

TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

APPEALING TO THE PEOPLE:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

by

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A thesis

Presented to the faculty of

Towson University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science

Department of Social Science

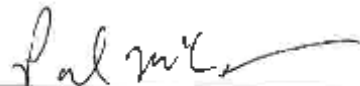
Towson University
Towson, Maryland 21252

August 2017

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE


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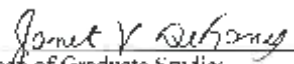
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Paul McCartney for encouraging me since the inception of this project. He pushed me to think deeply and to develop my ideas to their full potential. I would also like to thank Dr. John McTague for his enthusiasm and support of this project. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Toni Marzotto for her insight and feedback during the early and later stages of the writing process. Finally, I offer my thanks to my friends who have convincingly pretended to understand populism and who have let me recite campaign speeches to them over the past year.

ABSTRACT

“Appealing to the People: A Content Analysis of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaign”

Tranae Hardy

In the 2016 U.S presidential election, Donald Trump defeated several experienced opponents to become the president of the United States. However, he did so without having held any previous political office. This thesis argues that Trump’s use of populist rhetoric helped him gain the vote of the electorate. Particularly, Trump implemented the rhetoric of right-wing populism characterized by xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment that resonated with an electorate disenchanted with the current political establishment’s inability to protect its current socioeconomic status from foreign influences. A content analysis was employed to examine the campaign rhetoric of the major party presidential candidates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	iv
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
Literature Review	4
Chapter 2	22
Methodology	22
Findings	37
Chapter 3	58
Discussion	58
Conclusion	71
Bibliography	73
Curriculum Vita	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Aggregate use of ‘the people’ by content type	40
Figure 2: Use of the people primacy code by candidate	42
Figure 3: Percent breakdown of Trump’s racialized othering by sub-category	49
Figure 4: Comparison of instances of racialized other rhetoric by candidate	53
Figure 5: Individual candidates’ use of authoritarian appeals by content type	54

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

On November 9, 2016, Donald Trump was elected to the office of President of the United States. His journey to the presidency started in June 2015 when Trump announced his candidacy for presidency, pledging to “make America great again,” a phrase that would go on to become Trump’s campaign slogan. Not long after his announcement, Trump surged ahead of his primary opponents in the poll, becoming the frontrunner, the Republican presidential nominee, and eventually the president elect. As he progressed through the election season, Trump beat several well established GOP politicians including former governor Jeb Bush, Senator Ted Cruz, and finally the Democratic candidate, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. He did so without holding political office prior.

This fact makes his rise to the highest office in the nation an anomaly. In fact, it is a status that in modern history is only shared with one former president, Dwight D. Eisenhower. Amateur politicians such as this are often categorized as outsiders. Amateur-outsiders may see success at lower levels of government, but rarely at the presidential level. In the United States, it is much more common to have political outsiders from third parties competing at the presidential level. These third party candidates, however, have never succeeded in capturing the presidency. Although, Trump was not a third party candidate, he was a non-traditional candidate who was able to become the nominee of the Republican Party as an amateur politician. As such, Trump’s rise to the presidency is a phenomenon that warrants examination. Not only is

Trump an outsider politician who achieved great success, but he is also an outsider who was able to do so on a major party ticket.

This thesis begins with the question, “What conditions allowed an outsider candidate to succeed at such a high level of American politics?” Trump’s lack of political experience conferred upon him the status of a political outsider. I posit that Trump leveraged his outsider status through the use of right-wing populism. As an outsider, he was able to use populist rhetoric with a sense of legitimacy. He was able to use the anti-establishment language of populism credibly because he was not a member of the political establishment. This thesis argues that Trump’s use of populist rhetoric helped him gain the vote of the electorate. Particularly, Trump implemented the rhetoric of right-wing populism characterized by xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiment that resonated with an electorate disenchanted with the current political establishment’s inability to protect its current socioeconomic status from foreign influences. As a means of supporting this argument, I aim to identify the presence of populist language as a part of Trump’s campaign rhetoric, to determine if populist language was unique to Trump among the major party frontrunners, and to determine if the populist language used was ring-wing in nature.

A content analysis will be used to explore Trump’s populist rhetoric. This method is appropriate as it allows for a direct examination of politicians’ language. Thinly defined populism relies primarily on an appeal to ‘the people.’ More traditionally defined, populism “refers to the people, vents anti-establishment ideas and simultaneously excludes certain population categories” (Jagers and Walgrave 2007, 322). The elements of this definition have been used by scholars to examine the populist

attitudes of politicians. Previous content analyses (Negrea-Busuioc 2016, Oliver and Rahn 2016) fail to conceptualize the ‘other’ as any entity that is not categorized as a part of the political elite as a part of their analysis. In a study of the populist discourse of three Romanian populist parties, Negrea-Busuioc (2016) uses a codebook that includes “four dimensions of populist discourse: people-centered (any reference to the people), criticism of the corrupt political class/elite (including moral corruption), evoking and acclaiming the greatness of the country, and praise of Christian Orthodox values” (45-46). Oliver and Rahn (2016) similarly paid specific attention to anti-establishment rhetoric corresponding to political elites and the other, to economic elites (192-193). My thesis will incorporate similar elements my codebook.

While the political elites are often characterized as the ‘other,’ additional groups may also take on this role. In this election, immigration reform and terrorism were major issues. I argue that Trump used these issues to create an ‘other’ from the racial and ethnic groups associated with these topics, which is characteristic of right-wing populism. In the same announcement speech where he invoked the ‘people’ and pledged to “make American great again,” Trump denounced Mexican immigrants. Trump used othering rhetoric in this speech, claiming that Mexican immigrants are bringing drugs into the United States with them. He also accused immigrants of bringing crime into the country and went so far as proclaiming that Mexican immigrants are rapists. Trump used this type of divisive language to his benefit to rally the ‘people’ and to draw on their anxieties. In order to confirm Trump’s use of right-wing rhetoric, this thesis includes an examination of a racialized ‘other’ as a part of populist rhetoric.

Literature Review

As a means of exploring the factors that contributed to Trump's success, I examine the political and economic context in which the 2016 election season has taken place. First, I explore the literature on outsider politicians. Then, I review the literature on the American party system with a focus on the decline of the party system and the rise of candidate driven campaigns and an assessment of the strength of the Republican Party in particular. Then, I discuss the relevant literature on populism, which covers the approaches to populism, its core components, the types of populism, and the conditions that lead to the emergence of populism. This review of the literature will allow for the relationship between outsiders, the weak party system, and populism to come to the foreground. After the discussion of the literature, I comment on Trump's rise in relation to these concepts.

Political Outsiders

During the campaign Trump was labeled as a political outsider. Several definitions are associated with the term and therefore it becomes necessary to explore the literature on political outsiders. This exploration helps to confirm that Trump is truly a political outsider as well as aids in determining which type of political outsider he is. The literature on political outsiders also provides a set of conditions that allow outsiders to succeed. This particular subset of the literature is useful for determining if the conditions were favorable for Trump's success.

Scholars define political outsiders through either their relationship to the party system (Kenney 1998, Barr 2009) or by reference to their political experience (Lazarus 2009, Canon 2010). Some research incorporates both of these definitions, such as that done by

Miguel Carreras, who argues that political outsiders are “candidates who (a) have not had a previous career in politics or public administration when the campaign starts *and/or* (b) participate in the elections as political independents or in association with new parties” (Carreras 2012, 1456). An expansive definition such as the definition used by Carreras allows for outsiders to be placed into specific categories. The literature also includes characterizations of political outsiders that tie their identity with reform policies (Hinich et al. 2010).

Outsider politicians defined via their position to the dominant party. The definition of political outsider that a scholar subscribes to affects the type of research undertaken and thus the conclusions drawn about outsiders. For instance, Charles Kenney (1998) proposes a definition of the concept that categorizes political outsiders as “politicians who rise to political prominence from outside the national party system” (59). Using this definition, Kenney concludes that outsider status is not a static identity. Outsiders may become considered insiders, if a new party system is established. Robert Barr (2009) builds on Kenney’s study. For Barr, the politician’s location relative to the political establishment characterizes a political actor as an outsider, an insider, or a maverick. Maverick is an intermediate category that Barr offers. He defines a maverick as “a politician who rises to prominence within an established, competitive party but then either abandon his affiliation to compete as an independent or in association with an outsider party, or radically reshapes his own party” (Barr 2009, 34). Political outsiders gain “political prominence not through or in association with an established, competitive party, but as a political independent or in association with new or newly competitive parties” (Barr 2009, 33). Using this definition, Barr is able to argue that politicians from

marginal parties, those which are not considered competitive, can also be classified as outsiders.

When discussing outsiders via their position to the dominant party, third parties become relevant. These are parties that fall outside of the two dominant parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Third parties and their candidates are placed into four categories: splinter candidates, short-lived secessionist parties, traditional doctrinaire parties, and “new” parties (Bibby and Maisel 2002, 14). Splinter candidates split off a segment from major parties. Short-lived secessionist parties emerge when there is discontent over the way major parties handle major issues. These parties usually become irrelevant when major parties take over their issues. Traditional doctrine parties begin similarly to secessionist parties, but endure due to their unwillingness to compromise. New political parties differ from short-lived secessionist parties and traditional doctrine parties in that they tend to appeal to cultural ideologies rather than economic ideologies (Bibby and Maisel 2002, 36-37). In the literature, the competitiveness of these third parties within a two-party system is examined (Bibby and Maisel 2002, Hirano and Snyder Jr. 2007). Third parties have become less competitive over time. The share of votes that third party candidates have received for House, Senate, and state-wide offices has declined since 1930 with the average vote share down to approximately 3% in 2004 (Hirano and Snyder Jr. 2007, 2). Hirano and Snyder attribute much of this decline to the co-optation of the left by the Democratic Party following the New Deal.

The literature on third party parties also investigates the barriers that prevent third parties from succeeding in elections. It is suggested that electoral success for third party

candidates is more of a function of the candidate's characteristics than those of the party. The public tends to associate third parties with presidential candidates, as there have been many third party presidential candidates. However, few gain national stature. It is thought that if the electorate has "been looking for a third-party alternative and have not been finding it, what they have really wanted is an alternative viable candidate" (Bibby and Maisel 2002, 9). This is associated with what is referred to as the dilemma of the two-party system. Citizens express their dissatisfaction with the choices presented by the two-party system, yet they still vote for candidates from the major parties even when alternative candidates are present. Trump may have exploited this fact. He was not a traditional Republican, yet he ran as a Republican to use the party's cache. There are times, however, when citizen's dissatisfaction leads voters to turn away from the major parties. When this happens and both of the parties' candidates are unattractive, third party candidates are likely to be more successful in getting on the ballot. (Gold 1995, 752).

Recent research (Munro et al. 2013) examines the biases voters hold against third-party candidates even when the third party is ideologically similar to one of the major parties. The study shows that individuals who identify with a major party and are relatively committed to their political party are more likely to react positively to the platforms of the party they identify with than similar third party platforms. Munro et al. (2013) also report findings that align with Bibby and Maisel's dilemma of the two-party system. Individuals that intended to vote for the president of the United States in a close race between the two major parties, reported lower intentions to vote for a third party

candidate (Munro et al. 2013, 155-156). Third party candidates show lower rates of success due to voters' attachment to one of the two major parties.

Additionally, there are a number of institutional barriers including, but not limited to the single-member district system where the winner takes all, the separation of powers, the Electoral College system. Strategic voting is also highlighted as a hindrance (Bobby and Maisel 2002). Voters fear that casting a vote for a third-party candidate is equivalent to a wasted vote. Voters are less likely to perceive a vote for a third party candidate as a waste when one of the major party candidates has a large lead over the candidate of the rival major party (Gold 1995, 752).

Outsider politicians defined by length of experience. Political outsiders are also studied in terms of length of political experience. The research of Carreras (2014) frames the outsider as an individual with little to no political experience. His research shows that executive-legislative relations are strained when the president is an outsider. Carreras claims that when political outsiders are in power they exacerbate the problems of presidential systems. The problems of presidential systems include inflexibility in crisis situations, a greater likelihood of executive/legislative deadlock, and the possibility of the election of political outsiders (Mainwaring 1993, 207-209). When they are elected amateur politicians tend to lack the democratic socialization that comes from experience within the party system. They are devoid of the knowledge of negotiations and compromises that occur within and between parties (Carreras 2014, 75). This can cause conflict between the executive and legislative branches and impede progress within the government.

