also on his opponent's supporter. Showing respect is a great way to help candidates avoid alienating their opponent and their opponent's supporters in the event the candidate loses. Nevertheless, insisting on the opponent's faults and weaknesses might enhance your legitimacy by minimizing theirs.

Obama actually rarely uses this strategy (as a matter of fact, the only speech in which this technique is employed is during the National Convention speech), and, when he does use it, he does so in a very respectful manner, without any insults or personal attacks towards the competition. For instance, he mentions being tired with the Bush administration ("eight is enough"¹²⁹), but not once does he personally attack the former president. As for his comments about the Republican candidate John McCain in his Convention speech, Obama once again adopts a neutral point of view, not directly attacking him, but rather questioning his choices and political affiliation.

"The Republican nominee, John McCain, has worn the uniform of our country with bravery and distinction, and for that we owe him our gratitude and respect. And next week,

¹²⁸ Baldoni, J. (2011, March 11th). Using Stories to Persuade [Online]. Harvard Business Review. Available on: <https://hbr.org/2011/03/using-stories-as-a-tool-of-per> [Retrieved on January 18th, 2021].

¹²⁹ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit.

we'll also hear about those occasions when he's broken with his party as evidence that he can deliver the change that we need. But the record's clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush 90 percent of the time. [...] Truth is, on issue after issue that would make a difference in your lives – on health care and education and the economy – Senator McCain has been anything but independent. [...] Now, I don't believe that Senator McCain doesn't care what's going on in the lives of Americans. I just think he doesn't know.”¹³⁰

As seen in this extract, Obama actually recognizes McCain’s positive achievements in contrast to his questionable attitudes, showing a great ability to remain relatively impartial and objective.

In summary, the function of Obama’s campaign speeches is to argue in his own favor and to convince people to support his candidacy. To do so, Obama implements persuasive figures of speech in his speeches such as parallelisms, repetitions and rhetorical questions, which are all used to insist on important aspects of the speeches. In addition to those purely linguistic features, Obama also uses storytelling as a softer way to persuade his audience by creating a feeling of relatability. Finally, playing on legitimacy also seems to be an important factor for Obama. He often either mentions his experiences or remarkable people of his party as a way to insist on their similarities and enhance his own legitimacy. Another way for Obama to accomplish this goal is to raise doubts about the opponent’s own legitimacy, which he also does but always in a very moderate and respectful manner.

3.3. Linguistic factors

Linguistic factors (appendix 16) appear to be really important for the vote choice process. In fact, studies show that, at the present time, citizens seem to be less politically engaged and informed than they used to be. This means that potential voters are less likely to know precisely about the precise goals and objectives a candidate would want to accomplish if they are elected. Therefore, they tend to rely on factors that are directly given to them during speeches, TV appearances and so on. Such phenomenon causes verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal language to become increasingly significant when it comes to vote choice.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit.

¹³¹ Klostad, C. A., Anderson, R. C., & Peters, S. (2012). Sounds like a winner: voice pitch influences perception of leadership capacity in both men and women [Online]. Royal Society Publishing. Available on: <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/suppl/2012/03/06/rspb.2012.0311.DC1.html> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

3.3.1. Verbal language¹³²

Language is composed of a vast array of factors which all need to be considered together to obtain a comprehensive analysis of a speech. Verbal language refers to the words and sentences used, but also to other important parameters that can be divided in two categories. The first category regards the voice and includes factors such as sound emission, articulation, pronunciation and quality. The other category focuses on prosodic factors. Prosody is the variations in parameters such as syllables' highness, intensity and length, which determine the accentuation, rhythm and intonation of the speaker.¹³³

In his announcement speech, Obama mainly uses declarative sentences. There is not a single question in this speech, and only a single instance of exclamation: "*Let's get to work!*"¹³⁴. This sentence is situated at the very end of the speech, in between rounds of thanks. Its exclamative property, combined with his intonation, gives it a serious tone, as well as a motivational meaning. In addition to being an exclamation, this extract also shows Obama's determination to interact with his audience and to address them directly. He does not talk about the sole efforts of his campaign team, but about the combined efforts of his team and of his supporters. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that the 2008 Obama Campaign relied on volunteer work, social media, and the *MyBO* website.

The word choices for Obama's speech are also tremendously important. In fact, they demonstrate the same idea of togetherness that was first introduced by some of the parallelisms. Indeed, there are 69 occurrences of the word "we" in Obama's speech, which is double that of the pronoun "I". The number of references to his audience and himself as a united group would have been even more prominent if all other first-person plural pronouns (such as possessive pronouns) were taken into account. There is a serious focus on unity that is also emphasized by the words he uses to refer to his audience as part of a larger unity such as people¹³⁵, nation, generation or America, which are all repeated around 10 times throughout his address.

Regarding Obama's voice, he seems to have no issue expressing himself. His voice neither trembles, nor breaks, and he does not seem to struggle to utter any particular words.

¹³² All information given in this section were gathered from a personal research enabled by a linguistic software created especially for the purpose of this thesis. This computer program was built to provide information such as most used words, types of sentences, occurrences of a certain word, etc.

¹³³ François, T. (2019). LROM2660: Stratégie de communication orale dans l'entreprise. Université Catholique de Louvain.

¹³⁴ Obama, B. (2007). Op Cit.

¹³⁵ With the meaning of "a people", not as the plural of "a person".

There are a few instances of him repeating himself (or rather, restarting his sentences), but those are mostly due to the cheering of the crowd. Obama's articulation in his announcement speech is remarkable. He succeeds in making every single word of his speech completely understandable in spite of the surrounding noises. Nevertheless, he does not seem to exaggerate his pronunciation and his speech seems relatively natural, even though it has been prepared beforehand. This is probably made possible thanks to his paraverbal language (which will be discussed in the following section), and to his intonation.

Research suggests that intonation influences the general understanding of speech. In his article¹³⁶, John Levis mentions the global agreement of linguists that intonation is tremendously important for the understanding and interpreting of discourse. Nevertheless, the exact influence exerted by intonation variations has yet to be defined. Obama regularly alternates between rising and falling intonation. Classically, rising intonation can be found at the end of questions to insist more strongly on the interrogative nature of the sentences, while falling intonations generally indicates the end of a sentence or a paragraph. In addition to these typical uses of intonation, Obama also switches intonation within his sentences. It is fair to assume that those switches are meant to ensure that his speech remains dynamic and that his audience can easily notice what part of his sentence are the most important. Obama also sometimes uses rising intonation in places where typical language patterns have shown a greater use of a falling intonation. In their paper¹³⁷, two UCLA students actually demonstrated a falling intonation pattern at the end of exclamations. Yet, in the sole exclamative sentence of his speech, Obama finishes with a rising intonation, making it seem extremely enthusiastic.

In his Convention speech, Obama once again focuses on generating an idea of unity and togetherness through the use of first-person plural pronouns. He uses "we" 68 times throughout the speech, while the pronoun "us" appear 22 times and "our" appear 57 times. In very rare instances, these pronouns are used to refer to the Democratic Party and Obama's team during the election. Most of the time, however, he uses those pronouns to refer to a combination of himself, his team, and his entire group of supporters. It is safe to assume that he actually uses such pronouns to refer to the whole nation, as he often mentions the ability of being united without agreeing or sharing the same ideas on certain topics, such as in the following extract:

¹³⁶ Levis, J. Intonation and discourse: Three Approaches. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol.38, N°2 : pp. 353-357.

¹³⁷ Sturman, B. and Rett, J. Exclamation Intonation.

*“We may not agree on abortion, but surely we can agree on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country. The reality of gun ownership may be different for hunters in rural Ohio than for those plagued by gang-violence in Cleveland, but don't tell me we can't uphold the Second Amendment while keeping AK-47s out of the hands of criminals. I know there are differences on same-sex marriage, but surely, we can agree that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters deserve to visit the person they love in the hospital and to live lives free of discrimination. Passions fly on immigration, but I don't know anyone who benefits when a mother is separated from her infant child or an employer undercuts American wages by hiring illegal workers. This too is part of America's promise – the promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common effort.”*¹³⁸

Obama also uses “you” a significant number of times (44) in his Convention speech. This indicates a focus on his audience and on their particular needs and hopes and gives an impression of addressing them directly:

*“More of **you** have lost your homes and even more are watching your home values plummet. More of **you** have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that beyond your reach.”*¹³⁹

In spite of maintaining his focus on togetherness, Obama greatly increases his use of first-person singular pronouns (I or me). Far from being a suggestion of selfishness or self-centering, this phenomenon can actually be explained by the expanded focus on his objectives as president. As a matter of fact, Obama's convention speech is mostly centered around why he is running for president, as well as what his plans are to solve the ongoing issues affecting the lives of American citizens. It is thus only logical for him to use the first person, as he is the one establishing his objectives and campaign promises.

In addition to addressing goals and motivation, this speech also centers on Obama's promise to Americans that he would keep if he was elected. In actuality, the word “promise” appears a great total of 31 times throughout the speech. This choice of word reveals not just Obama's will to pursue change during his term, but also a bond and an engagement he creates with his audience to fight for a better future. He also uses this particular term to echo the ancient memory of the American dream:

¹³⁸ Obama, B. (2008). Op Cit.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

*“That promise is our greatest inheritance. It's a promise I make to my daughters when I tuck them in at night, and a promise that you make to yours – a promise that has led immigrants to cross oceans and pioneers to travel west; a promise that led workers to picket lines, and women to reach for the ballot.”*¹⁴⁰

In contrast to Obama's announcement speech, his Convention speech contains several interrogative sentences. Out of all those interrogations, five are only fragments serving hypothetical purposes. The four remaining sentences, on the other hand, are rhetorical questions meaning to question John McCain's behavior, and understanding of middle and lower classes' struggles and issues.

When it comes to the oral qualities of Obama's convention speech, they appear to be quite similar to the ones observed in his announcement speech. Again, his voice does not tremble, nor break, and he speaks in a confident manner. There are several instances of him having to restart the beginning of sentences, but once again, those occasional occurrences seem to only be due to the cheers and extraneous noises preventing him from being heard correctly in spite of the microphone. However, when this happens, he does not appear set back or lost and actually seems to welcome his audience's support respectfully and patiently before starting to talk again. His pronunciation is clear, but not exaggerated, and he is perfectly understandable. Most of the time, his intonation supports the punctuation of his discourse. At some precise moments, however, he will play with it to emphasize particular ideas or word that are particularly meaningful or impactful.

The data regarding the speech held during Obama's last rally is incomplete, as there is a fragment of the transcript missing. However, it reveals tendencies that differ from the previous speeches. The speech can be divided in three major parts: thanks and greetings, political objectives and plans (which is the part missing from the transcription) and, finally, storytelling about a small rally in Greenwood, Virginia. Together, the first and third sections of the speech make up more than two third of the speech. What those sections show is that there is, for the first time in all of Obama's speech, a predominance of the first-person singular. Obama is now mainly talking about himself, how grateful he is for his audience (and, on a larger scale, for his supporters), and his own personal experience in Greenwood. Nevertheless, despite using the first-person singular, Obama does not actually focus the speech on himself and navigates

¹⁴⁰ Obama, B. (2008). Op Cit.

through a speech of expressing his gratitude for people who have shaped his presidential campaign.

This prominent use of the first-person singular is complemented by the significant use of the second-person singular. The pronoun “you” is actually the seventh most used word of the transcript. This also indicates a change of focus compared to the other speeches. Indeed, instead of asserting what “we” can do for the country and for change, here Obama explicitly conveys the power of action to his audience and supporters who, the next day, will be able to make a concrete difference by casting their ballot.

The speech does not contain any exclamations, and only two questions: “*Are you fired up? Are you ready to go?*” Those short questions actually refer to the storytelling part of the speech. In fact, the anecdote Obama tells during the speech is all about this old congresswoman known for her famous chant (“Fired up? Ready to go?”) which she does wherever she goes to motivate the people of her town. Asking those specific questions to his audience is another way of motivating them and once again letting them know that the power is in their hands.

In terms of the utterance, this speech is slightly more challenging than for the other ones. In spite of keeping a clear and concise style of communication, Obama seems to stutter and hesitate more than he normally would. But these minor speaking issues can most likely be explained by the stress of Election Day, as well as by the emotions linked to his grandmother’s passing (which happened few hours before the speech). In spite of those influential factors, Obama seems to remain determined and optimistic. Similarly to his previous speeches, there is no miscommunication issues linked to his pronunciation and intonation, which he uses intelligently throughout his speech to keep it dynamic and easily processable.

Rhythm is also an important factor of verbal communication. Nevertheless, it is a rather complicated factor to analyze. What we can establish here is that several factors contribute to defining the rhythm of Obama’s speeches: the original subdivision of his texts in sentences and paragraphs, his preparation and stress level on the day of the speech, and the influence of the audience.¹⁴¹ Dividing the text in sections, and making sure which ideas are supposed to follow each other as well as preparing the text as a whole are important factors that were, considering the professionalism of Barack Obama, without a doubt carefully prepared and taken into account beforehand. The audience and his potential interventions, however, are unpredictable and have to be integrated within the rhythm of the speech without compromising the original

¹⁴¹ François, T. (2019). Op Cit.

preparation. Obama does so with grace and humor, taking the time, in each speech, to welcome his audience's cheers and chants, laughing with them and smiling at them. He never appears impatient or mad at the interruption, and rather seems to appreciate the moment the best he can. In spite of these interruptions, the speeches remain quite dynamic and energetic. This may be due to the careful organization of ideas and vocabulary variations, which help keep the audience engaged, and eager to know what topic will be addressed next.

3.3.2. Paraverbal language

Paraverbal language is extremely close and complementary to verbal language. It comprises melody, speech delivery, volume, breath, laughs, sighs, pauses, etc.¹⁴² It is associated with the personal speaking style of the speaker and is unique to each individual. Globally, it englobes all factors linked to the voice, but excludes the semantics of the speech.¹⁴³

Melody is a very complicated factor. It appears close to intonation, but does not serve any proper linguistic function. Most often, melody is interpreted by each and every listener in various, personal ways. As it is subjective to assess, I will not include it in this study.

However, it is possible to assess speech delivery speed, which is an important element in public speaking. Finding a good speaking speed is important to ensure an efficient transmission of the discourse, but also to ensure dynamism and maintain the audience's attention. According to Nicolas Mel¹⁴⁴, a communication coach, the average speech delivery varies between 120 and 160 words per minute. In his announcement speech, Barack Obama often slightly exceeds this limit with an average of 163 words per minute.¹⁴⁵ In both his Convention speech and the speech given at his last rally, however, Obama remains within the average range with 148 and 151 uttered per minute. If looking at all the individual excerpts used to establish Obama's average delivery speed, however, I noticed that the number of words was often influenced by the audience's reaction, and by the emotion linked to the particular segment of the speech. For instance, the following excerpt from the speech given during Obama's last

¹⁴² François, T. (2019). Op Cit.

¹⁴³ Delmas, H. (2010). La communication paraverbale [Online]. La communication non-verbale. Available on: <https://www.la-communication-non-verbale.com/2010/02/paraverbal-5471/> [Retrieved on March 20th, 2020].

¹⁴⁴ Mel, N. (2020). Je parle trop vite ! Ou comment maitriser son débit vocal dans ses prises de parole. Silence, Cabinet de Crise de Parole et de Communication. Available on: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/je-parle-trop-vite-ou-comment-ma%C3%A9triser-son-d%C3%A9bit-vocal-nicolas-mel> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2021].

¹⁴⁵ This affirmation is based on a personal tracking and examining of Barack Obama's speech delivery. To obtain a global overview, different one-minute extracts (plain speech, no interruption) were timed and examined in order to calculate Obama's word per minute count. Those

rally comprises 196 words, and was one of many taken into account to establish an average speech delivery speed:

“I met one of those women in Greenwood, South Carolina. It was back early when we were way back in the polls. Nobody gave us much of a chance back then. I had gone to South Carolina early in the campaign to see what I could stir up in the way of endorsements, and I was at a legislative dinner sitting next to a state representative that I really wanted to endorse me. So I turned to her and I said “I really want your endorsement.” And she looked at me and she said “I’ll tell you what, Obama, I will give you my endorsement if you come to my hometown of Greenwood, South Carolina.” I must have had a sip of wine or something that night because right away I said “Okay. I’m coming.” So the next time I come to South Carolina it’s about a month later. We fly in about midnight. We get to the hotel about one o’clock in the morning. I’m exhausted. I’m dragging my bags to my room when I get a tap on my shoulder and I look back and it is one of my staff people who says [...]”.¹⁴⁶

The bold part of the excerpt is actually the one with the most words and uttered the quickest. This actually makes sense, because the beginning of this story is exciting and promising, as he appears to have a way to obtain an important endorsement for the future of his campaign. Sharing a story with such a positive beginning could thus have, without a doubt, revived the emotions he felt at that particular moment, which would explain the excitement and the accelerated speech.

Information about volume is, in this particular context of campaign speeches, harder to analyze than for a public speaking done with few people in attendance. As a matter of fact, Obama’s rally and convention speeches gathered large crowds and necessitated particular installations to even enable the event. He thus had to use a microphone during all speeches, to ensure that the sound quality would be good enough for the entire audience to hear him correctly. In spite of the microphone, Obama still managed to play with the volume of his voice to keep his speech dynamic, as well as to insist on the most important parts of his speeches.

What is remarkable in all three of Obama’s speeches is his capacity to maintain a regular delivery speed without being interrupted by his breathing. As a matter of fact, there is no instance of Obama purposefully stopping a sentence only to breathe. Every single break, every single pause seems to have been rehearsed and prepared to give the speeches a perfect finish.

¹⁴⁶ Obama, B. (2008). Final Rally Speech (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <http://obamaspeeches.com/E-Barack-Obama-Speech-Manassas-Virgina-Last-Rally-2008-Election.htm> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Occasionally, though, he will take a moment to laugh at his audience's chants and cheers, or at their impromptu screams or comments. Such reactions show a sincere, enthusiastic and spontaneous response to his supporters' outbursts. In addition to laughing with his supporters, he will also occasionally crack a joke or introduce some irony within his speeches and pause right after to allow his audience to enjoy this humorous bit of the speech.

Another positive aspect of the pauses Obama makes in his speeches is that they are never full. In other words, he never hesitates or makes thinking noises (such as "hummm" for example) while pausing. He just stops talking to give his audience time to ponder what has been said and to process the information they have received. He also pauses before and after meaningful parts of his speeches or isolates particular words to highlight their importance. Besides, Obama pauses quite often during his speeches, even for much shorter periods of times. This pattern of pausing might also contribute to making the speech more understandable for the audience. In fact, this short period of silence gives the audience the opportunity to process the ideas that have just been transmitted to them. Having the ability to process what has been said to them then enables them to better understand and, in turn, to be more attentive to the speech.¹⁴⁷

A good balance between speech, pauses and breaths is also an indicator of fluency. Fluency is the ability to maintain this balance, while avoiding false starts, linguistic tics, repetitions, reformulations, and such phenomena during a speech.¹⁴⁸ We can deduce, thanks to the analysis of the other paraverbal elements, as well as from the verbal language analysis that fluency is mostly achieved in Obama's speeches. Indeed, there are very few instances of hesitations and false starts in his speeches. Moreover, the few identifiable false starts are often caused by the sustained cheering of the audience, forcing him to wait until he can be heard again. However, if a ranking was to be made of his fluency level throughout the three speeches, the speech given at his last rally would probably come last. In spite of showcasing great paraverbal language overall, Obama seems to struggle to start some of his sentences and he finds himself forced to reformulate several times:

*"Meanwhile, Senator McCain's campaign spent these last few weeks calling me everything but a name of god... but a child of god."*¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ François, T. (2019). Op cit.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit. 13 :57 – 14 :05.

