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ABSTRACT

This study examines Hillary Clinton's public discourse at various points in her career, analyzing which rhetorical strategies she uses to build and maintain trust between herself and the American public. To do so, this study examines five moments in Clinton's career in which she actively employs rhetoric that affects the public's perception of Clinton as a trustworthy or untrustworthy figure. The five case studies analyzed in this study are Bill and Hillary Clinton's 1992 interview on *60 Minutes*, following accusations of Bill's extramarital affair with Gennifer Flowers; Hillary Clinton's tears in New Hampshire on the 2008 presidential campaign trail; Hillary's "3am Phone Call" ad, released during the 2008 primary campaign; Hillary's social media efforts to brand herself as a grandmother during the 2016 presidential campaign; and Hillary's infamous email scandal that unfolded during the 2016 presidential campaign. With the theoretical foundation of Walter Fisher's narrative theory, Michael McGee's ideograph, Kenneth Burke's identification theory, and Shawn Parry-Giles' work in gender authenticity, this study concludes with a discussion of Clinton's most frequently and successfully-deployed rhetorical strategies for building trust with the American people.

Crafting Rhetorics of Trust: Hillary Rodham Clinton
and her Appeals to the American People

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M.A. Syracuse University 2016

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Communication and Rhetorical Studies, within the College of Visual and
Performing Arts

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 The Makings of Trust | 2 |
| 1.2 The Significance of Hillary’s Road | 4 |
| 1.3 Plan of Study | 6 |
| Chapter 2: The Context of Hillary Clinton | 9 |
| 2.1 Hillary Clinton as First Lady of the United States | 9 |
| 2.2 Hillary Clinton as a New York Senator | 11 |
| 2.3 Hillary Clinton’s 2008 Presidential Campaign | 14 |
| 2.4 Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State | 19 |
| 2.5 Hillary Clinton’s 2016 Presidential Campaign | 22 |
| Chapter 3: Foundational Literature and Methodology..... | 26 |
| 3.1 Ethos of Aristotle and Isocrates | 26 |
| 3.2 Burkean Identification | 28 |
| 3.3 The Narrative Paradigm | 31 |
| 3.4 The Ideograph | 33 |
| 3.5 Gender Authenticity | 36 |
| 3.6 Methodology for Artifact Analysis | 38 |
| Chapter 4: Analyzing Hillary Clinton and her Moments of Crafting Trust.... | 39 |
| 4.1 Hillary Rodham Clinton, no Tammy Wynette | 39 |
| 4.2 Hillary’s New Hampshire Tears | 47 |
| 4.3 Hillary Clinton, Answering the 3am Phone Call | 56 |
| 4.4 Grandmother Clinton Goes Social | 67 |
| 4.5 Wading through “Emailgate” 2016 | 81 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion..... | 93 |
| 5.1 Persuasive Appeals in Use | 93 |
| 5.2 Troubles with trust | 97 |
| 5.3 Dealing with Gender | 99 |
| 5.4 Conclusion | 102 |
| Bibliography..... | 104 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

A symbol of fierce independence and unyielding determination, champion of women's rights and children's advocacy, the name Hillary Rodham Clinton has been heard, reverberating through the political echo chambers and shaking the dust from the shelves of Washington for nearly 40 years. Known as a First Lady, a senator, a mother, a secretary of state, a grandmother, a Yale law school graduate, and most notably in the year 2016, a past and current presidential candidate, Clinton has built an empire on her reputation as an American political icon. Atop all of her different titles touted and offices held, Clinton now strives in 2016 to make her second run at the presidency on the name that has withstood remarkable flexibility over the course of her career as a public figure. However, throughout the flurries of polarized commentary on her government work, as well as the personal crises of her own—through the celebrations and the castigations of her decisions made on individual, state, and national levels—one question that the public continues to ask of Hillary Clinton has remained the same: Can she be trusted? This question lies at the heart of Hillary Clinton's complicated relationship with trust building and the American public.

