Exploring Charismatic Leadership: A Comparative Analysis of the Rhetoric of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election

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This study examines the charismatic leadership rhetoric of the Democratic Party's nominee Hillary Clinton and the Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump during the 2016 election. DICTION 7.0, content analysis software designed for political discourse, was used to analyze the campaign speeches of both candidates. The findings suggest that Donald Trump was significantly more likely to use hyperbolic crisis rhetoric regarding the intolerable nature of the status quo as well as rhetoric emphasizing a shared social identity, the pursuit of a common goal, and tangible outcomes. His communitarian rhetoric enabled the creation of a hermeneutic praxis shifting identity salience from the individual to the collective, encouraging the formation of collective memory and national nostalgia. Hillary Clinton, while employing egalitarian rhetoric, was constrained in her ability to utilize agentic rhetorical constructs due to stereotypical gender expectations and her positionality as a member of the incumbent party. The findings affirm presidential rhetoric as being anchored in political times and question the role of charismatic rhetoric in influencing the appeal, and potential electability, of the candidates during the 2016 presidential election.

Keywords: charismatic rhetoric, charismatic leadership, content analysis, presidential rhetoric, 2016 presidential election

There is no doubt that the 2016 presidential election was one of the most divisive elections of our times. Frontrunner Hillary Clinton, one of the most well-known and accomplished politicians on the national stage, lost the election to billionaire and reality TV star Donald Trump, defying every rule of electoral politics and the predictions of the media and pundits alike. Instead of a serious debate on the issues, the election coverage fixated on the character and remarks of Donald Trump, whose popularity among his ardent followers was undeniable, evident by his huge rallies across the country and often

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rivaling that of his competitor. Since Donald Trump took office, news sources around the world have scrambled to make sense of the circumstances behind his unexpected victory.

In democracies, the ability of voters to evaluate an individual running for office is critical. Considering that most voters do not have the opportunity to meet candidates in person, voters tend to base their assessments of candidates on public speeches, debates, and interactions with the media (Shamir 1995; Erikson and Wlezien 2012). With the above in mind, the purpose of this article is to examine one of the potential factors behind the results of the election, namely the charismatic elements of rhetoric among the major party presidential candidates of the 2016 election, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Though undeniably there are a multitude of factors behind the outcome of the 2016 election, a substantial amount of media coverage focused on the topic of Donald Trump's "legendary" charisma (e.g., Berger 2017; Guilford 2016; Khazan 2016; Minton 2016; Sullivan 2017). In contrast, the media commented that Hillary Clinton lacked the kind of charisma required to unite a nation (Keneally 2016) and questioned whether her "one-percent charm" could win over voters (Anderson 2015). The *Washington Post* also ran a story with the harsh title, "Looking for the Surgeon for Hillary's Charisma Transplant" (Pruden 2016). Hillary Clinton herself appeared at one stage to admit as much, telling "The Breakfast Club" of iHeart radio that she lacked the charisma of former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton, claiming that "they are so natural ... they can just go into a room and really capture it –They've got charisma. It was a lot harder for me" (Earle and Chambers 2016). On the other hand, some claim that Hillary Clinton was the more charismatic of the two candidates (Anderson 2016).

Scholars have identified the crucial importance of charisma in political leadership from as early as the mid-1900s (Davies 1954; Friedrich 1961), with various researchers examining the use of charismatic rhetoric within the context of past presidential elections (e.g., Bligh et al. 2010; Merolla, Ramos, and Zechmeister 2007; Schroedel et al. 2013; Willis et al. 2013). Other noteworthy studies have addressed charismatic leadership in the context of a non-Western leader (Bligh and Robinson 2010) or in the context of a sitting president's rhetoric before and after a crisis (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004).

There has not yet been research explicitly addressing the charismatic leadership rhetoric of the two major party candidates in the 2016 election. Instead, recent studies have been attentive to the presence of outsider appeals (e.g., Stewart 2018), racialized rhetoric (e.g., Penman and Cloud 2018), sexist rhetoric (e.g., Darweesh and Mehdi 2016), demagogic or divisive rhetoric (e.g., Johnson 2017; Kelley 2018), and a general analysis of the political rhetoric of the candidates (e.g., Lockhart and Mollick 2015; Savoy 2017; Sclafani 2018). Considering evidence linking attributions of charisma to voting behavior along party lines (Pillai and Williams 1998; Pillai et al. 2003), this is certainly a fruitful area of inquiry. As such, this study employs a communication-oriented approach to systematically analyze and compare the use of charismatic rhetoric among the major party candidates during the 2016 election. The study also examines the rhetorical strategies used by the presidential candidates to persuade followers to support them and convey their vision for the country. Thus, the study asks the following research questions:

1. Which presidential candidate displayed greater charismatic rhetoric during the 2016 presidential election, Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump?
2. What charismatic rhetorical strategies did they employ? What are the commonalities and the differences in their use of charismatic rhetoric?