*“We’re a union, that over decades we... we’ve... strived to pro... to perfect.”*¹⁵⁰

*“We’ve... we’ve been fierce and defending... ourselves, but we’ve tried to make sure that... that we’re always... reminding our supporters that all of us are in this together.”*¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, in spite of those small incidents, we can still consider the speech to be fluent, as the text as a whole remains articulate.

The final paraverbal factor to mention is Obama’s voice pitch. Voice pitch refers to the relative highness or lowness of the voice, which is defined involuntarily by the length of the vocal cords.¹⁵² Vocal signs are extremely important for humans. In fact, several studies have shown that one’s voice pitch can influence their perception by other people regarding factors such as strength, attractiveness, dominance, and emotional state.¹⁵³ In their article, Klofstad explains that because of how a speaker’s perception is actually affected by their voice pitch, it would be logical to postulate that this theory also applies to vote choice.¹⁵⁴ Klofstad thus conducted a study to test their hypothesis and determined that voice pitch had, in fact, a tremendous influence on voters. Their research showed that men with lower-pitched voice tend to be preferred by the voters and that previous incumbent had, on average, a lower voice pitch than the losing candidates. Nevertheless, this tendency seemed to disappear in the case of male candidates facing female candidates.¹⁵⁵ Obama has a lower-pitched voice. This gives him the advantage to be easily perceived as stronger, more competent and more trustworthy.¹⁵⁶ According to the data found in Klofstad’s article¹⁵⁷, his voice pitch might thus have influenced some undecided voters into casting their vote for him.

3.3.3. Nonverbal language

Nonverbal language comprises every element linked to a person’s attitudes, physical presentation and movements while speaking and does not take into account any part of what is actually being said. It can be divided in three major categories: position and gestures, physical appearance and material.¹⁵⁸ Nonverbal communication is tremendously important in politics

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 15 :20 – 15 :27.

¹⁵¹ Obama, B. (2008). Op cit. 26 :25 – 26 :37.

¹⁵²

¹⁵³ Klofstad, C. A. (2015). Op cit.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Klofstad, C. A., Anderson, R. C., & Peters, S. (2012). Op Cit.

¹⁵⁷ Klofstad, C. A. (2015). Op cit.

¹⁵⁸ François, T. (2019). Op cit.

and is basically unavoidable and greatly influential on citizens' reactions and on evaluations of political figures.¹⁵⁹ In actuality, some studies have demonstrated that nonverbal language was at least as significant as the verbal language, if not more.¹⁶⁰

During all three of his speeches, Obama stands still behind a podium. This is often a standard position in political speeches, but it does not leave much room for movements and gestures that would add some effect to the presentation or truly influence the meaning of what is being said. In spite of not being able to move around the stage, Obama still manages to add movement to his presentations by moving his arms. Most of the time, he will simply move his arms around (spread them, then bring them back closer to his core). But sometimes, he will use his hands to punctuate his speech, by counting on his fingers as he enumerates a list, for instance. Occasionally, he will point to his audience as if he was lecturing them or addressing them directly as he is speaking. Those types of movements are rarer than the others, but they enable him to insist on factors that are important by coordinating them with hand gestures.

Obama barely has any facial mimics during his speeches. Most of the time, he appears really serious and looks off in the distance towards his audience. At the beginning and the end of every speech, though, he takes the time to greet and thank his audience, all while smiling at them. He occasionally smiles during the speeches themselves, mostly in reaction to his audience's screams and cheers. During the speech held at his last rally, Obama does seem rather down in the beginning, frowning a little, but this might be explained by the passing of his grandmother, which he evokes at the start of his speech.

In addition to those basic gestures, it is also important to mention that Obama barely looks at his notes and stays focused on his audience about 99% of the time. Moreover, he slightly turns around from left to right to face different parts of the audience as he speaks. I personally consider this movement to be particularly significant. Indeed, he constantly tries his best to include the entire audience by acknowledging them physically. This, combined with his inclusive phrases where he mentions people of different races, social status, abilities, sexual orientations, etc. truly indicates a will to include the nation as a whole.

¹⁵⁹ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

¹⁶⁰ Laustsen, L., & Bang Petersen, M. (2015): Winning Faces Vary by Ideology: How Nonverbal Source Cues Influence Election and Communication Success in Politics [Online]. *Political communication*. Available on: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1050565> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

Physical appearance also plays a role in voters' choice, mostly when there is a lack of proper information regarding political positions.¹⁶¹ This factor, however significant, remains complex to account for, as attractiveness is subjective to everybody. Yet, in their article¹⁶², Lawson, Lenz, Baker, & Myers suggest that politicians who "look the part" might receive more votes than those who do not. According to them, good-looking politicians seem to do better, due to voters making inferences between their looks and their professional abilities.¹⁶³ Other elements regarding a more global physical presentation might also be taken into account, such as style as "style shapes image and image affect the vote".¹⁶⁴ In their study, Laustsen and Bang Petersen clearly demonstrated that physical elements of a candidate could influence potential voters in spite of said voters having information regarding their political affiliation. Their research showed that a simple photograph could already give an impression of a politician's fitness for office, as well as influence their impression of a series of more personal characteristics.¹⁶⁵ In spite of this information, it remains difficult to establish whether or not Obama's appearance had an influence on his election. Nevertheless, what we can say is that he always appeared perfectly groomed and dressed appropriately, yet modestly with a button-down shirt and suit pants. What can also be noted is that, in spite of being Black, there were no racist comments pertaining to his race in the mainstream media.

¹⁶¹ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

¹⁶² Lawson, C., Lenz, G. S., Baker, A., & Myers, M. (2010). Op Cit.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Laustsen, L., & Bang Petersen, M. (2015). Op Cit.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5: A closer look at Trump's 2016 campaign

Section 1: Electoral campaign and outcome¹⁶⁶

Trump officially announced his candidacy for the 2016 elections on June 16th, 2015. His political debut was far from unnoticed, as he launched his campaign with a speech calling Mexicans rapists and criminals. From the very start, Trump's campaign appeared to be quite visible, notably because of his animated exchanges during Republican debates, his calls for a Muslim ban or his complete refusal to conform to campaign norms. For instance, on February 1st, 2016, Ted Cruz won the Iowa Caucus. Trumps then accused him of fraud and asked for a revote or for the nullification of the results. As the numerous primaries took place, Trumps got in a feud with the pope regarding his wall project and criticized the church for having an opinion regarding political issues. Mid-March, his campaign manager was also accused of assault and had to resign.

In April, Trump won several Republican Primaries, including in the states of New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. At the same time, Hillary Clinton also won over numerous states and became increasingly closer to being the Democratic Party's nominee. As a reaction, Trump mentioned several times that the only reason why she was winning was because she was a woman, and not because of her actual political achievements.

On May 26th, Trump finally reached 1237 pledged delegates and officially became the Republican Party's nominee. About two months later, he introduced Mike Pence as his running mate. They both officially accepted their nomination on the 21st of July. From the end of September up to late October, Clinton and Trump faced each other three times during various debates, which seemed to establish a slight advantage for the Democratic candidate¹⁶⁷.

On Election Day in November, Donald J. Trump and Mike Pence officially won the general election. Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States of America in January 2017.

¹⁶⁶ Wikipedia. Timeline of the 2016 United States presidential election. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Available on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2016_United_States_presidential_election [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Section 2: Factors influencing the electorate

1. Political affiliation

According to Gallup research¹⁶⁸ regarding the 2016 elections, 21 states were classified as solidly Republican, meaning they would almost certainly vote Republican (appendix 17), as opposed to the 2008 elections, where a higher number of states had been determined as solidly Democrat. In addition to those secure states, Trump also managed to win 9 of the 15 competitive states (Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Texas and Louisiana).

There appeared to be a major shift between the 2008 and the 2016 elections. As a matter of fact, several states then considered as Democratic states and crucial for Obama's victories in both 2008 and 2012 went through important political shifts and became crucial for Trump's election as solid Republican states. That was actually the case of Iowa and Ohio, which were considered as leaning Republican for the first time in history during the 2016 elections. But in actuality, this shift in political affiliation observed state-wise might be more directly related to Trump than to the Republican Party itself. As a matter of fact, Trump had been regularly standing in favor of measures otherwise not so popular within his party. For instance, 73% of Republicans¹⁶⁹ supported Trump's tariff idea, in spite of the Republican support for free trade going on for decades.¹⁷⁰ Kaushik Basu, former chief economist of the World Bank and economy professor at Cornell University, mentioned in his commentary that "[Republicans] had a genuine commitment to their ideas and were following a moral compass" in contrast to Trump who only "stands for himself and nothing else".¹⁷¹ Basu also commented on the lack of regards of Trump towards the law of his own country and on how his behavior cost several members

¹⁶⁸ Gallup Team (2017). GOP maintains edge state party affiliation [Affiliation]. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/203117/gop-maintains-edge-state-party-affiliation-2016.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020].

¹⁶⁹ Even though it is not specified, we must imply that those republicans were Trump supporters and might not have been representative of the Republican Party's affiliates as a whole.

¹⁷⁰ Burmila, E. (2018, July 24th). How Trump is changing Republican Party Values [Online]. *The Week*. Available on: <https://theweek.com/articles/785361/how-trump-changing-republican-party-values> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

¹⁷¹ Basu, K. (2020, November 1st). If Trump wins again, the true values of the Republican Party will be abandoned [Online]. Available on: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/trump-pence-republican-party-us-elections-13414106> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

(senators and/or governors) to distance themselves from their own party¹⁷², once more showing that the main stream of the Republican party did not identify with Trump and his convictions.

Trump's approach to politics has also been described as authoritarian populism, meaning he is an "authoritarian leader who has mobilized an authoritarian populist movement that follows his leadership".¹⁷³ Much like other authoritarian figures (even more radical ones such as Hitler or Mussolini), Trump played on his ability to establish his authority over a crowd of people that perceive him as a savior. Even though he does not have the political background and discipline of the previously cited political leaders, he compensated by attacking and ranting about his opponents, as well as trying to destroy their credibility. Trump established his legitimacy by gathering supporters who had suffered economic and social deprivation and are desperately looking to politicians to somehow take the decision that will ultimately improve their life conditions. Indeed, he based his campaign on the false beliefs that Mexican people were violent drug-addicted job-stealers and that all Muslims were terrorists, and then proposed solutions that he knew would ease people's fears such as the Muslim ban and the border wall. Donald Trump also rapidly built a political persona that he knew would please the public, presenting himself as a provider of jobs and wealth, and as the restorer of a greater version of America that had somehow been lost over the years (hence his campaign slogan *Make America Great Again*). He then strongly relied on the ethos of this persona to attract more supporters and gain people's trust, without having to achieve any concrete goals.¹⁷⁴

Trump is anti-immigrant as was evidenced by his racist speeches and rants, as well as in his electoral promises (as mentioned above). He is also radically pro-gun, and targeted gun enthusiasts during his campaign, rallying them to his cause by accusing his Democratic opponents of "taking guns away from people".¹⁷⁵ Other campaign promises were to re-localize manufacturing jobs¹⁷⁶ to the USA by raising taxes on products made abroad and cutting taxes for American businesses, and to completely repeal the Affordable Care Act (widely known as Obamacare). As a whole, all promises made by Trump were formulated in such a way that they guaranteed a better life and greater freedom of all American-born citizens while fighting against

¹⁷² Basu, K. (2020, November 1st). Op cit. .

¹⁷³ Kellner, D. (2016). *American Nightmare: Donald Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Qiu, L. (2016, July 15th). Donald Trump's top 10 campaign promises [Online]. *PolitiFact*. Available on: <https://www.politifact.com/article/2016/jul/15/donald-trumps-top-10-campaign-promises/> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021]

all the systems put in place to harm them in the past (the terrorist, Ford's plants in Mexico, the Democrats, Obamacare, etc.).¹⁷⁷

What also drastically differentiated him from previous presidential candidates, as well as from his opponents, was how he decided to dig into his opponents' personal lives to expose whatever secrets he was able to find. For instance, he repeatedly used Hillary Clinton's emails scandal as a way to discredit her during her campaign, in spite of it already having been investigated and cleared by the authorities.¹⁷⁸ At the second presidential debate in Saint-Louis, he also brought several women accusing Bill Clinton of rape and/or sexual assault and enabled them to each comment on their encounters with the Clintons.¹⁷⁹

2. Personal factors

One of Donald Trump's most obvious characteristics might be his preexisting fame. Trump is a successful business man who inherited the family business in his youth and successfully grew it into a financial empire. His importance in business turned him into a socialite, well known by the public but he ultimately achieved widespread fame thanks to his reality show *The Apprentice*. Trump is thus a very public figure, a national celebrity, in spite of having no political background or experience whatsoever. Before the start of his political career, Trump's life thus revolved around spectacle, and it is with the same state of mind that he ran his campaign. During his entire campaign, Trump always appeared to unapologetically stay true to himself, using it as an advantage to further his media reach. His overall behavior, radical assertions and negative comments about his opponents (or anyone who would oppose his political and personal agenda) shocked the public, making him the center of attention exactly when he needed it.¹⁸⁰

It can be deduced that Trump's habit of being the center of attention certainly served him in his political career and his public appearances. As a matter of fact, Trump appeared to

¹⁷⁷ Johnson, J. (2016, January 22nd). Here are 76 of Donald Trump's many campaign promises [Online]. *The Washington Post*. Available on: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/01/22/here-are-76-of-donald-trumps-many-campaign-promises/> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

¹⁷⁸ Pengelly, M. (2015, July 26th). Donald Trump: Hillary Clinton's private email use was 'criminal' [Online]. *The Guardian*. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/26/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-email-scandal-criminal> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

¹⁷⁹ Nuzzi, O. (October 9th, 2016). Donald Trump Brings Four Bill Clinton Accusers to Debate, Definitely Not Sorry About Tape [Online]. *The Daily Beast*. Available on : <https://www.thedailybeast.com/donald-trump-brings-four-bill-clinton-accusers-to-debate-definitely-not-sorry-about-tape> [Retrieved on February 20th, 2021].

¹⁸⁰ Kellner, D. (2017). *American Horror Show Election 2016 and the Ascent of Donald J. Trump*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

have no issue expressing himself in public or in front of large crowds. At times, he seemed calm¹⁸¹, determined and highly focused towards his goals. He also had no issues establishing contacts with his supporters or anyone willing to interact as long as he got to remain the main focus of the show. For instance, during his speeches, he often paused to look and listen to his audience. Afterwards, he would sometimes point out a particular thing said by one of his supporters, and reformulate to put himself and his political agenda forward.¹⁸² On top of that, he also tends to only address other people while referring to their relationships with him. For instance, in his Convention speech, Trump often refers to Hillary Clinton as “my opponent”¹⁸³ and, when mentioning several representatives, he refers to one of them as “my friend Jamie Shaw”¹⁸⁴. It is also quite obvious that Donald Trump does not fear confrontation and is not afraid of what people think of him.¹⁸⁵

During his campaign, Trump was not afraid to defy the status quo and had no problem defending ideas completely opposed to his party’s original ideals or to his team’s opinions.¹⁸⁶ By doing so while focusing on an economically challenged group of citizens of the country, Trump certainly succeeded in awaking a fire in certain people and in convincing them to fight for what they believed in (and for what they believed would serve them most).

On a more negative note, however, Trump can be perceived as too bold and self-confident, as well as manipulative. He is aware of his accomplishments and believes he will have no problems accomplishing what he sets his mind to, even if it is far out of his comfort and knowledge zone.¹⁸⁷ However, if Trump’s methods and rhetoric contributed to rallying some parts of the American population, his excess confidence and confrontational personality might have, on the contrary, pushed away some indecisive voters.

In the book *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump*, Brandi X. Lee gathered essays from 27 psychologists and psychiatrists deeming the president unfit for his presidential role.¹⁸⁸ Many

¹⁸¹ As in ‘not stressed’, as he is actually quite active and agitated when talking.

¹⁸² Such an occurrence can be seen during his last rally speech, which will be analyzed in a further section.

¹⁸³ Trump, Donald J. (2016). *Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio* (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-accepting-the-presidential-nomination-the-republican-national-convention-cleveland> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020]

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Sherman, R.A. (2015). The personality of Donald Trump. *Psychology Today*. Available on: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-situation-lab/201509/the-personality-donald-trump> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Mary Trump, Trump’s niece and a clinician herself, also wrote a book of her own based on her intimate insight of the family, developing a similar point.

of those health professionals actually informally diagnosed Trump with pathological narcissism due to his display of narcissistic traits such as entitlement, believing to be superior to others, exaggerating talents and achievements, expecting constant admiration and praise, expecting others to do what you want, taking advantage of others, and several more. Craig Malkin, Ph.D., even explained that such a behavior could lead a person into a “psychotic spiral of paranoia, impaired and volatile decision-making, and gaslighting”¹⁸⁹ which unfortunately was observed in the events surrounding the storming of the US Capitol in January 2021.

It is thus undeniable that Trump has a very strong yet controversial personality. By addressing pressing issues and adopting contentious points of view, it became easier for Trump to attract a large number of people feeling let down and marginalized by the system. He exposed his very defined and radical point of view to the masses, who then become convinced that he possessed the absolute truth and a solution to guide them out of their misery. However, due to his extremist personality, he might have repelled moderate Republicans or indecisive voters who might not have related to his opinionated and immoderate stance.

3. Communication factors

For this section, I will analyze the communication factors of three speeches from the 2016 Trump campaign. I selected those speeches with the objective of building a comprehensive overview of the campaign by focusing on some of its key moments.

The first speech is the announcement speech of Trump’s campaign. It took place at the Trump Tower in New York City. A small stage was placed in the middle of what seems to be the main hall and most people were standing around it or looking down from the floor above.

The second speech is Trump’s nomination acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. It was held at the Quicken Loans Arena in Detroit Michigan. The audience was seated and a big screen had been installed to enable people sitting furthest away from the stage to see correctly.

The final speech is the one Donald Trump gave at his last campaign rally. It took place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the DeVos Place Convention Center. The audience was standing all over the place, including behind the stage.

¹⁸⁹ Narvaez, D.F. (2020). The psychology of Donald Trump [Online]. *Psychology Today*. Available on: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/moral-landscapes/202008/the-psychology-donald-trump> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

All three speeches were thus held inside. Furthermore, all are campaign speeches that were designed specifically for the particular circumstances in which they were given.

3.1. Pragmatic factors

As with Obama's speeches, we have to consider the fact that Trump wrote his speeches for his campaign. With that in mind, it can be easily established that the context of the speeches had to have an influence on their writing. Indeed, the speeches were probably designed to appear convincing and to seem relatable to Trump's audience. The overall context and atmosphere of the political rally likely did not have a tremendous influence on the understanding of the audience. Nevertheless, it probably reinforced the influential factor of the speeches due to the hype of the event.