National discussion questioning Clinton's identity as a trustworthy presidential candidate opens a window into the world of what citizens expect from government figures, the politics of American identification, and values still held in this country about the role of gender inside and out of leadership positions. Even more fascinating though than how the public chooses to accept or deny Hillary Clinton's personal and professional narratives, is how Clinton strategically employs various rhetorical tools to craft those narratives of why the American public should believe she can be trusted. Both proactive and reactionary attempts to convince the public that

they should place their faith in her as a leader at various levels of leadership have been brandished by Clinton and her collection of media teams over the years. In these relentless attempts made time and again to convince the public that she's just as trustworthy as any man who's ever asked for their vote, and to showcase her genuine character alongside her impressive level of expertise, Hillary Clinton communicates distinctly through a collection of rhetorics of trust.

1.1 The Makings of Trust

Before examining the complex process that is a rhetorical request for trust, a definition of rhetorics of trust is needed. The premise of appearing "trustworthy" is pieced together by many inter-related qualities. Underneath the outermost layer of what makes a person trustworthy is ultimately a question of likeability: people rarely trust those who they do not like. Extending further though, in order to be likeable, public figures need to be *relatable*. Citizens need to know that their voices are heard and their situations are taken seriously by public figures who feel close enough to the experiences of the public to connect with them in a meaningful way. Rob Asen, in his theoretical model for achieving trust,¹ describes the qualities of flexibility, forthrightness, engagement, and heedfulness as conditions that manifest through deliberation, all providing the necessary environment for interlocutors to build trust in one another. Asen writes that the quality of flexibility during interaction demonstrates that parties hear and are willing to account for one another; forthrightness provides clarity and confirmation of what parties can expect from one another through their interaction; engagement "functions ethically by treating people as capable agents who may participate fully in a collaborative process of reaching a shared judgment,"²

¹ Robert Asen, "Deliberation and Trust," *Argumentation & Advocacy* 50, no. 1 (Summer 2013): 2–17.

² *Ibid.*, 12

while also “[enabling] participants to address the power relationships that may frustrate efforts to build trust;”³ finally, heedfulness assures interlocutors that their deliberation carries value. By first assuring voters that they are recognized and that their voices matter through flexibility, forthrightness, engagement, and heedfulness, politicians such as Clinton have the opportunity to present themselves as safe and relatable candidates, eager to hear public stories and identify with national struggles. The need to be clear, open, and relatable is key to being perceived as likeable, and achieving base levels of trusting communication.

In order to be liked, candidates must be relatable, but they must also be *authentic*. In describing how deeply Americans value authenticity, Sarah Banet-Weiser writes that, “the concept of authenticity remains central to how individuals organize their everyday activities and craft their very selves.”⁴ In considering how they wish to craft their own identities, American citizens will go to lengths to consider how authentic another movement or person might be, before determining the extent to which they want to align their own identities with an outside force, if at all. Elizabeth Markovits, in her work on sincerity in democratic deliberation,⁵ details the extent to which Americans obsess over sincerity and truth-telling, especially from the mouths of politicians. In reminding readers how quickly American voters can decide to distrust a politician for not telling something exactly as it is, Markovits emphasizes the necessity for politicians to manifest their actions truthfully and transparently in order to be perceived as sincere. In measuring authenticity, shows of scripted performances, calculated gestures, and words that are said but never truly meant put voters off—people don’t like to be manipulated. Humans crave genuine connection to each other, and will always gravitate towards those who

³ Ibid., 13

⁴ Sarah Banet-Weiser, *AuthenticTM: The Politics of Ambivalence in a Brand Culture* (NYU Press, 2012).

⁵ Elizabeth Markovits, *The Politics of Sincerity: Plato, Frank Speech, and Democratic Judgment* (Penn State Press, 2010).

they believe are exhibiting their “real selves.” The candidate who appears most natural and open, therefore, like they are speaking from the heart, is easy to relate to, easy to like, and easy to trust.

Furthermore, while the elements that come together to form a working definition of trust are essential to this study, equally essential is the aspect of gender. It is not insignificant that Hillary Clinton is one of America’s few women so widely known as more than a celebrity figure, but as a leader, carrying as much influence and power as the names of political men who have come before her. While gender does not account for all of the factors that form Clinton’s battle for trust with the American people, it plays an indisputable role in shaping the social expectations placed on Clinton and the nature in which her public critiques manifest. This foundational entanglement of gender and public perception inevitably invokes the question of how gender politics function at the core of Hillary’s rhetorical appeals to alter how she must present herself as trustworthy to the public. Parsing out the answer to this, along with other questions, is the beginning of understanding Clinton’s complex task of appearing trustworthy, and analyzing how she must go about strategically using rhetorical tools to invite, build, and maintain a relationship of trust with the American public.