The study offers a number of central contributions. First, it assists in the establishment of the historical record of these two candidates in the context of the election. Second, it develops our understanding of how charismatic rhetorical leadership has been articulated by the candidates, the patterns of charismatic language use, and how these factors may have impacted the appeal (and therefore the electability) of the candidates to followers. Finally, though the issue of causality cannot be directly addressed, this study provides compelling insights valuable to future elections and adds to the larger body of charismatic leadership research.

Literature Review

Rhetoric, Leadership Ability, and Distance

Communication skills are one of the six main criteria used by voters to judge a nominee's effectiveness (Greenstein 2004). Greenstein claimed that without communication, all other criteria, such as organizational capacity, political ability, cognitive style, vision, and emotional intelligence, are of little value. Accordingly, during an election cycle, how candidates speak and the content of their speech are valuable deciders in the evaluation of a candidate's leadership ability. It has an established impact on the intent to vote as well as actual voting (Pillai and Williams 1998).

Rhetoric is especially important because of the concept of distance present during modern-day elections: most followers do not have the opportunity to interact with candidates and directly observe them carrying out their daily work (Antonakis and Atwater 2002). In fact, without distance, rhetoric would play a much smaller role in how the public evaluates candidates (Shamir 1995). Interestingly, the more distant leaders are from their followers (i.e., physically distant and having only highly infrequent one-way interactions with followers), the more likely that followers will depend on perceived or ascribed attributes when evaluating them (Trope and Liberman 2010). These ascribed attributes are typically extracted from a candidate's rhetoric in a variety of fora, such as public speeches, debates, and social media offerings (Shamir 1995). In particular, one of the considerations voters look for in a candidate's rhetoric is evidence of charisma or charismatic leadership (Merolla and Zechmeister 2009).[1]

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1. Though many presidential candidates rely on speechwriters in the preparation of their speeches, the final content of their speeches is often directed and annotated by the candidates and tends to reflect their personal style and beliefs (Mio et al. 2016).

Defining Charisma and Charismatic Leadership

In his seminal work, Max Weber (1947) defined charismatic leadership as the ambiguous quality in an individual by which s/he "is set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (333). He also referred to it as "an extraordinary quality of a person" (295). Others have defined it as the characteristic of having "profound and extraordinary effects on followers" (House and Baetz 1979, 399). Recent research has suggested that charisma should be measured from a signaling theory point of view, which views charisma as a value-based, symbolic, and emotionally laden characteristic, not necessarily connected to outcomes, or the ability to influence others (Knippenberg and Sitkin 2013; Antonakis et al. 2016).

Charismatic leaders are influential in several respects. They have an ability to emotionally connect with the electorate and motivate them to internalize their own vision (House 1977). They can inspire followers to forsake their own interests and, in extreme cases, put aside rationality to support the cause being buoyed by the candidate (Fiol, Harris, and House 1999). There is also strong evidence that charismatic presidential candidates are more likely to be perceived by followers as having successful leadership ability (Jacquart and Antonakis 2015). Importantly, charisma has been linked to numerous organizational outcomes, such as performance, satisfaction with leader performance, and effectiveness (Awamleh and Gardner 1999).

It is worth noting that some literature suggests that charismatic leadership is strongly influenced by followers' perceptions and is viewed through the lens of the "charismatically mastered" (Weber 1947). For example, when evaluating the charismatic leadership of John Kerry and George W. Bush, Democratic supporters of John Kerry were significantly more likely to view him as charismatic as compared to Republicans, who instead viewed George W. Bush as the more charismatic candidate (Williams et al. 2009). Charismatic leadership is therefore considered to be a highly subjective construct (Jacquart and Antonakis 2010) in that it oftentimes depends on the relationship between a leader and his followers (Davies 1954).

Scholars disagree on the degree to which charismatic leadership is the inalienable property of a person or whether it is primarily due to factors outside of the individual (Beyer 1999). Trice and Beyer (1986) posit that there are five elements necessary for a leader to achieve charismatic leadership. These include: (1) outstanding personality traits, (2) a social crisis or time of stress, (3) a vision that promises a revolutionary solution to the crisis, (4) followers who believe in the charismatic leader, and (5) recurrent success and therefore validation of the charismatic leader in dealing with the crisis. However, there has been some debate surrounding the inclusion of the element of crisis as a prerequisite for a leader to achieve charismatic leadership.[2] While Trice and Beyer (1986) insisted on adhering to this principle, others have suggested that the presence of crisis would be an enabling (and at times amplifying) factor for the presence of charismatic leadership, though not strictly necessary (Halverson, Murphy, and Riggio 2004; Hunt, Boal, and Dodge 1999).