One strong common factor of all of Trump's speeches seems to be their extreme disorganization. His ideas appear to be mixed up, he sometimes doesn't finish sentences, and he often comes back to previous ideas or subjects without any logical links. It is probable that his speeches were not originally written to be so haphazard, but rather that his elocution style ultimately became so prominent that he got carried away and deviated from the original text of the speeches. It is then possible that Trump's disarray might have had an impact on the perception of his audience. As a matter of fact, even if not intentionally, Trump often comes back to the same ideas which might, due to the strong repetition effect, enhance the influential factor of his speeches.

Another pragmatic element that should be taken into account is the fact that, although all three speeches were part of his campaign, only two of them were held during rallies organized by his campaign teams, while the third one was held during the Republican National Convention. The Convention speech implies a much more conventional and official context, which directly impacted his content and delivery. In fact, out of all speeches analyzed for this thesis, the one held at the Convention appears to be most organized, with fewer repetitions and a larger vocabulary range. Furthermore, the spatial arrangement at the Convention meant that all people were seated within a certain range of the speaker and within viewing distance of a gigantic screen on which the speech was broadcast. Thus, the entire audience had complete access not only to the audio of the discourse, but also to all of Trump's mimics and gestures, which enabled them to perceive the entire meaning of the speech.

While all of Trump's speeches have been held inside, the organization of the seating (or standing) area of the audience differs from one building to another. The most problematic speech was, without a doubt, the speech given at his last rally. People were standing all over the place, including behind the stage, completely preventing them from seeing Trump's expressions or gestures, except for the few times when he intentionally turned around to "greet" them. As for people standing the furthest away from the stage, it is likely that they did not have access to those elements either and that their understanding of the speech was based only on what they heard.

In conclusion, pragmatics did have a certain influence on the meaning of Trump's speeches. In fact, in addition to being specifically written for the campaign, the speeches' influential factors were probably reinforced by the physical context of the events. The spatial infrastructure and organization of the buildings where the speeches were held (in order: Trump Tower, Quicken Loans Arena and Devos Place Convention center) were all tremendously different from one another. The seating or standing scheme might have prevented some audience members from having access to all of the speech-related information (such as non-verbal language) and thus might have had an impact on the understanding of the discourses, mostly during the last rally speech, where some people were standing behind the stage.

3.2. Functional factors

As previously mentioned, functional factors are factors linked to the function of language, or more precisely, to the objectives that language is supposed to accomplish. In the case of campaign speeches, the goal is to convince people support a particular party. There are thus several processes that may be implemented to achieve this goal.

The most prominent persuasion technique used in Trump's speeches is repetition¹⁹⁰. Indeed, Trump appears to often use the same vocabulary and to make his point by repeating his sentences (or very slight variations) several times in a row. For example, in his announcement speech, Trump stated:

*"When Mexico sends its people, **they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people. But I speak to border guards and they tell us***

¹⁹⁰ Équipe de professeurs Cours Louis Blanc. Op cit.

what we're getting. And it only makes common sense. It only makes common sense. They're sending us not the right people."¹⁹¹

Similarly, during his Convention speech, Trump said the following:

*"Together, we will lead our party back to the White House, and we will lead our country back to safety, prosperity, and peace. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order. [...] The attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life. Any politician who does not grasp this danger is not fit to lead our country. [...] The most basic duty of government is to defend the lives of its own citizens. Any government that fails to do so is a government unworthy to lead."*¹⁹²

Finally, Trump said the following during the speech he made at his last campaign rally:

*"Are we crazy? Is this crazy? It's crazy! But you know we just left New Hampshire; we're doing fantastically well. We're up in New Hampshire, we're up in Ohio, we're up in Iowa, we're up in North Carolina – we're doing great there. We're up in Florida. We're doing really, really well in Pennsylvania. I mean we are doing well, these people, the world's most dishonest people, the media. They are not happy. No, no. They're not happy."*¹⁹³

In addition to vocabulary and sentence repetition, Trump often repeats the same topics between or within the speeches. His most common topics are the detailed in the table below, as well as how many times a particular topic comes up in each speech:

	Announcement speech	Convention Speech	Last rally
ISIS, Mexico, and National Security	8	8	2
Job Security and its threat to China and Japan	6	4	6
Obamacare	5	1	1
Other politicians' mistakes and their dependence to lobbies (draining the swamp)	8	8	6
Personal wealth and/or success	8	2	1
Plan for the country if he wins the election	4	6	7
Other national affairs	2	3	2

¹⁹¹ Trump, D. J. (2015). Campaign Announcement Speech (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

¹⁹² Trump, Donald J. (2016). Op cit.

¹⁹³ Personal transcript of the last rally speech

We can notice that certain topics come up several times during the same speeches. Trump often goes back and forth between those topics without any logical link or appearing reason. This is particularly evident in Trump's announcement speech.

What we can also observe in the previous excerpts is that, through his repetition and general discourse, Trump is also building an 'us versus them' mentality. As a matter of fact, he uses pronouns and possessive determiners in the first-person plural, as well as words such as *together* to emphasize unity among supporters and, in a larger sense, among the entire nation. By contrast, in addition to calling his 'opponents' negatively connoted names (such as *rapists*¹⁹⁴, for Mexicans, or the *world's most dishonest people*¹⁹⁵, for the media), he never refers to them as individuals, but rather as groups of aliens, as if he was pointing his finger at them. Moreover, in his announcement speech, Trump used a vivid lexical field centered on competition, which further reinforces feeling of adversity:

*"How are they going to beat ISIS? [...] We used to have victories, but we don't have them. [...] And now they [Mexico] are beating us economically. [...] I'm in competition with them [The Middle East]. [...] Our enemies are getting stronger and stronger [...]."*¹⁹⁶

Another important persuasive element of Trump's speeches are rhetorical questions. Most of the time, such questions are used by Trump to draw his audience's attention toward his opponents or predecessors' mistakes or lack of achievements. For instance, in his Convention speech, Trump often questions his Democratic opponents' achievements:

*"President Obama has double our national debt to more than \$19 trillion, and growing. And yet, what do we have to show for it?"*¹⁹⁷

*"After four years of Hillary Clinton, what do we have?"*¹⁹⁸

He also seems to question any previous political authority in his announcement speech:

*"How stupid are our leaders? How stupid are these politicians to allow this to happen? How stupid are they?"*¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Trump, D. J. (2015). Op Cit.

¹⁹⁵ Personal transcript of the last rally speech

¹⁹⁶ Trump, D. J. (2015). Op Cit.

¹⁹⁷ Trump, Donald J. (2016). Op cit.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ Trump, D. J. (2015). Op Cit.

Finally, in his last rally, he uses rhetorical questions to imply the lack of change brought by the Democratic Party and to suggest that Hillary Clinton should leave public life in general, and politics in particular.

*“Real change also means restoring honesty to our government. So, the first thing we should do, let’s get rid of Hillary, okay?”*²⁰⁰

Even if it is technically impossible to gather the responses of the public, Trump included simple questions in his speeches that could potentially just be answered by a cheer, as if he was trying to get his audience to explicitly agree to his discourse.

Finally, Trump often reinforces his and his party’s superiority by attacking his opponents and predecessors. This has already been shown through the use of rhetorical questions, but is also done on a more explicit level by categorically insulting members of the opposite parties or policies that were adopted by them. For instance, Trump refers to Hillary as “Crooked Hillary”²⁰¹ at several occasions and mentions her legacy of “death, destruction, terrorism, and weakness”²⁰². He also called Obama a “negative force”²⁰³ and described his healthcare system as a “disaster” and a “big lie”²⁰⁴. In contrast to Obama, he does not recognize any positive side to the opposition, whether Republican or Democrat, and is not afraid to resort to name calling and other childish techniques to discredit them.

In summary, we can see that repetition plays a huge role in Trump’s speeches. He often repeats the same sentences with only slight variations to make his points. He also often goes back and forth between the same topics within the same speech, sometimes without any logical connections. In addition, Trump builds his credibility and legitimacy by creating an ‘us versus them’ mentality, reinforced by a lexical field of competition that is clearly evident in his announcement speech. Finally, Trump does not mind attacking his opponents, even on private affairs. This tendency to question his opponents’ abilities is also highlighted in his use of rhetorical questions.

²⁰⁰ Personal transcript of the last rally speech

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Trump, Donald J. (2016). Op cit.

²⁰³ Trump, Donald J. (2015). Op cit.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

3.3. Linguistic factors

3.3.1. Verbal language²⁰⁵

As previously mentioned, verbal language refers to the words and constructions used while speaking, as well as voice factors (sound emission, articulation, pronunciation and quality) and prosody (rhythm, accentuation and intonation).

In his announcement speech, Trump appears to use a majority of declarative sentences. There is no record of any exclamation. Nevertheless, there are a surprisingly high number of interrogations throughout the speech (37, to be precise). At least a third of these interrogations can be found in reported direct speech, as Donald Trump often reenacts conversations. The rest of these questions are either rhetorical or questions that he actually expects his audience to answer. Indeed, there are quite a lot of questions that he asks that can be answered by a scream or a cheer, which reinforces his interaction with the audience. Trump is indeed very aware of his audience, in spite of it not being that loud and not interrupting much during his speech. He also uses words such as “folks” to address them directly. In addition, he often takes the time to acknowledge audience comments and to answer them, even if that means interrupting his initial train of thoughts. Often, he will also transform those interactions into opportunities to attack other candidates or put his own political agenda forward. For instance, in his announcement speech, Trump comments on Obama by saying:

*“He was vibrant. He was young. I really thought that he would be a great cheerleader.”*²⁰⁶

One of his supporters then reacts by screaming “He’s not a leader!” to which Trump then answers:

*“He’s not a leader. That’s true. You’re right about that.”*²⁰⁷

By reacting to his audience’s comments and agreeing with them, Trump not only establishes a bond between them and makes them feel understood, but he also creates a certain

²⁰⁵ All information given in this section were gathered from a personal research enabled by a linguistic software created especially for the purpose of this thesis. This computer program was built to provide information such as most used words, types of sentences, occurrences of a certain word, etc.

²⁰⁶ Trump, Donald J. (2015). Op cit.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

sense of legitimacy, as his qualities then become acerbated by his audience's comments and opinions.

There is a huge focus on pronouns in this speech. In fact, Trump uses pronouns to draw four distinct poles throughout his speech: I, you, we, and they. In spite of being used the least, the pronoun "you" still appears 101 times within the speech. This shows a clear interest for his audience, and, broadly, for American citizens. This thus complements the idea that Trump does care about his audience, or at least seems to do so, as he regularly addresses their personal issues and feelings throughout the speech. "We" is the second least used pronoun with 128 occurrences in the speech. Most of the time, this pronoun does not refer to him and the American people as a whole, but rather to him, his political team, and party. Trump often uses this pronoun to talk about policies and regulations that would be implemented if he was elected, which confirms that the pronoun refers to him and his team.

"They" is used a grand total of 158 times. This pronoun shows a certain opposition between Trump and his group (either his political team, his group of supporters, or America as a whole, depending on the context) and an outside force that clearly is against them. The third person plural is never used in a positive manner in the entire speech. It shows clear opposition between him and whatever third party does not agree with his ideas and convictions. The numerous occurrences of 'the third-person plural also demonstrate that this perceived adversity is important to him and that surpassing his opponents in whatever field they might overpower him (and the United States) in is one of his primary concerns. By emphasizing the use of third-person plural, Trump reinforces the us-versus-them mentality that the speech conveys, which, in turn, highlights the lexical field of competition.

Finally, Trump used "I" 235 times throughout his announcement speech. Such a prominent use of the first person singular clearly implies a certain sense of confidence and great degree of self-interest. This phenomenon combined with an insistence on his wealth, assets, achievements and overall successes prove that he sees himself as a point of reference in the business world, and that this will soon also be the case in the political world. This idea is also reinforced by his recognition of his ability to lead his country:

*"When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time."*²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Trump, D. J. (2015). Op cit.

*“I know the smartest negotiators in the world. I know the good ones. I know the bad ones. I know the overrated ones.”*²⁰⁹

*“I will be the greatest jobs president that god ever created.”*²¹⁰

This tendency to favor the use of the first-person singular is also present in Trump’s Convention speech, but in a much less drastic manner. In his last speech, however, the first-person plural becomes the most used pronoun of the speech (136 occurrences, against only 71 for the first-person singular). In spite of the impressive progression of the use of the first-person plural, the focus Trump puts on himself remains extremely present. In fact, the “we” in Trump’s speeches mostly refers to his party or campaign team, therefore keeping him as the main focus. Even though he does sometimes refer to American citizens as a whole, the speeches do not convey an impression of togetherness and understanding. Nevertheless, Trump focuses a high level of attention on his audience and by using second-person singular, which remains constant throughout all speeches. This focus on the American citizens is reinforced by the use of the word “people” which is one of the most used words in his announcement and final rally speeches. What also remains prominent is the idea of adversity transmitted by the use of “they”.

Repetitions are also an important part of all of Trump’s speeches. In spite of being a good persuasion technique if done properly, repetitions cannot be abused, as they will make the speech feel heavy and redundant. This phenomenon, although present in all speeches, mostly stands out in the announcement and last rally speeches. For instance, in his announcement speech, he says:

*“Our country is in serious trouble. We don’t have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don’t have them.”*²¹¹

*“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us.”*²¹²

*“Hey, I have lobbyists. I have to tell you. I have lobbyists that can produce anything for me. They’re great. But you know what? it won’t happen. It won’t happen.”*²¹³

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Trump, D. J. (2015). Op Cit.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *Ibid.*

In these excerpts, the construction of the sentences changes every time, but the ideas remain identical, and the same point is being made several times in a row. In his speech held during his final rally Trump tends to reuse the same sentences and construction several times in a row, the only changes being the use of pronouns instead of nouns (or other minimal alterations):

“You know, it’s a movement like it’s never happened in this country before. It’s a movement that nobody’s ever seen before, even these people.”²¹⁴

“[...] I have so many friends in Michigan. [...] And I developed a great relationship with the people of Michigan.”²¹⁵

“After we win, I’m gonna be coming back to Michigan a lot. I’m gonna be coming back every time we open a new factory or a new automobile plant and we will do it. And we’ll do a lot of expansion. We’re gonna do a lot of expansion. I know exactly what to do folks. We’re not gonna lose your jobs anymore. We’re not gonna lose your jobs anymore.”²¹⁶

What can also be noticed is that those repetitions are not limited to a same speech. As a matter of fact, Trump often uses the same references, metaphors, expressions, etc. from one speech to another. This phenomenon might not have been noticed at the time due to the large timeframe in which all speeches were given, but became quite evident during a close analysis of the speeches. For example, in his announcement speech, Trump mentions Ford moving its small car production to Mexico and how, if he was president, he would tax them 35% to get them to maintain their production in the U.S. The exact same story then comes up again during the speech of his final rally. But what really stands out is the fact that he used the exact same speech conclusion in both his convention and last rally speeches:

“So, to every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I’m with You, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you. To all Americans tonight, in all our cities and towns, I make this promise: We will make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again. God bless you, and good night! I love you!”²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Personal transcript of the last rally speech

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Trump, D. J. (2016). Op Cit.

*“So, to every parent who dreams for their child, and to every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I am with you, I will fight for you and I will win for you. I promise. To all American tonight, in all of our cities and in all of our towns, I pledge to you one more time: together, we will make America wealthy again. We will make American strong again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again. Thank you everybody. Thank you. God bless you everybody.”*²¹⁸

Again, due to the large period of time that elapsed between these two speeches, it is difficult to establish whether or not it was noticed by Trump’s audience.

There is also an important topical similarity between all speeches. As a matter of fact, Trump continuously addresses the same issues with no variations whatsoever regarding their relevancy to the public he is speaking to. Considering the emphasis he tends to put on issues such as job and homeland security, exterior threats and government responsibility, his ultimate goal could be to initiate a climate of fear, anger and hatred towards whatever entity his supporters hold responsible for such issues. Surprisingly, however, what he would do to fix such issues or to at least improve the situation is barely discussed in his speeches. Indeed, while Trump clearly goes over his objectives in his announcement and Convention speeches, they still remain a minimal part of his discourse and are not discussed in depth. Thus, we can conclude that his political agenda would not be his primary influential factor of his speeches. In contrast, he seems to rely on emotions and generating admiration, which he often does through story telling (mostly anecdotes about his family, his own abilities in business, or any other instances where he was the focus).

When considering the bigger picture, and the overall content of these speeches, we notice that they can be divided into two major focuses: himself and the others. As a matter of fact, Trump’s confident personality is often evident in his speeches. He talks about himself by referring to his successes, his wealth, his connections or his tight-knit, loving family. Not once does he bring up any potential flaw. In his own eyes, he is a perfectly successful businessman who, through his career and public interaction, somehow acquired the required knowledge and background to start a political career. His perception of others, however, drastically differs. Anybody perceived as a potential opponent is directly mocked or belittled. He portrays them as inferior and stupid, and critiques their political stances, involvements and/or decisions. There is, in spite of his condescending perceptions of others, a high regard toward America and what

²¹⁸ Personal transcript of the last rally speech

the nation represents. In all his speeches, words such as America, American, nation and people are present and used in a positive context. Moreover, his campaign slogan “Make America Great again” also testifies to his will to improve life for American citizens.

Furthermore, from a grammatical point of view, Trump’s language level seemed to be below average compared to other presidents. In fact, his speeches are often considered easier to understand due to shorter sentences with simpler syntactic constructions.²¹⁹ Some have assessed his level to equal that of a 7th- or 8th-grader, with a less diverse syntax and vocabulary use than previous presidents. This tendency is even more remarkable when looking at off-the-script comments.²²⁰

Regarding Trump’s communication skills, he does not have any major issues expressing himself. His voice neither trembles, nor break. However, his pronunciation is slightly problematic. In fact, Trump seems to either over- or underarticulate his words. As a result, his speeches seem exaggerated for the most part, while some words are barely understandable.²²¹ He also uses a lot of contractions (such as gonna, we’re, ‘em, etc.) in all of his speeches, which is rather rare in formal speeches. This gives the speech a rather natural or improvised feel, which is even further reinforced by the many repetitions and overall disorganization that are typical of Trump’s speeches.

Trump’s intonation is also rather personal to him. As a reminder, rising intonation can generally be found at the beginning of sentences or the end of questions to insist more strongly on the interrogative nature of the sentences, while falling intonations generally indicate the end of a sentence or of a paragraph. Trump does not seem to follow classical intonation rules. It is actually quite hard to even establish an intonation pattern as he does not seem to follow one. He tends to use whatever intonation suits him best at a particular moment, which indicates that his use of intonation probably follows some topical or emotional motivations. As intonation has been recognized to influence the understanding of discourse, it is safe to assume that Trump would put emphasis on delicate topics that he knew could cause an emotional reaction to his audience. For instance, in his announcement speech, Trump talks about how 2000 Humvees

²¹⁹ Expert system team (2017). Trump speech analysis: What words tell us about the 45th president [Online]. *Expert System*. Available on: <https://expertsystem.com/trump-speech-analysis/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

²²⁰ Shugerman, E. (2018, January 9th). Trump speaks at level of 8-year-old, new analysis finds [Online]. *The Independent UK*. Available on: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-language-level-speaking-skills-age-eight-year-old-vocabulary-analysis-a8149926.html> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

²²¹ I personally struggled with his muffled pronunciation while transcribing the speech he held during his last rally.

have been abandoned for the enemy to take over. During this section of his speech, Trump clearly seems shocked and confused about this appalling number. He mentions:

*“Two-thousand three-hundred **Humvees**. These are **big vehicles**. Were left behind for the enemy. **Two thousand**. You would say maybe two? Maybe four?”*²²²

Even if this sentence is not truly significant in his discourse, it truly shows Trump’s personal take on intonation. Indeed, all words in bold represent Trump’s use of a rising intonation. It demonstrates the peculiar use of intonation Trump makes to prove his point, as it gives him a surprised tone, which is the emotion these sentences truly aim to convey.

