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Why Donald Might Tr(i)ump(h)

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in the Multilingual Business Communication.

Academic year 2015-2016

Supervisor: Olaf Du Pont

                Department of Linguistics

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Permission

We declare that others are allowed to consult and/or reproduce this thesis, if cited.

Ward Boone and Johannes Huysmans

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Abstract

Within this thesis, we not only try to explain the political rise of the unconventional 2016 U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump, we try to figure out if he stands a chance to become the 45th President of the United States on January 20, 2017, as well. We analyzed his brand, rhetoric, opponents and American history by looking into numerous American, British and Belgian newspapers and magazines and linked those results to a theoretical framework concerning brand image and social media. As Twitter has become a useful and important tool for political candidates to directly reach possible voters in the last couple of years, we have added multiple tweets of Trump to state our findings and conclusions. We compared Trump's brand as well as his policy to those to the Republican and Democratic Party, Hillary Clinton, Ted Cruz, Jeb Bush, Gary Johnson and Ronald Reagan. Finally, we link Trump's rise to alike phenomena and persons around the world and predict the outcome of the elections on November 8, 2016.

1. Introduction

On June 16, 2015 Donald J. Trump publicly announced his presidential candidacy and immediately stirred up a media storm. Very few people, however, considered that the eccentric billionaire would have a shot at the Republican nomination, let alone become President of the United States. It is easy to forget that his is by no means the first time Trump is on the verge of a presidential candidacy. Multiple polls during the previous elections showed that he actually did stand a chance, and a very decent one at that time. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll from March 2011 put Trump in the lead for the Republican nomination for President of the United States (Wall Street Journal, 2011, March). In February 2011 a Newsweek poll placed him within a few points of President Obama in a potential presidential contest, but many voters were left undecided (Newsweek, 2001, February). And finally, a poll released in April 2011 by Public Policy Polling showed Trump having a nine-point lead in a potential contest for the Republican nomination for President of the United States while he was still actively considering a run (Daily News, 2011, April).

Nevertheless, the belief that Trump would never become President of the United States, did not fade. Journalist Dana Milbank for example wrote a column for the Washington Post on Donald Trump titled '*Trump will lose or I will eat this column*' in October 2015 (Washington Post, 2015, October) and even election specialist Nate Silver believed Trump's chances of success were rather slim. In August 2015 he gave Donald Trump only a two percent chance to clinch the Republican nomination. Note that Silver correctly estimated the presidential outcome in 49 of the 50 American states in 2008 and was one of the very few that successfully predicted Barack Obama's victory over Mitt Romney four years later. Since then, Trump has proved both those men and many other early sceptics, wrong. As a result, Milbank is still digesting his column and Silver altered his prediction. He now gives Trump twenty percent chance to become the 45th President of the United States on the 8th of November 2016 (Daily Mail, 2016, May; FiveThirtyEight, 2015, August & 2016, June).

Trump is one of the most, if not the most, contested and controversial presidential candidate in the last decades. Within this research, however, we did not choose to create a mere list of all the controversial things Trump did, stated or tweeted. Not only would this undermine the scientific ground and goal of this research, the list already exists. A Politico journalist listed the top comments Trump made during the last decades about religious and ethnic minorities, women and American society and called it '*The 15 most offensive things that have come out of Trump's mouth*'. The list mentions some examples, which have meanwhile almost evolved into Trump classics, including statements such as

'*laziness is a trait in blacks*', calling Jews '*negotiators*', the Japanese '*Japs*' and Mexicans '*rapists*'. When he was asked how to treat women, he even stated that '*you have to treat them like shit*'. The reporter responded by claiming Trump '*would make a good Mafioso',* to which the presidential candidate replied: '*One of the greatest*' (Politico, 2015, December).

So how then did almost nobody foresee the rise of Trump during in the 2016 presidential elections? Why were so many people surprised or even shocked? And are his chances to succeed Obama really that slim? Within this paper, we have tried to explain the rise in popularity of Donald J. Trump by deconstructing him into a brand and evaluating his campaign from this perspective.

2. Research Question

The previous examples of Milbank and Silver seem to be characteristic for the early 'expert' opinions on Donald J. Trump's candidacy. The majority of those experts and political watchers deemed Trump's views and ideas as too radical or unrealistic and therefore considered his chances for a successful campaign very slim. On the 16th of June, 2015, the day Trump officially announced his run for presidency, the Washington Post claimed that he would face 'an uphill battle to be taken seriously by his rivals, political watchers and the media' (Washington Post, 2015, June). However, all of them seem to have overlooked one crucial aspect of the Trump phenomenon: his brand.

Within this research paper, we aim to evaluate to which extent the brand 'Trump' is the reason for the man's political success. Experts and political watchers seem to underestimate its influence. Do people vote exclusively for his vision and opinion or for his brand? Or do they admire the combination of both those elements? Our goal is to find out which elements cause the *silent majority* to massively vote for Donald J. Trump by analyzing both his persona and brand within the contemporary political field.

The main tool that we use in order to dissect the brand 'Trump' is the Brand Personality Scale (cf. infra) by Aaker. The scale allows us to have a look at Trump from different perspectives and find potential reasons for his success. In a second step, the general findings from that traditional brand analysis are connected with a corpus of political comments, providing viewpoints from both an academic and journalistic perspective. They consist of the socio-political and psychological insights of Jonathan Haidt (cf. infra) and numerous American, British and Belgian publications such as newspapers, websites, video's, etc. Finally, we also broaden our research frame and underline our conclusions by integrating Trump's most used media channel: Twitter. His *tweets* are linked up with Aaker's scale and the academic/journalistic corpus in order to see if they support our analyses.

3. Theoretical Framework

To conduct our research, we established a theoretical framework that provides an insight in the psychological, political, sociological, marketing and linguistic basis that is needed to properly answer our research question. All those different publications also function as a backbone that structures this research paper, and can be grouped in three different sets:

The main source we consulted and integrated is *Dimensions of Brand Personality* by Jennifer L. Aaker. Unfortunately, due to our limited time frame, we had no other option than to incorporate only this brand research. However, this does not offset the scientific ground of our research as Aaker's work emerged as an established framework to evaluate the effects of brands and brand personality. In 2009, for example, Francisco Guzman and Vicenta Sierra used Aaker's scale in combination with Caprara's personality frameworks to analyze Mexico's 2006 election in *A political candidate's brand image scale: Are political candidates brand?*. A review of *Dimensions of Brand Personality* from 2014 will also prove the applicability of the scale and features in the next chapter (cf. infra).

The Righteous Mind and the essay '*When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism',* both by Jonathan Haidt, form the backbone of the second part of our framework. The works are cross-referenced with our supply of journalistic sources in order to extensively substantiate the findings of the traditional brand analysis.

Finally, in order to also include the social media conversations related to the topic in a scientifically correct way, we incorporated two publications on that matter: the article '*Political Polarization on Twitter'* by M.D. Conover, J. Ratkiewicz, M. Francisco, B. Gonçalves, A. Flammini & F. Menczer and the article '*Political Polarization on Twitter: Implications for the Use of Social Media in Digital Governments'* by S. Hong & S.H. Kim. Both of them evaluate the effect of Twitter on political polarization and provide an insight in the role of this mass media channel in the context of the contemporary political field. They are of vital importance to frame Trump's tweets not only related to Jennifer Aaker's work, but also within their very own and characteristic digital atmosphere. This chapter provides a short overview and summary of those five publications.

3.1.   L. Aaker – Dimensions of Brand Personality

In 1997, the Journal of Marketing Research published 'Dimensions of Brand Personality' in its August number. The ten page article features marketing research by Jennifer Aaker that establishes a theoretical framework of five different brand personality dimensions; excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness, and sincerity. Although the article goes back twenty years , the work is not

dated as a framework for our research as it incorporated a reliable, valid and generalizable scale for all the dimensions mentioned above and managed to become an established way of examining brand (personality) effects (cf. supra).

The work of Aaker has received some minor criticism though. In 2014, A. Ahmad and K.S. Thyagaraj reviewed the applicability of Aaker's scale in 'Applicability of Brand Personality Dimensions across Cultures and Product Categories: A Review' featured in the Global Journal of Finance and Management. They concluded that the generalizability across cultures of the five different personality dimensions can be questioned. The framework does, however, provide a solid basis for brands within a U.S. context:

'In the studies questioning generalizability of brand personality dimensions across cultures, it is found that all the five dimensions suggested by Aaker are not consistent with countries other than USA but some of the dimensions correspond with each country's culture (e.g., Japan, Spain, France, Netherlands and China). Therefore, all brand personality dimensions are not stable across cultures. […] Nevertheless the scale developed by Aaker is a great contribution to the concept of brand personality and proffers a solid foundation for future research.' (Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2014, 15)

In her work, Aaker defines brand personality as 'the set of human characteristics associated with a brand' (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Earlier research on the same topic mainly focused on how a brand allows consumers to express themselves, pursue their ideal self or cultivate specific dimensions of the self. The understanding of how and when exactly brand personality is linked with the consumer – or in our case voter – remained neglected. Aaker wanted to address those limitations and established a theoretical framework of five different core brand personality dimensions. Her results were tested and retested in order to provide a scientific stability for the five dimensions.

To identify the brand personality dimensions, 631 different people rated a subset of 37 brands on 114 different personality traits. This resulted in a set of five different core dimensions: excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness and sincerity. Those dimensions consist in their turn of different facets. The ones established in the next figure are the facets that most accurately and comprehensively represent the dimensions.
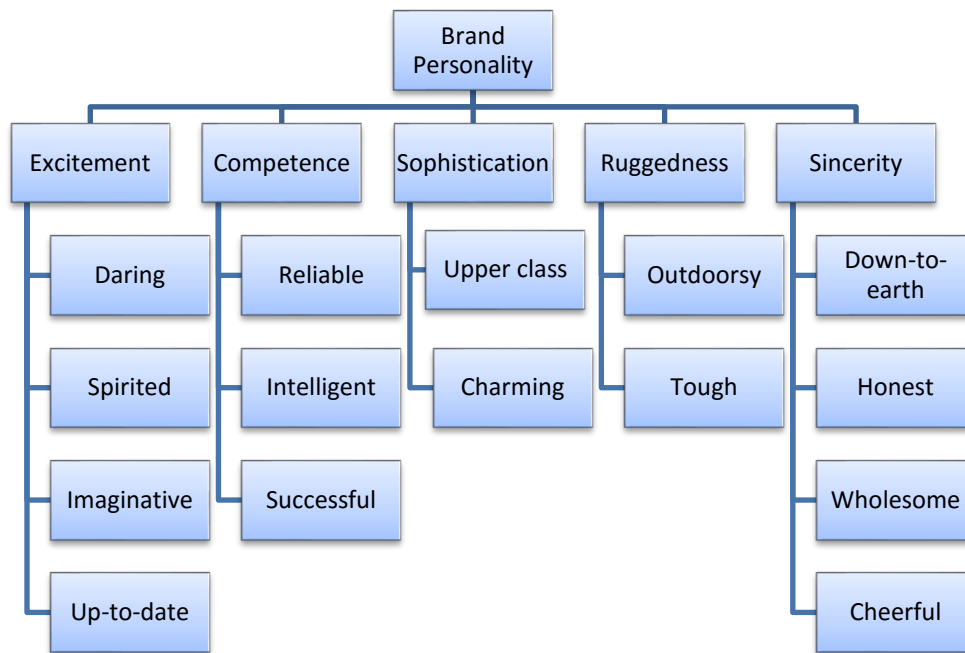
Figure 1 *Dimensions of brand personality*

On a next sub level, each of the facets is characterized by a set of different traits. Those traits evaluate to which extent each individual facet applies to the brand. A short overview:

- **Excitement**
  - Daring (daring, trendy, exciting)
  - Spirited (spirited, cool, young)
  - Imaginative (imaginative, unique)
  - Up-to-date (up-to-date, contemporary)
- **Competence**
  - Reliable (reliable, hardworking, secure)
  - Intelligent (intelligent, technical, corporate)
  - Successful (successful, leader, confident)
- **Sophistication**
  - Upper class (upper class, glamorous, good looking)
  - Charming (charming, feminine, smooth)
- **Ruggedness**
  - Outdoorsy (outdoorsy, masculine)
  - Tough (tough, rugged)
- **Sincerity:**
  - Down-to-earth (down-to-earth, family-oriented, small-town)
  - Honest (honest, sincere, real)
  - Wholesome (wholesome, original)
  - Cheerful (cheerful, sentimental, friendly)

In this research paper we approach the brand 'Trump' while keeping in mind all the dimensions, facets and traits mentioned above. Evaluating Trump as a brand has of course some implications for the way in which we apply Aaker's scale. One may already have noticed that if we apply her definition of brand personality – the set of *human* characteristics associated with a brand – the result is a small thinking

exercise. Investigating the set of human characteristics is quite straightforward as Trump is, of course, a human with characteristics in the first place. The very important side note here, however, is the extra brand dimension that is incorporated. We broaden the applicability of Aaker's scale as we do not stick to a strictly consumer related environment. The brand dimension is applied to both the person and brand Trump as he is, within his campaign, always a combination of both. Evaluating him strictly as a brand or strictly as a person is therefore not our intention. As we will argue, Trump has established a brand-like status, surpassing the capabilities of a mere celebrity or idol and incorporating brand dimensions such as those mentioned above. This results in both the person and brand 'Trump' merging into one entity: the Republican nomination for President of the United States.

3.2.   J. Haidt – The Righteous Mind

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist, specialized in the psychology of the morality, and professor in the Business and Society Program of the New York University and Stern School of Business. In 2012, he was hailed as 'top global thinker' by the Foreign Policy magazine and in 2013 as 'top world thinker' by Prospect.

The Righteous Mind is incorporated in our framework as it functions as a tool to understand the differences between voters and helps us see and understand why people think the way they do. In his book, Haidt structures his research in three different parts, resulting in three separate books with each one elaborating/continuing on the one before it. Al those parts contain one major principle of moral psychology, embodied in one central metaphor, and are backed up by Haidt with insights from neuroscience, genetics, social psychology and evolutionary modeling.

- The first part is structured around the principle: Intuitions come first, strategic reasoning second. According to Haidt, moral intuitions function automatically and instantaneously. They establish themselves long before moral reasoning has a chance to get started, and those first intuitions tend to drive our later reasoning. The central metaphor within this chapter is therefore: *'The mind is divided, like a rider on an elephant, and the rider's job is to serve the elephant'*. The rider stands for our conscious reasoning, the things we are fully aware of, while the elephant is the other 99 percent of mental processes, of which we are unaware, but which nevertheless determine most of our actual behavior. Haidt concludes this chapter by claiming that moral reasoning should be approached as a skill, something we gradually evolve to fit our social agendas. It justifies our own actions and makes us defend the teams we belong to. It is therefore important to focus on the intuitions, or elephant, and not on the moral arguments

as those are often post hoc constructions, made up spontaneously in function of someone's strategic objectives (Haidt 2012, 11 & 242).

- Haidt's second book focuses on the fact that there is more to morality than just harm and fairness. The central metaphor paints a clear picture here: *'The righteous mind is like a tongue with six taste receptors'* and lies at the basis of Haidt's Moral Foundation Theory. He claims that secular Western moralities can be seen as cuisines that activate merely one or two of those receptors, most of the time either harm and suffering or fairness and injustice. However, there are many more other powerful intuitions such as liberty, loyalty, authority and sanctity that are at play. Haidt shows us where they come from and why politicians of the right-wing have an advantage as they please all taste receptors. He concludes that it is important to step out of your own moral matrix in order to perceive additional moral concerns. As a result, there is not one true morality, as fundamentalists choose to believe , for all people, times and places, because society is more complex than that (Haidt, 2012, 11 & 242).

- The third and final part of Haidt's work shows us how morality binds and blinds. According to him, '*we are 90 percent chimp and 10 percent bee'*. We, as individuals, will compete with other individuals within every group, and we descend from primates who excelled at that kind of competition. Those two levels working simultaneously reveals that we are selfish hypocrites who are extremely skilled at putting on a show of virtue with which we blatantly even fool ourselves (Haidt, 2012, p.11-12 & 243).

In general, Haidt's *The Righteous Mind* paints the bigger picture of why people are divided by politics and religion. Not because some people are good and others are bad, but because our minds are constructed for some kind of group-alike righteousness. Humans are intuitive creatures, driven in their strategic reasoning by their gut feeling, making it difficult to connect with those who follow different matrices. Those matrices are indeed based on the same moral foundations, but consist out of different configurations (Haidt, 2012, p. 243).

3.3.   J. Haidt – When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism

On the 10th of July this year, The American Interest published the essay *'When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism'* by Haidt. The work dissects the moral decision making that drive voters towards a specific candidate under pressing circumstances as immigration, the delocalization of production and low-skilled jobs, and terrorist threat. It also shows us how moral psychology can help explain and reduce the tension between nationalism and globalism.

In four different small chapters, Haidt explains his views on the rise of the globalists, globalists and nationalists growing further apart concerning immigration, Muslim immigration triggering the authoritarian alarm and the possibilities for the future. He also draws upon the analyses and insights of social psychologist Émile Durkheim, German political scientist Christian Wenzel and Australian professor Karen Stenner, specialized in authoritarianism.

3.4.   M.D. Conover, et al. – Political Polarization on Twitter

The study of M. D. Conover, J. Ratkiewicz, M. Francisco, B. Gonçalves, A. Flammini & F. Mneczer was conducted in 2011 at the Indiana University. In their study, the four researchers investigated how social media, more specifically Twitter, determine the networked public sphere and facilitate communication between different political orientations. They acknowledge the growing importance of social media in shaping the political landscape and want to investigate its effects :

> *"According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, six in ten U.S. internet users, nearly 44% of American adults, went online to get news or information about politics in 2008. Additionally, Americans are taking an active role in online political discourse, with 20% of internet users contributing comments or questions about the political process to social networking sites, blog or other online forums. Despite this, some empirical evidence suggest that politically active web users tend to organize into insular, homogenous communities segregated along partisan lines"* (M.D. Conover, et al., 2011, 89)

To map the political communications on Twitter, the researchers established a corpus of more than 250,000 tweets from the six weeks leading up to the 2010 U.S. Congressional midterm elections. From there on, they focused on retweet and mentioned networks and assessed to which extent both are homogenous or heterogeneous.

For our research, the work of M.D. Conover et al. provides a useful framework for Trump's Twitter activity. It allows us to place his tweets in a broader context by taking into account the political evolutions that are unfolding within the digital spectrum. Moreover, it is highly important to note that digital and social media clearly maintain another decorum than the traditional media. As the research of both M.D. Conover and S. Hong (cf. infra) partly mention and our analyses will prove further on, the communication on social media tends to be even more direct and uncivil than real life interactions. Within this context, '*The Negative Consequences of Uncivil Political Discourse'* by Sandy Maisel was also consulted. The insights of Maisel allow us to frame uncivil online political discourse. The article was published in 2012 in Political Science and Politics and draws heavily upon the work '*The Consequences of Uncivil Discourse for the Political Process*' by Daniel Shea and Morris Fiorina.