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2. In this context, crisis is defined as "a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a system" (Rosenthal, Charles, and t' Hart 2016, 10).

Measuring Charismatic Leadership: Communal and Agentic Constructs

A leader's rhetoric and charismatic leadership are intimately connected. Despite the somewhat ambiguous or elusive nature of charisma as a construct (Spinrad 1991; Weber 1947), the literature proposes a variety of specific methods to measure or operationalize charismatic leadership through the study of rhetoric (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004). For instance, Shamir, Arthur, and House (1994) presented several constructs for measuring charismatic leadership, including references to shared history, collective identity, followers' worth, similarities to followers, distant goals, moral values, and faith. Others suggest an examination of components such as metaphors, similes, stories, and rhetorical questions (Frese, Beimel, and Schoenborn 2003).

Seven rhetorical charismatic constructs established to be empirically and theoretically linked to charismatic leadership (i.e., established to be likely to produce charismatic effects among followers) were selected as the basis for this study (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004; Shamir, Arthur, and House 1994). These were selected based on two well-known studies of charismatic leadership in political rhetoric studies, namely Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl (2004) and Shamir, Arthur, and House (1994), which examined the extent to which a charismatic leader's rhetoric reveals characteristics of charismatic leadership specifically due to motivational effects on followers. These motivational effects appeal to followers' concepts of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-expression. The constructs selected are also in line with recent reconceptualizations of charisma as a non-outcome-based concept (Antonakis et al. 2016). Therefore, the charismatic constructs included in this study are the following: (1) collective focus, (2) follower's worth, (3) similarity to followers, (4) cooperation, (5) action oriented, (6) adversity, and (7) tangibility. Adding to the growing research into charisma in the context of political campaigns, this study compares the use of these rhetorical charismatic constructs by the candidates throughout the 2016 election process. Previous researchers have categorized communal constructs as "feminine" and agentic ones as "masculine" (Bligh et al. 2010), in accordance with prescriptive gender stereotypes and expectations outlined and operationalized in previous research (see Prentice and Carranza 2002). The formulas used to calculate each charismatic construct (using the predetermined dictionaries available in DICTION), along with sample words for each construct can be seen in Table 1.

Defining the Charismatic Rhetorical Constructs

Communal Charismatic Constructs. Communal constructs pertain to relationship building and tend to underline the shared bonds between a candidate and his/her followers. They are considered one of the foundations of charismatic leadership (Waldman and Yammarino 1999). The four communal rhetorical constructs used in this study are:

1. *Collective focus*: This type of language builds trust around a shared social identity (e.g., social groupings, geographical entities), self-sacrifice, or pursuit of a common goal over individual self-interest. To examine this proposition, I used an additive formula of collective and public references minus any self-referential language.
2. *Follower's worth*: This type of language illustrates confidence in a candidate's followers and uses affirmative language, building self-worth through flattery and ingratiation (Shamir, Arthur,

TABLE 1
Overview of Charismatic Constructs (Operational Definitions, Formulas, and Sample Words)

Construct	Formula	Sample words
Collective focus	Collectives + peoples reference – self-reference	We, us, our, team, humanity.
Follower's worth	Praise + satisfaction + inspiration	Terms of praise that point to positive emotional states, such as faithful, loyal, and good.
Similarity to followers	Leveling + familiarity + human interest	Anybody, everybody, children, family, friends, parents, yours.
Cooperation	Cooperation	Alignment, network, teamwork, sharing and consolidate.
Action-oriented	Aggressive + accomplishment – passivity – ambivalence	Action, change, speed, and momentum.
Adversity	Blame + hardship + denial	Disaster, carnage, and injustice.
Tangibility	Concreteness + insistence – variety	Concrete words such as buildings, homes, etc. and the repetition of key terms.

Source: Bligh et al. (2010); Bligh and Robinson (2010); Davis and Gardner (2012); Schroedel et al. (2013).

and House 1994). To examine this proposition, I developed a formula that uses the praise, satisfaction, and inspiration dictionaries.

3. *Similarity to followers*: This type of language is different from the emphasis on collective identity or follower's worth described above. It more explicitly identifies the candidate as part of the same in-group as followers, downplays differences, and highlights congruence with followers along aspects such as values, family background, and financial background. At the same time, the leader belabors his/her fitness to be the head of the in-group (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004). To calculate this construct, I used the dictionaries of leveling, familiarity, and human interest.