Regarding the rhythm of Trump’s speeches, it seems to be in direct correlation with his speaking habits. In addition to using shorter sentences, Trump also seems to favor shorter paragraphs and idea subdivision, which causes him to pause quite often. These recurrent pauses thus create a slowing effect on the speech. The topical and phrasal repetitions also have an effect on Trump’s rhythm perception. As a matter of fact, he brings up the same topics and the same kind of sentence repeatedly. Such phenomenon makes it harder for people to perceive a progression within the speeches, and gives them an impression of slowness and endlessness. However, this impression of a slow rhythm is sometimes neutralized by Trump’s switch to rapid speed delivery²²³, whenever he talks about potential threats to the United States such as immigration or job theft.

Interruptions also affect the rhythm of Trump’s speeches. During his announcement speech, very few people actually seem to be present: there are no cameras filming the audience, but there are no noises that would be consistent with thousands of people. In actuality, the venue seems so quiet that all individual interactions from random supporters can be heard. The two following speeches, however, seemed to have attracted more significant crowds. The interruptions became more frequent, as well as longer and louder. However, Trump only listens to the cheers and screams for only so long before continuing his speeches. Even though he mostly takes the time to acknowledge and answer individual comments (if audible), it is not always the case and he will sometimes keep talking or only pause for a few seconds before continuing in spite of the noise. Such tendency actually creates a paradoxical secondary effect,

²²² Trump, D. J. (2015). Op cit

²²³ Speech delivery will be analyzed more thoroughly in the paraverbal language section.

which is precipitation: by talking over his audience, Trump gives the impression of being in a rush, or eager to be done speaking.

3.3.2. Paraverbal language

Trump's paraverbal language comprises melody, volume, breath, laughs, sighs, pauses, and other similar factors. As with Obama's speeches, I will not take melody into account, as its interpretation remains highly subjective.

Delivery speed is one of the most noticeable of all paraverbal factors. It refers to the speed at which someone is speaking and is calculated in words per minute. What truly stands out in Trump's case is the inconsistency that can be observed in his speech delivery. While the average delivery remains between 120 and 160 words per minute, Trump barely ever fits within those limits²²⁴. His announcement speech is the only one of the three which remains within the average speed. Nevertheless, among the five extracts of his announcement speech I used to calculate this mean, I noticed that his number of words per minute were either extremely close to the minimum point or to the maximum point (even occasionally going over 160 words per minute). The two other speeches, however, completely differ from this first observation. Indeed, in his Convention speech, Trump speaks extremely slowly, averaging around 88 to 89 words per minute, which is substantially less than the overall mean. This tendency, even though less drastic, also appears in the speech given at his last rally.

Regarding volume, it has to be analyzed within the context of the campaign, meaning that the surrounding noises (and possible echo) and presence of a microphone have to be accounted for. These physical arrangements are an intrinsic part of the nature of the event. In spite of such conditions, however, it seems like Trump tends to speak quite loudly. While it is impossible to confirm or refute that theory because of the sound system meant to amplify his voice, several factors can lead us towards this conclusion such as his exaggerated pronunciation and his angry-sounding tone.

Trump's pausing pattern during all of his speeches also appears quite random, which affects the perception of fluency. Fluency is accomplished through a good balance of speech, pauses and breath. Even though Trump's breathing is quite noticeable due to him keeping his

²²⁴ This affirmation is based on a personal tracking and examining of Donald J. Trump's speech delivery. To obtain a global overview, different one-minute extracts (plain speech, no interruption) were timed and examined in order to calculate Obama's word per minute count.

mouth open, it does not seem to affect the way he pauses in his speeches. However, Trump seems to pause very often, sometimes for a relatively long time and in the middle of sentences. It is complicated to establish a pattern or reason for why he would pause at certain moments. Obviously, as it often is the case during events full of a person's supporters, there are quite a few noises including cheering and screaming, which sometimes justify the pauses Trump takes before going on with the speech. However, most of the time, there are no particular reasons forcing him to stop. A few pauses might be associated with the desire to have an emotional effect on his audience, for example, if it is situated after an important idea or after a dramatic anecdote used to prove a point, but this only accounts for so many of the pauses. Some pauses could help Trump's supporters to ponder what has just been said; however, this would still not explain the excessive length of the pauses and why he sometimes pauses in the middle of an idea. Silence is also an integral part of the pausing patterns one can establish during a discourse. It often holds a strong meaning. Yet, as Trump tends to pause at unpredictable and illogical moments, it is almost impossible to precisely define said meaning.²²⁵

The last important paraverbal factor is Trump's voice pitch. Several studies have demonstrated that voice pitch has a tremendous influence on people's perception of an individual. Characteristics that people often attribute to someone's voice pitch are numerous, but include dominance, strength, and emotional state, all important qualities when it comes to becoming president.²²⁶ According to Klofstad's study²²⁷ on the effect of voice pitch on voter performance, candidates with a lower voice pitch are more likely to be perceived as a good fit for the position they are campaigning for. However, this theory does not apply in the case of a male candidate facing a female candidate²²⁸, which was Trump's case in 2016. Typically, Trump would probably be considered to have a rather low voice pitch. But the potential effect that his low pitch could have had was unfortunately limited by the nasal quality of his voice, which makes him sound higher pitched. This probably helped him sound less aggressive while facing Hillary Clinton, in spite of his angry sounding voice and offensive and threatening (body) language.

²²⁵ Hennel-Brzozowska, A. (2008). La communication non-verbale et paraverbale – Perspective d'un psychologue. *Synergie Pologne*, Vol. 5: pp. 21-30

²²⁶ Klofstad, C. A. (2015). Op cit.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

Trump also sometimes adopts a childish tone that could have toned down both the seriousness and perceived aggressiveness of his speeches. For instance, in his Convention speech, Trump refers to his opponent, Hillary Clinton, by saying:

*“That is why Hillary Clinton's message is that things will never change...never ever.”*²²⁹

Even though Trump starts this comment with a very serious, even angry tone, his demeanor completely changes at the end. The “never ever” is said in a childlike, provocative and mocking way. There is no apparent reason for him to adopt such an attitude, as the message itself is already clearly critical of Hillary Clinton’s accomplishments. Yet, this switch in behavior might simply be an indicator of Trump’s personal feelings towards his opponent.

3.3.3. Non-verbal language

Nonverbal language is an unavoidable element of political communication. All gestures and movements are bound to be analyzed by the audience, and associated with the politician’s discourse (appendix 18).²³⁰

During all three of his speeches, Trump stands behind a podium, which does not leave much room for movements and gestures that complement the speeches. However, Trump manages to find some mobility within the speeches, even though they vary in intensity. In his announcement speech, Trump actually barely moves. Most of the time, he only uses his right arm to perform movements which don’t appear to contribute to what he has to say, while he stays immobile behind the stand, leaning on his left arm. This might be the sign of a lack of preparation, as hands and arms are often used to convey most nonverbal information.²³¹ He does not really look around at the crowd and only faces the right side of the audience. He is also constantly glancing at his notes.

In his convention speech, Trump’s gestures slightly improve. He starts using both hands (some, even, being significant and complementing what is being said), but he still often leans on the podium with his left arm. He appears more mobile than he was in his announcement speech, and also pays more attention to his entire audience by turning his body around more. He also takes the time to readjust his suit, which, in addition to being part of his gestural

²²⁹ Trump, D. J. (2016). Op cit

²³⁰ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

²³¹ Rominieka, M. (2008). Non-verbal Cues in Politics: An Analysis of Gestural Signals Sent by American and European Politicians. *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*. Pp. 247–263

language, could indicate that he cares about his appearance. However, real improvement can be seen during his last rally. Before starting his speech, Trump takes the time to clap and salute his supporters. He moves a lot more, and even completely turns around several times to address the small crowd seated behind him. His arm movements are also more numerous and now involve both arms as he barely leans on the podium anymore. One of his most significant and recurrent movements is a hand movement resembling a diver's OK sign that he uses throughout his speeches (although to a lesser extent during the announcement speech) to emphasize important words or points. This overall improvement in Trump's nonverbal communication is a significant advantage for him, as a good nonverbal communication enables him to augment the influence he could have on his audience.²³²

Trump also has a very expressive face. Throughout his speeches, the most common perceivable expressions appear to be anger and determination, which makes total sense, as he generally emphasizes America's problems and how he would fix them if elected president. In his announcement speech, Trump very rarely smiles or laughs, but he sometimes appears to be grinning in satisfaction, even when talking about serious subjects. He also raises his eyebrows quite often, as if he was surprised. While it is evident that he could not be surprised at his own discourse, this facial expression could indicate that it is the feeling that he expects his audience to experience, or that what he mentions is quite shocking in itself.

Trump seems to have a happier demeanor during his Convention speech. He smiles frequently during the introductory cheers and overall looks very content with himself and with his audience. However, as soon as he gets to the core of the speech, Trump seems to look angry again. During his final rally, Trump's face looks satisfied and happy thanks to the poll numbers in his favor. Although he still does not smile very often, his face does not seem as severe and angry as in his other speeches. As nonverbal communication also relies on generating an emotional reaction to whoever might see it, we can assume that Trump's display of emotion might cause his audience to feel the same emotion.²³³ Using your eyes is another common facial gesture. But in the case of a speech held in front of such a large crowd (without the projection of the speaker onto video screens), they cannot be. Therefore, they do not play an active role in assessing nonverbal communication.²³⁴

²³² Rominieka, M. (2008). Op Cit.

²³³ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

²³⁴ Demir, M. (2011). Using Nonverbal Communication in Politics. *CSCanada (Canada Social Science)*, Vol. 7: pp. 1-14.

Physical appearance also represents a major part of one's nonverbal language. As a matter of fact, the first impression conveyed to an audience is through the speaker's look, which is why it is so important. In her thesis, Delia Dumitrescu affirms that attractiveness actually represents a major factor for uninformed voters, as well as for voters with no pre-established party affiliation.²³⁵ She also mentions that a dominant face²³⁶ tends to be favored by voters when it comes to male candidates. Nevertheless, other factors might interfere with that theory, such as the fact that voters usually assess a candidate's face according to what seems familiar to them.²³⁷ Obviously, such factors make it extremely difficult to establish some kind of correlation between attractiveness and political victories, as it is a subjective measure. What we can say, however, is that Trump usually appears in public neatly groomed and properly dressed, which establish a good basis for the image he projects to potential voters. However, some physical characteristics that often negatively stand out about Trump are his hair and his orange-toned tan. Those two elements have actually been repeatedly mocked by some, making them emblematic to how Trump is generally perceived and described.²³⁸

²³⁵ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

²³⁶ In Her thesis, Dumitrescu qualifies dominant faces as faces presenting typically masculine features.

²³⁷ Dumitrescu, D. Op Cit.

²³⁸ Rosenberg, S. W., Bohan, L., McCafferty, P., & Harris, K. (1986) The image and the Vote: The Effect of Candidate Presentation on Voter Preference. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 30, No. 1: pp. 108-127.

Chapter 6: Comparative analysis

Section 1: Divergences

Obviously, the first factor causing major disparities between candidates is their political affiliations. As a matter of fact, even though both campaigned to run the same country, Trump and Obama primarily targeted really different people with opposite values. During his campaign, Obama's goals were to defend and promote a more liberal system. He advocated for measures such as better health and social security systems, a tax reform, equal pay, etc. He also wanted to implement measures that would have promoted a more ecologically responsible approach to oil and the automobile industry, and wanted to end all unnecessary wars and bring the American troops home. Obama stood for progressive ideas that were even described as socialist by John McCain. Trump, on another hand, presented ideas in total contradiction with those of the Democratic Party. Sometimes, he even adopted stances that were even more extreme than those traditionally characterizing the Republican Party. His approach to politics often toed up to the line with authoritarianism, which truly showed in some of his policies regarding immigration (the border wall, the Muslim ban, etc.), for instance. In spite of pretending that he was neither intolerant, nor racist, he continuously adopted racist and discriminative measures against several groups and communities, such as Mexicans or LGBTQIA+ people. He also adopted an extremely nationalist approach, repeatedly denigrating organization such as NAFTA or the TPP, and claiming previous American leaders had not been smart enough to correctly organize a free-trade system. He also often appealed to his supporters' ideals of individual liberties, notably with pro-gun people, whom he highly targeted during his campaign.

Trump and Obama are also very different personality-wise. In 2007, at the start of his campaign, Obama was a Black, 47-year-old lawyer with only a few years of experience in politics. He was very much aware of his "lack" of experience, but appeared determined to create change and to work for all Americans' well-being. He portrayed himself as ambitious, but also as a family-centered man, even relying on his wife and children and thanking them numerous times for their unconditional love and support. As for Trump, he was a 70-year-old business man become national celebrity. He has had no prior experience in politics, yet appeared as (too) confident and ready to defy anyone who would present opposite ideas. He immediately targeted

the working-class individuals with lower levels of education and appealed to their feelings of rage and injustice, as well as to their desire to live better lives.²³⁹

In addition to their political and personal discrepancies, it is the Presidents' differences in terms of communication methods that truly show what they care about and what message they are trying to convey to the electorate. Even though all speeches were given in different contexts (both circumstantial, geographical and spatial), it would not be productive to assess the pragmatic differences as their influence is quite hard to prove. What we can say about the matter, however, is that all events had installations making possible for the audience to follow the speeches to the best of their abilities, so spatial organization would not have been at fault for any misunderstanding.

Regarding the function of the speeches, it happens to be the same each time: convincing people to vote for either Trump, or Obama. However, the process through which each candidate tries to accomplish this objective differs. Obama, for instance, plays on unity and togetherness by explaining why Americans should work with him to instigate change. Obama often achieves this process through parallelisms. By repeating a particular phrase or construction several times, he ensures that it resonates with his audience and encourages them to think about it more deeply. Obama often uses this figure of speech to highlight his political agenda and its criticality, stimulating a feeling of urgency around change. Obama also occasionally uses rhetorical questions, but they are rare and thus less influential. In the speech of his final rally, Obama also uses story telling as a persuasive element. By presenting himself as an ordinary individual, he creates the ability for his audience to relate and to understand. Thus, he establishes a common ground between him and his audience.

By contrast, Trump uses repetitions rather than parallelisms. Not only does he repeat the same topics and ideas between speeches, he also does it within the same speech. In fact, Trump often use the same words, grammatical construction, or topics several times within a single speech. With those repetitions, Trump insists on creating an 'us versus them' mentality, where supporting him appears to be the only safe and sane thing to do for the future of the United States. Trump also insists on that matter by developing the lexical field of competition, which is nowhere to be found in Obama's speeches. This technique is also accompanied by attacks on his opponents, whom he mocks at every chance he gets (even by using personal information).

²³⁹ Many mental health professionals actually characterized him as being a manipulative narcissist, showing traits such as entitlement and a feeling of superiority.

This completely contrasts with Obama's treatment of his opponents, of whom he recognizes the efforts and dedication, in spite of not agreeing with their ideals and political programs. Besides, Trump also makes an important use of rhetorical questions, mostly to question his opponents' accomplishments or the finality of their actions. He often formulates his questions for the audience so they can respond affirmatively (by cheering, for example), therefore creating an opportunity for his audience to validate his ideas.

The biggest difference between Trump and Obama is verbal language. In both cases, the use of pronouns appears to be very important. In Obama's speeches, such pronouns are used to reinforce the idea of togetherness and to refer to himself and the nation as a single entity, fighting side by side for improvements. Trump, on the other hand, uses those pronouns to divide the nation and instigate fear against China, Japan, Mexico or anyone that could appear remotely threatening to the United States. Trump's use of pronouns also reveals that he is definitely one of the main focuses of his own speeches. He likes talking about his accomplishments and about his wealth, and definitely thinks very highly of himself. As already mentioned, repetitions also represent a huge portion of Trump's speeches, with the same point being made over, and over again. Trump also often reuses the same anecdotes, jokes or topics in his speeches, which is far less pronounced and noticeable in Obama's speeches. It is also evident that Trump and Obama's way of speaking is tremendously different. While Obama regularly varies his grammatical construction and vocabulary, and prefers whole word form and a more formal kind of speech, Trump often sticks to the same basic construction, with lots of short forms and repetitive vocabulary. Pronunciation is also one of the major distinctions between the two candidates. While Obama tends to speak loudly, with a very clear (yet not exaggerated) pronunciation, Trump often oscillates between not articulating enough to be understood and articulating way too much, therefore giving an unnatural feeling to his discourse.

The rhythm of Trump and Obama's speech also quite different. As a matter of fact, Obama avoids repetitions: his speeches sound carefully prepared and he recites them without any problem. He pauses quite often, but it always remains brief, except for moments of cheers or applause, where he takes the time to fully welcome the emotions of his audience. Trump is the exact opposite: Trump takes numerous pauses, some in between sentences and paragraphs, but others in the middle of sentences, which greatly slows down the transmission of ideas. The many topical repetitions also give the impression to be going around in circles without getting any further in the speech. In spite of having no problem with excessive pausing, Trump still

gives the impression that he wants the speech to be over quickly, which translates into him cutting off his audience's cheers or screams on several occasions.

Regarding Trump and Obama's paraverbal language, speech delivery is the only factor that radically diverges. As a matter of fact, Obama generally falls within the average of 120 to 160 words per minute (often edging toward the higher end of that spectrum). Trump is, once again, tremendously different. Trump's speech delivery generally revolves around the lower end of this limit, even going way under it at times, making him an incredibly slow speaker. Obama's fluency also appears to be better, as he succeeds in having a good balance between speech, pauses and breaths. Obama gracefully combines all three elements, rarely makes false starts or hesitations, and his pauses are never full. By contrast, Trump's pauses are all over the place and do not appear to have any logical meaning. Even if he does not have true false starts, a remarkable number of his sentences go unfinished and he seems to hesitate quite often.

Finally, with regard to their nonverbal language, it is almost impossible to find any common factor between Trump and Obama's. They both have very distinctive postures and different ways of behaving behind their podium. Obama stands tall and straight. He has very few facial mimics, apart from the occasional smile. He never looks at his notes, but rather focuses on the entire audience. Trump, by contrast, often leans on his podium, which gives him a rather sloppy and unprofessional look, and often looks at his notes. He has a huge number of facial expressions which are very remarkable and way more significant than most of his body language. Indeed, those mimics really stand out, as Trump often exaggerates them, and they are far more pronounced than his upper-body gestures.