1.2 The Significance of Hillary’s Road

Differing from various rhetorical tools manipulated by other political figures, Clinton’s rhetorics of trust are unique to her in that few other politicians have been questioned as frequently and as aggressively on the nature of their ability to be trusted as Hillary Clinton has been throughout her 40 years in the public eye. Though these rhetorics of trust that Clinton draws from heavily throughout both current and past campaigns are not the only rhetorical appeals that she includes in her public discourse, they are significant because they trace back to core values at

the heart of any campaign—likability, relatability, authenticity—that must be proven as present before they can be further built upon. Hillary Clinton as a presidential candidate may bring extensive knowledge and experience, laudable policy goals, and strong character to the table; however, if the public doesn't trust her enough to vote for her, or even enough to consider her platform, then her campaign is deemed irrelevant. Therefore, the need for Clinton to craft successful appeals to trust surpasses that of other rhetorical concerns stemming from her communication.

Clinton's rhetorics of trust are significant in the role that they play within her campaign, but also, in the power they have to shape political discourse as a whole. Because the goal to gain the American people's trust is of primary importance, the direction that Clinton's rhetorics of trust take her in will fundamentally shape the remainder of the campaign. At the point where Clinton's discourse involving policy, core American values, and level of readiness to serve in America's highest office all become positioned in relation to her rhetorics of trust, it becomes imperative to examine these as well as past rhetorical appeals to understand how they have and are affecting the discourse that is crafted and filtered through to the voting population.

The aim of this study is to examine Clinton's rhetorics of trust as communicative tools to understand how they function rhetorically. As Hillary Clinton has gone from being known and criticized for one national phenomenon after another, both her image and her rhetoric surrounding that image have changed. However, throughout all the shifting and rebranding over time, even as her image has steadily evolved, the core values of trust and authenticity at the heart of all her public communication have remained the same. Here lies the importance in the scholarly analysis of Clinton's trust rhetoric: As Clinton's outward communication changes directions, it is of great value to understand how, at the core of each new and diverse "Clinton

campaign message” the rhetorics of trust are returned to again and again, yet in different contexts and with new perspective. Understanding how values such as authenticity and relatability can continue to function through fresh, new lenses, yet retain their original elasticity is of high value to the rhetorical community. The significance of this research extends out to how we understand the practice of argumentation in a larger scheme, how we communicate with hesitant publics, and how we reframe old concepts to gain new relevancy. The importance of this research will continue to be demonstrated as the analysis of Clinton’s trust rhetorics unfold.

1.3 Plan of Study

This study explores Hillary Clinton’s rhetorics of trust as they retain their core functionality across different audiences and contexts. Chapter 1 includes a review of the literature surrounding Hillary Clinton and the rhetorical construct of trust, as well as the methodology used to carry out this study. Beginning with Walter Fisher’s narrative paradigm and Michael McGee’s ideograph, the method will entail analyzing five key moments in Clinton’s public career through lenses that consider symbolic language, gender norms, power structures, and persuasive narrative elements from the critical lenses of narrative and ideograph.

Chapter 2 begins with background information, outlining Hillary Clinton’s past roles that have contributed to her public reputation, and how the social contexts of those roles have positioned her throughout her career. These roles include her time as First Lady of the United States as well as a New York state senator, leading up to her candidacy in the 2008 presidential campaign and her time as secretary of state, preceding her second run at the presidency in 2016. The context of Clinton’s time in each of these roles, as well as how each position shaped the

public's opinion of Clinton, provides meaningful context for situating Clinton's reputations as they stood during both the 2008 election season and in the present 2016 election.

Chapter 3 consists of the analysis, in which I parse out the elements of trustworthiness teeming from five key events of Hillary Clinton's public career. The five events to be examined are Bill and Hillary's January 1992 interview with 60 Minutes after the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Hillary's tears in New Hampshire days before the 2008 primary, Clinton's "3am Phone Call" ad from the 2008 primary election season, Clinton's social media messaging during her 2016 campaign, and her long-evolving 2016 email scandal.