The literature also focuses on factors that promote or hinder the success of political outsiders. For instance, the work done by Jeffrey Lazarus (2009) explores the reasons why experienced challengers tend to do better than amateur candidates. The work done prior to Lazarus attributes the success of experienced candidates to stronger electoral skills and to greater access to material resources. Lazarus suggests that these factors are only indirectly responsible for the greater success of experienced challengers compared to amateurs. He shows that the experienced challengers are actually more successful because they enter more winnable races. Canon (2010) reveals that amateur candidates are more likely to win congressional races in periods of electoral upheaval. He also posits that an open career structure where parties do not exert strong control over nominations is necessary for the success of amateur politicians (Canon 2010, 11). Corrales (2008) draws similar conclusions in his research on newcomers in Latin American presidential election. Outsiders are also more likely to emerge when a certain set of institutional characteristics are present, particularly during periods when the presidential and legislative elections are non-concurrent, voting is compulsory, and when countries ban re-election (Carreras 2012).

A portion of the scholarship on outsider politicians is centered on democracies in Latin America (Corrales 2007, Carreras 2012). The success of outsiders in presidential elections in these countries is much more common than in the United States. This phenomenon may be attributed to the prevalence of multiparty systems in Latin American. The corresponding work on outsiders in the United States presidential race tends to focus on third parties. When amateur outsiders are discussed in the literature, it is often in the context of Congress (Canon 2010). The proposed research aims to fill in

the gap in scholarship by focusing on an outsider politician who is an amateur in the U.S. presidential race.

The American Party System

Trump is most appropriately categorized as the amateur outsider as defined by Lazarus (2009) and Canon (2010). Canon proposes conditions that promote the success of these types of political outsiders. Exploring the literature on the American political system illuminates whether the conditions set forth by Canon currently exist. Confirming the presence of these conditions gives insight into how Trump was able to avoid institutional barriers and position himself to succeed.

An examination of the American political system reveals a number of the conditions that influence amateur candidate success do currently exist. These include the presence of weak parties and an open career structure. Pildes (2014) discusses the relatively weak status of today's American political parties and contends that there is a fair amount of political fragmentation exists in the United States, the most obvious in the Republican Party. He defines fragmentation as "the external diffusion of political power away from the political parties as a whole and the internal diffusion of power away from the party leadership to individual party members and officeholder" (809). There are also cleavages within the two major parties that render the parties ineffective. Party cleavages are due to rifts between the ideologically pure and the more moderate members of party over issues such as political means, strategy, and how to face logistical constraints (Noel 2016, 167). The cleavage is particularly noticeable within the Republican Party, which failed to coordinate around a single presidential candidate during the 2016 presidential nomination process. There was no party favorite during the invisible primary, the period

where “presidential candidates attempt to establish their viable campaigns before the primary season” (Anderson 2013, 62). The party’s moderates favored Jeb Bush while its ideologues favored Ted Cruz, with neither faction able to bridge the divide and find a single candidate to rally around.

The decline in the power of party leadership is attributed to a revolution in communications and technology as well as changes in campaign finance laws. The change in communication and technology allows politicians to build a brand outside of the party. Candidates are thought of as self-starters, who use the party labels as political currency (Jackson 2014, 17). Campaign finance reform laws, such as McCain-Feingold, prevents parties from receiving soft money. Pildes (2014) states that “the fact that Congress was willing to cut off the flow of soft money to parties was itself a signal of the candidate-centered nature of our financing system and the reduced dependence of candidates (especially incumbents) on the parties for their electoral success” (835).

The weak party system is evidenced by the structure of the electoral structure of the United States. In the United States, the electorate votes for individual candidates rather than for the political party. Furthermore, American political parties lack a certain amount of control due to the absence of barriers to join a political party. American political parties lack party dues and a patronage system of hiring and firing. Without these mechanisms in place, American political parties are less tightly structured than other democracies (Pildes 2014, 813). This structure allows individuals to run for office without having to gain the approval of the party elites.

Populism

This thesis argues Trump leveraged his status as a political outsider to use populist language legitimately. An exploration of the literature on populism gives insight into what constitutes populist rhetoric, the types of populism that exist, and the conditions under which populism emerges. This subset of the literature is particularly relevant for building the codebook for the content analysis.

Similar to the concept of outsider candidates, populism is a concept whose definition varies within the literature. The literature acknowledges that there is not an agreed upon definition of populism and even suggests further exploration of the term is warranted (Canovan 2004, Savage 2011, Moffitt and Tormey 2014). The term populism has been used to describe several political movements in different regions that are only common in that they are labeled as populist. The existing definitions of populism include but are not limited to “a collection of movements, broadly on the right of the political spectrum that have emerged in many established liberal democracies, challenging existing parties and mainstream policies” (Canovan 2004, 242) and “a mass movement led by an outsider or a maverick seeking to gain or maintain power by using anti-establishment appeals and plebiscitarian linkages” (Barr 2009, 38). Moffitt and Tormey (2014) state “there exist at least four approaches to populism - ideology, logic, discourse and strategy/organization” (383). The duo, however, champions a fifth approach, populism as a political style. When characterized in this manner, populism involves “a proclaimed rapport with ‘the people’, a ‘them-and-us’ mentality, and (often, though not necessarily) a period of crisis and mobilization” (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 387). Moffitt and Tormey take a less often used approach, but illustrate that the approaches to populism are varied.

Components of populism. Although these definitions view populism through different lenses, populism has often been distilled to common elements. The ‘people’ and their hostile relationship with an ‘other’ have been identified as core to populism (Deiwiks 2009, 2). Other scholars have cited additional elements. From a rhetorical approach, populism not only includes a clearly defined ‘people’ and the formation of an ‘other,’ but also includes tropes of a corrupted system and an apocalyptic confrontation that will lead to change (Lee 2006, 362). Rhetorical approaches treat populism as an argumentative framework as opposed to a movement. Treating populism as a discourse results in scholars’ further deconstruction of the term populism.

Populism is broken into its primary components when it is treated as a discourse. Constituent components such as ‘the people’ or ‘the other’ are referred to as empty signifiers (Savage 2011, 171). That is these terms are emptied of their meaning to allow them to represent an entire community. As an empty signifier, intragroup differences within ‘the people’ are ignored and emphasis is placed on the common characteristics of the group to allow the individuals that comprise the group to be represented as one homogenous group (Savage 2010, 183). As a result of being an empty signifier, who the term ‘the people’ refers to may vary depending on who invokes the term. The malleability of ‘the people’ allows the group to consist of the entirety of a country or merely a subset of the population who are delineated by factors such as race or class (Panizza 2005, 14). ‘The people’ are also partly defined by those people and institutions they consider to be their opposition, ‘the other.’ As a part of establishing their identity, ‘the people’ are presented as distinct from ‘the other.’

If ‘the people’ are conjured into being by the populist leader, ‘the other’ is manifested from the fears of ‘the people’ as the enemy. Lee (2006) writes that the creation of ‘the other’ serves not only a means by which the identity of ‘the people’ is reinforced, but it is also often a scapegoat for the problems of society (359). Often ‘the other’ is presented as the political elites in a representative democracy. In fact, in much of the literature on populism the elites are positioned as ‘the other,’ but Deiwiiks (2009) lists foreigners as an example of another group that may take on this role. Panizza (2005) also expands the possible constituency of ‘the other’ as well highlighting that ‘the other’ may also be presented not only as a political opponent, but also as an economic adversary or a combination of the two.

Variations of populism. As mentioned above, populism has been used as a descriptor for several political currents throughout history and across geographic areas. Ritchie Savage (2011) points out several in his discussion of the resurgence of populism during the 2008 election. These political currents include the People’s Party in America and the Russian Narodnichestvo in the 19th century, Peron in Argentina and Vargas in Brazil during the 20th century (Savage 2011, 169). Even though all of these movements are labeled as populist, Savage posits they have little in common. Within the United States, common figures studied in conjunction with populism are Huey Long and George Wallace (Kazin 1998, Lee 2006).

Populism can be left-wing or right-wing. Left-wing populism defines “the ‘people’ as consisting of the working class, the ‘other’ being capitalism and capitalists, along with their side-kicks in government” (Deiwiiks 2009, 7). While left-wing populists target corporations and capitalists, right-wing populists tend to target immigrants. Hogan and

Haltinner (2015) describe right-wing populism as a “characterized by ethnonationalist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments; an emphasis on the ‘traditional’ social order, which usually includes a tough-on-crime stance with severe penalties for those who violate the rules; and the scapegoating of perceived ‘freeloaders’ and including government and intellectual elites and nonproductive welfare-dependent underclass” (520).

The law and order aspect of right-wing populism make it authoritarian in nature. Authoritarianism is a need for uniformity and order. According to MacWilliams (2016) authoritarians tend to “eschew diversity, fear ‘the other,’ act aggressively toward others, and once they have identified friend from foe, hold tight to their decision” (717). Authoritarianism is thought to be a trait that is activated under certain circumstances including situations in which authoritarians “perceive threats to conformity or the existing moral order” (Hetherington and Suhay 2011, 547).

Conditions that allow for the emergence of populism. A number of circumstances that allow populism to emerge have also been identified. Charismatic leaders are often associated with the rise of populism. Socioeconomic conditions and crises can also contribute to a rise in populist sentiment. The crises tend to disrupt social order and cause a decrease in the public’s confidence in the political system’s ability to restore it. The crisis could be real or constructed (Deiwiks 2009, 3). Crises may be related to immigration, perceived injustice, or a military threat among, other things (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 391). A surveying of the national climate may allow a researcher to determine if a rise in populist sentiment is likely. Oliver and Rahn (2016) attribute the current wave of populist sentiment in the United States to a “representation gap.” A large

section of the public feel political parties are not responding to their desires. The authors also found that populist sentiment was highest among Trump supporters.

Populist rhetoric. As discussed, the existing research establishes the core components of populism as well as conditions that allow for the emergence of populism. This provides a framework that can be used for the proposed research. The identified components and causes can be used to label populist rhetoric and to assess the current conditions.

Research on populist rhetoric (Bonikowski and Gidron 2015, Neagrea-Busuioc 2016, Oliver and Rahn 2016) has in fact used these elements to draw conclusions about how populist rhetoric is used and by whom. Through their analysis, Bonikowski and Gidron (2015) conclude that the content of populist claims varies by ideology. Democrats primarily employ economic populism that targets business elites, while Republicans engage in anti-statist populism that critiques federal political elites such as bureaucrats, big government, and Washington elites (1607-8). Oliver and Rahn (2016) find similar results when analyzing populism in the 2016 presidential primaries. Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders scored high in economic populism while Republican candidates Donald Trump and Ben Carson score highest in political populism. When examining candidates' invocation of the 'people,' Oliver and Rahn also found that Democrats invoked collective nationalist terms more often. Carson and Trump were less likely to refer to specific groups and instead used "we-they" collective constructions that included themselves as a part of the group. (Oliver and Rahn 2016, 193).

Hogan and Haltinner (2015) show that the language of right-wing populism is slightly different. The 'other' targeted by right-wing populists tends to be immigrants, who are perceived as interest-based threats and/or identity-based threats. Immigrants are framed

by right-wing populists as economic threats, who negatively affect wages, the cost of living and the tax burden for native-born citizens, as threats to security, and as threats to culture that undermines the native culture (Hogan and Haltinner 2015, 527-528). This is in contrast with the language of populism that focuses its criticism on the corrupt political and economic elite (Negrea-Busuioac 2016, Oliver and Rahn 2016). This thesis will build on the framework used by these previous studies. In order to determine if Trump used populist rhetoric to his advantage, language that appeals to ‘the people’ and anti-establishment rhetoric aimed at the political and economic elites will be highlighted. In order to determine the presence of right-wing ideology in the rhetoric, Hogan and Haltinner’s threats based scheme will be used. Additionally, as a means of capturing the law and order aspect of right-wing populism, authoritarian appeals will also be highlighted.

Analysis of populist discourse also concludes that representatives of the incumbent party are less likely to rely on populist claims. Bonikowski and Gidron (2015) explain that as incumbents these candidates lack of the credibility to make such claims (1608). Additionally, a candidate’s likelihood of the use of populism increases with their distance from the center of the political field. Those who held no previous political office were most likely to make populist claims. The duration of a candidate’s political career had a negative relationship with populist claims (Bonikowski and Gidron 2015, 1609). These findings support the claims that populist rhetoric is best used by an outsider politician.