3.5. S. Hong & S. Hyoung Kim – Political polarization on twitter: Implications for the use of social media in digital governments

In April this year, S. Hong and S. Hyoung Kim published a similar study in the Government Information Quarterly. It investigates two competing opinions, the *echo chambers view* and the *crosscutting interactions view*, concerning the role of social media in partisan polarization.

The echo chambers view focuses on 'the highly fragmented, customized, and niche-oriented aspects of social media' and it argues that these venues increase the political polarization of the public opinion (Hong & Hyoung Kim, 2016, 1). The crosscutting interactions view focuses in its turn on 'the openness of the Internet and social media' with different opinions immediately at hand (Hong & Hyoung Kim, 2016, 1). The research will eventually conclude on a polarized Twitter readership that supports the echo chambers view.

Hong and Hyoung Kim base their insights on the Twitter activities of members of the U.S. House of Representatives. They tested if politicians with unambiguous or extreme ideologies have greater readership than their moderate peers. Both left- and right-wing extremists turned out to have larger Twitter readership than their moderate peers (Hong & Hyoung Kim, 2016, 5).

4. Methodology

Within our research, we are aware of the fact that some newspapers and authors tend to be more subjective than others when reporting on Trump. That is why we looked for a wide journalistic spectrum including numerous news websites, magazines, books, polls and papers of both American, British and Belgian decent. We mainly focused on objective and factual sources and not on sensational media in a first phase as that would question the scientific ground of our thesis. Articles which were not sufficiently nuanced and mentioned feelings rather than facts or a political analysis, were only evaluated during follow-on research. For example, an LA Times article which drew a comparison between Trump and the Brexit was not part of our main focus as it was anti-Trump and suggested his voters had lost their mind: 'One lesson we can draw from the Brexit is that we should not become complacent and assume that voters will come to their senses in the end and make a safe, responsible choice.' (LA Times, June). Nonetheless Trump continuously expresses on Twitter his dislike for many newspapers and websites such as The Washington Post and Politico (The New York Times, 2016, June), but we decided to include them when the texts were more objective and factual as they reported on the numerous political events.

It seems that although Trump and most media dislike one another a lot, they are heavily intertwined. They cannot stand each other but at the same time cannot stop mentioning one another. In our opinion, this is a simple case of the law of supply and demand where the goods are Trump's controversy and the media outrage, with both elements stuck in a sort of a loop. Multiple media have even linked the political rise of Trump directly to the amount of media coverage he continues to receive.

Thomas Frank of The Guardian, for example, claims the press is at least partially responsible for the 'unexpected rise' of Donald Trump as a presidential candidate, a phenomenon he sarcastically calls 'a mystery':

> *'Working-class white people who make up the bulk of Trump's fan base show up in amazing numbers, but their views do not appear in our prestige newspapers. On their opinion pages, publications represent demographic categories of nearly every kind, but 'blue-collar' is the one they persistently overlook. He accuses the media of talking neither about nor with the so-called 'ordinary Americans' and claims that the press considers them 'not only incomprehensible, but not really worth comprehending, either' (The Guardian, 2016, March).*

According to former U.S.-correspondent Charles Groenhuijsen, a vicious circle between Trump and the media has emerged as a result of Trump playing the role of the underdog. He scolds the press but does not add that these so-called 'liars' give him a lot of publicity time after time. The media cannot resist the temptation to report every declaration or action live as breaking news. He concludes that Trump cannot live without the press and vice versa (De Morgen, 2016, May). Multiple media chiefs confirmed Groenhuijsen's words. In a Bosch Van Rosenthal article titled 'Trump saves the media', he mentioned CNN-president Jeff Zucker admitting that their viewing figures are 40 percent higher than normal and that they reported 2.200 items on Trump in the past two months. Zucker is a friend of Trump's and during the first three months after Trump had announced his candidacy, CNN reported twice as much about Trump as about Jeb Bush and one and a half time as much as competing news channels like Fox News (De Morgen, 2016, April). CBS boss Len Moonves said in an April interview about the attention Trump receives: 'It may not be good for America, but it is damn good for CBS' (Politico 2016, February). Rosenthal claims that Fox is one of the few media who can afford a less compliant Trump approach as they already supplied enough support before the presidential race took off. Because of their approach and a conflict with Fox-reporter Megyn Kelly, Trump boycotted one of their major debates (De Morgen, 2016, April). Jim Ruttenberg, a the New York Times columnist does not like what he is seeing right now as he believes three parties are involved: 'Never have financial, journalist and political matters been so entangled. The symbiosis between Trump and the press is nothing but disturbing.' (De Morgen, 2016, April).

Thanks to all this, the billionaire Trump only had to spend a fraction of the money of his opponents to receive media coverage. The New York Times estimated that Trump has only spent a modest amount on advertising: 10 million dollars through February 2016, far behind opponents such as Jeb Bush (82 million), Marco Rubio (55 million), and Ted Cruz (22 million). However, Trump is benefiting from free media coverage more than any other candidate. From the beginning of his campaign through February 2016, Trump recieved almost 2 billion dollars in free media attention, twice the amount of Hillary Clinton. Trump was granted 400 million dollars only in the month of February for example. (New York Times, 2016, March). The Huffington Post reported in March of this year that with those 2 billion on free advertising, he not only exceeded Cruz' 331 million but managed to receive more free advertisement as a political candidate than media stars such as Taylor Swift and Kanye West (The Huffington Post, 2016, March). Tyndall Report, which tracks nightly news content, revealed that through February 2016, Trump alone accounted for more than a quarter of all 2016 election coverage on the evening newscasts of NBC, CBS and ABC. He got more time on television than all the Democratic campaigns combined (Tyndall Report, 2016, February).

Amber Philips of the Washington Post even states that Trump does not need to spend money to spread his message. He has become an expert at letting the TV, radio and social media do it for him. One of his central tools is Twitter. Therefore we decided to include Trump's tweets into this thesis because, as Philips says: 'The 69-year-old uses the tool like a digital native, more prolifically than any other presidential candidate and arguably with much more skill' (The Washington Post, 2015, December). According to theoretician Sandy Maisel, the shift for politicians to implementing social media is not surprising. He claims that they nowadays are much more likely to use incivility in politics than before. This is because whereas in the past an outlet might have been seen by a small audience, today they aim at repetition through the 24-7 news cycle and the unfiltered nature of much of the news that reaches the public over the Internet (Maisel, 2012, p. 409).

As this research was due on the 12th of August, 2016, we have not included any news articles or events in general about the Presidential elections after the 5th of August. As Trump became the presumptive nominee on May 4 and the official candidate on July 19, most of the news articles and polls we looked into concerned his rise within the Republican party. It is therefore worth noting that we compared Trump more with his Republican fellow candidates and the GOP party in general than with Hillary Clinton and the Democrats.

We begin our research by giving an overview of the American presidential election system. Then we continue with the main part of our traditional brand analysis that focuses on the big five brand dimensions of excitement, competence, sophistication, ruggedness and sincerity. Each of those dimensions is analyzed within its respective chapter that is cross-referenced with our academic and journalistic sources and further substantiated with tweets from Trump's online discourse. After our general analysis of the 'Big Five' we investigate if Trump shifts his approach after clinching the Republican nomination Then we provide a chapter which reveals the similarities between Donald Trump and Ronald Reagan, and eventually compare Trump's brand and vision with those of other presidential candidates. We conclude by formulating our final prediction and take a glance at some Trump-like phenomena around the world, offering interesting subjects for further research. It goes without saying that we remained objective during our research and took no political stance whatsoever while writing this thesis and formulating our prediction.

5. The American Presidential Electoral System

As the American presidential electoral system is not quite like any other, we summarized the main dates, people, parties and issues which should be held accountable.

5.1 When is the election due?

The United States are a Federal Republic and Americans have the right, not the obligation, to cast their vote for the person they think should succeed the current Democratic President Barack Obama on November 8, 2016. Obama will leave the White House on January 20, 2017, as his second and last presidential term expires.

5.2 What does each party stand for?

There is one very small Libertarian Party, but the two parties that really matter in the US are the Republican and the Democratic Party. The Democrats' philosophy consists traditionally of modern liberalism, progressivism, social liberalism and a minority is conservative. They seek to provide government intervention and regulation in the economy. They are in favor of the introduction of social programs, support for labor unions, universal health care and environmental protection. According to Haidt, they follow John Stuart Mill's viewpoints on the ideal society (Haidt, 2012, p.134). The majority of the Republican party on the other hand is conservative, economically liberal and fiscally as well as socially conservative. A minority is right-wing populist. Traditionally, they support free market capitalism, a strong national defense, restrictions on labor unions, social-conservative policies and traditional, Christian values. Haidt claims that their viewpoints coincide with Emile Durkheim's vision on society (Haidt, 2012, p.134).

5.3 Whom are the people to choose from?

Donald Trump seized the Republican nomination and Hillary Clinton did so for the Democratic Party. Gary Johnson is the candidate for the Libertarian Party. All three of them had to choose a running mate who will serve as a Vice President in case the candidate is elected. Trump chose Mike Pence, Clinton picked Tim Kaine and Gary Johnson preferred Bill Weld. If a voter picks a presidential candidate, he automatically selects that candidate's running mate as well.

5.4   How did Clinton and Trump become nominees?

Trump and Clinton were among many possible presidential candidates for their respective party. Between February 1 and June 14 of this year, a series of presidential primary elections took place in every state, which narrow the field of candidates before an election for office. A candidate becomes the presumptive nominee of their party when their last serious challenger drops out or when the candidate mathematically secures a majority of delegates through the primaries prior to the convention. The official nomination and following acceptance speech, however, happens later on at the respective Republican and Democratic convention. Trump, for example, was the presumptive Republican nominee on May 4 after Ted Cruz stepped out of the race but has only been the official Republican candidate since July 19. The Republican convention was held from July 18 to July 21 and the Democratic one from July 25 until July 29.

5.5   When does someone get elected?

The United States have an indirect voting system: voters do not directly choose their next president but the candidate's party that receives a majority of the people's votes within a state, receives all delegates' votes from that state. There are 538 delegates in the US, which means a candidate has to secure 270 of them in order to win. Each of America's 50 states is awarded a number of delegates according to their total population. California is the state with the highest number of electoral votes (55), followed by Texas (38) and Florida and New York (both 29). A majority of the states is historically and almost always Republican, like Texas, or Democratic, like California. A dozen states however tend to swing from the Republican to the Democratic side and vice versa: these are the so-called 'swing states' and they have a very great impact on the election result. It is no coincidence that both conventions were held in two of the biggest swing states: the Republican took place in Cleveland, Ohio (18 delegates) and the Democratic in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (20). In this winner-takes-it-all-system, a candidate who scores a majority of the so-called popular vote, consisting of all people allowed to vote, but fails to collect over 50 percent of the delegates or 'electoral vote', loses. In the 2000 presidential elections, a majority of 543.816 voters chose the Democrat Al Gore over Republican George W. Bush. However, Bush won the state of Florida by 0.0092 percent and thereby received all 25 of Florida's electoral votes at the time. Bush ended up succeeding Bill Clinton after beating Gore with a delegate score of 271 to 266.

6. The Big Five

6.1 Excitement

The small county of Buchanan in Virginia might well be the best possible illustration of Trump's success and the way he is able to appeal to a rather neglected audience, often referred to as the *silent majority* (cf. infra).

6.1.1 Buchanan County: Trump's Exiting Brand In a Nutshell

A Wall Street Journal article by Bob Davis and Rebecca Ballhaus took a closer look at Buchanan County, where Trump won the Republican Primary with 69.7 percent in March 2016. By using statistics and interviewing the white working-class, they provided a clearer picture of why Trump inspires supporters and poses problems for anti-Trump GOP strategists (The Wall Street Journal, 2016, April).

In an area filled with uncertainty about whether their coal mines will remain open and whether the young people will have to leave to find a job, Trump is a reassuring presence, someone who has visited their living rooms for years via television. The population of Buchanan County has gone down steadily for the last fifteen years. In the meantime, the unemployment rate has almost doubled from 5.9 percent up to 10.8 percent. Today, the number of households receiving social security and disability checks is three times the number of households with a college graduate. Inflation-adjusted median income is barely half the national average and has not gone up since 1995, Moody's Analytics estimates (The Wall Street Journal, 2016, April). For decades, that distrust translated into votes for Democrats. How come Buchanan represents Republican supporters nowadays then?

Harry James Scott, a 69- year old retired coal miner, explains: 'I have never voted in a primary in my life. Until this year. And guess who I voted for? Donald Trump. He is the only one that mentions coal. He is the only one with enough backbone to stand up for us here in southwest Virginia' (The Wall Street Journal, 2016, April).

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 mei
Can you believe Crooked Hillary said, "We are going to put a whole lot of coal miners&coal companies out of business." She then apologized.

↩   ♻ 10.249   ♥ 27.497   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 mei
Unlike crooked Hillary Clinton, who wants to destroy all miners, I want wages to go up in America. We will do so by bringing back jobs!
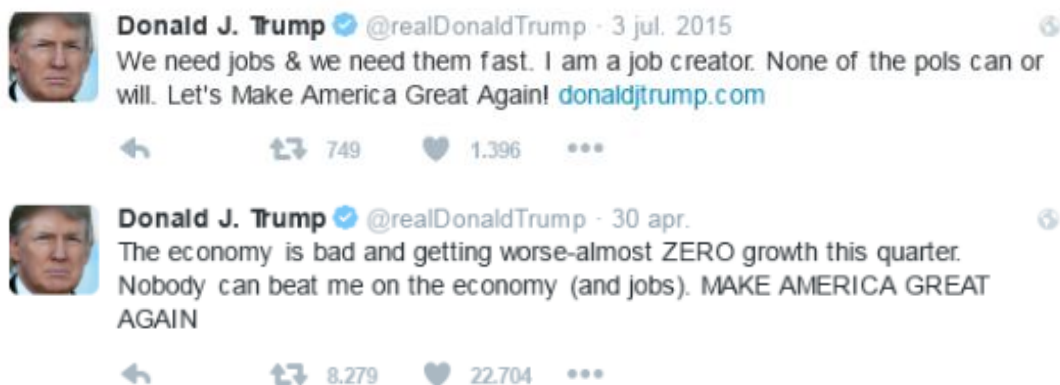
↩   ♻ 7.240   ♥ 21.904   •••

Voters claim that Trump understands their frustration and will fight the Washington establishment on their behalf. The county sheriff made the following remark: 'He talks before he thinks so he doesn't have time to think up something and lie to you'. Trump's comments about women and his shifting views on abortion and foreign policy are generally seen here as a plus because they reinforce his outsider status. Trump has won over many Democrats because 'he not only speaks for them, he speaks in terms they're comfortable with', says Gerald Arrington, the county's Commonwealth's attorney and a registered Democrat. Arrington says Trump won his vote in the Virginia primary, the first time he cast a vote for a Republican. According to Trump supporters in Buchanan, the Trump slogan 'Make America Great Again' refers to returning to the economy of a decade ago, when coal held its own and the global economy hadn't suffered through the financial crisis and its aftermath. It is an approach that Trump definitely also incorporates in his Twitter discourse to appeal to the greater public:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 3 jul. 2015
We need jobs & we need them fast. I am a job creator. None of the pols can or will. Let's Make America Great Again! donaldjtrump.com
↩ ↻ 749   ♥ 1.396   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 30 apr.
The economy is bad and getting worse-almost ZERO growth this quarter. Nobody can beat me on the economy (and jobs). MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN
↩ ↻ 8.279   ♥ 22.704   •••

Tables have turned in Buchanan. The Democrat Al Gore carried the county in 2000 with 58 percent of the votes against George W. Bush, despite local suspicion of environmentalists. John Kerry did nearly as well four years later. Barack Obama just lost the county in 2008 to John McCain. As the most popular Democratic nominee in the Buchanan County primary election in 2008, Hillary Clinton received 2.245 votes, pulverizing the Republican favorite Huckabee who only gained 398 votes. This year in March however, Clinton won 523 votes while Trump persuaded 1.589 people to vote for him. This shift is partially caused by Clinton's remarks, mentioned earlier in Trump's tweets, about bringing non-coal mines jobs to coal areas: 'We are going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business', she said in a March 2016 rally at Ohio (Wall Street Journal, 2016, April).

The case of Buchanan County clarifies Trump's success and slogan and identifies his voters on a rather small scale. We will further on broaden our scope and take a look at the whole of the U.S. and try to characterize Trump's electorate, the so called *silent majority*. Who are these people that politicians as well as the lion 's share of the media have persistently overlooked when claiming that Trump did not stand a chance?

6.1.2 Loud Trump Gives Silent Majority a Voice

During a visit to Arizona in July 2015, only 25 days after announcing his presidential candidacy, Trump declared as he left the stage: 'The silent majority is back, and we're going to take our country back' (New York Times, 2015, July). Thomas Patterson from Harvard University agrees: 'The elite reaps what it sows and cannot undo half a century of neglect in a snap' (De Standaard 2016, June). The term also appears a couple of times during periods on his Twitter and seems to excite that specific majority by claiming their time has finally come:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 29 jul. 2015
I truly LOVE all of the millions of people who are sticking with me despite so many media lies. There is a great SILENT MAJORITY looming!
↩   ↻ 2.654   ♥ 7.135   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 30 jul. 2015
The polls have been consistently great. The silent majority is speaking. Politicians are failing. #MakeAmericaGreatAgain!
↩   ↻ 1.699   ♥ 3.844   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 18 aug. 2015
I am looking forward to being in New Hampshire tomorrow. The silent majority is taking our country back. We will MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
↩   ↻ 2.478   ♥ 6.287   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 23 aug. 2015
New Reuters Poll just came out and has me at 32%, highest number yet. The silent majority is back and we will MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
↩   ↻ 4.520   ♥ 9.781   •••

The Telegraph already suggested last December that Trump-voters are people who benefited from the economic booms of post-Second World War in the past, but have been affected by the economic crisis at least for the last couple of years. Globalization has hit them hard as they watched the factories where they used to work lower their wages or even move abroad. Journalist Ruth Sherlock called it 'the dissolution of the American dream' (Telegraph, 2015, December). These people believe that politicians have not done anything to help them. They do not want nuanced discussions but an outlet for their anger. Haidt describes this explanation as the 'left behind' thesis. According to him, 'globalization has raised prosperity all over the world, with the striking exception of the working classes in Western societies.' (The American Interest, 2016, July). As a result, the less educated people of the richest countries no longer have access to low-skilled but well-paid jobs, as those were shipped overseas or given to much cheaper immigrants (The American Interest, 2016, July).