Even though we cannot compare Trump and Obama regarding their relative attractiveness, as it is a completely subjective matter, we still can compare their physical features. Obama is young, tall and fit Black man, while Trump is an old, tall, chubby, white man with an impressive blonde hairdo and a fake tan. Even if both of them dress really nicely (usually in a suit and tie), they do have very different feature which will appeal to some people more than others. This would then influence those people in their assessment of both candidates' capabilities.

Section 2: Similarities

In spite of their many, yet logical, differences, there are still a few similarities between Trump and Obama's communication style.

First, their overall intention is identical: they are trying to be elected president of the United States. No matter what strategies are then put in place, they are both competing to win over any American citizen that could be enthused by their programs. This obvious element has to be brought up, as their intentions are highly likely to influence the way they behave. It is the ongoing common element to all of their speeches: it is what defines their secondary objectives, their argumentative techniques, etc. It is the foundation of their entire campaign.

Regarding verbal factors, even though Trump and Obama have radically different speaking style and intonation patterns, they both have a really personal intonation style. Obama adopts intonation patterns that often convey a serious and determined, yet optimistic tone. He sometimes switched intonation in the course of a sentence, or ends his sentences by an unusual intonation raise, which differs from conventional intonation rules or habits. As for Trump, he does not seem to have any pre-established intonation patterns; he rather lets his intonation be controlled by topical or emotional cues. Both of them, however, seem to shift their intonation according to the most delicate or important topics of their speeches.

When looking at the topics of their speeches, we can also notice a similar focus on the well-being of the United States and its citizen. However, both demonstrate their concerns in very different ways, which is why this similarity might not be noticed immediately. Trump shows his concerns by talking about terrorists and job threats, about people willing to harm the country's organizations, stealing their safety and their rights. Obama, on the other hand, shows that he cares about his people by proposing health care and social security reforms. He tends to focus on the domestic problems that they can solve, instead of pointing a finger at potential threats or at other countries that he considers responsible for American's problems. Due to their political and personal beliefs, they perceive well-being, and what is necessary to obtain it, in a different way. This does not mean that one of them cares more than the other, but rather that they have a different perception of what would be best for their country.

Finally, regarding their paraverbal language, Trump and Obama show quite a few similarities. The most prominent one is the influence of the topic they are talking about on their speech delivery. Trump and Obama tend to have a relatively steady delivery. The only factors truly playing an influence on whether they will deviate from it are the topics they are mentioning, and, therefore, the emotions linked to that particular topic. For instance, Trump tends to speak faster when mentioning threats to the job industry, while Obama usually speaks faster when talking about exciting or enthusiastic topics, such as his wealth, his family, or his positive political results.

Their voice pitch is also quite similar. Trump and Obama both display quite a deep voice, which sounds quite manly and confident. Nevertheless, Trump's voice has a nasal aspect, which, associated with his sometimes-childish tone, might not convey the authority and credibility he hopes to portray. Obama, by contrast, sounds serious no matter what, even when occasionally laughing with his audience, which might be explained by the stable nature of his voice and the steady tone of his voice.

Section 3: Results

By comparing Trump and Obama's communication habits, we can establish a list of similar and divergent communication strategies.

Focusing on the commonalities and differences between Trump and Obama enables us to establish a pattern of techniques that seem to be part of the process of influencing the electorate. Indeed, if a communication technique is used by both Trump and Obama, we can deduce that it may be relatively effective when it comes to convincing their audience. But divergences within the communication techniques might highlight interesting strategies. This then provides an objective ground to formulate a partial answer to our research question: how did Trump and Obama's communication style influence the electorate?

Undoubtedly, political affiliation has a tremendous influence on the electorate. Indeed, most voters identify with the beliefs of a particular party, and will tend to vote accordingly. When indecisive or insecure, voters also rely on personal factors: the candidates' attitude, their ideals and beliefs, their personality, details of their personal life, etc. Such traits are crucial of elements of a candidate's character, and, as their life is suddenly brought under the spotlight, they become unignorable when deciding who to vote for. At the time of his campaign, Obama was a young and ambitious senator and family man, while Trump was an accomplished businessman turned reality celebrity. They had tremendously different background and ambitions, as well as different perceptions of what American citizens wanted and needed. What we can imply is that those personal elements actually speak to voters and enable them to relate to the candidates. While this might not suffice to vote for a particular person, it might help them make their decisions, or consider the bigger picture.

The pragmatic and functional aspects of Trump and Obama's speeches are relatively similar as well. While having the same objectives regarding the actions they want to accomplish

during a political campaign does not mean much (as any person ever campaigning would have the same goal), similarities in the pragmatics might be significant. As a matter of fact, pragmatics are known to have an important effect on the meaning of the discourse, but what if they could actually reinforce the intended effect of the discourse? Indeed, the organization of the speeches makes is so thousands of supporters and eventual supporters are gathered in the same place for a consequential amount of time. The group dynamic could thus reinforce the influential effect of the original speech. Even if this assumption cannot be verified, several studies have proven that group effect strongly influences attitudes, judgment, and perceptions²⁴⁰, which leads us to believe that a political rally would have been no exception. With regards to the function of the speeches, they are the exact same for all six speeches. Nevertheless, they are not given in the same manner: parallelisms, repetitions, rhetorical questions, and other processes are used by either one or both candidates to connect with voters, thereby influencing the electorate into supporting them. The fact that both Trump and Obama use standard figures of speech that are known for their argumentative properties also indicates that it was a conscious choice, made specifically to be able to anticipate the effect of their speeches on the audience.

Furthermore, to influence his audience, Obama also made a habit of establishing credibility through his speeches. Indeed, he often refers to emblematical political figures (be they activists, politicians, presidents, etc.) and acknowledges the accomplishments and great changes they have been able to make in the past. Trump also showed great interest in such process and repeatedly used similar techniques. However, Trump generally did so by trying to discredit his opponents, be it by the use of insults, mockery or embarrassment.

Regarding the verbal aspect of linguistic communication factors, two factors seem to present a certain similarity: intonation and topics. A certain level of topical similarity seems quite logical in such an important political race. In fact, as presidential candidates' campaigns usually take place over the same period of time, it appears logical to address the same problems and how they could be solved, no matter the party of the candidate in question. However, in our particular case, Trump and Obama's campaigns took place 8 years apart, which diminishes the opportunities for topical similarities. Nevertheless, we still can find several parallels between the two candidates, the most important and prominent one being their devotion to their

²⁴⁰ Swagatika, M. Influence of the Group on Individual behaviour [Online]. *Psychology Discussion*. Available on : <https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/behaviour/human-behaviour/influence-of-the-group-on-individual-behaviour-group-psychology/3300> [Retrieved on May 15th, 2021].

countries. Even if expressed in really different ways, both Trump and Obama continuously express their deep cares and worries about their nation, which, in the context of a national election, is crucial. While they do not perceive the same risks and threats for the United States, the candidates show themselves ready to fight for the well-being of their citizens. This topical similarity is extremely meaningful as the general election is the chance for Americans to ensure that the person in power has their best interest at heart. According to how the candidates present themselves to the public and to which issues they consider to be the most pressing, different candidates will attract different supporters. Thus, the topical choices of their speeches will enable a first targeting process of the audience, and focus their influential properties on members of the audience already presenting similar beliefs than a particular candidate.

Topical similarities also matter when it comes to Trump and Obama's intonation style, which also represent a similar verbal feature between the two candidates. Indeed, while Trump and Obama's respective intonation are nowhere near identical, what can be observed is that they both develop a very personal style, which translates in strong variations from standard intonation patterns. While both differ from traditional patterns, they also differ from each other, making it impossible to establish one precisely successful and influential intonation pattern. Nevertheless, Trump and Obama do present an important similarity: both their intonations are topically or emotionally related. What this indicates is that linking intonation to the different topics that are discussed, as well to the emotions that those topics convey, might be the ultimate solution to build an influential intonation strategy. As a matter of fact, associating a particular type of intonation to a specific subject during a speech might enable the audience to truly perceive the speaker's feeling, as well as their true intentions. Intonation, when used correctly, can also be used to induce those same feelings within the audience.

Regarding paraverbal language, Trump and Obama present quite a few similarities, such as the influence of their speech topics on their delivery speed. However, most of said similarities are minors and would have limited effect on the power of their speeches. Their voice pitch, however, is a much more important commonality between the two candidates. As a matter of fact, we already established that a low voice generally creates a perception of the speaker as strong, attractive, dominant, and emotionally stable (cf. chapter 4, section 2, pt. 3.3.3). Moreover, men with a deep-toned voice are often preferred by voters, which, considering Trump and Obama's voice pitches, seems to be in their advantage. Indeed, their voice pitch already gives them the opportunity to appear as great political candidates. When associated to a political agenda that appeals to their targeted audience, Trump and Obama's respective voice

pitch might do a good job at persuading voters to support them. Indeed, they acquire a sense of authority through their voice pitch, which they can then exploit during their political campaign.

The main difference between Trump and Obama's speeches is their verbal aspect, and, more specifically, their grammatical and lexical compositions. Both show a tremendous focus on pronouns, but with different intentions. Obama regularly uses the first-person plural to create an effect of togetherness, while Trump mainly speaks in first-person singular, to shift the attention of his audience towards his own achievements. Considering that both techniques ultimately participated in the elections of the candidates, we can imagine two different scenarios:

- Obama focused on creating a feeling of togetherness which greatly relied on the implication of his supporters. This, in turn, gave the impression to his audience that only together could they generate the change that America needed and deserved.
- Trump mainly focused on his own fame and accomplishments while also mentioning all the problems that America was facing to insist on the change that he could bring, therefore presenting himself as some kind of savior for his country.

Moreover, their use of vocabulary greatly differed, with Trump mainly using a simple, repetitive lexicon, and Obama varying his phrasal constructions. This, however, can be explained by their target audience. As mentioned in the second chapters, different parties often target different audiences. This has been even more remarkable with Trump, who, in addition to differing from his Democratic opponent, also drastically diverged from his Republican colleagues and predecessors in terms of ideals, objectives, and target audiences. Thus, a different use of grammar and vocabulary might indicate a great knowledge of the candidates' target audience²⁴¹ and be part of their influence strategy, as their discourse is especially constructed to appeal to their audience.

While other verbal and paraverbal elements also have to be taken into account when analyzing communication as a whole (such as rhythm, delivery speed, pausing patterns, or fluency), it is complicated to truly establish whether or not they have a direct impact on the influential factor of those speeches. However, a good overall communication style might

²⁴¹ Their target audience being white people with lower education and conservative values for Trump, and educated white people and people of color for Obama.

facilitate the understanding of the speeches, which might, in turn, influence the convincing property of the discourse.

Conclusion

To sum up, I can safely confirm that communication style does play a tremendous role in political communication, and on the influence exerted on the electorate. As a matter of fact, and even more so in a political campaign, every word and every sentence are thought to be clear, precise and on point to have the best effect possible on the audience. The goal is to influence and to convince, to convert an audience into a group of supporters, but there is no one way to do it properly.

When I started my thesis, I formulated my research question hoping I would find how Trump and Obama succeeded in persuading the electorate into voting for them. But in retrospect, I realized that such a research question only supposed a relatively high level of similarity between their communication techniques, which, in turn, would have postulated the existence of a single right communication technique to get the electorate to elect a particular candidate. But the results have shown me the exact opposite.

As a matter of fact, there is no uniquely right communication technique. Rather, we could consider that there is one right way to adapt one's communication style to their audience. Specifically, Trump and Obama sure do share some communication technique such as topical resemblance, deeply personal intonation patterns, a low voice pitch, and a delivery speed greatly influenced by topics and emotions. But Trump and Obama's other linguistic features greatly differ: the delivery speed, the rhythm, the grammar and lexicon, etc. Nevertheless, in spite of all those differences, both Trump and Obama were indeed elected President of the United States.

Ultimately, there are more differences than there are commonalities, which leads us back to one everlasting element: the goals and implications of those speeches. As per its nature, the goal of a presidential campaign is to convince people to vote for a particular candidate. Similarly, the one true implication of a political campaign is to win. So, how did Trump and Obama's communication style influence the electorate? They adapted to their audience. Their communication techniques might have converged or diverged, but their objective remained the same. The content, rhythm, grammar, lexicon, delivery speed and all other communications were carefully designed to be pertinent for the targeted audience. By providing an understandable speech, with accessible language and delivery, both Trump and Obama ensured that they would reach their maximum potential of appealing to their respective target audience.

Obviously, it is essential to remember that this thesis cannot be considered as exhaustive, as it only took into account three speeches pertaining to each candidate. Future research could thus focus on a larger scale study, which would not only include more speeches, but also surveys of concerned voters, which would give us a more definite knowledge of the actual perception of each speech by the audience. Such research would shed even more light on the ways in which communication styles determine the outcomes of elections.

Bibliography

Research material

Obama, B. (2007). Campaign Announcement Speech [Online]. Available on: <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/barackobamacandidacyforpresident.htm> [Retrieved March 20th, 2020].

Obama, B. (2008). Speech at the Democratic National Convention [Online]. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmEI9Doctqs> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Obama, B. (2008). Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Denver: "The American Promise" (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-accepting-the-presidential-nomination-the-democratic-national-convention-denver> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Obama, B. (2008). Final Rally Speech [Online]. Available on: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?282202-1/obama-speech-manassas-virginia> [Retrieved on March 20th, 2020].

Obama, B. (2008). Final Rally Speech (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <http://obamaspeeches.com/E-Barack-Obama-Speech-Manassas-Virginia-Last-Rally-2008-Election.htm> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Trump, D. J. (2015). Campaign Announcement Speech [Online]. Available on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RM3VTxDMyZQ&list=PL_4eS3H-BKsh0hsxQFr0I8_2d_TuP3Ef9&index=9 [Retrieved on March 20th, 2020].

Trump, D. J. (2015). Campaign Announcement Speech (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Trump, D. J. (2016). Speech at the Republican National Convention [Online]. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5XmFG3221s> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Trump, Donald J. (2016). Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio (transcript) [Online]. Available on: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-accepting-the-presidential-nomination-the-republican-national-convention-cleveland> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Trump, D. J. (2016). Final Rally Speech [Online]. Available on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-cE8JXmGh8&list=PL_4eS3H-BKsh0hsxQFr0I8_2d_TuP3Ef9&index=5 [Retrieved March 20th, 2020].

Sources

Essays, theses and scientific articles

Amossy, R. (2008). Argumentation et Analyse du discours : perspectives théoriques et découpages disciplinaires [Online]. Argumentation et analyse du discours. Available on : <http://journals.openedition.org/aad/200> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

Ausina, O. (1987). Construire l'image d'une personnalité politique à la télévision. Pygmalion Désarmé [Online]. *Études de communication. Langages, information, médiations*. Available on : <http://journals.openedition.org/edc/2880> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

Delmas, V. (2012). Pour une analyse pluridimensionnelle du discours : le discours politique. *La linguistique*, Vol. 48 : pp. 103-122.

Demir, M. (2011). Using Nonverbal Communication in Politics. *CSCanada (Canada Social Science)*, Vol. 7: pp. 1-14.

Dumitrescu, D. Nonverbal Communication in Politics: A Review of Research Developments, 2005-2015.

Hennel-Brzozowska, A. (2008). La communication non-verbale et paraverbale – Perspective d'un psychologue. *Synergie Pologne*, Vol. 5: pp. 21-30

Immelman, A. (2008, July). The political personality of U.S. president Barack Obama [Online]. Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, San Francisco. Available on: http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/psychology_pubs/25/ [Retrieved on December 9th, 2020].

Klofstad, C. A. (2015). Candidate Voice Pitch Influences Election Outcomes. *Political Psychology*, Vol. xx, No. Xx.

Klofstad, C. A., Anderson, R. C., & Peters, S. (2012). Sounds like a winner: voice pitch influences perception of leadership capacity in both men and women [Online]. Royal Society Publishing. Available on: <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/suppl/2012/03/06/rspb.2012.0311.DC1.html> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

Kroes, R. (2012). The power of rhetoric and the rhetoric of power: Exploring a tension within the Obama presidency [Online]. *European journal of American studies*. Available on: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/9578> [Retrieved on the April 10th, 2020].

Laustsen, L., & Bang Petersen, M. (2015): Winning Faces Vary by Ideology: How Nonverbal Source Cues Influence Election and Communication Success in Politics [Online]. *Political communication*. Available on: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1050565> [Retrieved on May 18th, 2020].

Lawson, C., Lenz, G. S., Baker, A., & Myers, M. (2010). Looking like a winner: Candidate Appearance and Electoral Success in New democracies. *World Politics*, Vol. 62: pp. 561-593.

Levis, J. Intonation and discourse: Three Approaches. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol.38, N°2 : pp. 353-357.

Pelerin, C. (2019). Les voix de Donald Trump lors des primaires républicaines 2016 : Une analyse critique du discours politique (thesis).

Rominieka, M. (2008). Non-verbal Cues in Politics: An Analysis of Gestural Signals Sent by American and European Politicians. *Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics*. Pp. 247–263

Rosenberg, S. W., Bohan, L., McCafferty, P., & Harris, K. (1986) The image and the Vote: The Effect of Candidate Presentation on Voter Preference. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 30, No. 1: pp. 108-127.

Sturman, B. and Rett, J. Exclamation Intonation.

Books and e-books

Güell, P. I., Engelken-Jorge, M., & del Río, C. M. (2011). *Politics and Emotions: The Obama Phenomenon*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Kellner, D. (2016). *American Nightmare: Donald Trump, Media Spectacle, and Authoritarian Populism*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

Kellner, D. (2017). *American Horror Show Election 2016 and the Ascent of Donald J. Trump*. Rotterdam: SensePublishers.

Polls

CNN Team (2016). Exit polls [Online]. CNN. Available on: <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/national/house> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Gallup team (2008). Candidate Support by Political Party and Ideology [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/108049/Candidate-Support-Political-Party-Ideology.aspx>. [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Gallup team (2009). State of the States: Political Party Affiliation [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/114016/State-States-Political-Party-Affiliation.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020]

Gallup Team (2017). GOP maintains edge state party affiliation [Affiliation]. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/203117/gop-maintains-edge-state-party-affiliation-2016.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020].

Newport, F. (2008), Democrats Racially Diverse; Republicans Mostly White [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/160373/democrats-racially-diverse-republicans-mostly-white.aspx> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on: <https://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on: <https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

News and reviews articles

Baldoni, J. (2011, March 11th). Using Stories to Persuade [Online]. Harvard Business Review. Available on: <https://hbr.org/2011/03/using-stories-as-a-tool-of-per> [Retrieved on January 18th, 2021].

Balz, D.; Kornblut, A. E. (2007, February 11th). Obama Joins Race with Goals Set High [Online]. The Washington Post. [Retrieved on October 20th, 2020].