Trump in Context

There are multiple definitions of the term political outsider. Donald Trump can be categorized as a political outsider as per the definitions proposed by both Lazarus (2009)

and Canon (2010). Trump is an amateur politician having held no political office prior to winning the U.S. presidential election. The literature on political amateurs in congressional races shows that open political structures where parties do not exert strong control over nominations are likely to lead to the success of political amateurs. It is reasonable to extend these findings to presidential race.

The current American political system is one with relatively weak political parties and an open structure. The parties have little control over the nomination of candidates in the presidential race. They do not have the capacity to exclude individuals from joining their party nor do they have formal approval over individuals who wish to run for office. The little power parties do have is derived from their ability to provide endorsements for candidates during the invisible primary, “when presidential candidates attempt to establish their viable campaigns before the primary season begins with the Iowa caucuses” (Anderson 2013, 62). Even though it is rare for amateur-outsiders to garner success at the presidential level, Trump managed to do so in part due to this system. The Republican Party could not exclude him from the running in the presidential primaries. The chance the Republican Party had to block Trump’s nomination was squandered as a result of the fragmentation of the party during the invisible primary. The party’s inability to rally behind a single candidate created an opportunity for Trump to become the frontrunner in the primary race.

This opening gave Trump the space to leverage his outsider status and to use populist rhetoric. Bonikowski and Gidron (2014) show that populist rhetoric is not only more likely to be used the further the candidate is from the center of the political field, but also more likely to be used when the duration of the candidate’s career is shorter. In simpler

terms, outsiders are more likely to use populist rhetoric. This stems from the fact that populist rhetoric is perceived as more credible when it comes from outsider. As an amateur politician, Trump's outsider status granted him the ability to employ populist rhetoric and to do so legitimately.

Trump's ability to invoke populist rhetoric legitimately would have meant little if the electorate were not receptive to his message. The country, however, was primed to accept populism as a result of the national climate. Among portions of the population, there was a sense of economic crisis. The number of working white men between the ages of 30 to 49 categorized as not making a living wage increased from 1974 until 2007. Making a living was defined as "earning an income large enough that it puts a household of twos above the poverty line" (Murray 2012, 226-228). In 2016, this was an income of \$16,020 (Federal Poverty Guidelines). This can be attributed to the stagnating wages in the United States. Fukuyama (2016) claims the white working class are in a position similar to one experienced by African-Americans in the 1980s. They are witnessing the emergence of an underclass, "a mass of underemployed and underskilled people whose poverty [seems] self-replicating because it [leads] to broken families...unable to transmit the kinds of social norms and behaviors required to compete in the job market" (Fukuyama 2016, 60). In addition to the stagnating wages, the middle class faces competition from immigrants. The middle class, particularly those who identify as conservatives, see unskilled immigrants willing to work for low wages as stealing their jobs and driving down wages (Seltzer 2016, 74).

Conditions such as this allow populism to emerge. The socioeconomic conditions combined with the perceived threat from immigration and the representation gap

identified by Oliver and Rahn create the perfect conditions for Trump's populist rhetoric to resonate with members of the electorate. The populist rhetoric used by Trump has the hallmarks of traditional populist rhetoric including appeals to the 'people' and criticism of political elites. Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," is a prime example of his use of populism, specifically his appeals to the 'people.' In addition to the traditional language of populism, Trump also uses language that characterizes the right-wing brand of populism. He conjures an image of illegal immigrants as interest-based threats both economically and security wise.

This thesis aims to identify the presence of populist language as a part of Trump's campaign rhetoric, to determine if populist language was unique to Trump among the major party frontrunners, and to highlight Trump's use of right-wing populism as a major part of his winning campaign. In order to meet these goals, I conduct a content analysis on a selection of his speeches, interviews, and debates. The content analysis will highlight Trump's appeals to 'the people,' the othering of both the elites and racial minorities, as well as authoritarian appeals. I perform a similar analysis on the speeches, interviews, and debates of Hillary Clinton as means of determining if populist language was exclusive to Trump

This chapter provided the necessary background to put Trump's political rise into context. Chapter Two details the methodology used. It describes in detail the process of performing the content analysis, the limitations faced, and provides an example of the codebook used. Chapter Two also includes the important findings of the analysis.

Chapter Three provides an in depth discussion of the findings. It examines the importance of the findings, situates results of the analysis in existing literature, and presents important implications. Chapter Three concludes with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology

A directed content analysis was performed on the speeches, interviews, and debate remarks of both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. These materials cover both the primaries and the general election. A content analysis is used to classify textual materials. The implementation of a content analysis for this thesis allowed for a direct examination and interpretation of the rhetoric of the Trump and Clinton. A directed content analysis, specifically, allowed for existing theory to be used as the basis for classification. Using this methodology enabled the theories of populism to be applied to the rhetoric of candidates in order to meet the goals of this thesis.

This chapter presents the methodology employed and the resulting findings. First, an overview of qualitative research is discussed. This overview highlights the advantages of qualitative research and indicates why qualitative methods were the best fit for this particular thesis. Then, content analysis as a method is explored including various approaches to content analysis and the limitations of content analysis as a method. The specifics of my content analysis is then discussed including the sources used, the initial round of coding and the codes used as well as the additional codes that emerged from said coding. Finally, the limitations of this study will be addressed.

The latter half of this chapter includes a review of the findings. The most frequently applied code was ‘the people’ code. Use of this type of language was present in both of the candidate’s campaigns and is the primary component for populism. Trump’s campaign used language that othered both the elites and racial minorities at a much higher rates of than did Clinton’s campaign. These additional rhetorical elements

characterize Trump's rhetoric as a thick form of populism. His populist rhetoric also proved to be right-wing in nature as evidenced by his racialized othering and authoritarian appeals. The findings section will give a more in depth exploration of these results.

The primary goal of this analysis is to answer the following three questions: 1) Did Donald Trump incorporate populist language into his campaign rhetoric? 2) Among the major party frontrunners, was populist language unique to Trump? 3) If Donald Trump employed populist language in his campaign, was the language used ring-wing in nature? This chapter outlines the process and the resultant data used to answers these questions.

Qualitative Research

A qualitative content analysis was employed. Qualitative research focuses on “observing, describing, interpreting, and analyzing the way that people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them” (Bazeley 2013, 4). When compared to quantitative research, qualitative research is able to present a more three dimensional, nuanced view of the world. When conducting qualitative research, “the researcher is aware of the socially constructed nature of reality and is embedded intimately in the context of the study - the research setting, participants, and the data being collected” and is able to get “at the how and why of the story, in ways that quantitative research cannot” (Yates and Leggett 2016, 225).

This thesis lends itself to qualitative research as it aims to understand a social phenomenon. Qualitative analysis allows for a deeper exploration of the role of populism in the election than quantitative analysis would permit. Quantitative analysis could be

used to determine the presence of populist rhetoric and to highlight the difference of frequency of use between the candidates, but it loses the nuances associated with qualitative data. Quantitative analysis is helpful as a preliminary step; however, the content of the message is forgone in favor of summative numerical data when quantitative analysis is the only method employed. Qualitative analysis allows for the exploration of the actual content of the message. The content of the message is available for interpretation when qualitative analysis is used.

When comparing the methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research important differences emerge including “the difference between (1) aiming for explanation and (2) aiming for understanding, and the difference between (1) a personal role and (2) an impersonal role for the researcher” (Stake 2010, 19). Additional differences in qualitative research and quantitative research include sample size, methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Researchers may analyze data inductively or deductively and may use elements of both. Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data while deductive analysis begins with an existing framework.

Content Analysis Overview

Traditionally, content analysis is used to classify textual material. It can be used to interpret a variety of texts including historical documents, newspaper stories, political speeches, open-ended interviews, diplomatic messages, psychological diaries, and official publications (Weber 1990, 5). Content analysis uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences may concern the author of the message or the audience of the message as well as the message. This analysis can be either quantitative

or qualitative. However, qualitative content analysis differs from other qualitative methods in a number of ways including the requirement that the “specifications for the categories be sufficiently precise to allow multiple coders to achieve the same results,” its reliance on the systematic application of rules, and its drawing on the concepts of validity and reliability usually found in the positivist sciences (Dixon-Woods et al. 2005, 50).

The desire to focus on the substance of the campaign rhetoric led to the selection of content analysis as a method. Content analysis allows for a close examination of the rhetoric used by each of the candidates. Qualitative content analysis, in particular, allows one to see not only the language used, but also to categorize and to interpret said language. It allows theory to be applied, in this case the components of populism, to real world rhetoric.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identify three approaches to qualitative content analysis: conventional, directed content analysis, and summative content analysis. Conventional content analysis is used in studies with the aim of describing a phenomenon. It is most appropriate when existing theory or research literature is limited. In conventional content analysis, categories and names for categories flow from the data. A limitation of conventional content analysis is failing to identify key categories. Directed content analysis differs from conventional content analysis in that there is existing theory about a phenomenon that would benefit from further description. This type of content analysis is used “to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1281). The existing research is used to focus the research question. It can also help to inform the initial coding scheme. With directed content analysis, coding can be done with predetermined codes and new

categories can be created for data that does not fit the predetermined codes. There are limitations to this approach. The use of theory can create bias in researchers as they are concentrating on finding data that corresponds with the theory. This bias makes it more likely that researchers will find evidence in support of the theory. Summative content analysis identifies and quantifies “certain words or content in text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of their words or content” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1283). In summative content analysis, predetermined words are counted and then interpreted.

A directed content analysis was used for this thesis in order to explore Trump’s use of populism in the presidential election. It was the optimal choice as there is a plethora of existing research (Bonikowski and Gidron 2015, Negrea-Busuioc 2016, Oliver and Rahn 2016) on the use of populist rhetoric by political candidates. In a directed content analysis, existing theory aids in the creation of the coding scheme. Codes can be drawn from aspects of the theory rather than being drawn only from the data. Thus, the existing research acted as a foundation upon which to build my analysis of the 2016 presidential election. Codes such as appeals to the people and the elite other were drawn directly from the literature on populism. When trying to determine the existence of populist rhetoric in the campaign, a directed content analysis allows for a systematic review of the language used as well as lends credibility to the results as the categories are grounded in theory. Moreover, using a directed content analysis allowed me to not only draw on existing categorizations of populist rhetoric, but also to build on this research and offer my own categories that are relevant specifically to the 2016 campaign season.

Limitations

As with all methods there are limitations associated with content analysis. These limitations are attributed to the reductive nature of content analysis as a method and the unlikelihood of the method to preserve “the interpretive properties of underlying qualitative evidence” (Dixon-Woods et al. 2005, 50). The properties are lost as content analysis often relies on frequency counting as a means of relaying results. This manner of reporting results lessens the complexity of the qualitative data. Concerns may also arise around the reliability of the text classifications. Weber (1990) points to three types of reliability pertinent to content analysis: stability, reproducibility, and accuracy. Stability is the extent to which the results of content classification are invariant over time. Reproducibility or inter-coder reliability refers to the degree to which the given code definition will produce the same results when the same text is coded by a different coder. The strongest form of reliability is accuracy, which refers to the “extent to which the classification of text corresponds to a standard or norm” (Weber 1990, 17). Validity issues can also grow out of the ambiguity of words. Codes need to be considered carefully to ensure they measure what the researcher intends to measure.

These issues of reliability were addressed by using a directed content analysis. The characteristics of this approach helped to ensure the codes corresponded to a standard. Using a directed content analysis allowed me to build the analysis around the existing literature. Pulling from the existing literature allowed for a specificity in the definitions of the codes that are necessary for reliable research. Creating codes from the existing scholarship helped to address concerns of accuracy specifically. The scholarship acts as the standard to which the codes correspond. It provided credible sources upon

which to base the definition of each of the codes used. As discussed in the literature review, there are components of populism that appear in most scholars' definition of the concept. These components include appeals to 'the people' and an antagonistic relationship with the political elite. The consensus among scholars on these components validated their use as codes. Furthermore, the scholarship on populism provided examples of terms that fit into each code. When initially creating a codebook, examples of language fitting into these codes were listed for reference. Having concrete examples of populist rhetoric helped with issues of stability.