Decades ago, a Gerald Ford-campaign memo already identified a rising number of Reagan voters who were neither loyal Republicans or Democrats and were alienated from both parties (New York Magazine 2016, June). Charles Groenhuijsen, former US-correspondent for the Dutch NOS, says Trump is the only one, along with Bernie Sanders, to see a political vacuum of angry voters according to whom 'the US goes to hell right now' (De Morgen, 2016, May). Another former US-correspondent, Eelco Bosch Van Rosenthal, agrees. He compares Donald Trump to the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn as both aimed at angry, white, low-educated people, who failed to take advantage of economic prosperities (De Morgen, 2016, April).

According to Steve Rattner, a financial advisor who worked for the Obama administration, the group of middle-class white voters has suffered a decline in their income in recent years (MNSBC, 2016, January). A Public Religion Research Institute survey in November 2015 found that many of his supporters are working class voters with negative feelings towards migrants, as well as strong financial concerns (Wall Street Journal, 2015, November; PRRI, 2015, November). Christopher Caldwell, who wrote *Reflection on the Revolution in Europe*, says that the American economy nowadays consists of information technology around university campuses subsidized by the government. The United States are as good as entirely deindustrialized (Het Laatste Nieuws, 2016, July). Robert J. Gordon, author of *The rise and fall of the American growth*, analyzed how a small minority has made fortunes by cannibalizing and avoiding the old economic structures. They did so by laying off giant numbers of people and using the unrestricted free trade agreements (Het Laatste Nieuws, 2016, July). Caldwell continued that the Democratic party does not resemble at all at the working class party she used to be. Instead, she represents the elite of the new capitalist class, the 1 percent. A complete outsider was necessary to accuse the current system. According to Caldwell, and many others, that outsider is Trump (Het Laatste Nieuws, 2016, July).

6.1.3 Demographics of Silent Majority

Multiple media and polls have pointed out that blue-collar voters and those without a college degree are attracted by Trump's populistic speeches and his opposition to illegal immigration, various free trade agreements that he believes are unfair, and most military interventionism (New York Times, 2016, March; Politico, 2016, February; NPR, 2015, September; Newsweek, 2015, August; The Guardian, 2015, October; Politico, 2016, March; Washington Post, 2015, December). Wall Street Journal reported that the counties that have delivered the strongest vote for Donald Trump in the 2016 primary season tend to be rural communities that are struggling economically, with household incomes and college graduation rates below the national average (Wall Street Journal, 2016, April). Trump is also highly popular among Republican and leaning-Republican minority voters (Survey USA 2015, September; The Washington Times, 2015, November; The Root, 2016, January). Support for Trump is high among

working and middle-class white male voters with annual incomes of less than 50,000 dollars and no college degree (New York Times, 2016, March).

A nationwide February 2016 survey pointed out that Trump's popularity among Hispanic and Latino Americans is low: 80 percent of Hispanic voters had an unfavorable view of Trump (including 70 percent who have a 'very unfavorable' view), more than double the percentage of any other Republican candidate (The Washington Post, 2016, February). However, Trump has received pockets of Hispanic support, winning around 45 percent of the Hispanic Republican vote in the Nevada Republican caucuses and receiving some support among Cuban Americans in Florida (The Miami Herald, 2016, March; The Atlantic, 2016, March).

And finally, surveys published in late 2015 by ABC News/Washington Post showed Trump polling unfavorably among women and non-white voters, with 64 percent of women viewing Trump unfavorably and 74 percent of non-white voters having a negative view of the candidate (New York Times 2015, December). A large Survey USA poll shows Trump polling significantly favorably among minority and woman voters compared to past and present Republican presidential candidates. This poll also reports that Trump garners some support from voters outside of his party (Survey USA, 2015, September). At the end of 2015, multiple newspapers reported that there is a large gender gap in support for Trump, with women significantly less likely to express support than men (Politico, 2015, December; The Wall Street Journal, 2015, December). Reuters mentioned a March 2016 poll in which half of U.S. women expressed a 'very unfavorable' view of Trump (Reuters, 2016, March). A separate March 2016 poll showed women favoring Hillary Clinton 55 percent to 35 percent over Trump, 'twice the gender gap of the 2012 presidential election' (New York Times, 2016, March). A Gallup poll showed 7 women in 10 being unfavorable of Trump and nearly 6 in 10 men as well. Like this, Trump's gender gap is larger than any other major candidate (Gallup, 2016, April). Of course, the man himself does not always agree with these claims and often sees them as an attempt to undermine him and his brand:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 15 mei
The failing @nytimes wrote yet another hit piece on me. All are impressed with how nicely I have treated women, they found nothing. A joke!

↩   ⇄ 3.755   ♥ 12.943   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 15 mei
Everyone is laughing at the @nytimes for the lame hit piece they did on me and women.I gave them many names of women I helped-refused to use

↩   ⟲ 5.119   ♥ 16.461   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 mei
Michael Barbaro, the author of the now discredited @nytimes hit piece on me with women, has in past tweeted badly about me. He should resign

↩   ⟲ 3.137   ♥ 10.187   •••

6.1.4   Conclusion

We may conclude that the vast majority of Trump's mostly white male electorate does not necessarily dislike migrants, they hate the fact they are somewhat neglected by their own politicians. They feel no hatred towards 'strangers', they despise being considered irrelevant. Trump is besides Sanders the only presidential candidate that explicitly mentions and focuses on the blue-collar Americans. The latter want a politician they feel they can trust and renders hope again for their future. They choose heart over mind and ignore the controversy or see it as a good thing as it makes Trump stand out, he is something that excites them as he dares to address up-to-date problems.

6.2 Competence

The competence dimension is defined by traits and facets such as 'hardworking', 'corporate', 'intelligent' and 'successful'. In this chapter we will argue that this dimension of Trump's brand was strongly cultivated by the TV-show The Apprentice, and is still frequently and explicitly maintained within his online discourse.

6.2.1 The Apprentice Sets the Scene

The Washington Post journalist Marc Fisher wrote an article on Trump, linking his current presidential campaign to his presence as a TV-star in The Apprentice, a show starred from 2004 until 2015. It seems that the airing of Trump in millions of American living rooms for multiple years, made him not only look genuine, but empowered his brand as a successful leader and businessmen as well (The Washington Post, 2016, January).

Trump had been a household name for a generation, but until 2004, his reputation was shaped by a newspaper stories and magazine covers and TV reports. The Apprentice allowed Americans to see him in a way they perceived as unmediated. Trump in his turn sensed that the show had enormous potential to introduce him to a broader audience, and especially to younger people. He did not run for president because of The Apprentice, but according to the show's executives and producers, there would be no candidacy without the show. It turned him into 'a pop-culture truth-teller, an evangelist for the American gospel of success, a decider who insisted on standards', Fisher states. Trump knows this (cf. infra) and therefore kept on maintaining that image in his discourse. On Twitter for example he often refers to his incredible capability of making deals, bring in jobs or his corporate insights:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 22 dec. 2015
We need a PRESIDENT with strength, stamina, heart and incredible deal making skill if our country is ever going to be able to prosper again!

↩   ♺ 4.604   ♥ 11.280   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 29 dec. 2015
So, I have spent almost nothing on my run for president and am in 1st place. Jeb Bush has spent $59 million & done. Run country my way!

↩   ♺ 4.228   ♥ 10.463   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 26 mrt.
Wisconsin's economy is doing poorly and like everywhere else in U.S., jobs are leaving. I will make our economy strong again - bring in jobs

↩   ♺ 6.319   ♥ 19.469   •••

Mark Burnett, the creator of The Apprentice: 'People want to hear the unvarnished. Without a TV show, you are just the editor's headlines, the journalist's take. On TV, you feel you get to know the person. That same style that he showed on 'The Apprentice' seems to be what's working for him now — the ability to speak his mind clearly and not tone down his voice in a politically correct, TV way. It's the kind of brand recognition that would certainly enhance your political career (The Washington Post, 2016, January).

In Trump's most recent book, he writes that he did 'not do the show for the money, mind you, but because it creates such a powerful brand presence and is a lot of fun to do.' When Trump was asked about former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the next star of The Apprentice: 'You think he'll be good? I hope he's good. He was in politics. So maybe he can do this, too.' (The Washington Post, 2016, January).

6.2.2   Functional Vanity

We already mentioned it , but is quite remarkably how often Trump emphasizes his own competence as one of his significant traits. Especially if some of his early predictions turn prove correct , Trump does not hesitate to publicly announce it and remind everyone that he, and his corporate competence, called it from the start:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 15 nov. 2015
President Obama just told President Putin how important the Russian air strikes against ISIS have been. I TOLD YOU SO!
4.925   10.877   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 16 nov. 2015
Remember, I was the one who said attack the oil (ISIS source of wealth) a long time ago. Everyone scoffed, now they're attacking the oil.
6.296   13.396   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 24 mrt.
It is amazing how often I am right, only to be criticized by the media. Illegal immigration, take the oil, build the wall, Muslims, NATO!
7.504   22.320   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 12 jun.
Appreciate the congrats for being right on radical Islamic terrorism, I don't want congrats, I want toughness & vigilance. We must be smart!
27.830   74.057   •••

All the Tweets in this chapter also portray what Michael Persson calls *functional vanity*. He claims that multiple Trump voters believe that a good president is a good businessman. Therefore Trump continuously puts the focus in his speeches on his competence and does not hesitate to refer to his

track record of business deals and realizations. He even manages to turn his bankruptcies into a good thing (De Morgen 2016, July). Again, this approach kept on appearing in our Twitter corpus:

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 19 jun. 2015
> Stop saying I went bankrupt. I never went bankrupt but like many great business people have used the laws to corporate advantage—smart!
>
> ↩   ⬆ 908   ♥ 1.148   •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 27 feb.
> I started my business with very little and built it into a great company, with some of the best real estate assets in the World. Amazing!
>
> ↩   ⬆ 3.852   ♥ 13.483   •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 30 apr.
> The economy is bad and getting worse-almost ZERO growth this quarter. Nobody can beat me on the economy (and jobs). MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN
>
> ↩   ⬆ 8.279   ♥ 22.704   •••

6.2.3   Conclusion

It appears that Trump can easily maintain his competence dimensions. His popularity within the TV-show The Apprentice allowed him to establish a brand that embodied the image of an intelligent, hardworking businessman, something he was very aware of. Later on, he holds on to that image using functional vanity, especially in his Twitter discourse, to continuously underline his competence.

6.3   Sophistication

Jeff Guo from The Washington Post said in December that Trump's personality as well as his politics are the reasons for his success: some people do not only love his ideas, but they also love the way that he delivers it and plays with the sophistication dimension, containing facets and traits such as 'upper class', 'charming' and 'smooth' (Washington Post, 2015, October & December).

Ine Roox notices in De Standaard how this dimension was already cultivated on the first day of the Republic convention in Ohio. Trump announced his wife Melania who described her husband as a competent leader with numerous qualities. She emphasized his soft side and portrayed him as the ideal family man whilst making references to their son (De Standaard, 2016, July). Our Twitter corpus proves that this is something Trump also frequently does himself:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 19 jul.
It was truly an honor to introduce my wife, Melania. Her speech and demeanor were absolutely incredible. Very proud! #GOPConvention
↩   ⇄ 12.986   ♥ 57.198   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 10 feb.
Thank you, New Hampshire! Departing with my amazing **family** now! #FITN #NHPrimary
facebook.com/DonaldTrump/po…

↩   ⇄ 4.279   ♥ 14.692   •••
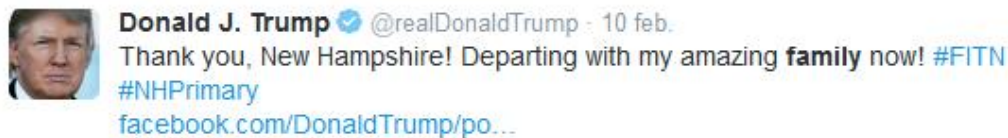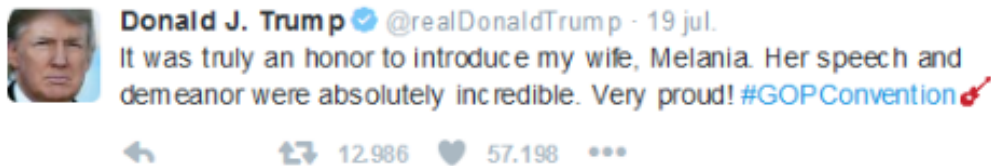
It is quite remarkable how frequently he also emphasizes his donations and support for different social groups, for example the U.S. veterans, and charities. His Twitter discourse clearly substantiates his sophistication dimension, portraying him as a classy and charming benefactor:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 jul. 2015
I will make this right for our great Vets!
↩   ♺ 814   ♥ 2.250   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 jul. 2015
I have a proven track record supporting our Veterans. Veterans deserve universal access to care. VA scandal proves politicians are inept.
↩   ♺ 1.524   ♥ 2.982   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 28 nov. 2015
Virtually no-one has spent more money in helping the American people with disabilities than me. Will discuss today at my speech in Sarasota
↩   ♺ 1.805   ♥ 4.605   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 9 feb.
No-one has done more for people with disabilities than me. I have spent many millions of dollars to help out-and am happy to have done so!
↩   ♺ 2.507   ♥ 8.028   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 24 mei
While under no obligation to do so, I have raised between 5 & 6 million dollars, including 1million dollars from me, for our VETERANS. Nice!
↩   ♺ 7.164   ♥ 25.279   •••

According to Guo, the four main factors for Trump's political rise are the relatively great dislike of immigrants among lower income Americans (1), the fact that Trump says things people have been afraid to say (2), that quite some people are sick of the establishment (3) and that Trump has simple answers for complex issues (4). Stanford psychologist Jeffrey Pfeffer, specialized in leadership, told Guo's colleague Max Ehrenfreund: 'They're responding to dynamism, to force, to movement, to smiling, to facial expressions that convey authority. Trump does it with more force. He does it with more energy and energy is contagious.' John Hibbing, a psychologist at the University of Nebraska, added to the discussion that 'People like the idea that deep down, the world is simple; that they can grasp it' (Washington Post, 2015, October & December). George Lakoff, specialized in cognitive linguistics at the University of California concluded that Trump supporters reason via direct causes and

experience difficulties with complex relations. A lot of Trump's policy propositions fit them. 'Too many immigrants in the US? Build a wall to keep them out. It is as simple as that', says Lakoff (De Standaard, 2016, June).

David Weigel organized a focus group of Trump supporters and concluded that nothing seems to be able to put them off their candidate. In fact, when rivals attack him, Trump's numbers go up. Weigel: 'That confidence only grew as Trump's alleged gaffes and mistakes were laid out. At 6:30 p.m., when the session began, all 29 participants were asked to rate their likelihood of voting for Trump, and just 10 people said they were at 9 or 10. After one hour of mostly negative questions about Trump, six more people joined that confident group' (Washington Post, 2015, December). The results of Weigel's research confirm Haidt's theoretical findings in *The Righteous Mind*. Haidt claims that if you want to change the mind of people, you cannot change it by utterly refuting their arguments, you have to talk to their intuition, their subconscious, their 'elephants':

> *'It's such an obvious point, yet few of us apply it in moral and political arguments because our righteous minds so readily shift into combat mode. The rider and the elephant work together smoothly to fend off attacks and lob rhetorical grenades of our own. The performance may impress our friends and show allies that we are committed members of the team, but no matter how good our logic, it's not going to change the minds of our opponents if they are in combat mode too' (Haidt, 2012, p. 49).*

In a review of *How Propaganda Works*, John Min mentions how Jason Stanley describes this phenomenon as 'flawed ideology'. It is characterized by the fact that 'it is hard to rationally revise one's belief in light of counter evidence' (The Good Society, 2015, p.213). He does, however, restrict this term towards the ideologies 'that are genuine barriers to the acquisitions of knowledge' (The Good Society, 2015, p.214). Haidt eventually concludes in *The Righteous Mind* that you have to understand things from your opponent's perspective, how and why they value both person and brand, if you want to really change someone's mind (Haidt, 2012, p.49).

Not only tens of millions of conservatives are appealed by Trump's rhetoric, moderate voters can like him as well. The latter have a progressive and a conservative worldview but that bridge is blown up as soon as one of the two is activated, extinguishing the other one. Both world views are activated by language and the more the media report on Trump's ideas, the more the moderate voter's conservative worldview is activated. Attacks by the media or other politicians do not harm their vision but helps it even more. Lakoff: 'The more you are told not to think of an elephant, the more you do' (De Standaard, 2016, June). Trump knows this so he continuously thanks his fans and maintains his 'charming' side while exciting the people:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 24 sep. 2015
Despite the establishment and the media's best efforts, the people are speaking loudly and clearly. Thank you to my amazing supporters!

↩   ⇄ 3.429   ♥ 7.772   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 30 sep. 2015
Just read that "Trump" has the largest (and I add most enthusiastic) crowds. Tonight I will be in New Hampshire - the place will be packed!

↩   ⇄ 2.096   ♥ 3.347   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 4 okt. 2015
For all of my fantastic supporters, and for the U.S.A., we are going to win and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, maybe greater than ever before!

↩   ⇄ 4.279   ♥ 9.033   •••

A likely explanation why this approach works, is offered by the famous American essayist Marilynne Robinson: 'The public is exasperated by the political system to the point that it is enjoying a kind of catharsis, the indiscriminate smashing of things as a performance art'. (The Guardian, March 2016).

6.3.1   Aiming at Voter's Heart, Not Their Mind, Results in Perfect Hit

Working America conducted a field research with a sample of 1.689 likely voters using face-to-face conversations. Their household incomes constituted 75.000 dollars a year or less, classifying them in the working-class neighborhoods. The vast majority of this group were whites (98 percent), 60 percent of them was female and the average age of the group was 64. The researchers reached a mix of 41 percent of Republicans, 32 percent of Democrats and 27 percent of Independents. Most of those who held a candidate preference picked a Grand Old Party candidate, only 35 percent claimed to vote for a Democratic candidate. Not less than 90 percent of the respondents interviewed in Cleveland and Pittsburgh said they went on to cast their vote in 2012. This is quite a high number when you know that voting is a right and not an obligation in the U.S. The research was conducted in December 2015 and January 2016 and revealed that more than half of the potential voters (53 percent) had not yet picked a definite candidate. Sixty percent of the undecided voters did not express a party preference. Of the 47 percent that had already made up their mind, Trump came out on in not less than 38 percent of the cases, beating all other Republican candidates in total with a giant margin (27 percent) and scoring almost as high as the two Democratic candidates combined: 22 percent voted Clinton, 12 percent went for Sanders.

Among Trump supporters in general, issues were much less important than personality. Nearly half of those who would vote for Trump in November 2016, said they liked him because 'he speaks his mind'.