Basu, K. (2020, November 1st). If Trump wins again, the true values of the Republican Party will be abandoned [Online]. Available on: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/trump-pence-republican-party-us-elections-13414106> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

BBC (2015, June 27th). US Supreme Court rules gay marriage is legal nationwide. [Online]. BBC News. Available on : <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33290341> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Brownstein, R. (2019, march 12th). The Key demographics of the Democratic Party are fragmenting [Online]. CNN. Available on: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/12/03/politics/2020-democrats-campaign-barack-obama/index.html> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Burmila, E. (2018, July 24th). How Trump is changing Republican Party Values [Online]. The Week. Available on: <https://theweek.com/articles/785361/how-trump-changing-republican-party-values> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Condon, S. (2012, September 4th). Obama's 2008 promises: kept or broken? [Online]. CBS News. Available on : <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/obamas-2008-promises-kept-or-broken/> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Friedberg, M. (2008, March 21st). Barack Obama's Integrity [Online]. HuffPost. Available on : https://www.huffpost.com/entry/barack-obamas-integrity_b_92750?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZWNVc2lhLm9yZy8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALBC_glGDVFICYhbhb53gKUmdlBo325DPgPGkUHDvLlFdtI5NS18rpqW8dRw7-

[744NoQCj2hfNQNDY5EI7AHTWNgj5MigQiRvLMXzqMtx6E2pjRUHvtl4xJUlBYMAC2w8p2fgmPfiOuDspWJ6-wJsy74EjOqWyMjtwDXB6HRKS](https://www.usnews.com/opinion/debate-club/articles/2017-01-17/obamas-rhetoric-and-symbolism-will-give-him-a-positive-legacy) [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Good, C. (2017, October 20th). The Legacy of Hope [Online]. *U.S. News*. Available on: <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/debate-club/articles/2017-01-17/obamas-rhetoric-and-symbolism-will-give-him-a-positive-legacy> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Johnson, J. (2016, January 22nd). Here are 76 of Donald Trump's many campaign promises [Online]. *The Washington Post*. Available on: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/01/22/here-are-76-of-donald-trumps-many-campaign-promises/> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

McClatchy Newspapers (December 4th, 2008). Supreme Court to consider taking up lawsuit challenging Obama's citizenship [Online]. *The Guardian*. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/dec/04/barack-obama-citizenship-supreme-court> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Nuzzi, O. (October 9th, 2016). Donald Trump Brings Four Bill Clinton Accusers to Debate, Definitely Not Sorry About Tape [Online]. *The Daily Beast*. Available on: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/donald-trump-brings-four-bill-clinton-accusers-to-debate-definitely-not-sorry-about-tape> [Retrieved on February 20th, 2021].

Pengelly, M. (2015, July 26th). Donald Trump: Hillary Clinton's private email use was 'criminal' [Online]. *The Guardian*. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jul/26/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-email-scandal-criminal> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021]

Qiu, L. (2016, July 15th). Donald Trump's top 10 campaign promises [Online]. *Politifact*. Available on: <https://www.politifact.com/article/2016/jul/15/donald-trumps-top-10-campaign-promises/> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021]

Shugerman, E. (2018, January 9th). Trump speaks at level of 8-year-old, new analysis finds [Online]. *The Independent UK*. Available on: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-language-level-speaking-skills-age-eight-year-old-vocabulary-analysis-a8149926.html> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

Stirland, S. L. (2008, October 29th). Obama's Secret Weapons: Internet, Databases and Psychology [Online]. *Wired*. Available on: <https://www.wired.com/2008/10/obamas-secret-w/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

Talbot, D. (2008, August 19th). How Obama Really Did It [Online]. *MIT Technology Review*. Available on: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/410644/how-obama-really-did-it/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

Talbot, D. (2009, February 24th). Personalized Campaigning [Online]. *MIT Technology Review*. Available on: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/412208/personalized-campaigning/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

Weisberd, J. (May 19th, 2009). La vraie personnalité d'Obama [Online]. Slate. Available on: <http://www.slate.fr/story/5499/la-vraie-personnalite-dobama> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

Blog posts

Delmas, H. (2010). La communication paraverbale [Online]. La communication non-verbale. Available on: <https://www.la-communication-non-verbale.com/2010/02/paraverbal-5471/> [Retrieved on March 20th, 2020].

Diffen LLC (2020). Democrat vs. Republican [Online]. Diffen. Available on : https://www.diffen.com/difference/Democrat_vs_Republican [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Expert system team (2017). Trump speech analysis: What words tell us about the 45th president [Online]. Expert System. Available on: <https://expertsystem.com/trump-speech-analysis/> [Retrieved on March 28th, 2020].

Goddard, T. 2008 Electoral Map [Online]. Teagan Goddard's Electoral Vote Map. Available on: <https://electoralvotemap.com/2008-election-results/> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Juma, N. (2019, May 5th). Barack Obama quotes about change, education, and equality [Online]. Everyday Power. Available at: <https://everydaypower.com/barack-obama-quotes/> [Retrieved on May 15th, 2021].

Mel, N. (2020). Je parle trop vite ! Ou comment maitriser son débit vocal dans ses prises de parole. Silence, Cabinet de Crise de Parole et de Communication. Available on : <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/je-parle-trop-vite-ou-comment-ma%C3%A9triser-son-d%C3%A9bit-vocal-nicolas-mel> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2021].

Melvin (2019). Quelle est la signification de logos, pathos et ethos ? – Aristote. Tout Comment. Available on : https://education.toutcomment.com/article/quelle-est-la-signification-de-logos-pathos-et-ethos-aristote-14011.html#anchor_3 [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

Swagatika, M. Influence of the Group on Individual behaviour [Online]. Psychology Discussion. Available on : <https://www.psychologydiscussion.net/behaviour/human-behaviour/influence-of-the-group-on-individual-behaviour-group-psychology/3300> [Retrieved on May 15th, 2021].

Websites

Barack Obama. Available on: <https://barackobama.com/> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020). United States Presidential Election of 2008 [Online]. Encyclopedia Britannica. Available on: <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-2008> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Donald Trump. Available on: <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/> [Retrieved on April 17th, 2020].

GOP. Gop.org. Available on : <https://www.gop.com/> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

Narvaez, D.F. (2020). The psychology of Donald Trump [Online]. Psychology Today. Available on: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/moral-landscapes/202008/the-psychology-donald-trump> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

Political Maps. Available on <https://www.politicalmaps.org/> [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020].

Sandbox Networks (2020). Presidential Elections, 1789-2020. InfoPlease. Available on : <https://www.infoplease.com/us/government/elections/presidential-elections-1789-2020> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Sherman, R.A. (2015). The personality of Donald Trump. Psychology Today. Available on: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-situation-lab/201509/the-personality-donald-trump> [Retrieved on February 6th, 2021].

The Democratic Party. Available on: <https://democrats.org/> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

The Democratic Party. History.com. Available on: <https://www.history.com/topics/us-politics/democratic-party> [Retrieved on March 27th, 2020].

Wikipedia. Timeline of the 2008 United States presidential election. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Available on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2008_United_States_presidential_election#2008 [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Wikipedia. Timeline of the 2016 United States presidential election. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Available on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_2016_United_States_presidential_election [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Audiovisual resources

Cloud English (2020). How do presidential elections work in America. Available on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOpEBJY2ZQI> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

CNN (2016). Timeline of the “Birther Movement” [Online]. Available on : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzYVwVR-Rek> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

New & Notes (May 27th, 2008). The history of Black Presidential Candidates. [Online]. NPR. Available on : <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90856052> [Retrieved on November 24th, 2020].

Course notes

De Lavergne, C. (2010). La communication non verbale.

Dennis, P. (2019). LMULT2421: Economic, legal, social and political issues in English-speaking countries – American Perspectives. Université Catholique de Louvain.

Équipe de professeur Cours Louis Blanc, Procédés pour persuader [Online]. Available on: <http://courslouisblanc.free.fr/fiches.pedagogiques/procedes.pour.persuader.htm> [Retrieved on February 21st, 2021]

François, T. (2019). LROM2660: Stratégie de communication orale dans l'entreprise. Université Catholique de Louvain.

François, T. (2019). LROM2670: Les textes économiques et commerciaux en français : genres de discours et questions de terminologie. Université Catholique de Louvain.

Lumen Learning Team. How voters decide [Online]. Lumen Learning. Available on : <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-politicalscience/chapter/how-voters-decide/> [Retrieved on November 10th, 2020].

Appendices

Appendix 1: Party preference for the presidential election by political ideology and identification²⁴²

This table shows the party preference of voters during the 2008 presidential election according to their political ideology. In this particular case, it demonstrates how liberal, moderate and conservative Democrats are definitely more likely to vote for a Democratic candidate.

	Barack Obama	John McCain
Oct. 27-Nov 2, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	96%	3%
Moderate Democrats	89%	7%
Conservative Democrats	82%	12%
Pure independents	24%	32%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	19%	77%
Conservative Republicans	5%	92%

²⁴² Gallup team (2008). Candidate Support by Political Party and Ideology [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/108049/Candidate-Support-Political-Party-Ideology.aspx>. [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Appendix 2: Likelihood of independent voters to vote for Democratic or Republican candidates during the presidential elections of 2008²⁴³

The following tables demonstrate how likely independent are to either vote for the Democratic or the Republican candidate. Ultimately, it reveals that Independents are slightly more likely to vote Republican (30 to 35%, against 25 to 30% ending up voting for Democrats).

	Barack Obama	John McCain
Oct. 27-Nov 2, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	96%	3%
Moderate Democrats	89%	7%
Conservative Democrats	82%	12%
Pure independents	24%	32%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	19%	77%
Conservative Republicans	5%	92%
Oct. 20-26, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	94%	4%
Moderate Democrats	88%	8%
Conservative Democrats	79%	17%
Pure independents	34%	30%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	19%	75%
Conservative Republicans	4%	93%
Oct. 13-19, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	96%	2%
Moderate Democrats	89%	7%
Conservative Democrats	76%	15%
Pure independents	27%	34%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	15%	80%
Conservative Republicans	5%	92%

²⁴³ Gallup team (2008). Op Cit.

Oct. 6-12, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	95%	3%
Moderate Democrats	87%	10%
Conservative Democrats	78%	15%
Pure independents	33%	25%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	17%	77%
Conservative Republicans	5%	93%

Sep 29-Oct 5, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	96%	2%
Moderate Democrats	86%	8%
Conservative Democrats	75%	16%
Pure independents	23%	32%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	19%	76%
Conservative Republicans	4%	94%

Sep 22-28, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	95%	3%
Moderate Democrats	86%	9%
Conservative Democrats	74%	19%
Pure independents	22%	31%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	15%	80%
Conservative Republicans	4%	93%

Sep 15-21, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	95%	3%
Moderate Democrats	86%	9%
Conservative Democrats	74%	19%
Pure independents	22%	31%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	15%	80%
Conservative Republicans	4%	93%

Sep 8-14, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	94%	3%
Moderate Democrats	83%	10%
Conservative Democrats	76%	17%
Pure independents	24%	38%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	16%	79%
Conservative Republicans	4%	95%

Sep 1-7, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	93%	5%
Moderate Democrats	81%	12%
Conservative Democrats	66%	24%
Pure independents	27%	32%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	10%	85%
Conservative Republicans	3%	95%

Aug 25-31, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	93%	4%
Moderate Democrats	81%	12%
Conservative Democrats	70%	21%
Pure independents	29%	28%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	16%	78%
Conservative Republicans	3%	94%

Aug 18-24, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	93%	4%
Moderate Democrats	81%	11%
Conservative Democrats	77%	15%
Pure independents	23%	29%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	14%	78%
Conservative Republicans	4%	94%

Aug 11-17, 2008		
Liberal Democrats	91%	6%
Moderate Democrats	78%	13%
Conservative Democrats	63%	26%
Pure independents	29%	31%
Liberal/Moderate Republicans	13%	77%
Conservative Republicans	5%	91%

Appendix 3: Racial overview of the electorate²⁴⁴

This racial overview of the 2008 electorate demonstrates the clear divergence between the Republican and the Democratic party's electorate in terms of diversity. Indeed, it shows that Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians represent a bigger part of the Democratic electorate, than of the republican electorate.

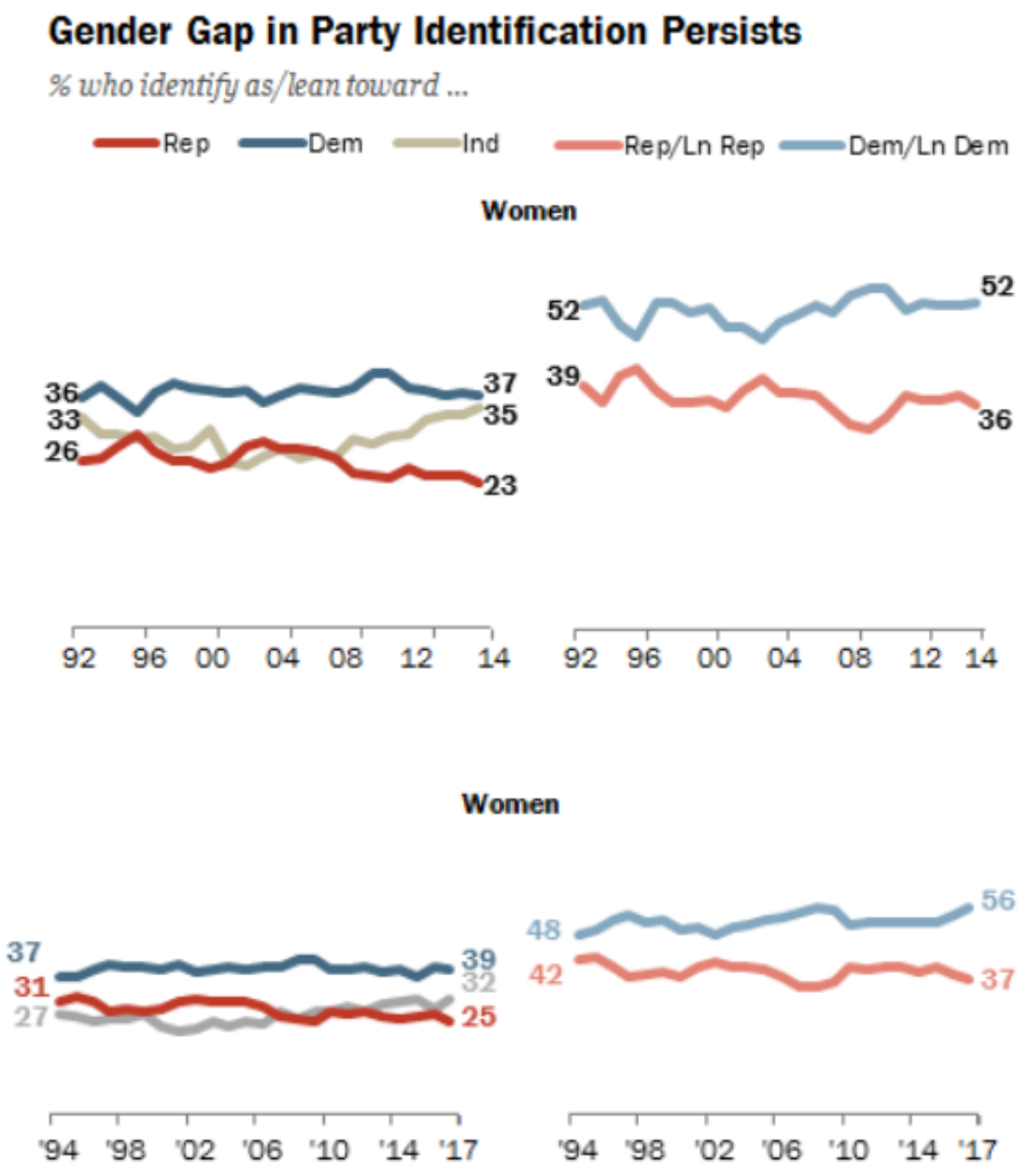
Racial and Ethnic Composition of U.S., by Party ID

	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Non-Hispanic white	89%	70%	60%
Non-Hispanic black	2%	8%	22%
Hispanic	6%	16%	13%
Asian	1%	3%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Undesignated	1%	2%	2%

²⁴⁴ Newport, F. (2008), Democrats Racially Diverse; Republicans Mostly White [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/160373/democrats-racially-diverse-republicans-mostly-white.aspx> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Appendix 4: Gender gap in party affiliation

This graph shows the difference between men and women’s tendencies to identify as Democrat or Republican. With “people leaning toward” Democrat taken into account, more than 50% of women appear to identify as Democrats.²⁴⁵



246

²⁴⁵ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on: <https://www.people-press.org/2015/04/07/a-deep-dive-into-party-affiliation/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

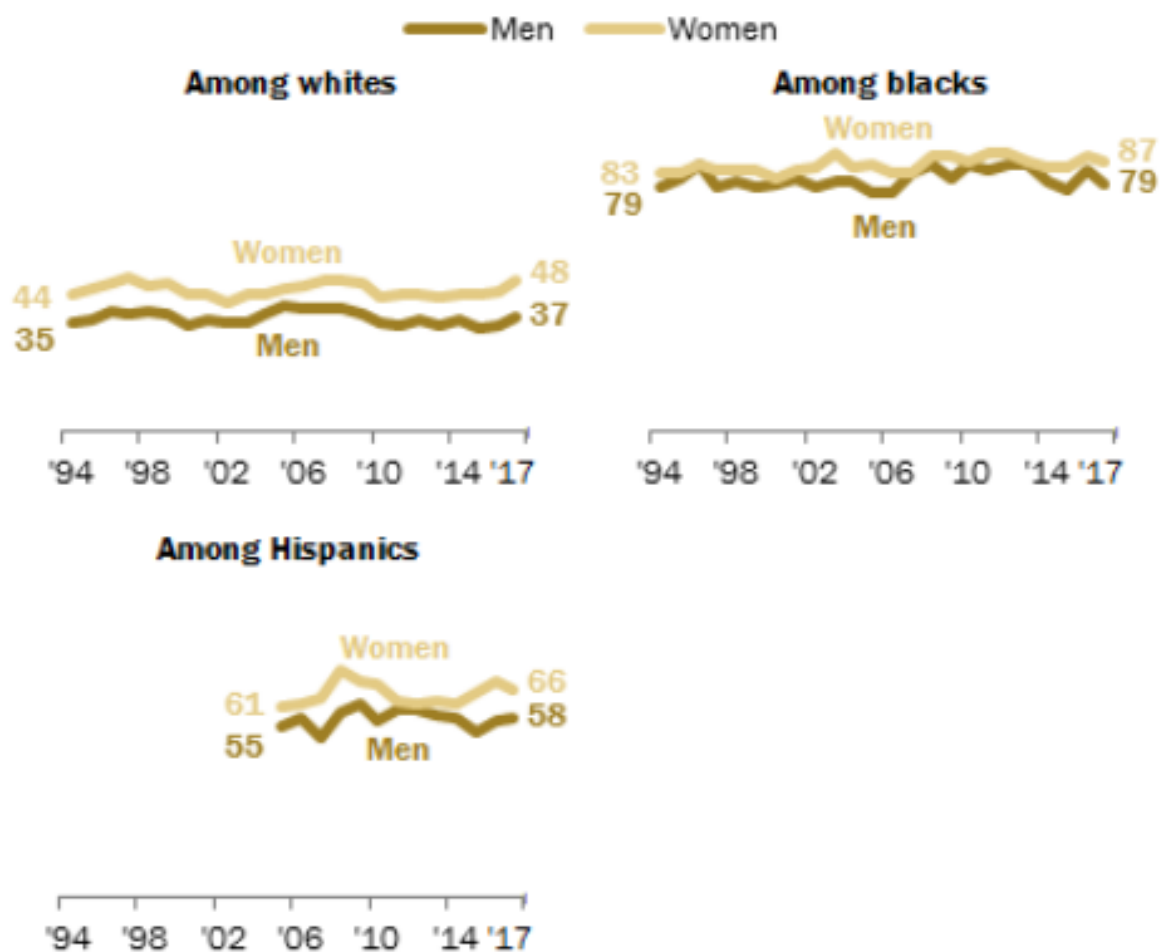
²⁴⁶ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters’ Party Identification [Online]. Pew Research Center. Available on: <https://www.people-press.org/2018/03/20/1-trends-in-party-affiliation-among-demographic-groups/> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

Appendix 5: Gender gaps across races²⁴⁷

This graph demonstrates how gender differences regarding political affiliation can be observed through ethnic groups.