Content Analysis of the 2016 Election

Transcripts of both Donald Trump's and Hillary Clinton's speeches, interviews and debates were taken from the University of California Santa Barbara's The American Presidency Project. The American Presidency Project is an "online resource that has consolidated, coded, and organized into a single searchable database" the messages and papers of the presidents from Washington to Taft and the public papers of the presidents from Hoover to Obama. Transcripts of all of the 2016 Republican and Democratic primary debates were available through The American Presidency Project as well as general election debates. Also, available through The American Presidency Project were a selection of campaign speeches and interviews of presidential candidates from both the Democratic and Republican parties. The American Presidency Project does not include information on how campaign speeches and interviews were chosen, but the site does include transcripts that from the candidates' entrances into the campaign and their exits. Transcripts were taken from this source because it included transcripts for both parties

that covered roughly the same time period and were transcribed by the same individuals. Using this site allowed for consistency among the sampled documents.

All of Trump's speeches, interviews, and primary and general election debate appearances that were available through the American Presidency Project were used for the content analysis, yielding a sample size of 74 documents. These documents spanned the period from Trump's announcement of his candidacy to his acceptance of his election as the 45th president of the United States. Similarly, all of the transcripts from Hillary Clinton's speeches, interviews, and primary and general election debate appearances provided by The American Presidency Project were used for the content analysis yielding a sample size of 98 documents. The documents spanned the period from Clinton's announcement of her candidacy to her concession of the 2016 presidential election. Clinton's campaign rhetoric served as a comparison. Clinton is used as a comparison rather than a control because according to Jagers and Walgrave (2005) all types of politicians use a form of populism to mobilize support. They classify this ubiquitous form of populism, which only requires references to the people, as thin populism. Because it is likely that this form of populism will be evident in Clinton's campaign rhetoric, her use as a comparison was more apt.

Preliminary Codes

For this thesis, preliminary codes were developed based on the literature on populism and right-wing populism. The literature on populism indicates that populism has often been distilled to common elements. Core to populism are the 'people' and their hostile relationship with an 'other' (Deiwiks 2009, 2). Often the focuses of this antagonism are the political and economic elite. As such, populism includes tropes of a

corrupted system and an apocalyptic confrontation that will lead to change (Lee 2006, 362). This focus differs in right-wing populism. This brand of populism others racial groups and immigrants in particular. Prior studies have used these definitions to create codes for content analyses.

The traditional elements of populism were utilized by Bonikowski and Noam in their analysis. The duo analyzed 2,406 speeches of US presidential candidates from 1952 to 1996 using automated text-analysis methods (Bonikowski and Noam 2015, 1594). They used a dictionary of populist terms associated with economic populism and anti-statist populism. Negrea-Busuioac (2016) used a codebook that used “four dimensions of populist discourse: people-centered (any reference to the people), criticism of the corrupt political class/elite (including moral corruption), evoking and acclaiming the greatness of the country, and praise of Christian Orthodox values” (45-46). Similarly, Oliver and Rahn (2016) used two dictionaries “that captured anti-establishment rhetoric, one corresponding to political elites and the other, to economic elites.

Additionally, definitions offered by Hogan and Haltinner (2015) were used to create codes corresponding to right-wing populism. Hogan and Haltinner assert that there are three ways in which right-wing populist tend to portray immigrants as threats. These include immigrants as economic threats, security threats, and as cultural threats. The definitions offered by Hogan and Haltinner in addition to the scholarship discussed above were used to create the initial codebook used for this thesis. The individual codes are discussed in further detail below.

The people: The first code that was created was ‘the people.’ References to ‘the people’ are essential to populist rhetoric. This code highlights language that creates a sense of

group identity within the audience. Examples of this code include, but are not limited to “our country”; “working class men and women”; “Americans”; “our citizens”; “the American people”; “the people.” Variations of these words were also classified under this code. For instance, Trump used phrases such as “the forgotten people” that were also included under this code.

Traditional elite other: Two codes, “traditional elite other” and “racialized other,” were created to represent the ‘other.’ The “traditional elite other” denotes the ‘other’ associated with the traditional populism. References to the “traditional elite other” were coded using the code “anti-establishment.” The “anti-establishment” code was used to identify language that condemns and/or criticizes the political and/or economic elites. This code was adapted from the system used by Oliver and Rahn (2016), who coded for the criticism of political elites and the criticism of economic elites separately. As such the “anti-establishment” code combines the two dictionaries used by Oliver and Rahn and consists of keywords such as “Obama administration,” “politician(s),” the government (in Washington),” “the system,” as well as “special interests,” “IRS,” “lobbyists,” “donors,” and “campaign contributions.” These terms correspond to the institutions a populist may traditionally point to as failing ‘the people.’

Racialized other: The “racialized other” code was created to highlight the race based othering that characterizes right-wing populism. Three sub-codes were created to correspond to othering rhetoric attributed to right-wing populist as described by Hogan and Haltinner (2015). These include immigrants as economic threats, immigrants as threats to security, and immigrants as threats to culture. Words and phrases that described immigrants as an economic threat to native-born citizens were flagged with the

code “immigrants-econ.” Similarly, language that describes immigrants as a national security threat was coded as “immigrants-sec.” This included terms such as “crime” and “terrorists.” The last sub-code under “racialized other” is “immigrant-cult.” It was used to flag language that describes immigrants as undermining native culture.

Preliminary Round of Coding

Prior to coding the full sample of texts, the preliminary codes were used to code a random selection of Donald Trump’s speeches. This was done in order to combat the bias of directed content analysis that is derived from using set categories. Working strictly from the existing literature can narrow the scope of analysis by limiting the codes used and the language that fits inside those codes to the codes and language that appear in the literature. The preliminary round of coding allowed other themes to emerge that were not initially considered. For instance, codes were created based on the literature on right-wing populism. These initial codes only identified immigrants as threats. However, upon the first round of coding, it became evident that language that othered non-immigrant minorities was present in the campaign rhetoric and it should be coded for as well to identify right-wing populism.

In order to choose the sample for this preliminary round of coding, the transcribed documents were listed chronologically in an Excel spreadsheet and assigned a number 1 through 70. Using a random number generator, fifteen transcripts were chosen for coding using the initial set of codes. This sample included fourteen speeches and one primary debate appearance. Dedoose, an app designed for analyzing qualitative and mixed method research, was used for the coding of the transcripts. In Dedoose, the fifteen documents were assigned descriptors. One descriptor identified the candidate the

transcript was attributed to and the other descriptor identified the text type. A transcript could be attributed a text type of speech, debate, or interview.

After assigning a descriptor to a document, it was coded using the initial coding scheme mentioned above. The units of analysis varied by code. For the code ‘the people,’ phrases such as “American people” were coded as one unit of analysis. However, with the other codes, units of analysis were complete thoughts. Therefore, two or more sentences may have been assigned one code. For instance, the quote, “We have to have assimilation — to have a country, we have to have assimilation. I'm not the first one to say this, Dana. We've had many people over the years, for many, many years, saying the same thing. This is a country where we speak English, not Spanish,” from an appearance by Donald Trump at a Republican debate was coded as one instance of ‘racialized other’ and its sub-code ‘immigrants-cult’ (Trump 2016).

Additional Codes

Through this initial round of sample coding, other themes emerged that called for the creation of additional codes. Three additional codes, “working/middle class appeals,” “personal-attack,” and “scandal,” and two sub-codes, “native racial minority,” and “anti-media” were created. The reasons behind the addition of these codes will be explained in the subsequent sections. For a full list of the all the codes used in the content analysis see Table 1.

Working/middle class appeals: Economic crises have been identified as a factor that can contribute to a rise in populist sentiment. The addition of the code “economic crisis” codes for language that centers on the economic status of the United States and the

American people apart from the effect of immigrants and immigration. It includes mention of past unfavorable economic conditions and promises to remedy these conditions. Frequent mention of the country's economic conditions may indicate the presence of a pandering to populist sentiment.

Native racial minority: The initial round of coding also revealed that the code “racialized other” had omitted references to racial minorities that are non-immigrants. The addition of the sub-code “native racial minority” attempts to fill that gap in the coding.

Scandal and personal attack: The code “scandal” was created in order to account for this type of rhetoric. Coding this small sample also revealed that not all of the criticism focused on politics. The criticism could also be personal in nature. Thus, language that condemns or criticizes an opponent personally rather than on a political basis is coded as “personal-attack.” The presence of personal attacks aligns with Moffitt and Tormey's (2014) assertion that populists use bad manners to differentiate themselves from the political establishment.

Authoritarian: The “authoritarian” code was added to identify rhetoric that appealed to authoritarians and adds another dimension to the set of codes that correspond with right-wing populism. Right-wing populism appeals to authoritarians in that it emphasizes the traditional social order and often includes a tough on crime stance (Hogan and Haltinner 2015, 521). This code was used to highlight language that refers to protecting the established social order, norms, and/or social conventions. Trump's assertions at presidential debates in Missouri that “we're going to bring law and order” exemplify this type of rhetoric (2016).

People Primacy: For the populist, ‘the people’ are the true holders of sovereignty” (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 391). The “people primacy” code categorizes language that goes beyond merely invoking ‘the people.’ Language in this category promotes the primacy and sovereignty of the people. Examples of this type of language include statements such as Trump’s promise to “drain the swamp in Washington DC and replace it with a new government of, by, and for the people” (2016).

Anti-Media: The last additional code added was the “anti-media” code, which was a sub-code of “traditional elite other.” Language associated with this code condemns and critiques the media, an institution populists consider a part of the establishment.

Limitations

This thesis faces several limitations. Using transcripts from The American Presidency Project presents the first set of issues. Since the texts were prepared by another source, errors in transcription are not always readily fixable or knowable. For instance, there was one instance of duplicate interviews supplied for Clinton. Secondly, the transcripts available through The American Presidency Project are only a fraction of the total number speeches given during the campaign season. However, this was the best source available. I was unable to find any source that collected the entirety of the speeches from the campaign season in transcribed form. The candidates’ websites offered a limited selection of speeches from the course of the campaign, but more often than not in video format. In order to combat the sampling bias, all the speech, interview, and debate transcripts available through The American Presidency Project were included in the analysis. Limitations also arise from the nature of type of content analysis performed. As a directed content analysis, there is the potential for researcher bias in

deciding which theory based codes to use. I overcame this bias using a two pronged approach. First, I used the components of populism that were widely agreed upon in the literature as its essential components. This helped to combat issues of reliability. Following this selection, a preliminary round of coding was conducted. The preliminary round of coding allowed for themes to emerge naturally from the text that may have been overlooked.

Table 1

Codebook

Code	Full Name and Definition
Authoritarian	Authoritarian appeals: language that refers to protecting the established social order, norms, and/or social conventions
Working/middle class appeals	Working/middle class appeals: language that centers on the economic status of the U.S. and the American people apart from the effect of immigrants and immigration.
People	The ‘people’: words and phrases that creates a sense of group identity with the audience
Personal-attack	Personal attack: language that condemns or criticizes on a personal rather than on a political basis.
People primacy	People primacy: language in this category promotes the primacy and sovereignty of the people
Scandal	Scandal: language that refers to political or personal scandal
Racialized other	
Immigrants-cult	Immigrants as threats to culture: language that describes immigrants as undermining native culture

Immigrants-econ	Immigrants as economic threats: words and phrases that describes immigrants as an economic threat to native-born citizens
Immigrants-sec	Immigrants as threats to security: language that describes immigrants as a national security threat
Native racial minority	Non-immigrant racial minority: references to racial minorities that are non-immigrants
Traditional elite other	
Anti-establishment	Anti-establishment rhetoric: language that condemns and/or criticizes both the political and economic elites
Anti-media	Anti-media rhetoric: Language that condemns and/or criticizes the media

Findings

Results were obtained by analyzing the coded data in Dedoose and include frequency and co-occurrence. A total of 172 speech, interview, and debate transcripts were coded using the fifteen codes described in the methodology section. The content analysis resulted in 4,969 code applications. Despite the larger selection of transcripts associated with Hillary Clinton, a greater percentage of the code counts were attributed to the transcripts associated with Donald Trump. The results presented below address the ‘the people’ and their primacy, the elite other, the racialized other, authoritarian appeals, and economic language. Code applications will be presented as percentages in terms of Trump versus Clinton.

‘The people’ and their primacy

As an empty signifier, a term where intragroup differences are ignored and common characteristics of the group are emphasized, various groups may take on the

mantle of ‘the people’ including the entire population of a country, individuals of a particular nationality or culture, or individuals of a certain class (Deiwiks 2009, 1-2). ‘The people’ is the central audience of populists. This code identified language that creates a sense of group identity within the audience.