4. *Cooperation*: This type of language indicates commitment to a shared vision or interactions among people that result in group outcomes.

Agentic Charismatic Constructs. Agentic constructs underscore the need to suffer hardship to achieve an ambitious vision for the country. They tend to indicate characteristics such as power, competence, and resoluteness. The two agentic rhetorical constructs included in the study are:

1. *Action oriented*: This type of language communicates certainty about attaining a vision for the country (Conger 1991). It commonly takes the form of a call to action. To calculate this charismatic construct, I added the dictionaries of aggression and accomplishment and subtracted the passivity and ambivalence dictionaries.

2. *Adversity*: This type of language emphasizes the desire to overcome intolerable current conditions and revolves around themes such as repression, inevitable need for change, and the urgency to change the status quo (Conger 1991). To test this construct, our formula added the dictionaries of blame, hardship, and denial.

Neutral Charismatic Construct (Tangibility). Tangibility describes references to intangible future goals as opposed to concrete, tangible outcomes. A number of scholars have suggested that a charismatic leader will use less tangible rhetoric in an attempt to broaden the appeal of his/her vision, instead of language grounded in specific, measurable outcomes (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004; Conger 1991; Shamir, Arthur, and House 1994; Willner 1984). To test this construct, we created an index consisting of the dictionaries of concreteness and insistence minus the variety score.

Method

To ensure the analysis was as impartial as possible, I used computer-aided content analysis to examine the charismatic rhetoric of the two candidates in question. Specifically, I used DICTION 7.0, a lexical program expressly developed for analysis of political discourse through the study of language selections, clusters of thinking, and intertextuality in language (Hart 2001). The software concentrates on word choices and the frequency of predefined families of words from 33 predefined dictionaries that include over 10,000 search words. As dictionaries contain single words only, statistical weighting procedures are used to compensate for context (Hart 2000). The software then portions the texts into 500-word passages for analysis to make them easier to compare with other texts, regardless of size.

There are several benefits to using computerized content analysis. First, it allows for a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods (Insch, Moore, and Murphy 1997). Second, because of the standardization of the computer software, it is considered highly reliable and efficient. Third, the software is sensitive to subtleties in a text that even an unbiased and talented coder might not notice (Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl 2004).

Nevertheless, one of the limitations of this methodology is that the theory of charismatic rhetoric correlates word frequency with salience as well as its lack of sophistication in accounting for the context of the text being studied (Pennebaker and Lay 2002). Moreover, other factors not accounted for in the study may influence perceptions of charisma among the public, such as past behavior, perceived personality characteristics, or media coverage (Chiang and Knight 2011).

Sample

The primary data set comprises the campaign speeches delivered by the candidates during the 2016 primary and general election periods (Peters and Woolley 2016a). The sample thus includes all campaign speeches from the announcement of candidacy for the presidency of each candidate (April 12, 2015 for Hillary Clinton; June 16, 2015 for Donald Trump) to the date of Hillary Clinton's concession speech and Donald Trump's victory speech on November 9, 2016. The transcripts were collected from the American Presidency Project website, a nonpartisan website deemed one of the leading sources of presidential documents online. In total, 155 speeches were analyzed, 66 for Donald Trump and 89 for Hillary Clinton.

TABLE 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Error Mean for Each Candidate's Charismatic Rhetoric

		Mean	SD	Standard Error Mean
Collective Focus	Donald Trump	1.12	1.38	0.17
	Hillary Clinton	-0.83	1.29	0.14
Follower's Worth	Donald Trump	-0.08	2.25	0.28
	Hillary Clinton	0.06	1.86	0.20
Similarity to Followers	Donald Trump	-0.57	2.10	0.26
	Hillary Clinton	0.43	2.23	0.24
Cooperation	Donald Trump	0.05	1.00	0.12
	Hillary Clinton	-0.04	1.00	0.11
Action-oriented	Donald Trump	1.68	1.76	0.22
	Hillary Clinton	-1.25	1.45	0.15
Adversity	Donald Trump	0.45	2.15	0.26
	Hillary Clinton	-0.33	1.69	0.18
Tangibility	Donald Trump	1.15	1.80	0.22
	Hillary Clinton	-0.85	1.34	0.14

Note: $N = 66$ (Trump), $N = 89$ (Clinton). Means were normalized to their z scores for comparative purposes.

Results

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviations, and standard error means for each candidate across the charismatic constructs selected. Means were normalized to their z scores for comparative purposes. As can be seen, there were notable differences between the candidates. It is important to note that Hillary Clinton had negative means for the majority of the charismatic constructs, namely the collective focus, cooperation, action-oriented, adversity, and tangibility constructs. In contrast, Donald Trump had positive values for the same constructs and overall exhibited more charismatic leadership across the constructs measured.