Similar gender gaps across racial and ethnic groups

% of registered voters who identify as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party



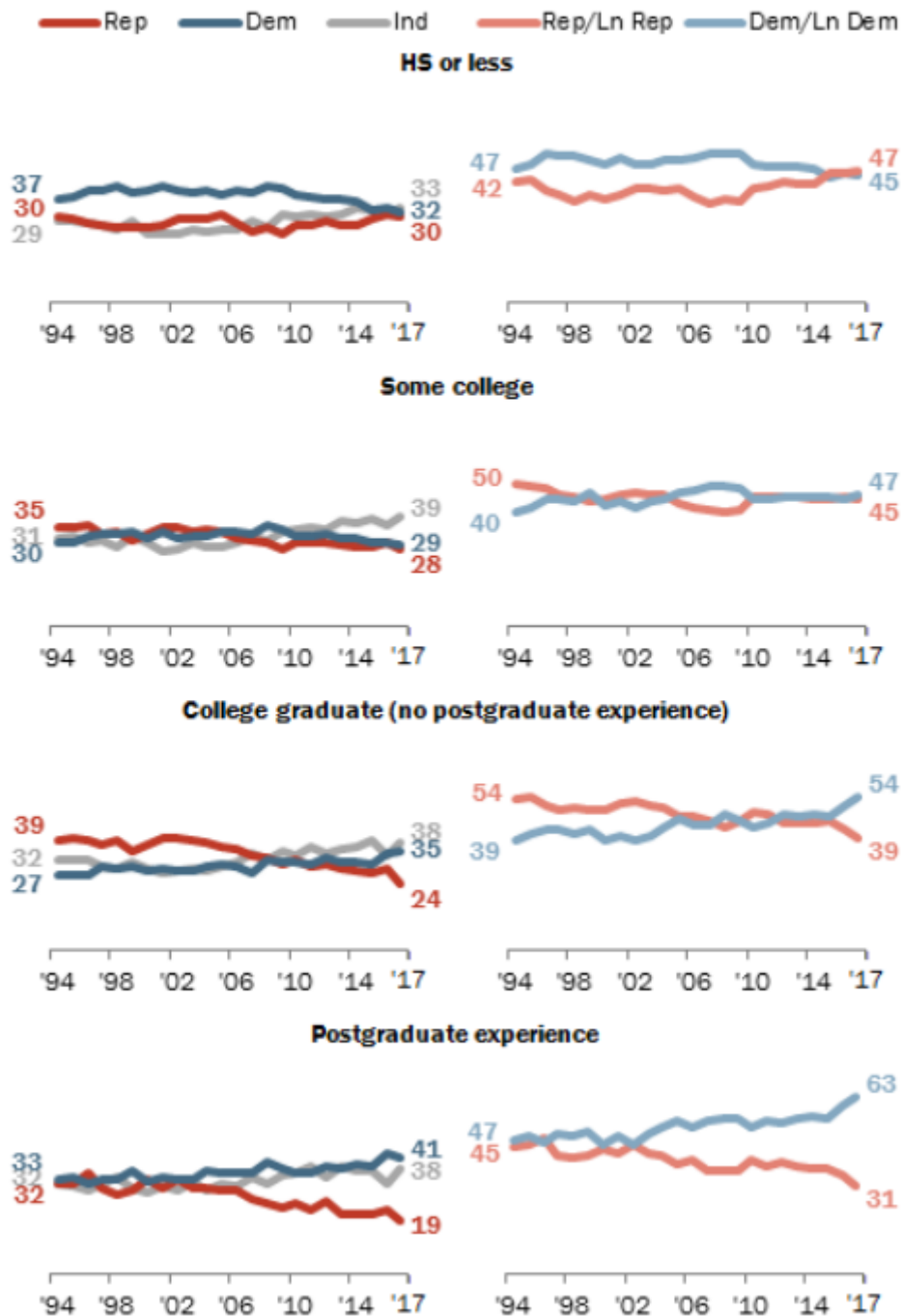
²⁴⁷ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Op Cit.

Appendix 6: Influence of education on political affiliation²⁴⁸

Graphs show no significant differences in people's political affiliation with regards to their education, except for people with a postgraduate experience, who clearly have a tendency to identify as Democrats.

College graduates continue to shift toward the Democratic Party

% of registered voters who identify as ...



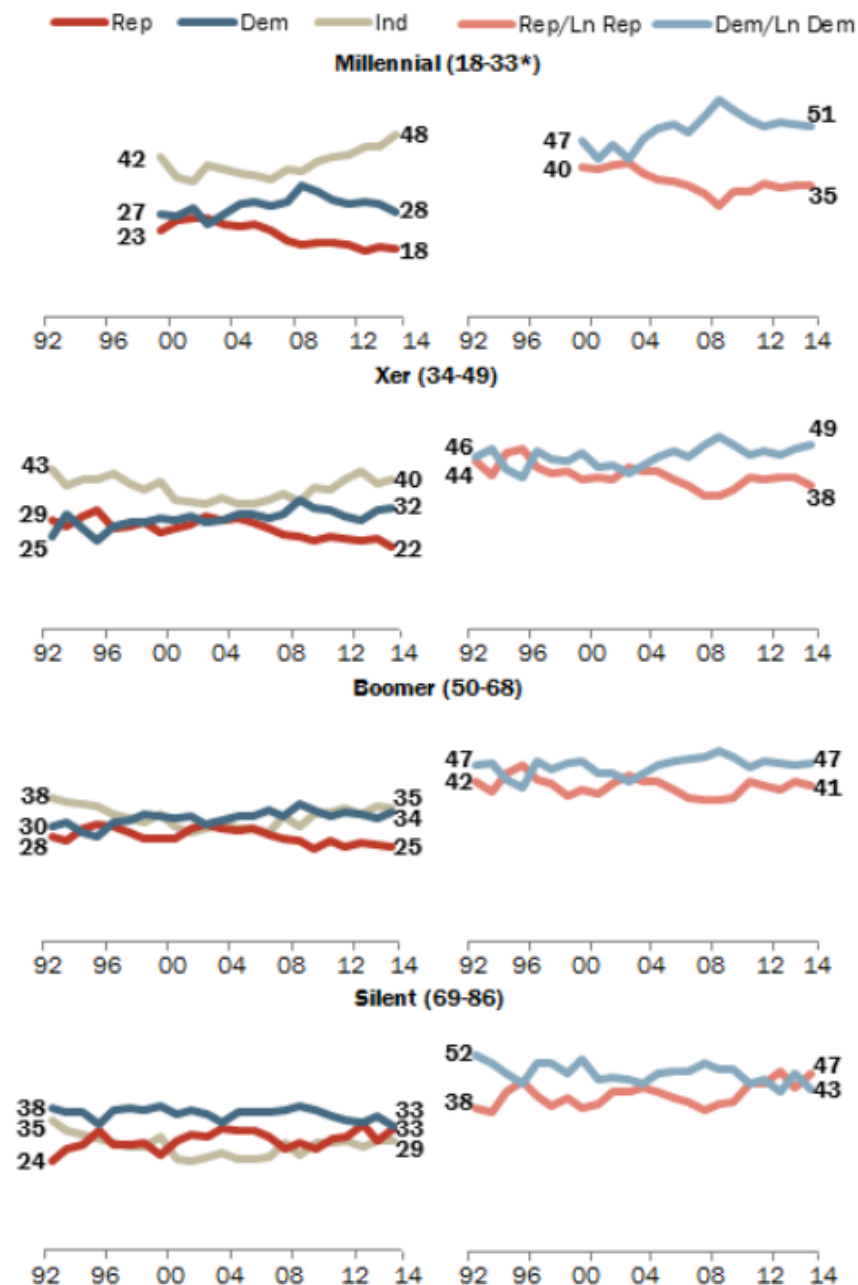
²⁴⁸ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Op Cit.

Appendix 7: Influence of the generation gap on political affiliation²⁴⁹

As we can see, the tendency to vote for either party is quite the same, except for millennials, whom majorly choose to vote for the Democratic Party.

Generation Gap in Partisan Affiliation

% who identify as/lean toward...

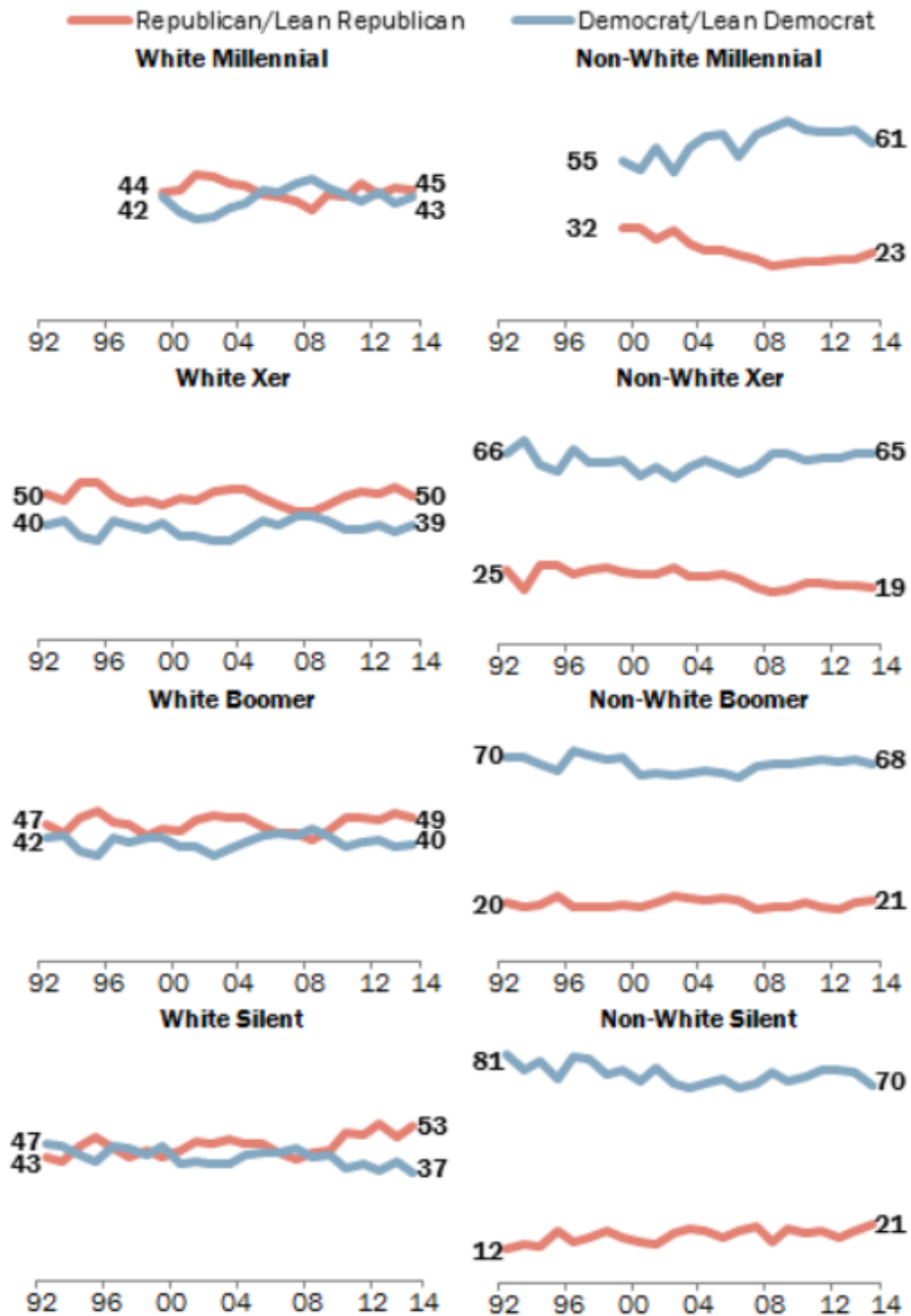


²⁴⁹ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online].

However, generational differences completely disappear when it comes to non-white voters.

White Millennials Are Divided in Partisan Leanings; Older Generations of Whites Lean Republican

% who identify as/lean toward ...



Appendix 8: Influence of religion on political affiliation

Religion also tends to have an influence on political affiliation. As a matter of fact, Christianity-based religion will tend to vote for the Republican party, as it is more conservative, while atheist people or people from other religions will generally adhere to the values of the democratic party.²⁵⁰

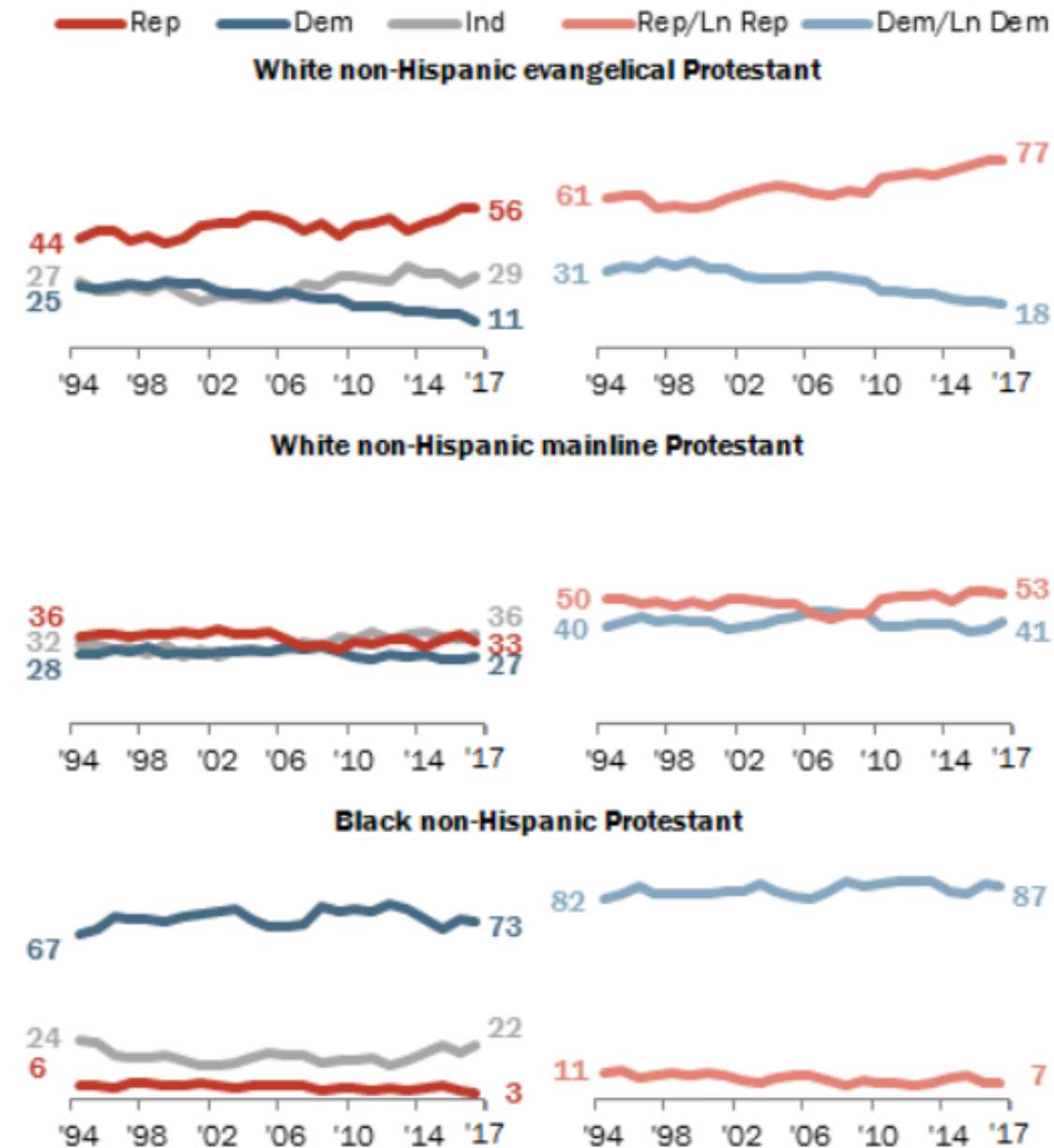
religion			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
protestant 27%	35%	63%	2%
catholic 23%	46%	53%	1%
mormon 1%	25%	74%	1%
other christian 24%	43%	56%	1%
jewish 3%	72%	26%	2%
muslim 1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
other religion 7%	62%	34%	4%
no religion 15%	71%	26%	3%
23447 respondents			

Nevertheless, the tendencies of certain religious groups to identify with a specific party tremendously vary according to the ethnicity of its members. For instance, Black Protestants and Hispanic Catholics are way more likely to vote for the Democratic party than their white counterparts.

²⁵⁰ CNN Team (2016). Exit polls [Online]. CNN. Available on: <https://edition.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls/national/house> [Retrieved on April 10th, 2020].

Steady increase in GOP advantage in leaned partisan identification among white evangelical voters

% of registered voters who identify as ...