References to ‘the people’ were the most frequently used of all the codes. There were 1,343 people references found throughout 159 of the transcripts. The code appeared most frequently in Donald Trump’s “Remarks on Immigration at the Phoenix Convention Center.” In general, references to the people were a greater part of Trump’s rhetoric than Clinton’s. Trump’s rhetoric accounted for 59.7% of the all references to ‘the people.’ Seventy-two of the Trump transcripts attributed to Trump contained language invoking ‘the people’. Trump invoked the people using a variety of phrases. Terms used by Trump included, but were not limited to “our country,” “our people,” “the people,” “the American people,” “the American voter,” “American workers” and “working class Americans.” While Clinton used some of the same ‘people’ rhetoric as Trump, she would often speak to specific subgroups in her speeches, which may account for her slightly lower use of these terms. For instance, throughout the campaign Clinton repeated a variation of the following remarks which speak directly to the interests of women and individuals with children:

So if you believe the minimum wage should be a living wage, that no one who works full-time should have to raise their child in poverty, join us. If you believe that every man, woman, and child in America has the right to affordable healthcare and women should be free to make our own health decisions, join us. If you believe your working mother, wife, or sister, or daughter deserves equal pay, then join us. (2016)

It should be noted that Trump also deviated from these generic terms and affixed the adjective “forgotten” to ‘the people’ in several instances deeming them “the forgotten

people” and “our forgotten working people.” Although references to the “forgotten” constituted less than one percent of Trump’s total people rhetoric, this type of rhetoric was only present in his campaign.

However, the “forgotten man” is not a Trump invention. It has existed as a part of the political lexicon for decades and has been employed by previous presidents including presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Richard Nixon. President Roosevelt first used the term “forgotten man” in an address in 1932. In the midst of the Depression, Roosevelt called for plans built upon “faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid” (Roosevelt 1932). Roosevelt’s “forgotten man” referred to the working class, which Roosevelt argued had been neglected by the policies of the national government. President Richard Nixon used the term in the 1960s to consolidate his diverse base into the “Silent Majority.” They were “the great majority of Americans, the forgotten Americans, the nonshouters, the non-demonstrators” (King and Anderson 1971, 243). Nixon’s Silent Majority was composed of law abiding citizens who supported the actions of the government. Trump’s use of the “forgotten man” is closer to Roosevelt’s use of the term. The “forgotten man” of the Trump campaign was overlooked by the government. Like Roosevelt, Trump pledged to govern with this group in mind, to “be a voice for all of the forgotten Americans in this country. People who just want a secure community for their families, good schools for the kids, and a good-paying job to support their loved ones” (Trump 2016).

Overall, ‘the people’ were invoked most frequently in speeches and least frequently in interviews. Speeches contained 71.3% of the code’s application while interviews only contained 6.8% (see figure 1). This pattern was mirrored in each of the

candidates' individual content breakouts with speeches accounting for most frequent use terms associated with the people and interviews accounting for the least amount.

However, Trump's speeches accounted for a much greater proportion of his use 'the people' than Clinton's speeches account for her use of the associated terms.

Approximately 80% of Trump's invocation of 'the people' occurred in speeches as compared to Clinton's 59%. Conversely, Trump's interviews accounted for less than one percent of his use of the associated terms whereas Clinton's interviews accounted for 15.7% of her use of the terms. This pattern may be attributed to the audience of the content. Speeches are a way for the candidates to speak directly to the electorate.

Candidates are also able to control the content of their message with speeches, whereas interviews and are debates directed by a moderator.

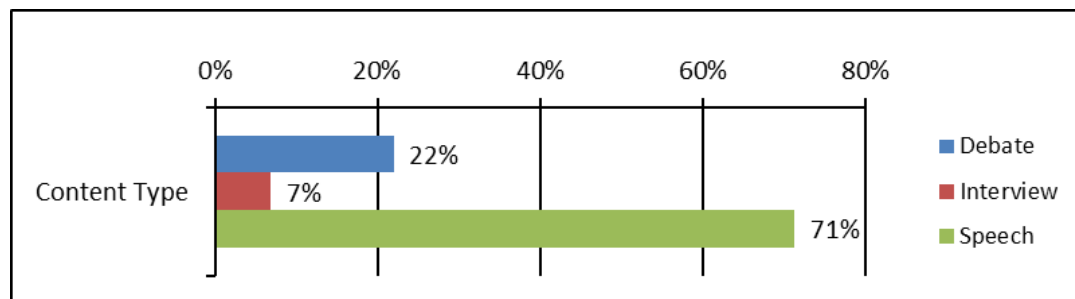


Figure 1. Aggregate use of 'the people' by content type.

As the only component necessary for thin populism and a common habit of politician, a degree of invoking 'the people' was expected from each candidate. Additional elements are required to move closer to the traditional conception of populism. Therefore, it is essential to examine each candidate's language for the other facets of populism to determine if a populism message was utilized.

Coding for people primacy aided in fulfilling this goal. Populists not only invoke ‘the people,’ but also believe that ‘the people’ are the only legitimate source of political power (Bonikowski and Gidron 2015, 1596). Populists attempt to restore this power to ‘the people.’ In order to capture this populist characteristic, language that promotes the primacy and sovereignty of the people was categorized under this code.

People primacy was coded for a total of 103 times occurring across thirty-eight transcripts. As with references to ‘the people,’ Trump used language centering on the primacy of the people most often. His rhetoric accounted for 98.1% the use of this type of language (see figure 2). People primacy had its highest rate of co-occurrence with the people code. The convergence of these two types of rhetoric is seen in Trump’s “Remarks to the 11th Annual Values Voter Summit” in which he states “It’s going to be American first, and it’s going to be the American worker first” (2016). This is an expected result as it is necessary to invoke ‘the people’ in order to promote their primacy. The anti-establishment code had the second highest rate of co-occurrence with people primacy. These two codes interacted in sentiments where candidates vowed to put the interests of ‘the people’ over the establishment. It is evident in statements such as “we are fighting for every citizen who believes that government should serve the people – not donors and special interests” where Trump calls for ‘the people’ to be the primary constituent of the government (Trump 2016). This message is in line with the populist demand that the ‘primacy of the people’ be restored and that the “elites would have to be replaced and in their place the new leaders (the populists) would act for the good of the ‘people’” (Deiwiks 2009, 2).

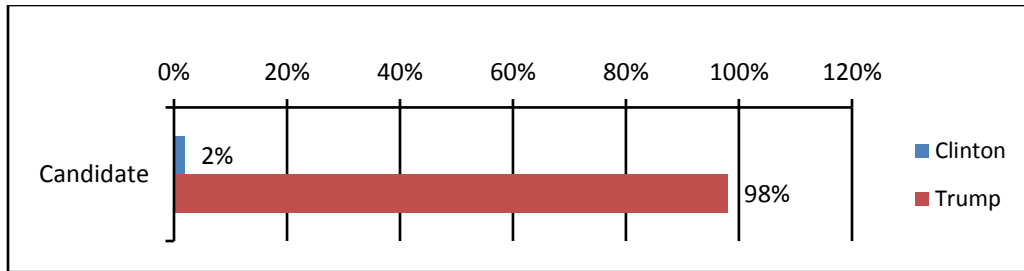


Figure 2. Use of the people primacy code by candidate.

Similar to the people code, language involving the primacy of ‘the people’ was found most often in the candidates’ speeches and least often in interviews. In fact, this code was completely absent from interview transcripts. Both Trump and Clinton used language emphasizing the primacy of the people most frequently in their speeches. For Trump, 89.1% of his usage was in speeches. Clinton had an even higher percentage with 100% of her usage occurring in her speeches. Just as with the invocation of ‘the people,’ speeches seem like the optimal medium to use this type of rhetoric as it is aimed at and delivered directly to ‘the people.’”

Examining the content of Trump’s speeches, a few key phrases become evident. Trump reiterates the primacy of ‘the people’ using the phrase “America first.” In his “Remarks at McGlohon Theatre at Spirit Square”, for example he asserts, “my vision rests on a principle that has defined this campaign: America First” (2016). He reiterates this message to his audience, ensuring in his remarks at the KI Convention that “under a Trump administration, it’s going to be America First” (2016). Trump uses this phrase to convey that if elected the interests of the American people will be put first on an international stage. Similar to “the forgotten man,” the phrase “America first” has a history in the American political lexicon. It has its roots in the isolationist group, the

America First Committee, which opposed the involvement of the United States in World War II. The group and thus the phrase were also associated with anti-Semitism.

Politician Pat Buchanan also used the phrase as a campaign slogan during the 2000 presidential run. He used the phrase to indicate his opposition to free trade (Calamur 2017). Trump's use of the term follows the tradition of Buchanan and suggests that the government should put the economic interests of the American people first when it comes to international dealings.

Although the phrase "America first" appeared a number of times, it was not the only reoccurring phrase Trump used to assert the primacy of the people. Trump also declared a number of times his administration would "be a government of, by and for the people" (2016). The corrupt government no longer governs with the will of the people in mind and thus need to be checked. This sentiment directly corresponds with the populist sentiment that the power should be in the hands of 'the people.'

The Elite Other

In order to create the identity of 'the people,' populists must not only define those who constitute the group, but also those who are excluded. As with 'the people,' a variety of groups can be categorized as 'the other.' Scholars (Bonikowski and Noam 2015, Negrea-Busuioc 2016, Oliver and Rahn 2016) tend to paint the political elite and the economic elite as this antagonistic force. However, institutions in general, may fall prey to the ire of populists. The traditional elite other code accounts for both the criticism of both the political and economic elite and institutions, specifically the media, through two sub-codes.

There were a total of 701 mentions of the traditional elite. The majority of these references were associated with Trump. His speeches, interviews, and debate remarks accounted for approximately, 85% of the references to the traditional elite. As with the people, mentions of the traditional elite appeared most frequently in Donald Trump's Remarks on Immigration at the Phoenix Convention Center. In this speech, Trump states "the fundamental problem with the immigration system in our country is that it serves the needs of wealthy donors, political activists and powerful politicians" (2016). Throughout his campaign, Trump played on the electorates negative views of immigrants. Here he plays on those negative feelings by putting the blame for immigration on the political establishment. Within the same speech, Trump invokes the traditional elite several other instances when criticizing the immigration system. He states that "to fix our immigration system, we must change our leadership in Washington and we must change it quickly" and "countless innocent American lives have been stolen because our politicians have failed their duty to secure our borders and enforce our laws like they have been enforced" (2016). According to Trump, the only way to remedy the immigration issue that plagues the populace is replace the current political establishment, who has failed to serve 'the people.'

Language condemning the traditional elite co-occurred at least once with each of the other codes. Excluding its sub-codes, traditional elite other had the highest rate of co-occurrence with the economic crisis code. The interaction between these two is apparent during Trump's appearance at the Republican Candidates Debate in Greenville, South Carolina where Trump criticized the political establishment's handling of the national debt. To Trump, politicians are all talk, no action and the actions that they do take make

the country worse off. Trump also makes statements with these co-occurring themes in his speeches such as with his “Remarks at Toyota of Portsmouth.” In these remarks, Trump blames the political establishment for the current economic plight of ‘the people.’ He contends that “we are also going to replace a failed political class that has betrayed our workers, spent trillions on endless foreign wars without victory, and destroyed our middle class” (2016). In this way, Trump used rhetoric that is not only others the traditional elite, but is also economically focused.

Trump consistently called for a replacement of the traditional American institutions. This included political institutions, but it also included the media. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the traditional elite other code was divided into two sub-codes, anti-establishment and anti-media. These sub-divisions allow a closer examination of Trump’s use of populism.

Anti-establishment. Barr (2009) asserts that anti-establishment politics argue that “the political class has failed to tend to the needs and interests of ordinary citizens and, as a result, changes are necessary” (37). In order to gauge Trump’s anti-establishment rhetoric language that condemns and/or criticizes both the political and economic elites was categorized using this code.

As with the codes previously discussed, the majority of applications of the anti-establishment code were associated with Trump. Of the 677 applications of the code, 84.9% of the applications were attributed to Trump. The anti-establishment code co-occurred most often with the economics code. The two codes co-occurred 228 times across ninety-one transcripts.