Of the noteworthy findings is the highly significant difference between the two candidates on the collective focus construct ($p < .001$; see Table 3).[3] This implies that Donald Trump was significantly more likely to use language emphasizing a shared social identity with his followers and the need to pursue a common goal than Hillary Clinton. Alternately, Hillary Clinton was more likely to use self-referential terms ("I," "myself," "me") over collective terms ("we," "us") when compared to her opponent. Along similar lines, the mean values for the cooperation construct (see Table 2) indicate that Donald Trump had a higher frequency of language that reiterated cooperation (teamwork, sharing) and less touting individual accomplishments than Hillary Clinton. However, as can be seen from Table 3, this difference was not statistically significant.

3. All significance tests are conservatively based on two-tailed tests. I considered significance as having at least .05 level of confidence.

TABLE 3
Mean Comparisons, *t* Test, and *p* Values for Each Candidate's Charismatic Rhetoric

		Mean	Mean difference	*t* Test	*p* Value
Collective Focus	Donald Trump	1.12	1.96	9.05	**0.00**
	Hillary Clinton	-0.83			
Follower's Worth	Donald Trump	-0.08	-0.15	-0.44	0.66
	Hillary Clinton	0.06			
Similarity to Followers	Donald Trump	-0.57	-0.99	-2.82	**0.01**
	Hillary Clinton	0.43			
Cooperation	Donald Trump	0.05	0.09	0.56	0.58
	Hillary Clinton	-0.04			
Action-oriented	Donald Trump	1.68	2.93	11.32	**0.03**
	Hillary Clinton	-1.25			
Adversity	Donald Trump	0.45	0.78	2.52	0.11
	Hillary Clinton	-0.33			
Tangibility	Donald Trump	1.15	2.00	7.93	0.05
	Hillary Clinton	-0.85			

Note: $N = 66$ (Trump), $N = 89$ (Clinton). Equal variances assumed.

Interestingly, Donald Trump had negative means for the two charismatic constructs that related to terminology referencing one's followers, namely follower's worth and similarity to followers. In contrast, Hillary Clinton had positive measures for the same constructs (the only constructs for which she measured positive). This means that Donald Trump had less terminology flattering or praising his followers and less language identifying commonalities with them than Hillary Clinton. In fact, Donald Trump was significantly less likely to use constructs relating to similarity to followers than Hillary Clinton ($p < .01$; see Table 3).

In terms of the agentic constructs of action oriented and adversity, Donald Trump outperformed Hillary Clinton. The values for the action-oriented construct (see Table 2) indicate that Hillary Clinton used less call-to-action terms and more language affirming contentment with the past or present. This difference was found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$; see Table 3). Likewise, the values of the adversity construct (see Table 2) suggest that Hillary Clinton used less terminology underlining the problematic nature of the status quo and had a more optimistic tone toward the existing state of affairs in the country. Finally, Hillary Clinton had more references to intangible future goals (in line with more abstract visionary rhetoric) and fewer to tangible temporary outcomes when compared to Donald Trump. Nonetheless, these differences were not statistically significant (see Table 3).

Discussion

Overall, the results confirm that Donald Trump exhibited a greater degree of charismatic leadership over the 2016 election as compared to Hillary Clinton. A study of the corpus of campaign speeches given by both candidates confirms the detectably more charismatic features of Donald Trump's speeches when compared to Hillary Clinton's. Perhaps most intriguing is Donald Trump's higher usage of the charismatic construct of collective focus (i.e., in reference to social groupings, geographical entities, etc.) in contrast to Hillary Clinton, who had significantly higher levels of self-referential language (e.g., "I," "myself"). Donald Trump also measured higher for his use of the charismatic construct of cooperation (e.g., "everyone," "together"), implying he knew how to level the playing field and set aside individual differences to enhance trust, legitimacy, and partiality (Seyranian and Bligh 2008). Clinton's increased preference for personal pronouns is in line with stereotypical gender expectations, as well as the tendency, of woman politicians to disclose private information as a means of endearing themselves to their audience (Benze and DeClercq 1985; Campbell 1989).