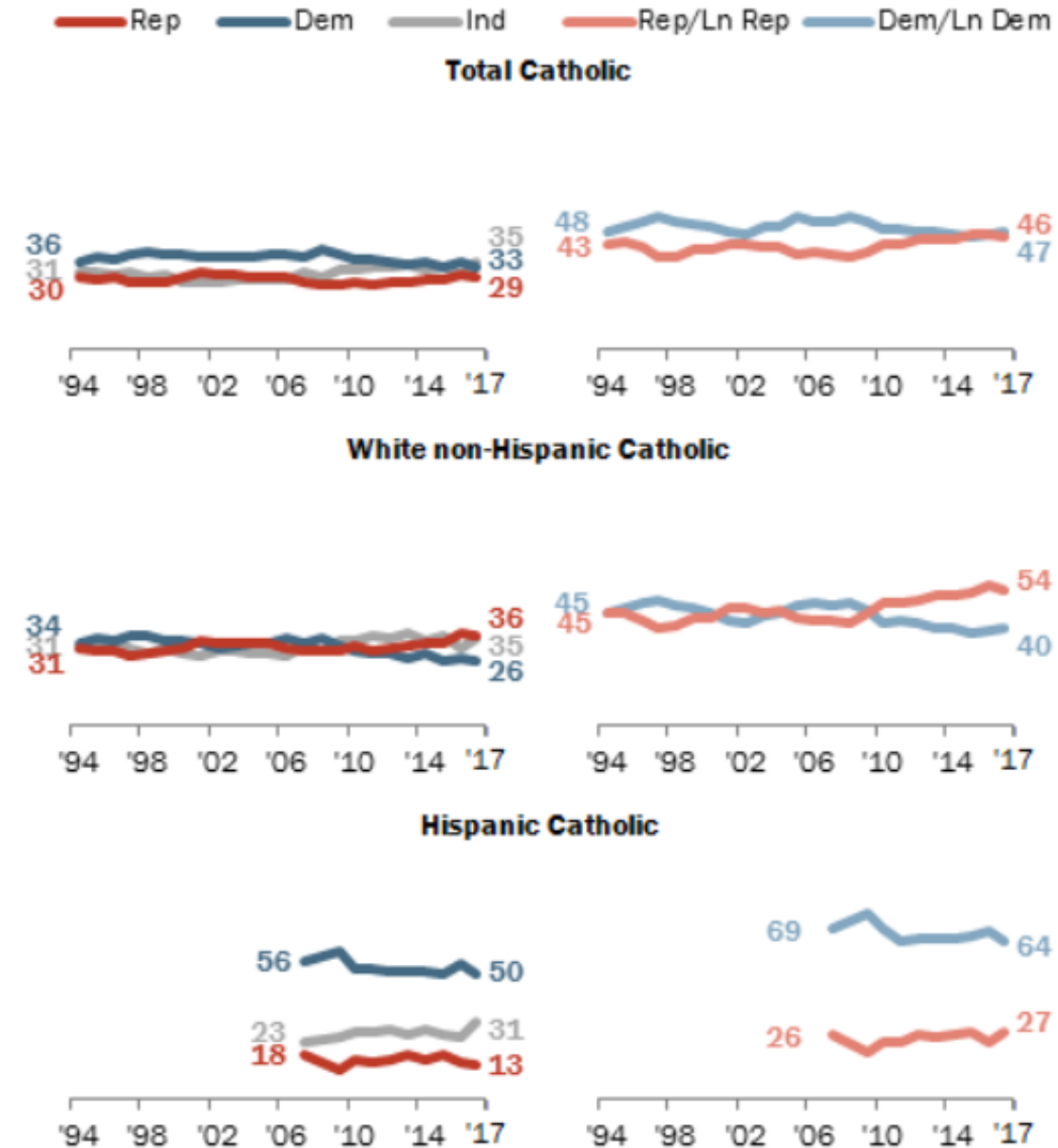


251

²⁵¹ Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Op Cit.

White Catholics have moved more toward the GOP over the past decade

% of registered voters who identify as ...



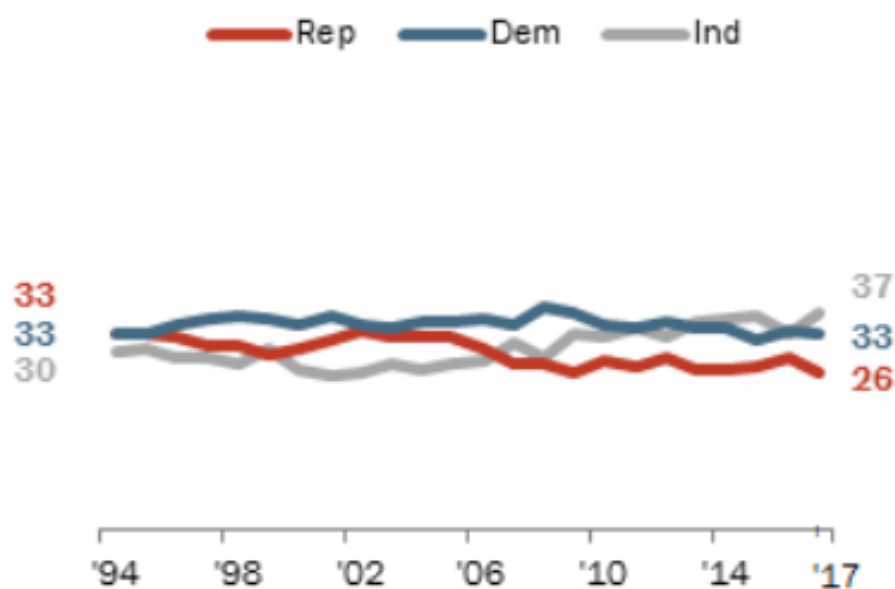
252

²⁵² Pew Research Center Team (2018). A Deep Dive into Party Affiliation [Online]. Op cit.

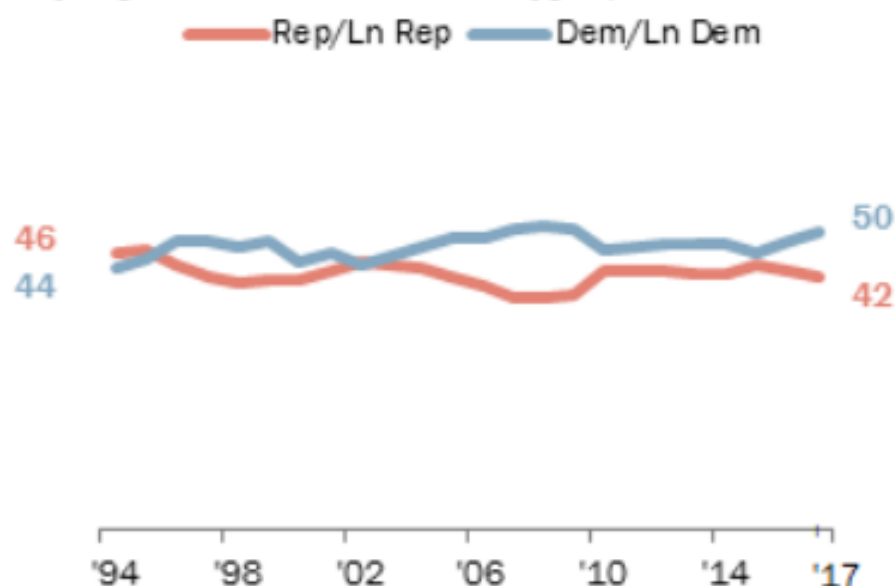
Appendix 9: Registered voters more inclined to identify as Democrat during Trump's 2016 campaign²⁵³

Democrats hold slightly wider edge in leaned party affiliation than 2015-16

% of registered voters who identify as ...



% of registered voters who identify as/lean toward ...



²⁵³ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Op Cit.

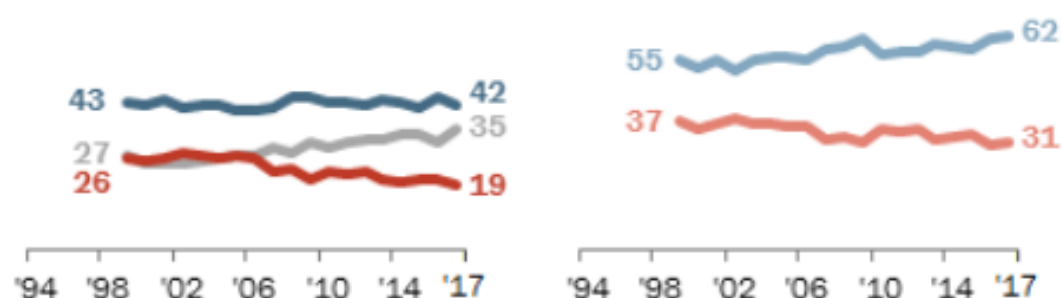
Appendix 10: Influence on the living area on the political affiliation²⁵⁴

Urban voters remain solidly Democratic, while rural voters tilt increasingly Republican

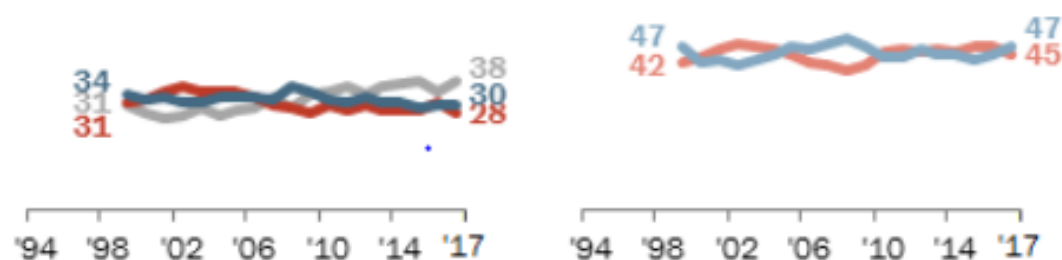
% of registered voters who identify as ...

Rep Dem Ind Rep/Ln Rep Dem/Ln Dem

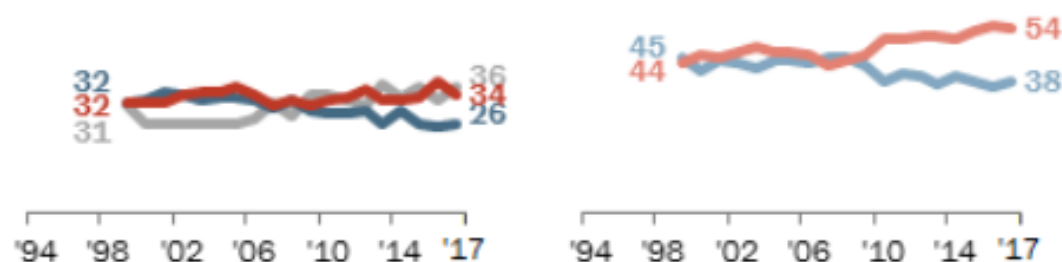
Urban counties



Suburban counties



Rural counties



²⁵⁴ Pew Research Center Team (2018). Wide Gender Gap, Growing Educational Divide in Voters' Party Identification [Online]. Op Cit.

Appendix 11: Influence of income on political affiliation²⁵⁵

CNN graphs reveal people with income under \$50K are more likely to vote for the Democratic party, while people with higher income generally affiliate with the Republican party.

income			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
under \$30,000 17%	56%	41%	3%
\$30k-\$49,999 19%	55%	44%	1%
\$50k-\$99,999 30%	47%	51%	2%
\$100k-\$199,999 24%	46%	51%	3%
\$200k-\$249,999 4%	47%	50%	3%
\$250,000 or more 6%	41%	57%	2%
23447 respondents			

income			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
under \$50k 36%	56%	42%	2%
\$50k or more 64%	46%	52%	2%
23447 respondents			

income			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
under \$100k 66%	51%	47%	2%
\$100k or more 34%	45%	52%	3%
23447 respondents			

income			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
under \$50k 36%	56%	42%	2%
\$50k-\$100k 30%	47%	51%	2%
\$100k or more 34%	45%	52%	3%
23447 respondents			

²⁵⁵ CNN Team (2016). Op Cit.

Appendix 12: Influence of citizenship and military service on political affiliation²⁵⁶

People born in the United States tend to vote for the Republican Party while people born outside the country and having immigrated tend to favor the Democratic Party.

were you born a u.s. citizen?			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
yes 91%	47%	51%	2%
no 9%	64%	34%	2%
23447 respondents			

Besides, people having served in the military also seem more likely to vote for the Republican party.

served in the u.s. military			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
veterans 13%	36%	63%	1%
non-veterans 87%	51%	47%	2%
23447 respondents			

²⁵⁶ CNN Team (2016). Op Cit.

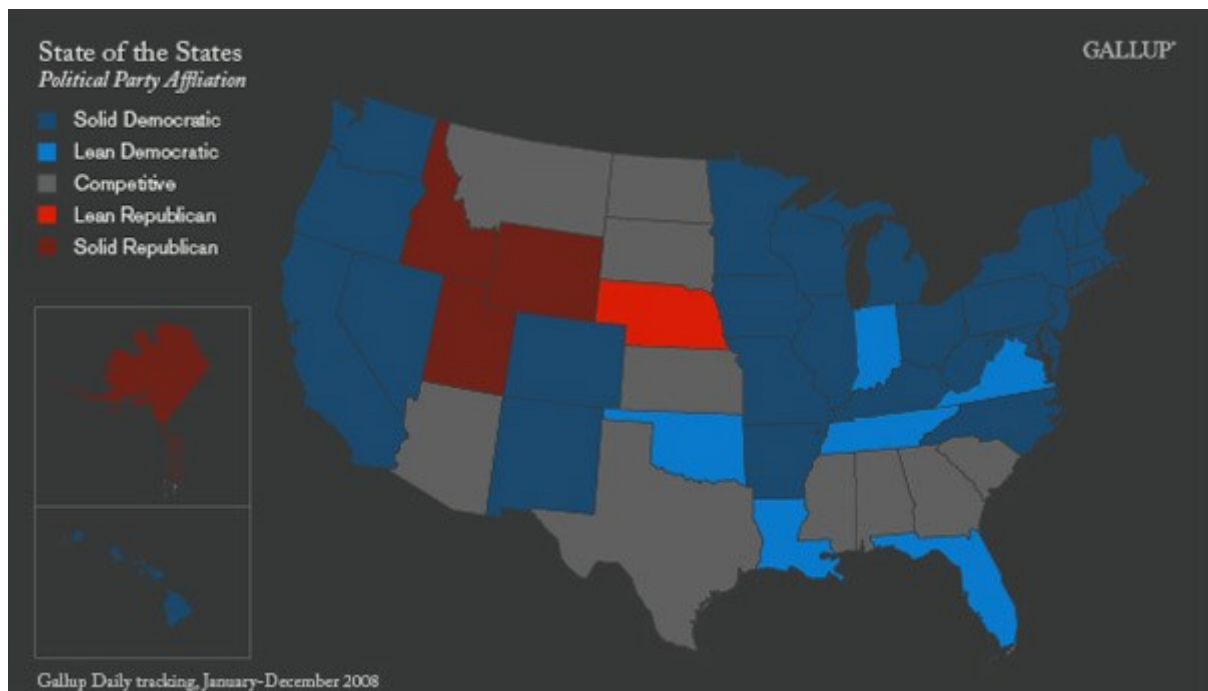
Appendix 13: Influence of sexual orientation and gender identity on political affiliation²⁵⁷

As shown on the following table, members of the LGBTQIA+ seem to be more likely to affiliate with the democratic party, although they represent a minority of registered voters.

are you gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender?			
	democrat	republican	other/no answer
yes 4%	78%	18%	4%
no 96%	47%	51%	2%
23447 respondents			

²⁵⁷ CNN Team (2016). Op Cit.

Appendix 14: States recognized as solid or lean Democratic during the 2008 elections²⁵⁸



²⁵⁸ Gallup team (2009). State of the States: Political Party Affiliation [Online]. Gallup. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/114016/State-States-Political-Party-Affiliation.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020]

Appendix 15: Shepard Fairey's print of Obama's 2008 campaign²⁵⁹



²⁵⁹ Good, C. (2017, October 20th). The Legacy of Hope [Online]. U.S. News. Available on: <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/debate-club/articles/2017-01-17/obamas-rhetoric-and-symbolism-will-give-him-a-positive-legacy> [Retrieved on April 5th, 2020].

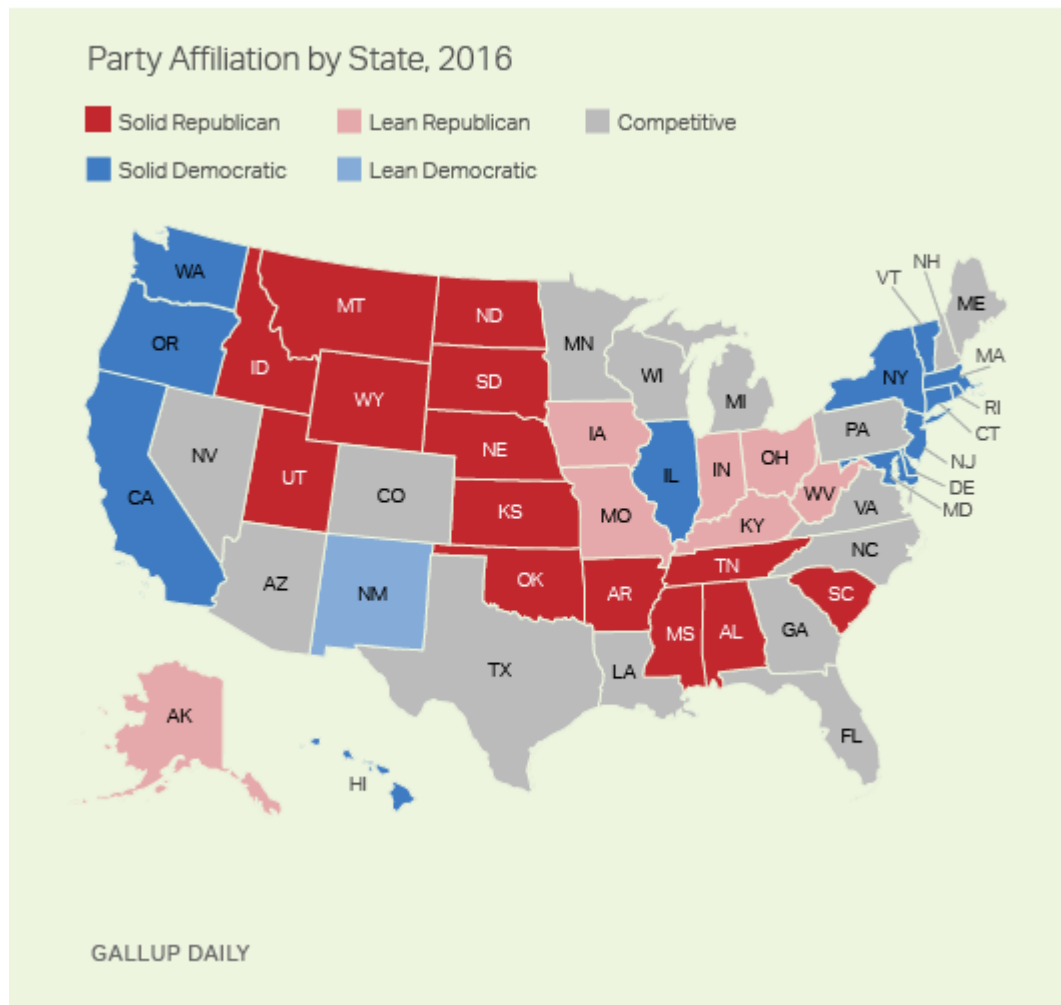
Appendix 16: Table of elements pertaining to verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal languages²⁶⁰

This table was used to compose all analyses of this thesis by establishing the basic components of all types of language.

Moyens de la communication orale						
Moyens linguistiques		Moyens paralinguistiques	Moyens extralinguistiques			
Voix	Prosodie		Kinésiques	Position	Aspect extérieur	Matériel
Emission sonore	Intonation	Mélodie de la voix	Attitudes corporelles	Occupation de l'espace	Vêtements	Aménagement des lieux
Articulation	Accentuation	Débit et pauses	Gestes	Espace personnel	Coiffure	Supports de diffusion du message
Prononciation	Rythme	Volume sonore	Regard	Distances	Propreté	
Qualité		Respiration	Mimiques faciales	Contacts	...	
		Rires, soupirs...				

²⁶⁰ François, T. (2019). LROM2660: Stratégie de communication orale dans l'entreprise. Université Catholique de Louvain.

Appendix 17: States recognized as solid or lean Republican during the 2008 elections²⁶¹



²⁶¹ Gallup Team (2017). GOP maintains edge state party affiliation [Affiliation]. Available on: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/203117/gop-maintains-edge-state-party-affiliation-2016.aspx>. [Retrieved on September 28th, 2020].