These voters were not necessarily racist or fascist. The top issue among voters was 'good jobs/the economy' with 27 percent, homeland security and terrorism finished second with 14 percent and health care was the third most frequently mentioned priority (10 percent). 'Immigration' was the top issue for only one in twenty (5 percent) people. But only 14 percent of Trump supporters cited this as an issue, finishing third after 'good jobs/the economy' (29 percent) and 'homeland security and terrorism' (21 percent). Voters who tipped immigration as their priority issue are often in favor of Trump (48 percent) but overall, they are a minority. Five times as many voters who supported Trump because 'I agree with his politics', did it because 'He speaks his mind'. The report managed to divide the Trump-voters into three groups. The first group of people were conservative voters who are more ideologically driven. The second one were 'fed up' voters who value being independent but had little information about or focus on specific issues. Last but not least there were low-information voters who knew Trump best from seeing him on TV on a daily basis (Working America, January 2015). Voters like his discourse because they recognize the style of Trump fro; his TV-show 'The Apprentice', which reached 30 million viewers at its most successful point (The Washington Post, 2016, January). Even Barack Obama's half-brother Malik acknowledged to endorse Trump because 'he speaks from the heart'. He told that the email gate concerning Hillary Clinton (cf. infra) was the final push that led him to Trump (De Morgen, 2016, July). An endorsement Trump gladly accepts:

Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 24 jul.
Wow, President Obama's brother, Malik, just announced that he is voting for me. Was probably treated badly by president-like everybody else!

↩   ↨ 32.577   ♥ 83.095   •••
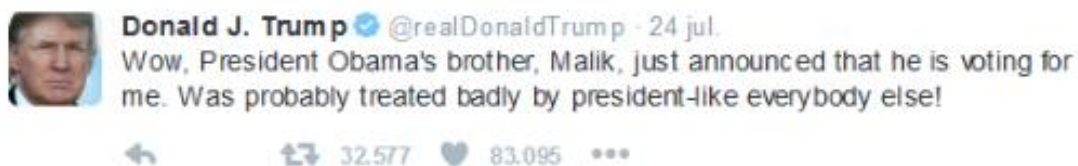
6.3.2   Conclusion

It seems that personality and politics overcome vision and controversy, especially when you are able to distinguish and address the main part of the electorate and acknowledge their needs. Trump is aware of the fact that personality plays a big part, so he maintains his sincerity by speaking his mind and implements a sophisticated dimension by showing, or letting other people show, his soft side and by appreciating his supporters.

6.4   Ruggedness

We decided to focus less extensively on Trump's ruggedness, the fourth dimension, as we believe that this particular aspect appears throughout this whole thesis. For example when he is the first and only one to take on controversial viewpoints that spark diffusion within his own party, or bluntly condemns numerous reactions in the media. As we mentioned before, we do not aim to provide a mere list of Trump's controversial sayings. Therefore, examples such as him threatening to leave the World Trade Organisation and rip up agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement are not included (CNBC, 2016, July). The fact that he portrays himself as the candidate of law and order, adds to that picture (De Redactie, 2016, July).

6.4.1   Time to Get Tough

Long before Trump made his presidential candidacy public, he already profiled himself as a tough guy with the publication of books such as *Thinks Big and Kick Ass in Business and Life* (Trump & Zanker, 2007) and *Time to get Tough* (Trump, 2011), where he himself features on the cover and looks the reader straight in the eye with a determined look. It is remarkable that the subtitle of the latter book is 'Making America No. 1 Again', which is as good as a copy of his current Presidential slogan. When airing in The Apprentice, Trump's tough brand continuously got cultivated as the sentence 'You're fired' became an iconic catchphrase portraying his direct style (The Washington Post, 2016, January).

Ironically, Vox reports how Trump often seeks revenge towards anyone who tries to get tough with him. According to journalist Ezra Klein, the unifying theme of Trump's convention is that the leader of the opposition party should be thrown in jail. Klein mentions other vindictive actions by Trump such as the barring of Washington Post reporters from his rallies and the threat towards its owner Jeff Bezos to use the power of his presidency to bring an antitrust suit against him. He also sued his ex-ghostwriter after she gave an interview to the New Yorker (Vox, 2016, July). This ongoing tough behavior is also heavily cultivated on Trump's twitter:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 jul. 2015
The liberal clown @ariannahuff told her minions at the money losing @HuffingtonPost to cover me as enterainment. I am #1 in Huff Post Poll.

↩   ⟲ 1.074   ♥ 2.163   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 7 dec. 2015
.@washingtonpost is going out of its way to tell failing candidates how to beat Donald Trump. The Post doesn't get that I'm good at winning!

↩   ⟲ 1.856   ♥ 5.340   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 10 feb.
Dopey Mort Zuckerman, owner of the worthless @NYDailyNews, has a major inferiority complex. Paper will close soon!

↩   ⟲ 2.008   ♥ 6.367   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 mei
Michael Barbaro, the author of the now discredited @nytimes hit piece on me with women, has in past tweeted badly about me. He should resign

↩   ⟲ 3.137   ♥ 10.187   •••

Regarding Clinton, Trump continuously undermines her brand and policy, both in his speeches and tweets. We will elaborate further on this relationship later on, but it is mentioned here briefly as it is exemplary for Trump's toughness. According to Haidt, friendships and social contacts across different parties in Congress for example, have been decreasing since the 1990s. The human connections weakened, and it became relatively easier to see the members of the other party as permanent enemies. Haidt notes how 'candidates began to spend more time and money on 'oppo' (opposition research), in which staff members or paid consultants dig up dirt on opponents (sometimes illegally) and then shovel it to the media' (Haidt, 2012, p.211). He mentions that one congressman recently claimed that contemporary congress 'is not a collegial body anymore', but 'more like gang behavior', as 'members walk into the chamber full of hatred' (Haidt, 2012, p.211). As a result, the content of political discourse on Twitter also becomes highly partisan. According to Conover et al., numerous tweets contain sentiments much more extreme than you would encounter in a face-to-face conversation. Moreover, the content is frequently 'disparaging of the identities and views associated with users across the partisan divide' (Conover et al., 2011, p.95). They even conclude that these interactions might serve to 'exuberate the problem of polarization by reinforcing pre-existing political biases' (Conover et al., 2011, p.95). In any case, Trump does not hesitate to emphasize his though character opposed to Clinton within his online discourse:

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 23 dec. 2015
> Hillary, when you complain about "a penchant for sexism," who are you referring to. I have great respect for women. BE CAREFUL!
> ↩ ⟲ 4.164 ♥ 11.075 •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 28 dec. 2015
> If Hillary thinks she can unleash her husband, with his terrible record of women abuse, while playing the women's card on me, she's wrong!
> ↩ ⟲ 6.810 ♥ 15.280 •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 20 mei
> Look where the world is today, a total mess, and ISIS is still running around wild. I can fix it fast, Hillary has no chance!
> ↩ ⟲ 6.051 ♥ 17.577 •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 jun.
> Crooked Hillary Clinton has not held a news conference in more than 7 months. Her record is so bad she is unable to answer tough questions!
> ↩ ⟲ 7.409 ♥ 21.370 •••

6.4.2   Contagious Toughness

Trump also succeeds in rousing the crowd and he directly advises them to toughen up against protesters at his rallies, National Observer reported. It even seems that he targets cities such as St. Louis, Chicago and Cleveland, where tensions concerning issues of race, racism and police violence flare higher than elsewhere (National Observer, 2016, March). At a rally in one of those cities, more specifically in St. Louis, Missouri, not far from Ferguson where intense Black Lives Matter protests have broken out multiple times over the last year and a half over racial inequality and disproportionately high rates of police brutality against black men and women, he said : 'If you see somebody getting ready to throw a tomato, knock the crap out of them, would you? Seriously. I promise you I will pay for the legal fees' (Go Kicker, 2016, March). Eventually, violence did break out at that rally when hundreds of supporters and protesters gathered downtown. In the end, 32 people got arrested (The Guardian, 2016, March).

According to the research of Hong and Kim, those effects can also be reached through the use of social media such as Twitter. They claim that messages containing extreme views and inciting extreme actions are more likely to be noticed, circulated and amplified by the public. This is mainly due to the 'echo chamber' nature of Twitter. Consequently, and this is an important side note, if policymakers rely heavily on that echo chamber in collecting and translating citizen voices, they give a greater weight to the opinions of the extremes because of their greater popularity on social media (Hong & Kim, 2016,

p.2). The final results of Hong and Kim suggest that politicians with extreme ideological positions tend to have more followers, but there is no difference between left- and right-wing extremist. Both have a larger readership than their moderate peers (Hong & Kim, 2016, p.5). Our Twitter corpus contains numerous examples of Trump calling for tough and immediate action:

Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 16 jul. 2015
I hope the boycott of @Macys continues forever. So many people are cutting up their cards. **Macy**'s stores suck and they are bad for U.S.A.

↩   ♻ 1.137   ♥ 2.339   •••

Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 12 nov. 2015
Macy's was very disloyal to me bc of my strong stance on illegal immigration. Their stock has crashed! #BoycottMacys

↩   ♻ 3.234   ♥ 7.436   •••

Donald J. Trump ● @realDonaldTrump · 27 jun. 2015
When somebody challenges you unfairly, fight back - be brutal, be tough - don't take it. It is always important to WIN!

↩   ♻ 1.913   ♥ 2.481   •••

However, the research provides only limited support concerning attracting audiences with extreme ideologies or influencing someone's ideological position to become even more extreme (Hong & Kim, 2016, p.6) . In other words, extreme messages reach a bigger public but do not necessarily convince that same public.

6.4.3   Conclusion

Despite his chances of being mocked by media and experts at the very beginning of his presidential campaign, Trump makes it look like he is the candidate that should not be criticized or messed with. He advises his entire electorate via Twitter and the supporters at his rallies to stand up against people who do not agree with his views with the motto: 'Who doesn't want to listen, has to (physically) feel the consequences'. Four years before he started his campaign, he already published a book titled 'Time to get Tough' that features him telling how America should be run. In a democracy, however, he will not be able to simply block certain media from his press conferences, something he does right now to any medium that openly questions or criticizes him or the way he runs his campaign. We believe that if there is anything that might end up costing Trump the presidency, it will be him taking his tough stance a bridge too far, as the lion's share of his controversy is an exploitation of the ruggedness of his brand.

6.5   Sincerity

The fifth and final brand dimension of Aaker's scale is sincerity. We will argue that Trump often fails to establish an 'honest', 'sincere' and 'wholesome' brand, but covers up those shortcomings. He focuses on traits such as 'down-to-earth', 'family-orientated' and 'small-town' to establish a sincere and appealing authoritative persona that successfully speaks to the heart, and not the mind (cf. supra). As a result, he perfectly fits in the political climate in which facts do not seem to matter any longer.

6.5.1   Facts Do Not Matter

Well known political commentator and Trump-critic John Oliver made an interesting remark in his weekly show after showing footage of Republican Newt Gingrich who claimed feelings are as valid as facts. Oliver stated that presidential candidates can create feelings and when on top of that, feelings are as valid as facts, candidates can create facts. Like this, Trump can create his own reality (July 2016, HBO). And that is exactly what Trump is doing, according to New York Times journalist David Brooks. Trump spoke at the GOP convention about rising crime rates and police deaths and claimed to be the candidate of law and order. Brooks points out, however, that crime rates have been falling almost without fail for 25 years and that in the first half of 2015, for example, the number of shootings in New York and Washington hit historic lows. Also, the number of police deaths decreased by 24 percent between 2005 and 2015. Brooks concludes that 'law and order is a strange theme for a candidate who radiates conflict and disorder' (The New York Times, 2016, July). Oliver continued by explaining how Trump has been 'able to say anything in this campaign, seemingly without any consequences', by comparing the things he says with the bed-of-nails-principle: 'If you step on one nail, it hurts you. If you step on a thousand nails, no single one stands out and you are fine' (HBP, 2016, July).

In the article *'The truth (so far) behind the 2016 campaign'* on the website Politifact, Aaron Sharockman and Neelesh Moorty performed a fact-check on all the presidential candidates from March 23, 2015, until June 29, 2016. They checked 650 statements in total and evaluated 158 facts proclaimed by Trump, who provided the biggest number as he appeared more on television and took part in more debates. The research revealed that 95 of the 158 fact-checks of his claims have been rated 'false' or 'pants on fire' (the highest possible rating of falseness). When the 'mostly false' claims were added to that number, the result mounted up to 123 of 158 or 78 percent of untrue or dishonest claims. A statement such as 'U.S. is the highest taxed nation in the world' for example got fact-checked already four times, and still remains simply false (Moorty & Sharockman, 2016, June).

According to Belgian historian and journalist Marc Reynebeau, facts and knowledge matter less and less in politics. He believes Trump represents the ghost image that academics call 'fact free politics' or 'post-factual democracy': a phenomenon where the truth no longer matters in politics. Politicians like

Trump do not convince voters with their knowledge or even their intellectual coherence but by their authenticity and power of action. Reynebeau concludes that it pays off electorally to simplify the world (De Standaard, 2016, June). This is something Trump also explicitly claimed in one of his tweets:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 1 nov. 2015
While in politics it is often smart to send out false messages, one thing is clear: That Hillary does not want to run against TRUMP.

2.302   5.450

The tweet above also shows us how political competition can involve trickery and demagoguery. According to Haidt, 'politicians play fast and loose with the truth, using their inner press secretaries to portray themselves in the best possible light and their opponents as fools who lead the country to ruin' (Haidt, 2012, p.211).

The theories of Maisel in '*The Negative Consequences of Uncivil Political Discourse'* confirm the analysis of both Reynebeau and Haidt. According to him, the lack of regard for the truth is a second aspect of today's uncivil political discourse, the first one being the lack of regard for other individuals in the process (Maisel, 2012, p.409). Maisel: 'Politicians say what they need to say- about themselves and about those running against them- to win elections'. He also mentions the crucial role of the media:

> *'Television networks on Right and Left repeat these falsehoods and give them credibility because they have discovered that outlandish claims lead to bigger audiences. The same is true of radio talk shows. Polling data show that most citizens gather news from outlets with whose position they agree. Conservatives listen to Fox News; liberals to MSNBC' (Maisel, 2012, p.410).*

This is line with the findings of Haidt, regarding intuitions coming first and strategic reasoning second. When people identify themselves as 'liberal' and 'Democrat' or 'conservative' and 'Republican', they do not just choose to endorse different values. Haidt claims that 'within the first half second after hearing a statement, partisan brains are already reacting differently' (Haidt, 2012, p.133). This can be seen as their intuitive elephant, leaning slightly towards one side and causing them to reason differently, find different kinds of evidence, and form different conclusions (Haidt, 2012, p.133). Once people join a political team and share moral matrix, confirmation of their grand narrative is seen everywhere and it is, according to Haidt, 'difficult – perhaps impossible – to convince them that they are wrong if you argue with them from outside of their matrix' (Haidt, 2012, p.241). We have already provided a similar conclusion regarding the sophistication dimension (cf. supra).

6.5.2   Authoritative Trump Offers What Crowd Seeks

In June, Vox-reporter Amanda Taub claimed that the rise of Trump is to be explained by a niche political science: authoritarianism. The term is used by political scientists in order to describe a worldview that values order and authority and distrusts outsiders and social change. In a certain way, it contains the most extreme forms of the sincerity dimension as some facets and traits such as 'down-to-earth', 'family-oriented', and 'small-town' are carried out to the maximum. Taub continues by saying that people who share authoritarian values seek strongmen leadership when feeling threatened. Authoritarianists are target groups who are fond of a simple, useful leadership style (Vox, 2016, June). Something Trump not only personifies on the stage, but also implements in his online discourse:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 sep. 2015
Our country needs a president with great leadership skills and vision, not someone like Hillary or Barack, neither of which has a clue!
↩   ⇄ 3.464   ♥ 7.444   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 20 aug. 2015
We are going to make our country so strong again, so great again. No more ripping off the United States. We will MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!
↩   ⇄ 6.046   ♥ 10.787   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 26 mrt.
Nobody will protect our Nation like Donald J. Trump. Our military will be greatly strengthened and our borders will be strong. Illegals out!
↩   ⇄ 9.727   ♥ 27.651   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 24 jan.
I will make our Military so big, powerful & strong that no one will mess with us. #Trump2016 facebook.com/DonaldTrump/vi...

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
TRUMP
THE MILITARY

↩   ⇄ 4.641   ♥ 12.311   •••

Several other studies have backed up Taub's claims. Nearly twenty years ago, Stanley Feldman and Karen Stenner posed questions in the field of parenting preferences like 'Which is more important for

a child to have: independence or respect for elders?' as questions such as 'Do you support strongmen leadership?' are too personal. The two researchers came to the conclusion that parents who wanted their children to value order and authority, correlated very highly with behavior that authoritarian people exhibit. This was, however, only the case for white voters (Feldman & Stenner, 1997).

Other journalists even linked Trump directly to authoritarianism. Politico-journalist Matthew MacWilliams conducted a research on the predictors of the rise of Trump and concluded that neither income nor education was the best predictor for a vote for Trump, but authoritarianism was (Politico, 2016, January). Vox, too, discovered that people who showed support for authoritarianism, were more likely to vote for Trump. They conducted a poll in collaboration with Morning Consult in February on perceived threats. Results showed that authoritarians scored higher on the 'I feel threatened' scale than non-authoritarians, when foreigners were the source of the threat. This was not the case when it came to car accidents or gun violence. Authoritarians preferred force over diplomacy and are willing to sacrifice civil liberties in exchange for safety (Vox, 2016, March).

6.5.3   History Is on Trump's Side

According to Taub, during most of USA's history, authoritarians were divided between Republicans and Democrats. Now, however, only Republicans appeal to them. The Republican Party started to embrace traditional values, turned against the Equal Rights Amendment, denounced abortion and fought against same-sex marriage. The war on terror and the position Republicans take towards this matter, fits the authoritarian line perfectly. She concluded that Trump benefited from a larger shift in his country that goes beyond any candidate and that Trump might well be the first of many Trumps in American politics (Vox, 2016, June). Not so long ago, Marc Hetherington and Jonathan Weiler found that over several decades, authoritarian voters are more and more shifting towards the Republican Party. When authoritarians become scared by a particular social change or issue, the Republicans are the ones who do not ignore them (Vox, 2016, June).