On the other hand, an examination of Trump's communal charismatic rhetoric indicates a pattern in the usage of pronouns to establish an in-group and an out-group, deliberately directing the audience's allegiances. He primarily relies on collective terminology (e.g., "we," "us," "together," "our") to foster a sense of unity and common ground with his followers. At the syntactical level, most of his speeches during the time period examined repeatedly engaged in the collective "we," often at least three times in immediate succession. For instance, speeches would conclude with variations of "we will make America prosperous again, we will make America safe again, and we will make America great again." Though the actual referents of terms such as "we" may be ambiguous, the rhetorical strategies employed cultivated a sense of "we" that included Donald Trump (in his position as president) and/or a future Trump administration, together with the followers being addressed. For instance, Trump would continually reference the milestones a "Trump administration" would achieve (e.g., "A Trump Administration will bring prosperity to all of *our* people"; Peters and Woolley 2016g). At other times, Trump engaged in illeism, referring to himself in the third person, for example, stating that "nobody would be tougher on ISIS than Donald Trump. Nobody" or that "the chances of peace really rise and rise exponentially. That's what will happen when Donald Trump is president of the United States." Such stylistic techniques are commonly used to manage audience perceptions of an in-group and out-group, with the added impact of projecting objective impartiality while engaging in self-promotion (Raskin and Shaw 1988).

Donald Trump's communal charismatic rhetoric often inculcated within it strategies of an "us" versus "them" narrative to induce other parties (such as illegal immigrants, refugees, terrorists, pundits, the corporate media, the establishment, etc.) as a polarized out-group. This othering is achieved in textbook form, using words such as "we," "us," and "here" in close contrast to terms such as "them." For example, in a speech given at the Erie Insurance Arena in Erie, Pennsylvania, Donald Trump stated that "*we* want to help people. Can't take a chance. San Bernardino, *they* walk in. *They* start shooting. Paris,

the best, the toughest gun laws in the world, Paris, France. *They* walk in. *They* kill 130 people. *They* wound so gravely hundreds of people."

As Smith-Rosenberg (1992) explained, "[I]nternally fragmented subjectivities assume a coherence...by being juxtaposed to multiple others—especially negative (feared or hated) others" (846). The communal "we" allows a sense of self to be gained by establishing that "we" are not like "them." The social influence literature argues not only that voters are more likely to trust in-group members and similar others (Fiske 1998) but that strategic use of discourse in such a manner is effective in raising identity salience among followers (Smith-Rosenberg 1992). Arguably, it encourages the creation of a hermeneutic praxis for the formation of collective memory and national nostalgia. In its most extreme form, communitarianism may advocate the rights of the collective as being independent of, and even divergent from, the rights of the individual (Audi 1995). In addition, the rhetoric of communitarian logic can be deliberate in constructing a situation where aggressive interdiction, such as proactive and punitive policies, is needed against trespassing individuals to protect the group (Cladis 1992).

Hillary Clinton measured notably higher for the constructs of follower's worth and similarity to followers, while Donald Trump used less terminology specifically flattering or praising his followers and less language identifying commonalities with them. As explicated above, female candidates usually perform more strongly across these communal constructs. Hillary Clinton frequently contrasted her working-class background to Donald Trump's elite upbringing, telling voters that "the family I'm from, well, no one had their name on big buildings. My family were builders of a different kind, builders in the way most American families are...My grandfather worked in the same Scranton lace mill for 50 years" (Peters and Woolley 2016f). Hillary Clinton's construing herself to be from a similar background to that of her voters and accentuating comparability in upbringing is a rhetorical vehicle often used among politicians to engender followers' trust and influence (Seyranian and Bligh 2008). It has also been interpreted as indicative of a more inclusive and egalitarian rhetoric (Lim 2002).

Donald Trump habitually employed rhetoric calling attention to what he considered the intolerable situation the country was in because of the policies of the Obama administration (see the adversity construct in Table 2). Donald Trump scored much higher than Clinton on this construct, implying that he was more successful at articulating the precarious nature of the present and placing blame, an essential component of charismatic rhetoric. For instance, when accepting the presidential nomination at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, Donald Trump underlined that the country was at "a moment of crisis ... the attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life" (Peters and Woolley 2016b). A significant portion of the acceptance speech stressed an extensive litany of problems facing the nation: increases in levels of homicides, poverty, national debt, the unemployment rate, terrorism, and crumbling infrastructure. His picture of "crumbling roads and bridges, or the dilapidated airports, or the factories moving overseas to Mexico, or to other countries" served to create an image of a country in crisis (Peter and Woolley 2016g).

Another key rhetorical strategy was the use of hyperbolic historical rhetoric defining the terrorist threat within the country and calling for the deployment of decisive

military force. For example, in a speech at Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire, Donald Trump invoked the terrorist attacks of 9/11 into the present, arguing that the country was witnessing "the growing threat of terrorism inside of our borders…the attack on the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, was the worst terrorist strike on our soil since September 11th, and the worst mass shooting in our country's history." He proceeded to state that this was a "national security issue" demanding military retaliation.