Similar to the people code, the anti-establishment code appeared most frequently in Donald Trump's "Remarks on Immigration at the Phoenix Convention Center." While addressing immigration in this speech, Trump made statements that denounced both politicians and special interests, such as:

These 10 steps, if rigorously followed and enforced, will accomplish more in a matter of months than our politicians have accomplished on this issue in the last 50 years. It's going to happen, folks. Because I am proudly not a politician, because I am not beholden to any special interest, I've spent a lot of money on my campaign, I'll tell you. I write those checks. Nobody owns Trump. (2016)

Clinton's anti-establishment rhetoric accounted for only 15.1% of the applied codes and tended to be aimed at the economic elites. This was evident in Clinton's speeches such as her "Remarks at Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza in Toledo" where she asserts, "it is wrong that corporations and the super-wealthy play by a different set of rules. A Wall Street money manager should not be able to pay a lower tax rate than a teacher or a nurse" (2016).

Overall, speeches contained the majority of the anti-establishment rhetoric accounting for 76.1% of the applications of the anti-establishment code. Debates and interviews accounted for 20.4% and 3.5% of anti-establishment rhetoric, respectively. When analyzing this pattern on a candidate level, the proportions were mirrored with speeches accounting for most frequent use of anti-establishment rhetoric and interviews accounting for the most infrequent.

Anti-media. Populists also attack traditional institutions outside of those political in nature. This includes the media. Language that condemns and/or criticizes the media was highlighted using the anti-media code. The anti-media code had only forty-three applications across twenty-five transcripts. Each of these applications was attributed to

Donald Trump. Anti-media language was concentrated in Trump's speeches. Nearly eighty-four percent of anti-media language was found in speeches with the remaining 16% found in Trump's debate transcripts. In his "Remarks at a Rally at the Waukesha County Expo Center", Trump used anti-media rhetoric stating, "We're trying to disrupt the collusion between the wealthy donors, the large corporations, and the media executives" (2016). There were several instances where Trump accused the media of colluding with the Clinton campaign. An example of this language is found in his "Remarks at the South Florida Fair Expo" where Trump stated that he was slandered and libeled by the "Clinton Machine, the New York Times, and other media outlets, as part of a concerted, coordinated and vicious attack" (2016).

Racialized other

Although studies of populism often focus on the antagonistic relationship between the political elites and 'the people,' various groups may take on the role of the other. Ethnonationalist and anti-immigrant sentiment characterize right-wing populism thus creating a racialized other. The racialized other code was created to highlight this race based othering and to measure the degree of right-wing populism present in Trump's rhetoric.

Language that created a racialized other occurred most often to Trump's rhetoric. His rhetoric accounted for 76.7% of racialized othering. Clinton's rhetoric accounted for 23.3% of the code's applications and the majority of this rhetoric was associated with the native racial minority sub-code. Clinton's mention of non-immigrant minorities often called attention to the issues minorities face. For instance, in a speech given at the New School for Social Research in New York City, Clinton states:

Talent is universal; you find it everywhere. But opportunity is not. There are nearly 6 million young people aged 16 to 24 in America today who are not in school or at work. The numbers for young people of color are particularly staggering. A quarter of young black men and nearly 15 percent of all Latino youth cannot find a job. We've got to do a better way of coming up to match the growing middle class incomes we want to generate with more pathways into the middle class. (2015)

Here and in other speeches, she discussed the lack of economic opportunity for citizens of color. Here rhetoric is also illustrative of a pattern present among the campaign rhetoric as a whole. The racialized other code co-occurred most often with the economic crisis code. However, these coded co-occurred a relatively low number of times, only sixty-seven times across thirty-two transcripts. This is most likely attributed to the existence of a sub-code that identifies language that labels immigrants as economic threats. Language that creates a racialized other and economic crisis language coincided in Trump's statements about the economic state of African-American and Hispanic communities. In his speeches, Trump promised to "fight to end the systemic poverty in our inner cities, and to lift millions of African-Americans and Hispanics out of poverty" (2016).

There were four sub-codes under the racialized other code. The codes included immigrants as a threat to culture, immigrants as a threat to economics, immigrants as a threat to culture, and non-immigrant racial minorities. The distribution of Trump's use of these types of rhetoric can be seen in figure 3. Three of the aforementioned codes were created from literature on right-wing populism and correspond to the othering of immigrants by right-wing populists.

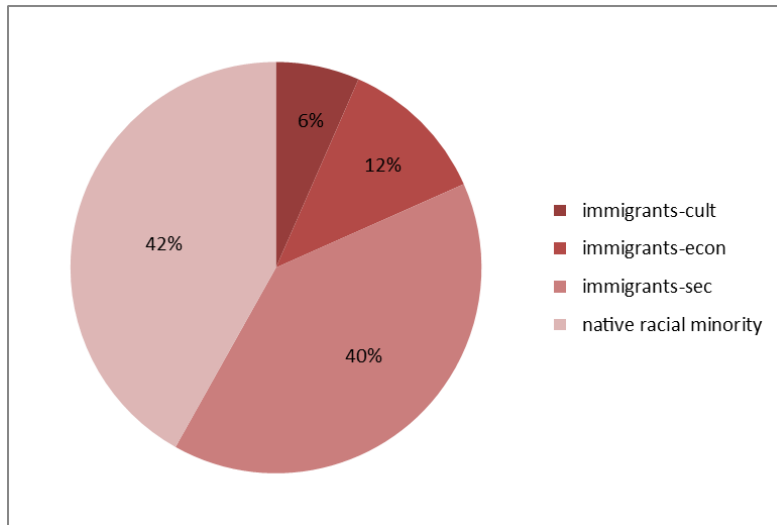


Figure 3. Percent breakdown of Trump's racialized othering by sub-category.

Immigrants as threats to culture.

The first category of racialized othering examined was immigrants as threats to culture. Right-wing populists tend to focus the cultural differences of immigrants. They find these differences irreconcilable with the native culture. This perceived inability of immigrants to assimilate cause right-wing populists to argue that immigrants undermine native culture (Hogan and Haltinner 2015, 540).

Although this type of language was used during the campaign, it was used relatively sparingly. Additionally, references to immigrants as threats to culture were exclusive to Donald Trump. This rhetoric primarily occurred in Trump's speeches with 94.7% of this othering language occurring in this medium. Of the three categories of othering language targeted at immigrants, rhetoric that suggests they are threats to American culture occurred least often. When using this type of language Trump tended to invoke the idea of American values. Othering language of this type was used primarily when discussing the vetting process for immigrations. A notable example is found in Trump's "Remarks at the Charlotte Convention Center" where he asserts that if elected

president “all applicants for immigration will be vetted for ties to radical ideology, and we will screen out anyone who doesn't share our values and love our people” (2016). In the same speech, he reinforces this sentiment declaring, “if you want to join our society, then you must embrace our society, our values and our tolerant way of life” (2016).

Immigrants as economic threats. According to Hogan and Haltinner (2015) right-wing populist groups frame immigrants as an economic threat. Immigrants depress wages as well as increase the cost of living and the tax burden for native-born citizen (527). This code highlighted rhetoric that reflected this belief.

The content analysis revealed that language that refers to immigrants as economic threats was also exclusive to Donald Trump. Trump used this othering language to depict immigrants as economic threats in two ways. One depiction was as a burden on the American taxpayer. He declared that illegal immigrants are a tremendous cost to the country due to the large estimated numbers using some form of welfare (2016). Additionally, Trump depicted immigrants as threats to the America worker. At times he identified specific groups of immigrant workers presented including veterans and native born racial minorities. In his “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention,” he made claims that immigrants take jobs from Americas and they have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for African-Americans and Latinos (2016).

It is of some note that Trump’s message about immigrants as an economic threat is inaccurate. For instance, a report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce states that “more than half of undocumented immigrants have federal and state income, Social Security, and Medicare taxes automatically deducted from their paychecks. However,

undocumented immigrants working “on the books” are not eligible for any of the federal or state benefits that their tax dollars help to fund” (U.S. Department of Commerce 2013, 11). This report similarly debunks Trump’s message that immigrants drive down American wages.

Even though his message was inaccurate, it played on the emotions of ‘the people.’ They were receptive to his message as they were discontent with their own economic standing and blamed immigrants. Trump similarly played on the electorate’s fear through rhetoric that painted immigrants as threats to security.

Immigrants as threats to security. In addition to viewing immigrants as threats to native culture and the economy, right-wing populists view immigrants as security threats. They use rhetoric that portrays immigrants as criminals. Right-wing populists tend to convey this message in a manner that presents this as common knowledge (Hogan and Haltinner 2015, 528).

Out of the three categories of language that depicts immigrants as a threat, immigrants as threats to security was used most often. Between the two candidates, Trump referred to immigrants as threats to security more frequently. Clinton’s rhetoric accounted for less than one percent of this type of language. Throughout his speeches, Trump referred to immigrants as murderers and drug lords. It was not uncommon for Trump to include the names of individuals murdered by illegal immigrants. For instance, in his “Remarks at Henderson Pavilion” he lists five different individuals. Trump would even go as far as describing the manner of their deaths for emphasis. Within the aforementioned speech, Trump notes an individual “who was brutally beaten and left to

bleed to death in his home” and an individual who was “viciously shot and killed by an illegal immigrant” (2016).

The presence of language that depicted immigrants as a threat, whether cultural, economic, or criminal was evident in the Trump campaign. This type of rhetoric indicates a degree of right-wing populism to his message. However, to fully examine the Trump’s use of a racialized other, his rhetoric towards non-immigrant racial minorities was also explored.

Non-immigrant racial minorities. Minorities do not need to be immigrants to be othered by populists. Historically, populists such as George Wallace have used race to other their fellow Americans. In order to identify the language used in regards to non-immigrant racial minorities, I used this sub-code. It helped conclude if non-immigrant racial minorities were othered in ways similar to immigrants.

The analysis shows that Trump used this type of language more often than Clinton. However, the difference in the rate of use between the two candidates was much less than in the racialized other sub-codes discussed above (see figure 4). Trump’s speech accounted for 60.8% of this type of language while Clinton’s speech accounted for only 39.2% of the total references. Rhetoric associated with non-immigrant racial minorities co-occurred with the economics code more than with any code save for its parent code. On several occasions, he claimed the failed policies of Democrats plunged African-American and Hispanic communities into “crime, poverty, and failing schools” (2016). Throughout the campaign, Trump tended to conflate the African-American and Hispanic populations with the inner cities and poverty.

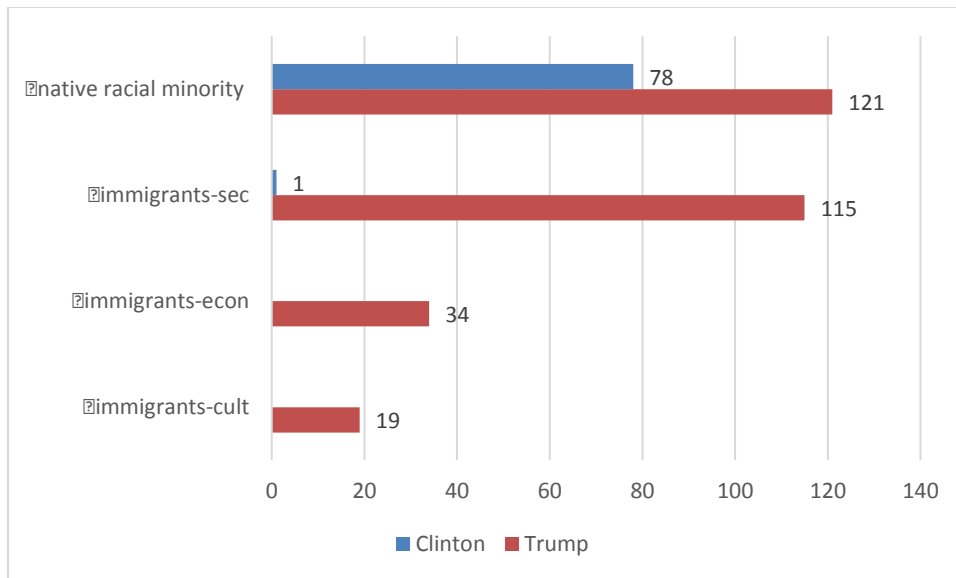


Figure 4. Comparison of instances of racialized other rhetoric by candidate.

Clinton’s mention of non-immigrant racial minorities differed from Trump’s. She would reference these populations most often in reference to criminal justice reform. Clinton advocated ending mass incarceration. In her remarks in Raleigh, North Carolina, Clinton vows that “we will reform our criminal justice system from end-to-end. It is wrong, my friends, that black men are far more likely to be stopped by police, charged and sentenced to longer prison terms than white men for the same offenses” (2016). Rhetoric concerning mass incarceration, criminal justice reform, and police brutality towards minorities constituted approximately 16% of Clinton’s rhetoric on non-immigrant racial minorities.