Later on, we will further elaborate on the comparison between Donald Trump and former President Ronald Reagan. Yet, it makes sense to mention him here in short. Elizabeth Drew stated back in 1976 that for example:

> *'Reagan's appeal has not to do with competence at governing, but with the emotion he evokes. Reagan lets people get out their anger and frustration, their feeling of being misunderstood and mishandled by those who have run our government, their impatience with taxes and with the poor and the weak, their impulse to deal with the world 's troublemakers by employing the stratagem of a punch to the nose' (The New Yorker, 1976).*

An approach that Trump also seems to incorporate (cf. infra) and even mentions explicitly by quoting Reagan:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 28 jul. 2015
"Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives." – Ronald Reagan

↩   ⟲ 4.266   ♥ 6.458   • • •
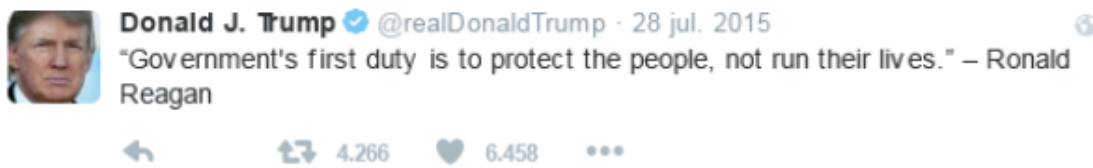
Richard Wirthlin, Reagan's campaign pollster said that voters 'follow some authority figure, a leader who can take charge with authority, return a sense of discipline to our government and manifest the willpower needed to get his country back on track' (Cowie, 2010, p.306). Ford added that 'Reagan had a penchant for offering simplistic solutions to hideously complex problems' and that 'he considered himself always right in every argument' (Ford, 1979, p.142).

6.5.4   Sincere Fascist?

When a part of Americans seek a leader, not all types of leaders are as democratic once they are in charge. Multiple scholars and journalists have linked Trump's political campaign to fascism, an authoritarian nationalist and dictatorial political discourse best known from Benito Mussolini's Italy from 1922 until 1943.

Harvard Teacher Umberto Eco (De Morgen, 2016, March) does not link Trump directly to authoritarianism, but qualifies him as a fascist claiming that Trump meets a list of seven fascist criteria. He focuses on national identity (1), attracts the frustrated middle class (2), creates a cult of actions (3), considers opinions differing from his as betrayal (4), despises the weak (5), is selectively populistic (6) and spreads lies and propaganda (7). Not to mention the support he receives from the KKK and other controversial institutions such as the National Policy Institution, the Traditionalist Youth Network, Stormfront, Infostormer and the American Renaissance-website. The American Freedom Party of well-known racist William Johnson even created a political action committee which rings civilians and tries to convince them to vote for Trump (De Morgen, 2016, March). Robert Paxton links Trump to fascism, too. As a scholar of fascism, he has cited a number of parallels between Trump's campaign and fascist movements of the 20th century:

> *'nationalism, aggressive foreign policy, attacks on the enemies inside and out without much regard for due process, an obsession with perceived national decline and the belief that the country needs a strong leader'. (Los Angeles Times, 2016, March).*

Some authors, however, believe white supremacy is not Trump's main issue and do not agree his electorate are all racists. Thomas Frank of The Guardian for example, is one of them. According to

Frank, Trump likes to talk more about restricting trade than white supremacy. He mentions the destructive trade deals of former and current political leaders, the companies that have moved their production facilities abroad and the numerous phone calls in which he threatens those companies' CEO's with tariffs, unless they move their company back within the United States' borders. Frank mentions that America is cut in two parts on the basis of socio-economic status: 10-20 percent of the population is considered the professional class, the remaining 80-90 percent is not. For the professional class, 'free trade' is an issue that's so obviously good and noble that it does not require any explanation or thought. For the majority of Americans though, 'free trade' means jobs and businesses moving outside of the US, causing unemployment. Frank dislikes the fact that multiple media talk about the correlation between racist Google searches and support for Trump because the areas where the support for Trump is great, correlate even better with the zones of economic misery that are the result of Washington's 30-year policy of free-market consensus (The Guardian, 2016, March).

6.5.5   Conclusion

Trump clearly fails to establish an 'honest', 'sincere' and 'wholesome' brand, but he is lucky that a big part of the Americans desperately seek an authoritative leader, regardless of his political party, the controversy he sparks or the notorious people he is linked to. They have been neglected by the current political elite for quite some time as they have seen their jobs as well as their opportunities vanish due to multiple free trade agreements. Therefore they do not seem to care about facts, they just want to 'make America great again'.

7. Short strategic shift after clinching presumptive Republican nomination

After the Brexit, a European milestone which we will evaluate and relate to Aaker's brand dimensions later on, Vox published an article mentioning striking resemblances between Trump and the Brexit. It argued that 'Trump has been Nigel Farage before he clinched the Republican nomination' and posed the question whether he could be Boris Johnson afterwards. According to Vox, the 'Leave' campaign won the British referendum by talking more like Donald Trump and that now, Trump is talking more like the Brexit campaign (Vox, 2016, June). But did Trump really alter his discourse? And to which extent are those presumed alterations a real strategic shift changing his brand?

At the end of June and one month before he secured the official nomination of the Grand Old Party, Trump fired his relatively inexperienced campaign manager Corey Lewandowski as part of a possible strategic shift. According to The New York Times, Lewandowski's time was primarily spent on the campaign trail with the candidate, and day-to-day aspects of the operation were largely handled by the chief strategist, Paul Manafort. Lewandowski had been causing controversy for months, including being charged with misdemeanor battery after he was accused of grabbing a reporter as she approached Trump in Florida in March. Paul Manafort on the other hand has quite some experience, as he helped manage the 1976 convention floor for Gerald Ford in his showdown with Ronald Reagan, the last time Republicans entered a convention with no candidate having clinched the nomination (New York Times, 2016, June). He also served for Bush, both father and son, and John McCain. Being Trump's strategist, however, is by far his most demanding challenge.

In his current strategic team, Trump can also count on a strategic social media team with Dan Scavino and Hope Hicks. Dan Scavino is one of Trump's confidants and his social media chief. Initially he was Trump's caddie carrying around his clubs, but he quickly became the president of a golf club and now he determines all the social media campaigns. Ex-model Hope Hicks is responsible for Trump's Twitter account and puts everything the flamboyant businessman dictates to her into tweets. She functions as a more discrete press officer in Trump's entourage (Het Nieuwsblad, 2016, July).

7.1   Let Trump Be Trump

In an analysis for De Morgen, Michael Persson compared the transcripts of eight speeches of both Donald J. Trump and Hillary Clinton. His main goal was to investigate the discourse of the 'classic' Trump and see if there is any evolution concerning his eccentric approach. According to Persson, the speeches of Trump are rhetorical wild rides with numerous linguistic whirlpools and the occasional dead end. Most of the time he is 'unprepared' and he maintains his lectures with what comes to his

mind. A teleprompter or some script are seldom seen on the Trump stage. 'Let Trump be Trump', was the motto of Lewandowski whose inexperience played a big role in Trump's success (De Morgen, 2015, June; De Morgen, 2016, July).

The main conclusions of Persson's research also apply to Trump's Twitter discourse. Firstly, he uses the word 'I' much more often than Clinton, who prefers 'him' or 'she'. He also starts 44 percent of his sentences with a personal pronoun, often 'I', whereas Clinton ticks off at 29 percent. She prefers to start with conjunctions in order to connect her sentences logically. The high use of 'I' is a small detail that massively emphasizes Trump's decisiveness and ego. The previous chapters on the dimensions of 'competence' and 'ruggedness' already show some Tweets that illustrate his tendency to focus on himself, but our corpus contains numerous other examples that prove our point:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 3 jul. 2015
Our Southern border is unsecure. I am the only one that can fix it, nobody else has the guts to even talk about it.

↩   ⟲ 1.479   ♥ 2.246   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 23 mrt.
I will be the best by far in fighting terror. I'm the only one that was right from the beginning, & now Lyin' Ted & others are copying me.

↩   ⟲ 7.342   ♥ 22.662   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 24 mrt.
Just announced that as many as 5000 ISIS fighters have infiltrated Europe. Also, many in U.S. I TOLD YOU SO! I alone can fix this problem!

↩   ⟲ 9.666   ♥ 23.156   •••

Persson's final description of the classic Trump is probably the most remarkable: 'This was an uncle who skipped family reunions for several years, and then suddenly returned full of confidence with some half-hearted anecdotes. He did, however, dare to state things that no one had ever said before: that grandmother's pie was disgusting' (De Morgen, 2016, July).

7.2   Post Lewandowski Shift?

At the end of June and after firing Lewandowski, Persson notes that some hints of a new Trump are starting to appear. Trump needs to fit the presidential role concerning both content and tone, so a strategic shift on all levels is urgently required. His speech in New York on the 22nd of June contains the first signs of a man who speeches in a more logical manner and starts to incorporate terms such as 'hope' and even 'change'. Vox-Journalist Dara Lind believes it was 'the first evidence that Trump could

actually make the much-hyped 'pivot' and started trying to appeal to Americans beyond his devoted fan base' (Vox, 2016, June). Trump altered his approach: the old Trump talked spontaneously, the new one uses a teleprompter. The old Trump's associations were all over the place. The new Trump appears to be following a logical structure with a clear focus. According to Lind he even managed to stay away from his applause lines while delivering 'a full-throated case for economic protectionism, encouraging domestic manufacturing and discouraging imports and trade' (Vox, 2016, June; De Morgen 2016, July). It appeared that the dimensions of 'sincerity' and 'competence' were being substantiated.

Persson believes the Trump team realized that they only have a chance to win if Trump receives enough support from the lower parts of the American middleclass. And that is the *whole* American middleclass. Convincing the angry, white conservatives is not enough. Trump needs to win over the angry, white democrats from the old industrial regions such as Pennsylvania and Ohio, and get in favor of women, blacks and Latino's. As a result, those last three target groups start to appear explicitly and more frequently in his speeches. He starts to personify a presidential candidate who could represent the *silent majority*, without turning off everybody else (Vox, 2016, June; De Morgen, 2016, July; Het Nieuwsblad, 2016, July).

Even concerning Hillary Clinton, Trump delivered a coherent description that was more reasonable than before. On Twitter, it is remarkable how 'crooked Hillary', who was consistently called that way since April 17th 2016, loses her 'title' and returns to being just 'Hillary' or 'Hillary Clinton'. This does not mean that Trump stops seeing her as 'a corrupt liar who is beholden to the big-money interests rigging the American economy', but his tone does seem to be a 'little' less vile and more sophisticated. He counters for example her campaign slogan 'I'm with her' by claiming 'I'm with you, the American people' (Vox, 2016, June):

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 21 jun.
Hillary defrauded America as Secy of State. She used it as a personal hedge fund to get herself rich! Corrupt, dangerous, dishonest.

↩ ⟲ 13.928 ♥ 33.248 •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 21 jun.
Hillary Clinton's open borders immigration policies will drive down wages for all Americans - and make everyone less safe.

↩ ⟲ 8.992 ♥ 23.167 •••
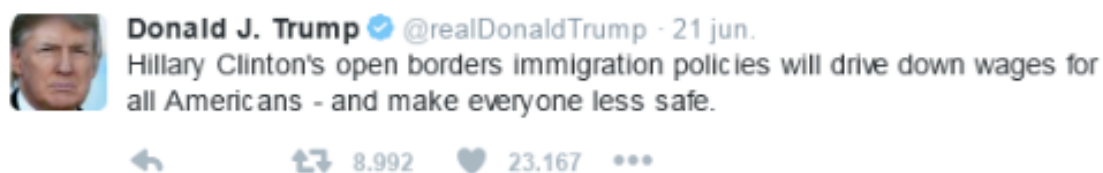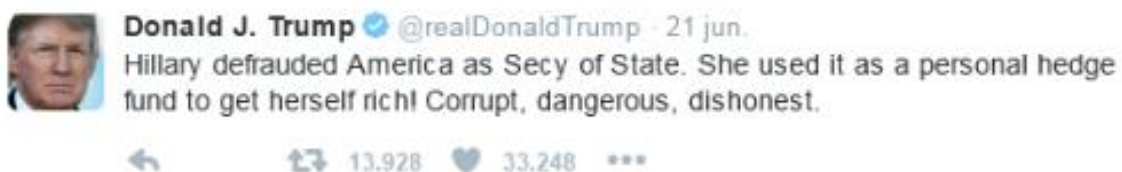
Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 23 jun.
Hillary Clinton's open borders are tearing American families apart. I am going to make our country Safe Again for all Americans. #Imwithyou

↩   ↻ 6.744   ♥ 20.550   •••

7.3   Old Habits Die Hard

In her analysis, Lind notes that Trump's 'pivotal' speech was proof of his capability to be the ideal Republican candidate, but it was 'by no means proof that this is the self-discipline Trump will bring to the remaining four and a half months of the campaign' (Vox 2016, June). Only about a week later, Lind's conclusion would be proven correct.

In New Hampshire, on the 30th of June, the eccentric and exciting old Trump already made his come-back. The script of his speech was quickly deemed useless and pushed aside, and during his speeches in North Carolina and Ohio, Trump completely fell back into his old habits. Persson notes how he praised Saddam Hussein, mocked the CO_2 emissions of Obama's Air Force One, denied that he tweeted an anti-Semitic star, and of course re-established the epitaph of 'crooked Hillary' while elaborating on her e-mail debacle, which, according to him, portrays the rigged system of the contemporary American political field. Starting from the 2nd of July, the following tweets made it very clear that the old approach was back. The cease-fire of 'crooked Hillary' references was thus only very temporary. The direct attacks are now, with her being the final opponent, more prominent than ever (cf. infra):

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 2 jul.
It was just announced-by sources-that no charges will be brought against Crooked Hillary Clinton. Like I said, the system is totally rigged!

↩   ↻ 21.525   ♥ 49.789   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 4 jul.
Crooked Hillary Clinton is "guilty as hell" but the system is totally rigged and corrupt! Where are the 33,000 missing e-mails?

↩   ↻ 10.893   ♥ 28.854   •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 4 jul.
Crooked Hillary will NEVER be able to handle the complexities and danger of ISIS - it will just go on forever. We need change!

↩ ⟲ 6.761 ♥ 20.230 •••

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 2 jul.
Crooked Hillary -- Makes History!
#ImWithYou #AmericaFirst

↩ ⟲ 11.192 ♥ 25.474 •••

As we mentioned earlier related to the work of Maisel, this kind of political uncivility is seen as a small cost if the gain is winning the ultimate battle. According to Maisel, the reason that 'politicians do not 'respectfully disagree' is that they do not in fact respect the views of their opponent; they see those views as dangerous'. On a discourse level, Trump clearly returns towards those dimensions of 'excitement' and 'ruggedness' by relentlessly attacking his final opponent. However, Maisel mentions that it is quite unclear if the public sees the stakes as high as political leaders do, voters merely want solutions to their pressing problems (Maisel, 2012, 410).

7.4   #TrumpPence16

It is safe to conclude that Trump fell back into his old discourse. Consequently, there is merely a shift concerning his own brand, but there is definitely one related to his general approach: the appointment of Governor Mike Pence as his running mate on July 15, 2016.
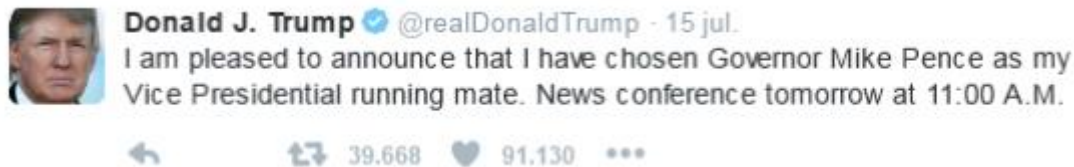
Pence is generally perceived as an experienced and safe choice. He maintains some very traditional and conservative viewpoints regarding gay rights and abortion, but is highly regarded by the establishment of the GOP. From this perspective, the appointment of Pence is strategically a logical choice. Trump was desperately in need of someone who compensates his eccentric style and knows his way around Congress and republican establishment. Pence fits that picture perfectly and is the ideal running mate who is a much more traditional personification of the GOP spirit than Donald Trump himself (De Morgen, 2016, July; De Standaard, 2016, July).

With Pence on board, it seems that the old Trump can be tempered a little bit. During his acceptance speech for example, Trump claimed he 'will do anything to protect the LGBTQ-community against violence and foreign, hatred-based ideology'. These words are historic as never before was the LGBTQ-community mentioned in such a manner in a Republican acceptance speech. Even more remarkable was the fact that Trump received applause from the conservative crowds for this statement. De Standaard journalist Gianni Paelinck warns that with Trump in the White House, gay rights might not take a leap forward. According to Bart Kerremans, professor in American Politics at the University of Leuven, Trump's words are 'noteworthy' as 'the gay movement inside the Republican Party has never succeeded in shifting the GOP program towards an openness concerning gay marriage. An important side note, however, is that Trump did not mention gay marriage but focused in his statement on the protection against hate crimes. His words mainly fit the picture of his immigration policy, combat against Islamic fundamentalism and the threats that oppose the United States (De Standaard, 2016, July). Nevertheless, Trump does have quite some LGBT supporters and he did choose three gay delegates for the California primary (Washington Blade, 2016, June).

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 14 jun.
Thank you to the LGBT community! I will fight for you while Hillary brings in
more people that will threaten your freedoms and beliefs.

↩   ⇄ 18.233   ♥ 51.994   •••

Björn Soenens also noticed that Trump did not utter the word 'conservative' once, even though he delivered the longest speech for the normally conservative party in 45 years. According to Soenens, Trump is an outsider. Paelinck continues that gay issues are traditionally defended by the Democrats. The same goes for women rights, which daughter Ivanka Trump addressed when she suggested equal pay for both genders. A Washington Post article titled '*Ivanka Trump spoke like a Democrat and Republicans absolutely loved it*', mentions Donald's eldest daughter, who is continuously present during her father's campaign trail, talking about the gender wage gap and the difficulties working mothers face at the GOP convention. No advocate for a Republican presidential nominee has spoken those words in primetime before (The Washington Post, 2016, July). Journalist Van de Weghe added: 'I thought Hillary Clinton was speaking instead of Ivanka', hinting at the current distortion within the Republican-Democrat spectrum (cf. infra) (De Redactie, 2016, July). Kerremans concludes that 'Donald Trump wants to attract Democratic voters with a populist speech and avoid that conservative gays would vote for Clinton. He aims at the middleclass, low skilled people and unionists, who normally vote for the Democratic nominee' (De Standaard, 2016, July).

When accepting his official nomination as the Republican candidate for the Presidency after beating 16 opponents, Trump also described himself as 'the candidate for law and order' and used the slogan 'I am your voice'. He then added: 'We cannot afford any longer to be politically correct' (De Tijd 2016, July). As Trump knows that the GOP is scared of losing what they have, he united the party in his speech on the topic of national security, mentioning 'law and order' four times, 'safe' or 'safety' thirteen times and 'threat' nine times. The theme fits Trump as he knows what worries the American people. He is the one who rediscovered the white lower class and put them on top of the agenda. He was the one who saw that those people were in a downwards spiral, continuously becoming poorer during the last 15 years whereas the rest of the country increased its wealth. Trump is the candidate who noticed that their children were being sent to pointless wars and that they do not want any colored neighbors. Even regarding his rival Clinton, Trump lowered his against voice and nuanced his tone. He calmed down the angry delegates who shouted 'locker her up' by claiming they were 'going to beat her in November' (De Morgen, July 2013). It seems as if Trump tried to ensure people that he is a regular politician, but Chris Christie, Governor of New Jersey and one of the key players in Trump's campaign team, begs to differ: 'Trump is not a pre-programed robotic politician' (NJ, 2016, June).