As discussed above, the presence of crisis is thought by some to be a necessary precursor to the existence of charismatic leadership (Weber 1947; Willner 1984; Trice and Beyer 1986; Pillai and Meindl 1998), while others believe it to be only a facilitating factor (Hunt, Boal, and Dodge 1999; Halverson, Murphy, and Riggio 2004). While Donald Trump's rhetoric undeniably echoes themes of crisis, what is arguable is whether the country was indeed in a situation of crisis during this time or whether Donald Trump was construing a crisis, using the verbiage of victimhood to galvanize support for his presidency while enacting himself as the savior. Challengers to the office of the presidency traditionally have had more success in employing crisis rhetoric (Trent, Friedenberg, and Denton 2016), defined by Windt (1973) as a rhetorical creation in which events become crises not due to a specific set of situational exigencies but rather by virtue of the rhetoric utilized to describe them. This is particularly true of male politicians who are more often antagonistic and confrontational in their style of rhetoric (Lamer 2009).

One must also remain cognizant of the rhetorical excess of social media and other media platforms, such as the increasingly siloed versions of national news stories to which viewers are repeatedly subjected (Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic 2015). In contemplation of the fact that the majority of mainstream media coverage followed President Trump's agenda (Faris et al. 2017) as well as his position as the number-one source of breaking news during the election (Isaac and Ember 2016), interpretations of the presence of crisis arguably may have taken precedence over other elucidations.

Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, measured negative for both the adversity and action-oriented constructs. As such, she was much less likely to use calamitous language and was more congratulatory on the milestones achieved by the American public and by the sitting president. A few days after Donald Trump's nomination acceptance speech, Hillary Clinton gave her acceptance speech in Philadelphia, where she lauded the rosy state the nation was in, claiming:

> We have the most dynamic and diverse people in the world. We have the most tolerant and generous young people we've ever had. We have the most powerful military. The most innovative entrepreneurs. The most enduring values. Freedom and equality, justice and opportunity. We should be so proud that these words are associated with us. That when people hear them, they hear… America (Peters and Woolley 2016f).

During the campaign, she would habitually speak of her relief that "there is a sense that we are on our feet. We're not running yet but we are on our feet" (Peters and Woolley 2016c). In response to Donald Trump's more ominous tones, she repeated her commitment to maintaining a confident perspective on the condition of the country, affirming in a campaign speech in New Hampshire that "if you're looking for someone to say what is wrong

with America, I'm not your candidate … there is more right than wrong. I don't think we have to make America great. I think we have to make America greater" (Tumutly 2016). These findings echo those of Bligh et al. (2010), who found that Clinton's rhetoric during the 2008 presidential campaign was significantly lower on action-oriented language relative to McCain as well as significantly lower on adversity language relative to both McCain and Obama.

A possible reason for this could be that as a member of the incumbent party, it would have been more problematic for Clinton to fault a president from her own party for any ongoing crises. Indeed, she repeatedly expressed gratitude to President Obama for his success in elevating the country from the "mess he inherited," how he was able to "dig us out of the ditches … and put us back on the right track" (Peters and Woolley 2016d), and how she would advance from his "good start" (Peters and Woolley 2016e). Bearing in mind that President Obama was a vocal supporter of Hillary Clinton and, by all accounts, campaigned quite aggressively for her in a manner unprecedented for an incumbent president at the end of his term, this is perhaps to be anticipated (Phelps 2016).

Furthermore, it is clear that there was a decision by the Clinton campaign to intimately align themselves with the Obama presidency and paint a Clinton presidency as Obama's third term (Dovere 2016). Some of the mailers sent out by the Clinton campaign show Obama and Clinton embracing on stage at the Democratic convention, while others show Obama walking across the White House promenade or in the Oval Office, with the words "this election, it's up to us to have his back" typed in bold blue letters (Dovere 2016). For all intents and purposes, Clinton decided to walk the tightrope of simultaneously praising Obama while delicately delineating distinctions between them, constraining her ability to use adversity and action-oriented charismatic rhetorical models and to exercise an inherently disruptive political effect. Clinton's order-affirming rhetoric reaffirms the context of presidential power as being anchored in "political times" (Skowronek 1993). In contrast, Donald Trump's positioning of himself as a political outsider or anti-establishment figure provided him significant leeway as an "order-shatterer" (Skowronek 1993) within iterations of the power cycle to assail politics as usual and harshly critique the status quo.