Authoritarian appeals

The authoritarian code was used to identify rhetoric that appealed to authoritarians and emphasized the traditional social order and tough on crime stance championed by right-wing populists (Hogan and Haltinner 2015, 521). This code was

used to highlight language that refers to protecting the established social order, norms, and/or social conventions.

Authoritarian appeals were used 220 times across seventy-two transcripts. Moreover, authoritarian appeals were almost exclusive to Trump's rhetoric. Clinton's speech represented less than 6% of the candidates' use of authoritarian language. As with the other codes described, the majority of this language occurred in the candidates' speeches. Less than 25% of authoritarian appeals were found in interviews and debates. When examining this breakdown for each candidate, Trump follows this trend more closely while for Clinton, debates and interviews constitute approximately 46% of her use of authoritarian appeals (see figure 5). It is probable that as with invocations of the people, authoritarian appeals are most prevalently used in speeches as the candidates have the chance to make these appeals directly to their intended audience.

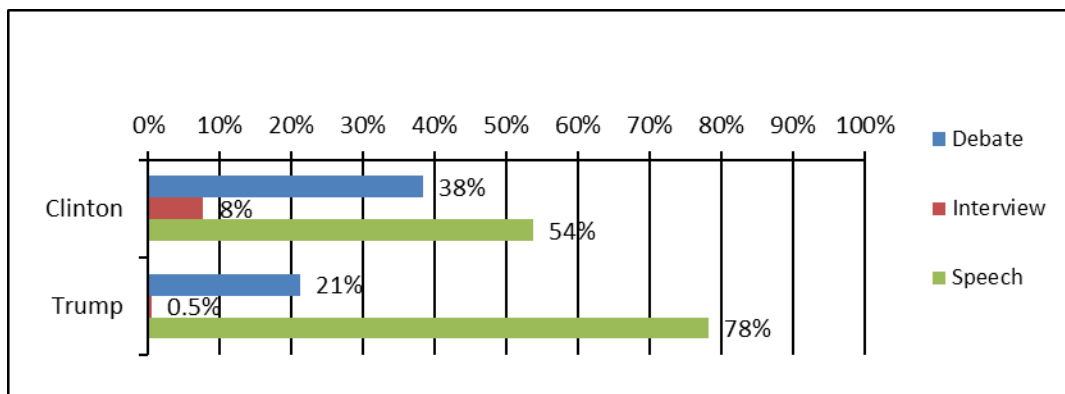


Figure 5. Individual candidates' use of authoritarian appeals by content type.

Trump's authoritarian appeals tended to fall into two categories, appeals related to physical safety and appeals related to protecting social status. Appeals related to physical safety came in the form of Trump's call for a return to law and order. During his speech announcing Mike Pence as his running mate, Trump explicitly refers to the duo as the law

and order candidates. This sentiment is echoed during the presidential debates where Trump vows to “bring back law and order...to bring back respect to law enforcement” (2016). This statement appeals directly to authoritarians. Authoritarians seek uniformity and order. As such they tend to follow leaders that offer to create these conditions (MacWilliams 2016, 717). Trump also appealed to authoritarians through his promise to restore and protect the country’s social status. These appeals came in the form of his slogan to make “America great again.” This pledge was accompanied by similar promises as seen in Trump’s “Remarks to the American Legion in Cincinnati” where Trump guarantees, “We will make America Strong Again. We will Make America Proud Again. We will Make America Safe Again. We will Make America Great Again” (2016). These pledges accounted for approximately 21% of Trump’s authoritarian appeals.

His vows to restore America to a previous state appeals to authoritarians’ desire to stick to norms and the status quo. However, Trump did not exclusively make appeals to authoritarian voters. He also appealed to the economic concerns of middle and working class voters.

Working/middle class appeals

Moffitt and Tormey (2014) posit that populism “gets its impetus from the perception of crisis, breakdown, or threat” (391). In recent history, the white working class has faced stagnating wages and underemployment. The middle/working class code attempted to measure the degree which candidates were appealing to this sense of economic crisis within the electorate. It focused on language that centers on the economic status of the U.S. and the American people apart from the effect of immigrants and immigration.

This type of rhetoric was the second most frequently used by Clinton and Trump. It was used a total of 955 times and appeared in 82% of transcripts. Trump used economic crisis rhetoric more often than Clinton, but the difference in usage between the two candidates was minimal. Trump accounted for 51.8% of all economic rhetoric and Clinton accounted for the remaining 48.2%. Both Clinton and Trump discussed the economy most often in their speeches and least often in interviews.

Both candidates proposed policies to improve the economic status of America and its citizens. For example, Clinton's plan included raising the minimum wage. She regularly mentioned her support for "the fight for 15," the quest to have the federal minimum wage increased to \$15 an hour. Trump focused on protecting domestic jobs. He promised to both "change immigration rules to give unemployed Americans an opportunity to fill good-paying jobs [and] cancel rules and regulations that send jobs overseas" (2016). Although the candidates took different approaches to economic policy, the frequency of use indicates it as an important campaign topic for both.

The candidates' focus on this issue was supported by voter sentiment. A poll conducted during the primaries by the Pew Research Center concerning voters' views on the economy revealed the negative assessment of voters on the country's economic state. Overall, 68 percent of voters felt that the economic system in the country unfairly favors powerful interests (Pew Research Center 2016, 34). The candidates' awareness of this sentiment is reflected in the high co-occurrence of economic rhetoric with anti-establishment language. When broken down by ideological views, 54 percent of those who self-identified as Republican or as leaning Republican poll expressed these pessimistic views. This number was higher for Republicans who were Trump supporters,

however, with 61 percent sharing this point of view. Sentiments on the current economic conditions were more favorable. Only 29 percent of voters considered economic conditions poor. Trump supporters had more negative perception. Forty-eight percent of Trump voters said they felt economic conditions were poor. These negative views give credence to both Trump's and Clinton's promises to improve economic conditions for voters.

CHAPTER THREE

Discussion

This thesis was based on the assumption that Donald Trump could legitimately incorporate populist rhetoric into his campaign due to his status as a political outsider. It explored how he leveraged this status through the use of right-wing populist rhetoric to win the 2016 presidential election despite his complete lack of political experience. While scholarship on outsider politicians and the presidency exists, most of it is centered on Latin American democracies. The corresponding work on outsiders in the United States can be categorized in two ways: third party candidates competing for the presidency and amateur outsiders competing for congressional offices. This research fills the gap in the scholarship by focusing on an amateur outsider politician in the U.S. presidential race albeit through the lens of populism. It gives insight into the ways institutional weaknesses can and have provided an opening for an outsider politician to succeed at the highest level. Additionally, the results of this thesis confirm that populist rhetoric can resonate with the electorate when employed by the right candidate at the right time.

In order to explore Donald Trump's use of right-wing populism, I conducted a content analysis to examine Trump's rhetoric in speeches, interviews, and debates for the hallmarks of right-wing populism including appeals to 'the people,' anti-immigrant sentiment, and authoritarian appeals. The rhetoric of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, was included in this analysis to serve as a point of comparison. The primary goal of this thesis was to answer the following research questions: Did Donald Trump incorporate populist language into his campaign rhetoric? Among the major party

frontrunners, was populist language unique to Trump? If Donald Trump employed populist language in his campaign, was the language used ring-wing in nature? This chapter provides the answers to the above research questions.

It addresses each of the initial research questions and provides answers based on the findings presented in the previous chapter. In the process of answering the research questions I situate the findings in the existing literature. I highlight the ways in which the findings support or refute the prevailing literature as well as any areas this thesis expands the scholarship. Next, the real world implications of Trump's success an outsider and a populist are explored. This section discusses the ramifications of the election of Trump including the creation of conflict between the executive and legislative branches, the appointment of inexperienced cabinet appointees, and the possibility of the normalization of racist rhetoric.

Research Question 1: Did Donald Trump incorporate populist language into his campaign rhetoric?

The first goal of this thesis was to identify the presence of populist language as a part of Trump's campaign rhetoric. A review of the literature was used to determine the universally agreed upon elements of populism. These elements included appeals to 'the people,' promotion of the primacy of 'the people,' and the othering of the political and economic elite. Coding for these elements revealed that Trump's campaign involved several instances of each type of rhetoric and did in fact use populist rhetoric in his campaign.

The first component of populism coded for was rhetoric involving 'the people.' Trump not only used this language throughout the campaign, his rate of invoking 'the

people’ was the highest among all of his rhetoric. The use of this type of language is particularly significant as its presence in Trump’s campaign allowed him to meet the standards for thin populism. Trump used the common phrases associated with ‘the people’ including “the American people” and “the American voter,” but he also set himself apart from Clinton by using a narrower definition ‘the people.’ He stepped outside of the generic people rhetoric opting to include the descriptor “forgotten” and addressing “the forgotten man” upon occasion. In doing so, Trump follows the precedent of previous American presidents and draws upon the historical connotations of “the forgotten man.” He builds a specific coalition from underserved voters. It is this language that acknowledges the stagnating middle class. Trump used this populist rhetoric to reach out to the portion of the electorate that felt neglected by the political establishment.

Trump bolstered his thin populism by emphasizing the primacy of the people. A core part of his campaign was the promise to put the American people first. He guaranteed that trade deals would be renegotiated to benefit the American worker if he were to be elected. The public was assured that under a Trump administration, the government would answer to ‘the people’ not special interests. This America first pledge distinguished Trump’s campaign from Clinton’s. Trump’s rhetoric championed ‘the people’ and leads towards a fuller version of populism. While Clinton invoked the people, similar language emphasizing the primacy of the people was virtually absent in from her campaign.

Trump’s populism is completed by his anti-establishment rhetoric as illustrated by his othering of the political elites. Although Trump criticized Obama and his

administration, his criticism was not limited to the Democrats. There were many times that Trump lumped all politicians together and made them the target of his condemnation. Trump viewed politicians as beholden to special interests and therefore ineffective in serving the American public. This tendency to condemn both Democrats and Republicans differentiates Trump's remarks from normal partisan campaign rhetoric. For Trump, the political establishment as a whole is deserving of criticism. He even criticizes non-partisan institutes such as the Federal Reserve.

This finding corroborates the results of the study of Oliver and Rahn (2016). The authors found that Trump's rhetoric leaned heavily on anti-political elite sentiment. This was evidenced by his high use of anti-establishment rhetoric in combination with instances of promoting the primacy of the people. In his speeches, Trump took every opportunity to disavow being labeled a politician, to describe the government as ineffective and corrupt, and to call for a return of a government beholden to the people. Oliver and Rahn also found that Democrats were more likely to use economic populism that targets business elites. This finding of this analysis found evidence of pushback against the economic elites in Clinton's campaign rhetoric. Language condemning the economic advantages held by members of Wall Street as compared to the average citizen was a reoccurring message in the Clinton campaign.

In addition to supporting the findings of existing scholarship, this analysis illustrates how populists may construct the other from groups outside of the elites. The criticisms Trump levied were not solely focused on politicians and political institutions. Trump also attacked the media as an institution. However, in his attacks, Trump treated the media as an extension of the political establishment. When he spoke of the media,

Trump portrayed the media as colluding with politicians. From his perspective, the media not only propped up the existing political establishment, but the media also sought to prevent Trump's movement.

The results this analysis show that Trump used language that exemplified all of the basic components of populism. He used appeals to 'the people,' promoted the primacy of this group, and used rhetoric containing anti-establishment sentiment. The presence of these components confirms Trump's use of populist rhetoric.

Research Question 2: Was populist language unique to Trump?

The second goal of this thesis was to determine if populist language was unique to Trump. In order to do so, Trump's campaign was compared Clinton's, as she was the other major party candidate. I coded for the elements described above (people rhetoric, language promoting the primacy of the people, and anti-establishment rhetoric) in Clinton's speeches, interviews, and debate appearances in the same manner as was done for the Trump campaign.

The analysis concluded that both candidates used a form of thin populism throughout the election season by invoking 'the people'. For both candidates, people rhetoric was the most commonly used type of populist rhetoric in their campaigns. However, the two candidates did not have equal rates of use of this type of language. Trump's campaign contained roughly 48% more references to 'the people.' This was a reoccurring pattern when comparing the rhetoric of the candidates in each category. Trump used each populist element at a much higher rate than Clinton.