7.5   Conclusion

After having seized the presumptive Republican nomination, Trump briefly altered his discourse to that of a regular politician. But as Trump is anything but a standard presidential candidate, he only managed to stay on the traditional and formal path towards the White House for a couple of weeks. We believe that this is because his brand is built on being the atypical candidate and assume that Trump could only for a short period of time pretend to be someone he is not. It is also possible that the short shift that occurred was aimed at convincing a broader range of people who were until then not included in his electorate. At the same time though, a possible extended shift might have cost him his die hard supporters as they cherish his blunt style and could reject him and his brand if he had evolved to a more standard politician.

8. Donald Remarkably Resembles Ronald

According to Frank Rich of New York Magazine, one of the best ways to explain Donald Trump's success, is to compare his brand and career path with that of 1980 GOP nominee Ronald Reagan. Donald and Ronald both sparked outrage within different parts of the electorate, had to endure a lot of negative press attention, offended the same elites, surprised multiple political adversaries, were both - unlike their respective competitors - very accessible to the press and the public, were populistic and built on nationalism, nostalgia, the dislike of Washington and racial themes. Both even encountered doubts about their seemingly fake coiffures. On top of that, they also share the same type of Democratic rivals. Rich claims 'Hillary Clinton is to Trump what Carter and especially Mondale were to Reagan: a smart, mainstream liberal with a vast public-service résumé who stands for all good things without ever finding that one big thing that electrifies voters' (New York Magazine, 2016, June).

Within this chapter we will further investigate the most prominent similarities between the presidential career paths of both men and evaluate if Aaker's different brand personality dimensions can be applied to Ronald Reagan. Several tweets of our Twitter corpus will also reveal that the connection between Trump and Reagan is direct and is not merely a construct of Frank Rich's.

8.1 Make America Great Again

Rich notes that both candidates built their campaigns around the same ideology and ambitious slogan '*Let's Make America Great Again'*. As the Belgian America watcher Björn Soenens describes in his book *America*, Reagan opened his inauguration speech with the words: '*Let us renew our faith and hope*' (Soenens, 2015, p. 99; New York Magazine, 2016, March). Note how this resembles especially Trump's 'new' style after the strategic shift mentioned earlier (cf. supra). Journalist Pressman of The Atlantic makes a similar comparison and believes that both men ran on the idea 'that simple solutions exist, but other leaders lack the strong will to implement them'. He suggests that this 'was a central aspect of Reagan's appeal and is key to understanding the Trump phenomenon' (The Atlantic, 2015, September). When we take a closer look on the next set of tweets, we see how Trump draws upon Reagan's perspectives and maintains that typical binary opposition: if we don't have borders, for example, we don't have a country, so we need a wall.

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 3 jul. 2015
"A nation that cannot control its borders is not a nation." - President Ronald Reagan

↩   ⇄ 2.508   ♥ 3.708   •••

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 12 nov. 2015
We, as a country, either have borders or we don't. IF WE DON'T HAVE BORDERS, WE DON'T HAVE A COUNTRY!

↩   ⇄ 6.171   ♥ 12.001   •••

Both men also clearly personify the all-American president that wants to save a demoralized country and experiences the need to re-establish the self-confidence the United States so desperately needs to properly function again. They stand for a carefree leadership based on certitude that appeals to a major part of the electorate. Reagan stood for a solution after some hard times during the seventies including Vietnam, Watergate, the deceit by Nixon, and the weak Ford and Carter. Trump is that same solution for different problems such as the economic crisis, terrorism, immigration, corrupt establishment, etc. (Soenens, 2015, 99).

8.2   Candidate From Disneyland

Rich further claims that until Reagan actually became the Republican candidate, he was not taken seriously as a politician at all (New York Magazine, March, 2016). Craig Shirley, a longtime political consultant who wrote a book about Reagan and the campaign that, according to him, changed America, draws a similar conclusion: 'Other major GOP players – especially Easterners and moderates – thought Reagan was a certified yahoo' (New York Magazine, 2016, March). He mentions a 1976 poll claiming that 90 percent of the Republican state chairmen accused Reagan of 'simplistic approaches, with no depth in federal government administration and no experience in foreign affairs' (New York Magazine, 2016, March). Four years later, a U.S. News and World Report survey of 475 national and state chairmen concluded George Bush Senior was greatly preferred over Reagan. In that survey, one state chairman possibly spoke for many when he told Reagan's intellect was 'thinner than a spit on slate rock' (New York Magazine, 2016, March). Rick Perlstein in his turn announced in his multi-award winning trilogy of the rise of the conservative movement *The Invisible Bridge: the fall of Nixon and the rise of Reagan* (2014), that Nixon as well as Ford thought Reagan was nothing but a lightweight. Gerald Ford wrote in his memoirs that after his loss in the 1976 election to Carter he did not take the Reagan-threat seriously because he 'did not take Reagan seriously' (Blumenthal, 2008, p.159). The press too, did not think much of Reagan's candidacy as Harper's magazine called him 'the presidential candidate from Disneyland' (Harper's Magazine, 1976, September).

8.3 Controversy

As already mentioned, neither men was reluctant to spark controversy, spread lies or fail in public, all often in order to create a certain excitement. Rich reports that Reagan once confused Afghanistan with Pakistan and when he was in office meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Reagan claimed that he had filmed the liberated Nazi camps while he actually had never even witnessed them (New York Magazine, 2016, March). Trump often acts in that same fashion, says Eelco Bosch van Rosenthal. Statements such as 'I do not accept campaign donations' or 'America has an annual trade deficit of 500 billion dollars with China' are simply false (De Morgen, April 2016).

8.4 Moderate Right Wingers?

A BBC comparison between multiple current and former Republican Presidential Candidates also revealed that Trump, like Reagan, is not so extreme after all in a party that continues to shift to the right. All candidates received a score on major policy issues such as taxes, national security, immigration, foreign policy and abortion. The scale varied from 0 to 10 with 0 being 'moderate' and 10 being 'right wing'. Concerning taxes, national security, foreign policy and abortion, Trump had moderate opinions. It is worth noticing here that the respective scores only slightly differ from Reagan's. The only issue on which both gentlemen could not disagree more is immigration. Whereas Trump scored the maximum of 10, mainly thanks to his Mexican wall proposal; Reagan scored a 1 with his actions that granted amnesty to undocumented foreigners who entered the US before 1982 (BBC, 2016, March). Quite remarkably in this context is the way in which Trump is still able to connect his own immigration policy with Reagan's perspective. The second tweet from the previous set delivers the perfect example:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 14 jul. 2015
A nation without borders is no nation at all. We must build a wall. Let's Make America Great Again! donaldjtrump.com
↩   ⟲ 1.265   ♥ 2.402   •••

Trump combines two of Reagan's opinions here: 'A nation without borders is no nation at all' (based on 'A nation that cannot control its borders is not a nation') and the slogan 'Let's Make America Great Again', with his own Mexican wall agenda. Even though both men could not be further apart concerning immigration, Trump still succeeds to maintain the idea that he follows in Reagan's footsteps.

8.5 Consistently Inconsistent

Both men also appear to be consistently inconsistent. Reagan was a conservative who swung from left to right, and vice versa, from time to time. In 2004, Trump said that he identified as a Democrat (CNN, 2015, July) and he rejoined the Republican Party in 2009. It is striking that one out of four people who voted for the Democrat Obama in 2012, now intend to vote for the Republican Trump. Party loyalty does not determine the candidate choice all that much, as 58 percent of those rooting for team Trump said they would still vote for him if he were to become the Democratic nominee (Working America, 2015, January).

8.6 Conclusion

Both gentlemen do not necessarily represent a party or certain facts, but a feeling or brand. They represent an ideal and competent leader who stands for certitude and is able to appeal to a big part of the electorate, often seen as the silent majority. They both cover up their disinterest in actual facts and their tendency to lie by cultivating the excitement, competence sophistication, and ruggedness of their brand. As a result, it is no wonder that Trump sees Reagan as the best president during his lifetime:
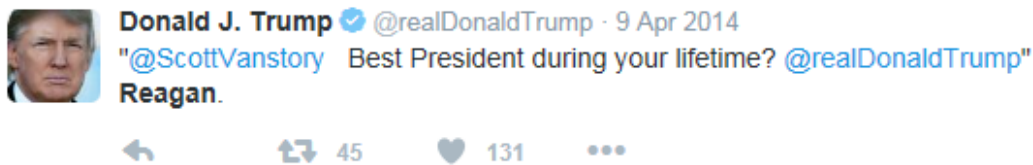
And opened his book *Time to get Tough'* with the Reagan quote:

> 'Next Tuesday all of you will go to the polls, will stand there polling place and make a decision. I think when you make that decision, it might be well if you would ask yourself, you better off than you were four years ago?' (Trump, 2011).

9. Comparison With Other Presidential Candidates

We decided to evaluate Trump's brand and vision from a Republican and Democratic perspective and compare it with four other original presidential candidates: Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Hillary Clinton and Gary Johnson. We did that because we believe that they had, and some of them still have, the biggest impact on Trump's campaign and vice versa. If we dig deeper into the established brands and visions of those different candidates, we stand a greater chance of solving our research question.

Jeb Bush was expected to be one of, if not the, Republican candidate with the highest chance of winning his party's nomination. He already quit the presidential race in February, however, with Marco Rubio, John Kasich, Ted Cruz and Donald Trump still in it. Cruz was included in this chapter as he was the final Republican candidate Trump had to beat to become the presumptive nominee. It is evident we also have also looked into the elected Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton as she is Trump's final opponent and gets a lot of attention on his Twitter. Clinton will therefore be evaluated in some more detail. And finally Gary Johnson is incorporated as he is the third presidential candidate. His Libertarian Party only scored one percent of the votes in 2012, but it might cause some mayhem this November.

9.1 GOP Clashes with Trump on Continuous Basis

The fact that multiple Republican figureheads such as Mitt Romney, John McCain, Paul Ryan and the entire Bush family were absent from the GOP convention in Ohio, where Trump was officially elected and presented as the Republican presidential candidate, is no coincidence. Already in March 2016, an open letter from 120 conservative foreign-policy and national-security leaders condemned Trump as being 'fundamentally dishonest' and 'unfit to be president' (Reuters, 2016, March). Even after his nomination, approximately 30 percent of his own party did not support Trump, the highest percentage since 1976 (De Standaard, 2016, July). We believe that this is due to the fact that Trump and his brand are far from the political or Republican standard.

In his essay '*When and Why Nationalism Beats Globalism'*, Haidt draws a similar conclusion referring to the work of Karen Stenner. According to Stenner, authoritarians, such as Trump (cf. supra) are psychologically different from so called 'status quo conservatives'. The latter are more prototypical and quite cautious when it comes to radical change. As a result, they are not natural allies of authoritarians, as those often favor radical change and want to take big risks to implement new and untested political policies, such as a Brexit or ban of Muslim immigration. Stenner claims that this is where so many GOP members, and almost all conservative intellectuals, oppose Trump: 'he is simply

not a conservative by the test of temperament or values' (The American Interest, 2016, July). The status quo conservatives can, however, form an alliance with authoritarians when they believe that progressives undermine the country's identity and tradition, and see radical change and political actions as the only solution (The American Interest, 2016, July).

9.2   Reasons for Trump's Success in the GOP

But how did Trump become the Republican presidential candidate if not even his own party seemed to like, let alone support him? This may be explained , at least partially , by the fact that Trump differs greatly from most of the other GOP-members.

According to John Cassidy of the New Yorker, Trump's right-wing populist positions concerning nativism, protectionism and semi-isolationism differ in many ways from traditional conservatism: 'What is perhaps more surprising, at least to Washington-based conservatives, is how many Republicans are also embracing Trump's populist lines on ending free trade, protecting Social Security, and providing basic health care' (The New Yorker, 2016, February). Trump opposes many free trade deals and military interventionist policies that are supported by the conservatives and he insists that Washington is 'broken' and can only be fixed by an outsider (Politico, 2015, September; New York Times, 2016, March). Nicholas Confessore explains: 'While wages declined and workers grew anxious about retirement, Republicans offered an economic program still centered on tax cuts for the affluent and the curtailing of popular entitlements like Medicare and Social Security' (New York Times, 2016, March).

Another fact that helps explain Trump's success is that he is not a single case within the GOP, he's merely the loudest. According to Politico journalist Michael Lind, the Republican elite has for many years gotten away with promoting trade policies that are the exact opposite of the policies favored by much of their electoral base. Trump has not been the only populist conservative in the GOP who wants to end illegal immigration, tax the rich, protect Social Security and Medicare, and fight fewer foreign wars. But before the summer of 2015 and the political rise of Trump, mainstream pundits and journalists, who were searching for a libertarian right more to their liking and comprehension, refused to notice them (Politico 2015, September).

Finally, both Trump and the GOP are also completely done with the political elite correctness. The hatred towards that elite correctness, personified by 'crooked' Hillary Clinton, is a crucial element that unifies the GOP (De Tijd, 2016, July). Clinton does not only represent the current political class but has connections with Wall Street, the so-called greedy ones who care for no one but themselves (De Morgen, 2016, July). A De Morgen article mentions how Trump's aversion for elite correctness became

clear once more in the plagiarism affair of his wife Melania, who copied and pasted some parts of Michelle Obama's 2008 speech. Paul Manafort and Trump's entourage claimed that people were nagging about this trivial issue as Melania's words were 'common' and that 'most people share those values' (De Morgen, 2016, July).

9.3   Distortion of the Republican-Democrat Spectrum

The love-hate relationship between Trump and the GOP is quite clear, but where exactly can Trump be situated within the Republican-Democrat spectrum? At their respective conventions at Ohio and Philadelphia, it became clear that both the normally conservative Republican Party and the in general liberal Democratic one, shared a mishmash of conservative as well as liberal viewpoints. As a result, it is less evident to pinpoint a politician in the contemporary political field.

Tom Van de Weghe, America-watcher for the Flemish public service broadcasting, attended both the Republic Convention in Ohio and the Democratic in Philadelphia. Afterwards, he wrote that he had to pinch himself in the arms as the tone and the atmosphere of the Democratic Convention looked more like a regular Republican one than ever before. Van de Weghe cited Republican strategist Rich Galen who asked himself: 'Did the Democrats just steal from us? Where did the GOP go to?'. According to Van de Weghe, the Democrats want to attract the political middle, the group which despises Trump. President Obama in his turn even cited Ronald Reagan twice during his speech while Trump did not mention his late Republican colleague once at the Ohio convention (De Redactie, 2016, July).

Clinton's choice for Tim Kaine as possible future Vice-President, is also one which has to convince doubting Republican voters, as Kaine stated: 'If any of you were looking for Lincoln's party, we are offering you shelter in the Democratic party'. Abraham Lincoln was the Republican President during the American Civil War and is widely considered one of the greatest ever to have lived in the White House. Clinton's slogan 'Stronger Together' has the opposite meaning of Trump's 'I am your voice'. Clinton is trying to shift to the left to please Bernie Sanders' voters, but she threatens to alienate the Democratic left wing even further with her Neo-Republican vocabulary (De Redactie, 2016, July).

Van de Weghe concludes that with 'two historically unpopular candidates, it is possible that the American voter estranges even more from politics and decides to stay at home on the 8th of November (De Redactie, 2016, July). A great part of them will only cast their vote for both an appealing brand and a clear vision, something that appears difficult to establish within the current distorted Republican-Democrat spectrum.
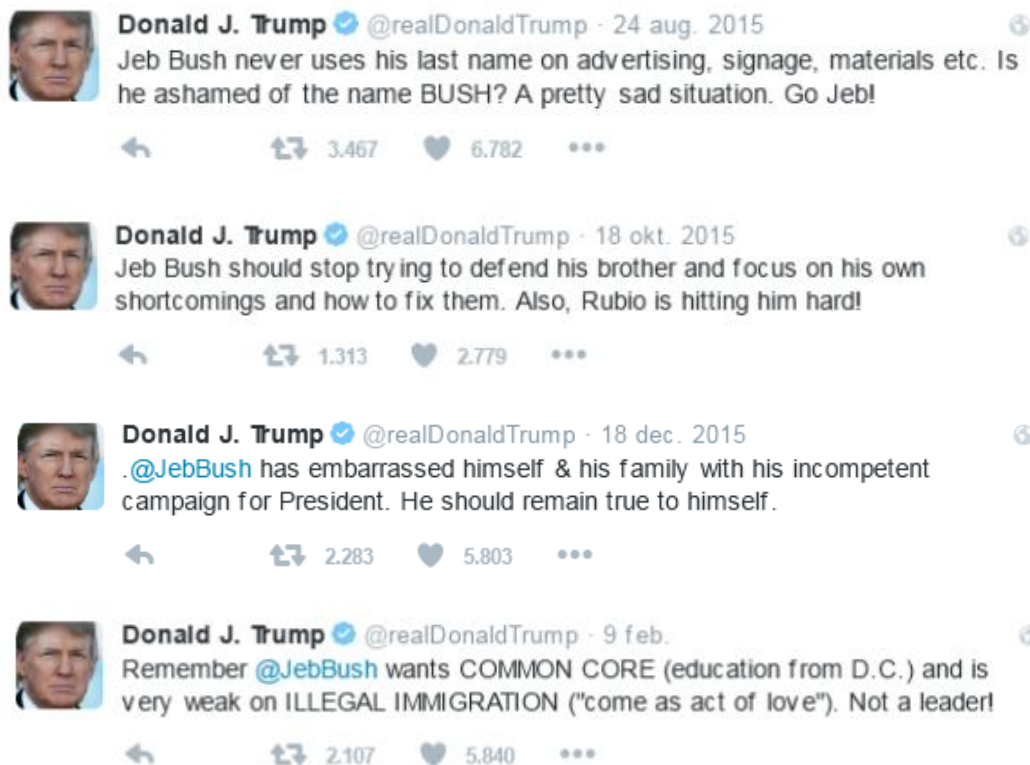
9.4 Jeb Bush: Doomed from the Start

On the 20th of February, Jeb Bush ended his run as a Republican presidential candidate. Consequently Trump lost interest in Jeb on Twitter and quickly aimed his arrows at the next victim. According to Max Ehrenfreund of The Washington Post, Bush' decision was an acknowledgement that his family no longer takes the lead within the Republican Party.