Another compelling difference across the neutral construct of tangibility is Hillary Clinton's higher usage of charismatic rhetoric emphasizing intangible future goals, broader perspectives, and life views instead of specific measurable goals as compared to Donald Trump. This is ironic considering that Donald Trump was regularly criticized by the mainstream media for being unable to provide concrete policy details and having a knowledge deficit in certain areas, in contrast to Hillary Clinton's ability to provide excruciating levels of policy detail (Rogin 2016). In fact, reports from people in the Trump campaign regarding their preparation for the presidential debates indicated their belief that "debates are not won or lost on policy minutiae…it [is] as a waste of time to try to fill his head with facts and figures. Instead, they want him to practice staying focused on big-picture themes" (Healy, Chozick, and Haberman 2016). Nevertheless, Donald Trump's frequent mention of short-term goals and pragmatic steps he would take to bring about change, such as promises to build a wall across the Mexican border, withdraw

from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and enact a Muslim immigration ban, among others, appear to be behind his lower frequencies on this charismatic construct.

There is strong evidence that presidents in our time are not obliged to adopt substantive arguments to influence public opinion (Cohen 1995) and that policy specifics may serve to alienate voters (Healy, Chozick, and Haberman 2016; Waldman and Jamieson 2003). This illustrates how Clinton's preference for sticking to "big themes" could have worked to her advantage in some respects. Lim (2002) indicated that modern presidential rhetoric has exhibited a preference for abstract lofty words as well as becoming more anti-intellectual when compared to that of previous eras. The term anti-intellectual here refers to a lack of cognitive and evaluative processes, a lack of reasoned argument, and a use of colloquial terminology over formal word choices. The coexistence of rhetorical abstraction and anti-intellectualism has produced what Lim called an "embarrassing vacuousness" in contemporary political rhetoric (Lim 2002, 334). This study's findings regarding the tangibility of each of the candidates' rhetoric certainly provide a compelling perspective on the relative charismatic content of the candidates. They are especially insightful when accounting for claims made by a recent comparative study of the candidates, which suggests that Donald Trump adopted a simple communication style and scored notably lower on lexical density (the amount of actual information present in his words) than Clinton (Savoy 2017). Additionally, he was found to be more likely to reuse phrases as compared to other candidates (Savoy 2017). Hillary Clinton on the other hand was found to produce lengthier sentences, reflecting more complex reasoning and critical thinking (Savoy 2017).

Conclusion

For all the media coverage on leadership style and charisma, there has been scant systematic analysis of charismatic leadership in the political context. This study addresses this gap by contributing to the extant knowledge on the differences in charismatic leadership between the competing major party candidates in the 2016 election, enhancing our understanding of the rhetorical techniques used to gain voter support, as well as develops our understanding of how the charismatic aspect might have influenced the results of the election.

Overall, this study of the corpus of campaign speeches given by both candidates corroborates the theory that Donald Trump exhibited a greater degree of charismatic leadership over the majority of charismatic leadership constructs as compared to Hillary Clinton during the 2016 election. Although causality cannot be confirmed,[4] this study highlights the influence the charismatic element might have had on the electability of each candidate and provides insights that should be valuable for future elections. The findings suggest that Donald Trump's strategic use of communitarian rhetoric to create a hermeneutic praxis shifting identity salience from individual to collective conceptions of the cause, encouraging the formation of collective memory and national nostalgia among

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4. Nevertheless, charisma as a trait has been connected to voting choices during presidential elections (Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk 2009; Funk 1999).

followers. The results affirm the context of presidential rhetoric as being anchored in political times, where Donald Trump's position as an anti-establishment figure enabled his employment of hyperbolic crisis rhetoric to increase his charismatic presence.

Hillary Clinton, while employing egalitarian rhetoric, was constrained in her ability to exercise an inherently disruptive political effect, by both stereotypical gender expectations and her positionality as a member of the incumbent party. It raises the question of the role of stereotypical gender expectations surrounding traditionally feminine (and masculine) rhetorical spaces when used by politicians in the public sphere. Clinton's lower charismatic leadership across agentic rhetorical constructs (emphasizing strength and power), and her consequent loss of bid for the presidency, potentially strengthens claims of the double bind faced by women politicians in the public sphere and the limitations of engendered language expectations in political rhetoric, particularly when belonging to the incumbent party.

Although there are several elements to achieving charismatic leadership, including the leader, the followers, and the socioeconomic and political contexts, it is indubitable that the content of a leader's rhetoric is critical. Having said this, the variables in this study were limited in scope and excluded potentially significant factors such as contextual and situational influences (e.g., the social, political, and organizational environment; perceived personality characteristics; or media coverage). These factors would need to be researched further to improve our discernment of audience reception of charismatic leaders and charismatic rhetoric. Furthermore, more research is necessary on the differential impact of speechwriters on presidential rhetoric and levels of charisma (Seyranian and Bligh 2008) as well as how patterns change over time with the candidates. Nevertheless, this study contributes to the body of political leadership literature and opens the door for further analysis into the practice of charismatic rhetoric during the 2016 presidential election.

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