Even though Clinton used people rhetoric often, her use of language promoting the primacy of the people was sparse. While Trump employed this language over a

hundred times, Clinton only did so twice. In both of these instances, Clinton explicitly stated she wants to be a champion for hard-working Americans. Similarly, Clinton used a relatively low amount of anti-establishment rhetoric. She used it approximately six times less than Trump did and anti-media rhetoric is non-existent in Clinton's campaign. The scarcity of this rhetoric in Clinton's campaign is an indication that Clinton's populism is relatively thin, especially compared to Trump's.

The results of the content analysis support the assertion that all types of politicians use thin populism to mobilize support (Jagers and Walgrave 2005, 320-23). Examining the campaigns of both candidates revealed rhetoric that invoked 'the people.' People rhetoric occurred more often than any of the other types of the coded rhetoric. References to 'the people' allow political speech to meet the criteria for thin populism. Its widespread use among politicians makes its frequency of use in this election an unsurprising result.

The confirmation of the use of populism by Trump's campaign as well as the relative lack of use of populism used by Clinton supports several of the results of Bonikowski and Gidron (2015). The duo found that the length of candidate's career had a negative relationship with the use of populist claims. Those candidates with longer careers face greater difficulty in credibly using populist rhetoric. Bonikowski and Gidron also found that candidates from the incumbent party tended to avoid the use of populist rhetoric. Notably, members of the previous administration are least likely to make populist claims. Conversely, candidates who had not previously held political office were more likely to make populist claims.

The results of this analysis follow that pattern. Clinton checked off many of the boxes that would prevent her from using populist rhetoric. She had a long political career including two terms in the United States Senate and tenure as the Secretary of State. The latter position also serves as an indicator of Clinton's ability to credibly use populist rhetoric as this position was under the previous administration. This is reflected in her sparse use of the rhetoric throughout the 2016 campaign. It is of note that Senator Bernie Sanders, who has also had a long political career, was able to use populist rhetoric credibly in the Democratic primaries Sanders' may have been able to more credibly brand himself as an outsider. He is not officially a member of the Democratic Party, but is an independent that caucuses with them in the Senate.

Examining Trump's political career, he was in many ways, the direct opposite of Clinton. He came into the presidential race as an amateur politician without any political experience and he did so on the ticket of the opposition party. These characteristics made it more likely for him to use populist rhetoric. The results of this thesis confirm the work of Bonikowski and Gidron and indicate that Trump took advantage of his ability to make populist claims freely.

Trump's campaign involved the necessary rhetorical elements to characterize Trump's rhetoric as a thick form of populism and distinguish it from the thin populism employed by Clinton. His campaign rhetoric contained much higher rates of criticism of the elites and championing 'the people' than Clinton's. His rate of use of these types of language was about nine times higher than Clinton's use. This large disparity in the rates of use of populist language indicates that although there were some populist elements to Clinton's campaign, populism was primarily a characteristic of Trump's campaign.

Research Question 3: Was the language used by Donald Trump right-wing in nature?

Right-wing populism as defined by Hogan and Haltinner (2015) is “characterized by ethnonationalist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments; an emphasis on the ‘traditional’ social order, which usually includes a tough-on-crime stance with severe penalties for those who violate the rules; and the scapegoating of perceived ‘freeloaders’ and including government and intellectual elites and nonproductive welfare-dependent underclass” (520). In order to determine if Trump’s populism was right-wing in nature, language othering minorities and authoritarian appeals were coded. The presences of such language would give a positive indication that Trump’s populist rhetoric was right-wing.

Much of the literature on populism focuses on the tension between ‘the people’ and the elites. However, populists may construct the other from any group that is not considered a part of ‘the people.’ The results of this thesis reveal that in addition to the elites, Trump creates the other out of racial minorities. The analysis revealed that Trump utilized all three categories of threat identified by Hogan and Haltinner. Trump’s racial othering points to the presence of an additional layer of right-wing ideology in his populism.

He described immigrants as threats to the American economy. As expected, Trump asserted that immigrants lower the wage for America workers and raise the level of unemployment in the country. He did so in order to appeal to the frustrations of the ‘forgotten working people.’ Similarly, Trump plays on the electorate’s economic frustrations by echoing the false belief that the ‘forgotten working people’ have to support immigrants’ through government subsidies. This message and its reception by

the electorate exemplify economic crisis as an impetus for populism. It supports Moffitt and Tormey's (2014) assertion that the crises that promote the emergence of populism may be real or constructed. Government data shows that these economic fears associated with immigrants are unfounded. Illegal immigrants do not drive down American wages and they are not eligible to receive government subsidies.

Although there is evidence Trump exploited the electorate's economic concerns, there is greater evidence that Trump attempted to take advantage of their security concerns. During his campaign, he described immigrants as a danger to American citizen. He portrayed immigrants as murderers and rapists that needed to be prevented from entering the United States. The abundance of this language was unexpected because economic security and the loss of jobs to immigrants seemed to be the more salient issues of his campaign. However, with the terrorist attacks and the refugee crisis that occurred during the campaign, security issues had to be addressed and this was reflected in Trump's rhetoric. These crises may have affected the rate of use of this type of rhetoric. Depicting immigrants as a threat to the nation's security provided Trump a subject to build his authoritarian appeals around.

The rhetoric of Trump's campaign also portrayed as cultural threats. He spoke of immigrants in terms of assimilation. For Trump, there were immigrants who posed a threat American culture and whose values were incompatible with American values. Those individuals were to be prevented from entering the country. The presence of this threat narrative in addition to the two types discusses above indicate that Trump engaged in the racial othering of immigrants. These results build on the research of Hogan and Haltinner (2015). The definitions used to identify racialized othering were based on the

work of these authors. However, the authors broadly explore the threat narratives employed by several right-wing populist groups. Through the use of content analysis, this thesis examines this right-wing rhetoric more closely by systematically by analyzing candidates' speeches.

Trump played heavily on the American people's fears using authoritarian appeals. His pledge to be the law and order candidate, a key authoritarian phrase, was used to draw in voters with authoritarian personalities. Trump promised to not only bolster law enforcement at home, but also to protect the nation from external threats. In nearly every speech, he reminded the public that he was going to build a wall on the border to keep out individuals who bring crime and drugs to the country. He described himself as the candidate who would implement extreme vetting on those who attempt to enter the country through legal means. Trump's campaign included bold claims about how he would restore America to its former glory, promising not only to just restore safety, but also to restore the country's status. According to Trump, America would begin to win again under his administration. His campaign rhetoric was rife with this type of language. The type of language authoritarian voters could rally around. The examination of authoritarian language in this analysis adds a new dimension to the work done by Hogan and Haltinner. While they examine the language of right-wing populist movements and acknowledge that law and order rhetoric is a part of right-wing ideology, they focused their research solely on the immigrant threat narrative. Hogan and Haltinner failed to analyze the authoritarian aspects of right-wing populism. The inclusion of authoritarian rhetoric in this analysis gives a more complete picture of the right-wing populism that was employed.

The results of this thesis also contribute to the literature through the exploration of the othering of non-immigrant racial minorities. Trump's othering of non-immigrant minorities takes a different form than his othering of immigrants. It is more understated in nature and because it is not as obvious as the othering of immigrants, it may be overlooked at first glance. Whenever Trump mentioned African-American and Hispanic communities, he would also mention poverty, poor education, and crime. He conflated these communities with the inner cities suggesting all African-Americans and Hispanics lived in inner cities and that the problems of the inner cities were only those of African-Americans and Hispanics. While he did not use antagonistic language when speaking of these communities, by mentioning them only in association with the issues of poverty, poor education, and crime Trump paints them as different from the working class American he typically addressed. Although they are not depicted as threats, these minority communities are not entirely included in 'the people.'

The results of the content analysis show throughout the campaign Trump used language that painted immigrants as threats. Throughout the campaign, he referred to these individuals as threats to American security, its economy, and its culture. He associated immigrants with radical ideology and implied they were intolerant of American values. In his speeches, Trump expressed to his audiences that immigrants were a financial burden to the American people. They deplete the welfare system and take jobs from American citizens. Similar language was virtually non-existent in the Clinton campaign. Additionally, Trump used the authoritarian language of law and order associated with right-wing moments. The presence of anti-immigrant sentiment in

combination with authoritarian appeals indicates that Trump did employ right-wing populism

Implications

This thesis identified rhetoric in Trump's campaign that can be categorized as right-wing populism. He was able to use this rhetoric legitimately due to his status as a political outsider and gain the support of the electorate. Although outsiders have taken the highest executive office in other countries, it is a rarity in the United States. This thesis serves to illustrate how such an inexperienced candidate can gain power as well as the type of language that resonates with the electorate to make that possible. It verifies that populist language can be effective, especially when implemented in the right context. The results of this thesis are significant as they support the existing literature on populism, which aids in the identification of the circumstances and the rhetoric that can lead to the election of a candidate like Trump. This is key because there are real world implications for the election of an inexperienced president, several that have already begun to impact the United States.

The first set of implications are derived from Trump's status as a political outsider. The literature shows that outsiders can cause major conflict within the government. Carreras (2014) illuminates a number of issues that can arise when an inexperienced outsider is elected to the presidency. Disputes between the executive and legislative branches increase due to lack of democratic socialization. Political outsiders are not accustomed to negotiation and compromise. Secondly, due to lack of ties with traditional parties, outsiders tend to have cabinets "constituted by members of their

personal networks of support with very limited previous experience in public administration (Carreras 2014, 74-75).

Both of these issues have already become problems for the Trump administration during his first few months in office. He faced opposition from both Democrats and Republicans in his attempt to fulfill his campaign promise to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. This promise was a part of the anti-establishment rhetoric of his campaign. However, he was unable to deliver and withdrew the bill for a replacement when it was obvious the bill would not pass. His inability to build coalitions may make for a disappointment for those who voted for him and, more importantly, ineffective governing.

This ineffective governing may be intensified by his cabinet choices. Due to their lack of political ties, outsider presidents tend to have cabinets consisting of individuals from their personal networks. The literature goes as far as labeling these individuals as cronies (Carreras 2014, 75). This pattern is reflected in Trump's cabinet. He nominated individuals with backgrounds similar to his own, politically inexperienced with longstanding careers in business, to run key departments such as the Department of State and the Department of Education. Their lack of expertise and experience may have negative repercussions for the American people.

Trump's lack of governing experience has already had ramifications, but the populist rhetoric of his campaign is also likely to have repercussions. Much of populist rhetoric relies on othering groups. Trump's right-wing rhetoric specifically condemned immigrants. Over the course of the election, he painted immigrants as violent, a drain on American society, and at odds with the country's values. Trump's anti-immigrant

rhetoric has created a space where his supporters also feel comfortable promoting intolerance of those unlike themselves. Now that Trump is in office, this sentiment is even further legitimized among supporters and over the course of presidency could be normalized. Although Trump has not been successful thus far with his legislative agenda, historically, right-wing populist groups have affected national discourse and public policy. With four years left in his term, the full impact of Trump's presidency has yet to be seen.

Conclusion

A number of factors came together that created the circumstances for Donald Trump to be elected president of the United States. There were few systematic barriers to Trump's entry into the 2016 U.S. presidential race. A weak party system and an open career structure allowed Trump to become a formidable candidate. American voters that were unsatisfied with their socioeconomic status and felt a lack of political representation were primed to receive a populist message. Moreover, Trump's opponent was an individual who symbolized the establishment that voters were rallying against and thus could not offer the people a credible populist message of her own. Due to these factors Trump had an opening to take advantage of voter discontent.

This thesis confirmed that Trump did in fact employ a populist message. It determined that the main components of populism were present in Trump's campaign rhetoric. He invoked a forgotten middle class, used anti-establishment language, and presented the political elites as the enemy of the people. Specifically, Trump employed rhetoric that was right-wing in nature. He incorporated into his campaign not only a

narrative of immigrants as threats, but also authoritarian language. In doing so he was able to capitalize on the electorate's sense of economic crisis and immigration as a perceived cause of this crisis. Trump was able to ride a wave of populism that won him the election.

Future research may want to expand on this project. It would be interesting to determine how the rhetoric of this election compares to the previous election. Was there as much populist rhetoric employed in the previous election cycle? Was populism language employed at all? Additionally, future research may investigate if a populist candidate's rhetoric changes according to the composition of the audience. Do certain audiences elicit a more or less populist message than others? Are certain components of the populist message emphasized when presented to certain audiences?

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