On the one hand, the failure of Bush's campaign was his own fault. His sober, rational brand never appealed to a frustrated primary electorate and Trump mocked him mercilessly as a 'low-energy' candidate. Our Twitter corpus contains numerous examples that show us how Trump's discourse continuously undermined Bush and his unappealing brand. A brand that is clearly flawed concerning excitement and ruggedness:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 22 dec. 2015
Weak and low energy @JebBush, whose campaign is a disaster, is now doing ads against me where he tries to look like a tough guy.

1.533   4.158

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 21 jan.
Low energy candidate @JebBush has wasted $80 million on his failed presidential campaign. Millions spent on me. He should go home and relax!

2.919   8.596

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 22 jan.
After spending $89 million, @JebBush is at the bottom of the barrel in polls. He is ashamed to use the name "Bush" in ads. Low energy guy!

1.682   4.877

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 12 feb.
Lightweight @JebBush is spending a fortune of special interest against me in SC. False advertising- desperate and sad!

2.122   6.221

On the other hand, Jeb was never able to escape his association with the policies that defined his brother's presidency and GOP voters are rejecting George's policies very forcefully right now. According to Ehrenfreund, the most striking aspect of the Bush-Trump duel may have been the fact that 'no candidate in the race was prepared for GOP voters' opposition to immigration, with the exception of Trump' (Washington Post, 2016, February). Unfortunately for Jeb Bush, his brother's actions in office were what first led to the Republican anger towards illegal immigration as George W.

Bush rooted for citizenship for undocumented migrants during his presidency, elements Trump gladly points out:

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 24 aug. 2015
Jeb Bush never uses his last name on advertising, signage, materials etc. Is he ashamed of the name BUSH? A pretty sad situation. Go Jeb!
3.467   6.782

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 18 okt. 2015
Jeb Bush should stop trying to defend his brother and focus on his own shortcomings and how to fix them. Also, Rubio is hitting him hard!
1.313   2.779

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 18 dec. 2015
.@JebBush has embarrassed himself & his family with his incompetent campaign for President. He should remain true to himself.
2.283   5.803

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 9 feb.
Remember @JebBush wants COMMON CORE (education from D.C.) and is very weak on ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ("come as act of love"). Not a leader!
2.107   5.840

Ehrenfreund further suggests that 'Republican primary voters are rejecting the conservative worldview that shaped George Bush's policies: military intervention abroad, combined with an emphasis on inclusion and tolerance at home' (The Washington Post, 2016, February). Jeb does not seem up-to-date and therefore fails to excite the greater public. As a result, Jeb was already greatly unpopular in 2015: an American Values Survey revealed that 61 percent of the Republicans and 69 percent of the Tea Party members claimed that electing another Bush would be bad for the country (PRRI, 2015, November). It is safe to say that the Bush brand stood no chance against what Trump was able to establish.

9.5   Ted Cruz: Former Trump Rival and Current GOP Divider

Trump tried to win the Republican nomination by presenting himself as an unconventional candidate and the opposite of a standard Republican, something that paid off. According to Time Magazine, Cruz tried to win the Republican bid by going against the GOP and it made him 'the most hated man in Washington' (Time, 2016, May). He stepped out of the presidential race on May 3, making Trump the presumptive nominee for the Republicans. But how did those two strategies, at first sight seemingly equal, turn out in such a different way?
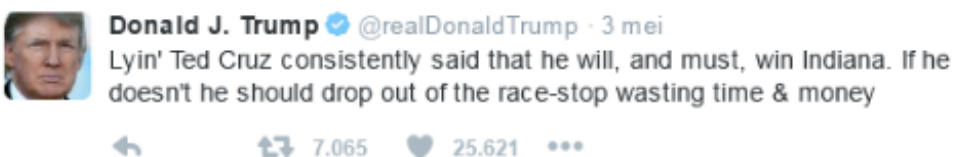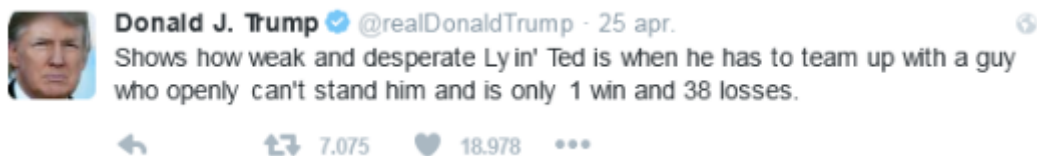
First of all, Cruz picked the wrong, possibly non-existing electorate. In 2013, a vast majority of Republican strategists agreed that the GOP needed to broaden its appeal. The shift was so necessary and obvious that the Republican National Committee even codified it in a report after the 2012 campaign (Time, 2013, March). According to Alex Altman of Time, the GOP preferred a candidate who would start as a classic center-right conservative in the primary and then alter his path to the middle for the general election. Cruz, however, tore apart the rulebook by counting on evangelical and very conservative voters, assuming that he would be able to raise the 'conservative army' of people who stayed at home in 2008 and 2012. The conservative army that Cruz had promised to unleash was unfortunately for him proven to be a myth (Time, 2016, May).

Secondly, Cruz was not able to establish an appealing brand on the right vision. According to Altman, an unwritten political rule is that the most likeable candidate usually wins. Altman pretty much sums up the main differences between the Trump and Cruz brand by comparing the different ways in which they tried to read the mood of the voters: 'As Trump was running up the vote tally in the Rust Belt, promising factory jobs were coming home, Cruz stuck with his that's-not-government's-job position. Trump riled crowds about immigrants; Cruz quoted the Founding Fathers. Trump pledged to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexican border while Cruz promised to move the American Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Trump campaigned with celebrity coach Bobby Knight; Cruz rallied with talk-radio host Glenn Beck. Cruz kicked off his campaign at evangelical Liberty University and Trump announced his candidacy in the gold-plated lobby of his Manhattan skyscraper. In 2016, the voters who fueled the conservative uprising were more interested in a candidate who could channel their anger than rhapsodize about the Constitution' (Time, 2016, May).
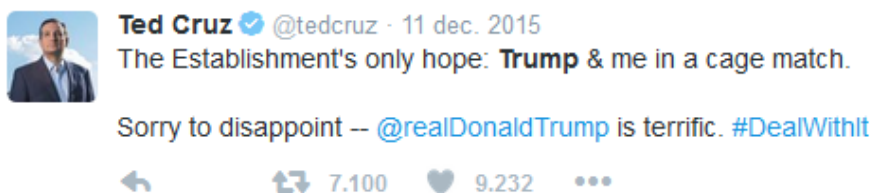
Thirdly, Cruz chose the wrong running mate and is hated by his own party. On May 3, 2016, he quit the presidential race after losing the Indiana primary election. Not long before that primary, he revealed that he would chose Carly Fiorina as his Vice-President. A disastrous move as a lot of Americans still see Fiorina as the Hewlett Packard CEO who shipped thousands of jobs to India, so Cruz had to explain himself for 'embracing her unpopularity' (De Morgen, 2016, May.) At the very same day he told the press to opt for Fiorina, former Speaker of the House John Boehner called Cruz 'Lucifer in the flesh' and 'a miserable son of a bitch' (The Atlantic, 2016, April). That amount of name-calling stands example for the deep-rooted hatred a lot of Republicans such as John McCain and George W. Bush feel towards Cruz. Boehner fired his shots because Cruz almost solely forced the 'government shutdown' in October 2013 after making any form of compromise between Boehner and Obama about Obamacare impossible. It is that Republican hate towards Cruz that has overshadowed his campaign. He bragged about the way he was anti-establishment but ironically he needed the support of the party elite to

beat Trump. He even barely managed to convince voters of the quite firm '#NeverTrump'- movement in the GOP.

Another image issue he faced was the fact that he tried to make himself look like the devoted and trustworthy candidate, playing on the dimensions of sincerity and competence, but in the meantime spread lies about his opponents. Trump took advantage of that and changed Cruz' motto 'TrusTED' mockingly to 'Lying Ted'. He became the center of Trump's Twitter attention when Jeb Bush was no longer part of the story (cf. supra):

> **Donald J. Trump** ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 25 apr.
> Wow, just announced that Lyin' Ted and Kasich are going to collude in order to keep me from getting the Republican nomination. DESPERATION!
> ↩ ⟲ 12.051 ♥ 29.365 •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 25 apr.
> Shows how weak and desperate Lyin' Ted is when he has to team up with a guy who openly can't stand him and is only 1 win and 38 losses.
> ↩ ⟲ 7.075 ♥ 18.978 •••

> **Donald J. Trump** ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 3 mei
> Lyin' Ted Cruz consistently said that he will, and must, win Indiana. If he doesn't he should drop out of the race-stop wasting time & money
> ↩ ⟲ 7.065 ♥ 25.621 •••

Cruz revealed his true color when Trump linked Cruz' father to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963. Cruz reacted by calling Trump all kinds of names and said 'This is what I really think'. A couple of months earlier, on the 11th of December 2015, he had claimed Trump to be 'terrific' and ended with the hashtag 'DealWithIt'. (De Morgen 2016, May).

> **Ted Cruz** ✓ @tedcruz · 11 dec. 2015
> The Establishment's only hope: **Trump** & me in a cage match.
> Sorry to disappoint -- @realDonaldTrump is terrific. #DealWithIt
> ↩ ⟲ 7.100 ♥ 9.232 •••

Nowadays, Cruz experiences a lot more difficulty to denounce any kind of support for Trump. Michael Persson describes how Ted Cruz's speech at the Republican convention for example pointed out the deep divide in the GOP. Cruz was along with John Kasich the last Republican candidate Trump had to beat in the pre-elections and he battled a bitter fight with the billionaire, involving even assumptions that Cruz' wife cheated on him. Cruz' speech sounded very much like one of the Never-Trump movement, which consists of rebels who had tried up until the start of the Republican Convention, to change the rules in order to sabotage Trump's official nomination. Persson questions whether Cruz

now has given the conservative movement new life. If so, the GOP is currently divided in three parties: the America First-nationalists led by Trump, the classical capitalist establishment like Jeb Bush and Cruz' orthodox fundamentalist current. Either way the content of Cruz's speech has put the divide of the GOP in broad daylight again, after it had been covered up with the announcement of the Trump-Pence tandem (De Morgen, 2016, July).

We believe that both men have sparked controversy for at least a couple of years. But whereas Trump did so in the TV-show The Apprentice, Cruz did it at the political stage and in his own party. The Trump brand was and still is disliked by a decent amount of GOP-members but he is the better alternative for Cruz, who is not only disliked by the GOP-establishment but by a big part of their voters as well.

9.6 Case Clinton

Clinton is Trump's final opponent and both her persona/brand and policy receive quite some attention on Donald Trump's twitter as we saw earlier discussing the strategic shift, so we decided to analyze those elements a bit more in depth here. Where exactly do the differences between the brands of both candidates lie and which one appears to be more successful? Yet again, Aaker's dimensions function here as a guideline.

9.6.1 Brand

The only strong point of the Hillary Clinton brand appears to be her political experience. The general opinion is that she is missing charisma and is deemed by many, and especially Trump, as 'crooked' and not to be trusted (Het Laatste Nieuws, 2016, July). An article of the conservative WorldNetDaily titled '*Hillary's 22 biggest scandals ever'* pretty much sums up all the affairs she is affiliated with and render her 'crooked' in the eyes of many voters (WND, 2015, May).

Mailgate and the debacle of Benghazi are probably the two most notorious stories on her. It appeared that she had used her own private mail server instead of the better secured ministerial server when she was the Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Barack Obama. By doing so, she risked some trustworthy information to fall into the hands of hackers. The FBI investigated the matter but decided not to press charges and only claimed that she had been 'uncareful'. According to Trump, this is a clear example that Hillary is incapable to lead. The Clinton brand equals dishonesty and incompetence in Trump's eyes, so he undermines both the dimensions of sincerity and competence:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 29 jan.
The new e-mail release is a disaster for Hillary Clinton. At a minimum, how can someone with such bad judgement be our next president?

↩   ↻ 5.515   ♥ 13.434   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 17 mei
Wow, 30,000 e-mails were deleted by Crooked Hillary Clinton. She said they had to do with a wedding reception. Liar! How can she run?

↩   ↻ 8.718   ♥ 21.885   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 18 mei
I look so forward to debating Crooked Hillary Clinton! Democrat Primaries are rigged, e-mail investigation is rigged - so time to get it on!

↩   ↻ 8.155   ♥ 22.269   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 21 jun.
How can Hillary run the economy when she can't even send emails without putting entire nation at risk?

↩   ↻ 19.540   ♥ 40.406   •••

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 jul.
Crooked Hillary Clinton and her team "were extremely careless in their handling of very sensitive, highly classified information." Not fit!

↩   ↻ 7.916   ♥ 23.376   •••

During that same term, in September 2012, the Islamic terrorist group Ansar al-Sharia attacked the American consulate in Libya, killing four Americans, amongst whom ambassador Christopher Stevens. Later on, an independent commission judged that the American Ministry of Foreign Affairs fell short in securing the safety of the consulate (WND, 2015, May). Again, Trump does not hesitate to blame Clinton:

Donald J. Trump ✔ @realDonaldTrump · 6 jul.
I don't think the voters will forget the rigged system that allowed Crooked Hillary to get away with "murder." Come November 8, she's out!

↩   ↻ 13.124   ♥ 37.502   •••

At the annual movie festival in Cannes, Peter Schweizer, the author of 'Clinton Cash', tried to promote a documentary based on his book. It tells a story about the lucrative ways Bill and Hillary Clinton made their political influence pay off, literally. According to Schweizer, heads of state from Rwanda, India and even Russia could count on the support from the American government in exchange for financial support to the Clinton Global Initiative, the Clinton's organization. More than once, those business

partners had questionable reputations concerning human rights or environmental protection. Schweizer, who calls himself a conservative libertarian, talks about 'hypocrisy' as those violated issues are the ones the Clintons officially claim to care about (De Tijd, 2016, July). This double standard does critical damage to, again, the Clinton's 'sincerity' dimension and is easily criticized by Trump:

Donald J. Trump ⬤ @realDonaldTrump · 13 jun.
Saudi Arabia and many of the countries that gave vast amounts of money to the Clinton Foundation- cont'd: facebook.com/DonaldTrump/po...

↩   ↻ 7.083   ♥ 15.287   •••

Donald J. Trump ⬤ @realDonaldTrump · 30 jun.
One of the reasons Hillary hid her emails was so the public wouldn't see how she got rich- selling out America.
hosted.ap.org/dynamic/storie...

↩   ↻ 7.946   ♥ 17.449   •••

Donald J. Trump ⬤ @realDonaldTrump · 16 jul.
Crooked Hillary Clinton is bought and paid for by Wall Street, lobbyists and special interests. She will sell our country down the tubes!

↩   ↻ 9.371   ♥ 27.580   •••

On the morning of the 28th of July, De Standaard reported that the day on which Clinton would hold her acceptance speech, her campaign team was still doing everything they could in order to make her look like the only serious and responsible candidate with plenty of expertise (De Standaard, 2016, July). By announcing Tim Kaine as her running mate (cf. supra), she chose a steady, consistent and experienced white male. A strategic choice to lure traditional moderate Republican voters to the Democratic side. Kaine speaks Spanish and has a blue collar background (De Morgen, 2016, July). As we explained earlier, Trump also made a safe choice with Mike Pence, a social conservative who is praised by the GOP establishment and might attract voters Trump originally would not (De Standaard, 2016, July).

At the Democratic convention, politicians such as current Vice-President Joe Biden, Clinton's running mate Tim Kaine, former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, and both Barack and Michelle Obama, portrayed Hillary Clinton in a manner she just fails to promote herself: the only option for a reasonable American in November. At the same time, they tried to portray Trump as a dictator who poses a threat for both America and the entire world. Each speaker tried to persuade the highly educated Republicans who surrounded former Republican presidential candidates John Kasich and Jeb Bush, the lower educated people from old industrial areas and military servicemen, who are normally right-wingers.

The biggest differences between the respective conventions is that Trump used fear images and apocalyptic scenes to persuade the crowd. Barack Obama, amongst other Democrats, talked about hope and about an America that is still great (De Morgen, 2016, July). He portrayed a hopeful country and tried to bring down Trump's doom images and his slogan 'Make America Great Again', but according to Haidt, this is where Democrats have been failing for years now. He claims that Republicans do not just aim to spread fear, as the Democrats claim, but 'trigger the full range of intuitions described by Moral Foundations Theory'. Haidt:

> *'Like Democrats, they [Republicans] can talk about innocent victims (of harmful Democratic policies) and about fairness (particularly the unfairness of taking tax money from hardworking and prudent people to support cheaters, slackers, and irresponsible fools). But Republicans since Nixon have had a near-monopoly on appeals to loyalty (particularly patriotism and military virtues) and authority (including respect for parents, teachers, elders, and the police, as well as for traditions). And after they embraced Christian conservatives during Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign and became the party of 'family values', Republicans inherited a powerful network of Christian ideas about sanctity and sexuality that allowed them to portray Democrats as the party of Sodom and Gomorrah' (Haidt, 2012, p.128).*

In an article for De Standaard, Evita Neefs draws a similar conclusion. She cites Cas Mudde from The University of Georgia who clarifies that other parties need to consistently bring an ideological well-thought story if they want to undermine the populistic approach. Because if you constantly need to defend yourself, you are stuck in a defensive position that gives the impression that populists are asking the right questions (De Standaard, 2016, June).

Although Clinton got more votes and representatives, she has not been able to evoke the sort of enthusiasm her final democratic rival Bernie Sanders managed to raise (De Tijd, 2016, June). The Democrats want to continue on the straight road America has been on for a couple of decades, while Trump wants to leave that path on the first day he encounters a crossroad: November 8, 2016. We believe people will vote for Trump's brand or Hillary's policy later this year, as Trump's exact policies still remain rather vague and Hillary's brand image is quite poor.

9.6.2   Vision

During her candidacy, Clinton has focused on several themes such as raising middle class incomes, expanding women's rights, improving Obamacare and making an effort in the United States to change the involvement of money in political campaigns.

In March 2016, Clinton proposed a detailed economic plan in which her economic philosophy was based on inclusive capitalism. Clinton proposed providing incentives for companies that share profits with employees, communities and the environment, rather than focusing on short-term profits to increase stock value and rewarding shareholder, increasing collective bargaining rights and placing an "exit tax" on companies that move their headquarters out of America in order to pay a lower tax rate overseas.

Journalist Amy Chozick mentioned, however, that unlike Sanders or Trump, Clinton did not espouse a vicious charge of the private sector or offer an important assessment of the state's future (The New York Times, 2016, March). According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), both Trump and Clinton oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and ensure that free trade agreements create U.S. jobs (CFR, 2016, August). Clinton believes in equal pay for equal work (CBS News, 2014, February) and while Trump has not directly mentioned this issue, his daughter Ivanka did at the GOP convention (The Washington Post, 2016, July). Whereas Trump has claimed he would like to keep all undocumented immigrants out of the U.S., Clinton stated that allowing undocumented immigrants to have a path to citizenship 'is at heart a family issue' (The New York Times, 2016, May). While Clinton is in favor of maintaining American influence in the Middle East, Trump is not at all planning on doing so and even questions NATO. He claims that with him as a president, the U.S. might not automatically defend NATO allies who are under attack (The Guardian, 2016, July).

9.7 Gary Johnson

Never in American history have the two most important presidential candidates been so unpopular. The Libertarian Party of Gary Johnson and his running mate Bill Weld might be able to stir things up as they, too, received a spot on the voting list in all states. The party only managed to convince one percent of the voters in 2012, but Mitt Romney said in June 2016 that he considered voting for the Libertarians and in lead polls, which were conducted in the beginning of August 2016, they scored 9 up to 13 percent. Traditionally the party was close to the Republicans with their slogan 'Maximum freedom, minimum government', but is now leaning closer towards the center with its Democratic viewpoints (De Redactie, 2016, August).

9.8 Conclusion

Both Party conventions showed that the Republican and Democratic Party are using each other's rhetoric and policy more than ever before. But while the 'third-party' of Gary Johnson might make Libertarian history with current polls placing his Party at an all-time high, Johnson stands no chance

because his brand and his policy are far less known than those of Trump and Clinton. Like this, his policy and brand lack competence compared to Clinton and excitement compared to Trump.

Hillary's brand fits the earlier description by Frank Rich, although it needs some alteration. She is indeed a mainstream liberal with a vast public-service résumé, but seems to no longer stand for all good things, and definitely cannot find that one thing to electrify voters. Trump's supporters have appeared much more eager to support their candidate during rallies than Clinton's. Trump's brand is way more exciting than Clinton's. We believe that a great deal of Trump's popularity and the lack of Clinton's, has to do with the respective candidates' brand. Multiple cases that discredit Clinton took place at a time when she exerted an important political function, with Benghazi and mailgate standing out. This has caused voters to distrust and even dislike her as a potential future President, perhaps even shifting the fact that she could become the first female President to the background. The competence part of her brand is being questioned, too. That hatred towards the elite correctness is one of the few things on which the Republicans agree. The only policy issue in which Trump has taken a firm and steady stance, is that he is opposed to the free trade deals that are ruining the low-skilled and low-educated Americans' dream to climb the social and economic ladder. Whereas Clinton prefers to continue the Republican presence at the White House and Trump stands for economic change, he seems to top Clinton on ruggedness too. Last but not least, as Trump looks like a down-to-earth (he speaks his mind), family-oriented (the American people come first no matter what) and small-town minded (he wants to bring jobs back to small towns instead of shipping them overseas) candidate, he overcomes the fact that he is dishonest and is lucky that during this campaign, facts do not seem to matter. Therefore, he appears more sincere than Clinton.

Trump tops both Cruz and Bush on the excitement issue as well. He appeared more rugged than Jeb and more sincere than 'Lyin' Ted' too. Cruz and Trump were both anything but popular in the Republican Party, but Trump managed to electrify voters whereas Cruz did not. Jeb Bush was supposed to live up to his presidential race, but his last name as well as his lack of capabilities to energize crowds, sidelined him quicker than most experts initially had expected.

10. Prediction: Trump's Triumph or Clinton's Climax?

In less than three months from now, the world will know who will succeed Barack Obama on January 17, 2017. In what is probably the most unconventional presidency race with likely the most controversial candidate ever for both the Republicans or the Democrats still in the race, almost no one dares to predict the outcome in November.

10.1 Trump's Triumph

American documentary filmmaker Michael Moore, however, who is anything but a fan of Trump, listed five reasons why he thinks Trump will win in November. All of them involve the fact that Americans have the right to vote and not the obligation: 'There is no doubt in my mind that if people could vote from their couch at home on their X-box or PlayStation, Hillary would win in a landslide. But that is not how it works in America. People have to leave the house and get in line to vote'. The five reasons why Trump will win, according to Moore, are the broken, embittered people in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin who suffered from Clinton's support of the North American Free Trade Agreement (1), the last stand of angry white men who will refuse a woman as a president right after a black man has been sitting in the White House for 8 years (2), the hugely unpopular Hillary Clinton who represents the old way of politics and for whom no Democrat is excited to cast a vote (3), the many depressed Sanders supporters who will stay at home as picking a moderate old white guy like Tim Kaine as a running mate is not the way telling millennials their vote is important (4) and the fact that millions are going to vote for Trump not because they agree with him or even like him, but just because they can, venturing their anger towards a broken political system (5) (Michael Moore, 2016, July). Chris Cillizza of The Washington Post posted an article with the title '*Yes, of course Trump can win*' two days after Moore posted his blog. According to Cillizza, Trump stands a chance because all the rules are off (1) and because Clinton is a uniquely flawed candidate who has been in the national eye for a very long time and people have largely made up their minds about her (2). Cillizza ends with the words 'For those who say Trump can't win, you probably said he would have never made it this far' (The Washington Post, 2016, July). Ironically, it was his Washington Post-colleague David Milbank who titled his article '*Trump will lose or I will eat this column*' (The Washington Post, 2015, October), only nine months earlier.

Others do not mention the possible victory for Trump but point out the current unpopularity of Clinton. A 2015 American Values Survey revealed that a majority (54 percent) of Americans say that electing another president from the 'Clinton' family would be bad for the country (PRRI, 2015, November). And while the Democratic convention scored higher viewer ratings than the Republican, Trump's

acceptance speech counted two million more viewers than Hillary's. No less than seven out of ten Americans dislike and distrust Clinton and the fact that she could be the first female president is much less of an issue than that she is the only alternative for Trump (De Redactie, 2016, July).

10.2   Clinton's Climax

Some, however, write that Trump is starting to lose his grip on the elections and that Clinton might take advantage of this. Time Magazine reported on a Gallup poll on the first of August, 2016, claiming that the Republican convention had put Trump further behind. That is remarkable, to say the least, as national conventions typically leave presidential candidates with a so-called 'convention bump', a tiny boost in the polls thanks to four days of positive coverage. It was the first time since Gallup started those polls in 1984 that a candidate has left a convention with a net negative. Gallup's telephone interviews with approximately 1.000 adults aged 18 living in all 50 states and D.C. were conducted July 23-24 and July 29-30. Trump managed to score 15 percentage points fewer in comparison to before the GOP convention, whereas the Democratic convention left Clinton a convention bump but a historic tiny one with only four percentage points (Time 2016, August).

According to Washington Post journalist Harold Pollack, the turning point in this election might just as well be the appearance of lawyer Khizr Khan at the Democratic Convention. His son Humayun, a posthumously decorated Army captain, was killed by a suicide bomber in Iraq. Khan directly addressed Trump with the words: 'Have you ever been to Arlington Cemetery? Go look at the graves of brave patriots who died defending the United States of America. You will see all faiths, genders and ethnicities. You have sacrificed nothing and no one'. Trump replied in an ABC interview that he did make a lot of sacrifices and insinuated that Khan's wife was silent and not allowed to say anything (ABC, 2016, July). Humayun's mother, however, had stated before that she would become too emotional and lose herself in grief if she were to speak in public about the loss of her son (The Hill, 2016, July). Pollack draws comparisons between Trump's response to Khan's attack and another lawyer's altercation, Joe Welch, with the controversial Republican Joe McCarthy in 1954. Welch was sitting in on a hearing about special treatment for a McCarthy aide when the latter lashed out and accused Welch's young associate of belonging to a 'Communist front organization', the National Lawyers Guild. Welch was fed up and asked his famous question: 'Have you no sense of decency, sir?'. The question answered itself. It encouraged McCarthy's enemies and called attention to McCarthy's cruelty toward a single sympathetic person (The Washington Post, August, 2016).

10.3   Undecided will decide

Others conclude that the voters who are still undecided, will eventually decide the outcome of these presidential elections. Time reported that at the end of July 2016, 11 percent of Americans still had not made up their minds for whom to vote. According to Time-journalist Frank Lutz, those of them who know a lot about both candidates and do not like either one, will eventually decide this 2016 election. He describes these voters as 'Children living through a bitter divorce, watching with a mixture of fear and disdain as their parents argue, knowing they will soon be forced to choose with whom to live—a decision with no good outcome'. Luntz hosted four focus group sessions with 27 undecided voters at the GOP Convention in Cleveland with perfectly balanced political backgrounds: one third voted for President Obama twice, a third voted twice for the Republicans and the remainder switched sides, in both directions, between 2008 and 2012.

Luntz sums up eight core characteristics of the people 'who will determine America's future': They want a unifier instead of a divider and they are waiting impatiently for that one candidate who can demonstrate the capacity to work across the issues that divide us. They want change and that is good for Trump, but they want progress too, like Clinton (1). Secondly, the candidate perceived to be most likely to blow up the political process is most likely to earn their support. Voters who think the system is rigged agree with Bernie Sanders and with Trump's attacks on the Republican establishment, too (2). They also long for more choices than between 'the lesser of two evils', as an undecided voter complained. The candidate that makes the most compelling appeal to 'a third way' is going to win quite some undecided voters (3). Further, character is more important than policy. Partisans prioritize ideology over personality and the unaffiliated care much more about integrity and accountability (4). On top of that, frankness counts a lot. Undecided voters want to know what the candidate truly thinks. The problem with Trump is that he loves the spotlights and doesn't know when to say no. The problem with Clinton is that she avoids them and does not know when to say yes (5). They want to dream again. The tone of this election is making voters angry and voter's anger is driving the tone of the candidates (6). The first presidential priority matters a great deal: telling voters exactly what you will do moments after being sworn in is what undecided voters want to hear and know (7). Lastly, undecided voters are reached most effectively online, via Facebook or Twitter. Voters spend twice as much time online as they do watching television and the world wide web empowers them to compare and fact-check when they want it and how they want it (8) (Time Magazine, 2016, July).

11. Final Prediction and Conclusion

Almost no one foresaw the political rise of Trump, because very few noticed in advance the *silent majority* he addresses and persuades as well. He is, to put it metaphorically, the one who addressed the elephant in the room: millions of obvious and silent frustrated voters who were overlooked by anyone but Trump and perhaps Sanders. It is insanely ironic that this elephant in the room was noticed by the one Republican candidate no one paid attention to in advance in the polls, and that the symbol of his party is an elephant.

You could say that the success of Trump in the media as well as with his voters is partially due to a rather unusual supply and demand where Trump is the right man in the right place at the right time. Both his brand and persona embody everything a major part of the electorate are looking for. Angry, mainly blue-collar white male voters seek an authoritarian (sincerity) leader who does not take into account social conventions or the preferences of his opponents or even his own party (ruggedness). They seek someone who embodies their neglected economic frustration (excites) and offers a voice for them (sophistication), the *silent majority*, in a confident and reassuring manner (competence). Someone who is, as our analyses have proven, in line with four dimensions (excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness) of Aaker's Brand Personality Scale, and is able to cover-up his shortcomings in the one remaining (sincerity).

The media in their turn moderately feed off Trump's controversy and the unconventional Trump needs the media to remain the top of mind awareness in these 2016 elections and to lower his campaign costs. They have a marriage of convenience where love has been absent but both refuse a divorce because their marital status offers them advantages in their separate lives.

This presidential candidacy race will go down in history as the battle of Trump's brand and atypical, change-seeking, mostly non-political style that attracts Americans who wake up from their American nightmare and Clinton's policy, backed up by the current political elite class who want little to change as things are going just fine for them. Trump's and Reagan's first names are not the only things between them that rhyme as both have used the same rhetoric, the same policy, apart from immigration, and faced a similar democratic challenger and contempt from their own party and the media. Reagan served two terms from 1981 until 1989, will Trump seal his first one later this year? We believe he might as well just do so.

The candidate who succeeds most at convincing voters to go to the polling stations, wins as there is merely a voting right in America, not a voting duty. We believe that when on the 8th of November this

year, 50 percent of Americans wake up supporting Clinton and an equal part endorses Trump, Trump will become the 45th President of the United States. This is because the crowd that is attracted by Trump has higher incentives (change over status quo) as well as a leader they look more up to than Clinton, whose fan base will vote for her policy or the fact that she could become the first female US president. Trump voters are attracted to a combination of both brand and vision, even if that vision is rather unclear. He makes promises that appeal to a big part of the electorate (jobs) and personifies everything they are looking for at the moment. Although the Libertarian party of Gary Johnson is doing much better than in the polls right now than it did in the 2012 presidential elections, we do not give him a shot at the presidency. By offering a third way between Trump's vague policies and Clinton's poor brand image, he might however, stir things up a little. Fourteen months ago, everyone laughed at Trump's chances. Today, after having analyzed his brand, electorate, rhetoric, opponents and American history, we know he has a shot. And we are dead serious.

12. Suggestions for Further Research

 We have tried to explain the political rise of Trump, but we realize he is anything but a single case. In fact, multiple Trump-like phenomena around the world have occurred in 2016 and few of them were foreseen or cheered by the greater audience.

12.1   Brexit

On the 24th of June, 2016, between Trump's presumptive and his official Republican nomination, the British people let the world know via the results of a referendum that they no longer wanted the United Kingdom to be part of the European Union. Just like the Trump's political surge, very few people had predicted the right outcome of the referendum and from the outside, just like with Trump's rise, not many people understood why the British people made that kind of drastic decision. There are, however, multiple striking resemblances between Trump's political career taking off and the Brexit.

'It was grimly appropriate that the first major international visitor to the new, post-Brexit Britain was Donald Trump', wrote Jonathan Freeland the day after the British voters decided to leave the European Union (New York Review of Books, 2016, June). According to Leave founder Arron Bank, there is a direct link between Trump and the Brexit: 'Donald Trump inspired the Brexit campaign because facts do not work. The Remain campaign featured fact after fact after fact. You have got to connect with people emotionally. It's the Trump success'. The Ukip donor admitted financing an 'American-style' referendum campaign and called Donald Trump as 'an influence'. The Independent added that the prime emotional connection the ones in favor of Brexit made with voters is 'on the issue of immigration'. The Leave campaign received criticism for claims made during the referendum campaign right after its outcome, especially the one alleging that a Brexit would trigger an extra 350 million pounds per week for the British National Health Service (Independent, 2016, June). While this was one of the slogans of the Leave EU-campaign and possibly convinced quite some voters to shift to the Leave-camp, Nigel Farage admitted that this will not be the case and called the slogan 'a mistake', only hours after the outcome of the referendum was made public (Huffington Post, June 2016).

Last December, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in Britain analyzed the answers from over 30.000 respondents to the question whether they wanted to stay in the EU or not. The respondents were classified in three categories: 'inners' (Remain), 'outers' (Leave), and undecideds. Only 1 in 5 'inners' indicated immigration was bad for the economy, whereas nearly 7 in 10 'outers' felt that way. On the question 'Is immigration undermining British culture?' 28% of the Inners believed this to be true, compared to 73% of the Outers. Education was a key factor in the simulated Brexit-poll as well.

People who were in favor of a Brexit, tended to have left school before their 17th birthday, to have few or no advanced academic qualifications, to be over 55 years old, and to work in less secure, lower-income jobs. Those who wanted Britain to remain a member of the EU tended to be younger, to be more highly educated, and to have more financially secure and professional jobs. Professor Matthew Goodwin of the University of Kent, England, points out that in both the U.S. and the U.K., many workers 'have not had a raise for at least 10 years' in inflation-adjusted terms: 'You can begin to understand, if not empathize with, their economic pessimism. In the five areas where Brexit was strongest, the median income was around 18,000 pounds while in the five areas where support for Brexit was weakest, the median income was around 35,000 pounds'. The Chatham House report of December 2015 added that 'In many respects, undecided voters — who may yet decide the outcome of the referendum — look more like the 'outers' than the 'inners.'' FiveThirtyEight senior writer Farai Chideya concluded in June 2016 that 'Trump voters and Brexit supporters do share some common political concerns — a sense that it's necessary to protect borders, culture and the economic interests of native-born majority-culture citizens' (Chatham House, 2015, December; FiveThirtyEight, 2016, June). Even Trump himself notices parallels: 'I thinks that most voters see that similarity. Voters have had enough of being governed by the elite' (New York Review of Books, 2016, June).

12.2   Rodrigo Duterte, Norbert Hofer & Recep Erdogan

Apart from Trump, multiple other right-wing 'law and order' candidates have appeared at the political stage in Europe as well as Asia. In the race for the presidency in the Philippines, it seemed that the controversial candidate Rodrigo Duterte used a Trump-like approach, gaining popularity by appealing to voters' emotions rather than supplying them with facts. However, Duterte might have taken it even further than Trump, whom he called 'a bigot'. Whereas Trump once stated 'I could shoot somebody and not lose votes', Duterte actually did. He clinched the Philippian presidency not long after admitting on air to have killed three people. He called the pope 'son of a whore' and regretted the rape and death of a young woman because 'she was beautiful and he should have being able to rape her first'. Huffington Post described him once as 'Trump on steroids' (The Daily Beast, 2016, May; NBC News, 2016, May; Huffington Post, 2016, May; The Guardian, 2016, January).

Norbert Hofer, 'Austria's Trump', has a shot at becoming the first far-right European head of state since World War 2. Hofer drew multiple comparisons to Donald Trump for his anti-immigration statements and has claimed increases in gun ownership in Austria are linked to immigration. He lost the original Austrian elections in May with a very narrow margin but gets another chance in October this year after having questioned the outcome of the election (Business Insider, 2016, July).

Last but not least, Thomas L. Friedman, a New York Times columnist, notices a striking resemblance between Trump and the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (De Morgen, July 2016). About the failed coup by the Turkish army to overthrow Erdogan's regime on the 15th of July, he said following: 'the drama that is emerging in Turkey shows what happens with a country when one leader demonizes all his rivals and spreads complot theories'. Friedman continues by claiming the political strategy and tactic of Erdogan and Trump are like two drops of water. Trump, as does Erdogan, makes up 'facts' and figures on an industrial scale, comes up with complot theories on a regular basis and can count on a group of supporters who condone all of his gaffes. He shares Erdogan's arrogance and uses Twitter to get around conventional media, while Erdogan controls the media and does not need Twitter as such. Last but not least, both men surround themselves with people who are family or inferior figures. Trump does so by having picked Mike Pence as his running mate. Friedman does not predict a military coup in the US, but assures that Jeb Bush' prediction will come true: 'Trump would be a chaotic President just like he is a chaotic candidate right now' (De Morgen, 2016, July).

The Brexit as well as the surge of political leaders like Duterte, Hofer, Erdogan and others are linked to Trump's rise because radical and atypical political ideas appeal to a larger crowd within their respective countries than analysts and media had ever deemed possible. We believe that our thesis might provide a basis for further research into the brand images of the phenomena and persona we mentioned and the electorate they apparently appeal to.

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