Finally, the study concludes with a discussion of the implications drawn from the findings about how Clinton's rhetorics of trust function as communicative tools. Findings regarding their success, their failure, and their potential to be applied to other rhetorical situations are laid out as contributions to the already existing body of work regarding rhetoric and ethos.

The limitations of this study lie primarily in scope, method, and timeline. In terms of scope, the analysis of Hillary Clinton's public image could easily generate bookshelves worth of work, as could the analysis of the lack of trustworthiness seen in politicians in general. When examining Hillary Clinton's rhetorics of trust, there will always be more examples of Clinton's inauthentic moments to list, more artifacts to study, more perspectives to consider. The contextual moments, artifacts, and critical perspectives chosen to weave together this study offer a specific take on how Clinton's rhetorics of trust function, and should be viewed as that: one analysis of many potential analyses to be made on the never-ending wealth of rhetorical query that is Hillary Clinton.

Second, in terms of method, the notion of character progression as a factor in artifact comparison comes into question. In studying the various contexts in which Clinton deploys her rhetorics of trust, it is fair to recognize that as she moves through different phases of her life and serves in different roles, she learns from previous experience, and thus, shapes her rhetorical appeals not fully based on the contextual *kairos* of the present, but also on what not to do, knowing that certain appeals have backfired in the past.

Finally, the timeline of this thesis overlaps unevenly with the unfolding of the 2016 campaign. This thesis accounts for the 2016 campaign through fall of 2015 and the early spring of 2016 as it occurs in present time, but cannot take into account the final 10 months leading up to the general election. In analyzing Hillary Clinton's trust rhetorics of the 2016 campaign, this shortcoming in failing to account for the entire duration of her presidential run must be noted.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this study is able to operate effectively through the means and the unique academic perspective that has been designed specifically for exploring and analyzing Hillary Clinton's unique and significant rhetorics of trust.

Chapter 2: The Context of Hillary Clinton

2.1 Hillary as First Lady of the United States

Before serving as the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton served as the First Lady of Arkansas for 12 years as her husband, Bill Clinton, served as Governor. After entering the White House as the 42nd President of the United States, Bill Clinton would begin his eight-year term, while Hillary would begin her time as a First Lady who was primed to occupy far more than the typical First Lady role. According to the stories of White House aides, recorded and collected years after the end of Bill's presidency, Hillary as a First Lady was "at once formidable and not always politically deft;"⁶ where Hillary is "now carefully controlled at 67, then she was fiery and unpredictable, lobbing sarcastic jabs in private meetings and congressional hearings. Now criticized as a centrist and challenged from the left, Mrs. Clinton then was considered the liberal whispering in her husband's ear to resist the North American Free Trade Agreement and a welfare overhaul;"⁷ she was "messy, sometimes explosive and often politically clumsy,"⁸ during formative years—"a time of daring and hubris."⁹ Contrasted to the Hillary Clinton that America knows in 2016, Hillary as First Lady seemingly had a lot more authenticity to give.

In 1993, Bill Clinton selected Hillary to head the task Force on National Health Care Reform, engulfing her in what would become years of involvement in controversial

⁶ Peter Baker and Amy Chozick, "Hillary Clinton's History as First Lady: Powerful, but Not Always Deft," *The New York Times*, December 5, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/06/us/politics/hillary-clintons-history-as-first-lady-powerful-but-not-always-deft.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

health care work, which would ultimately see little success.¹⁰ Working for the Children's Defense Fund for years after graduating from Yale Law, however, Hillary was passionate about pushing children's and families' issues to the forefront, and proved to be influential in the creation of the Children's Health Insurance Program, providing state-funded health care for children whose parents could not afford to pay. Aside from the sometimes controversially political image that Clinton was quickly building for herself, Bill and Hillary Clinton encountered their first public controversy in 1993 with the Whitewater scandal. Upon entering the White House, the Clintons fired seven members of the White House travel office, which was rumored to have been motivated by clearing room for the positions to instead be filled by friends.¹¹ Pressure for the White House to then provide explanation for the firings led to an FBI investigation, giving way to the discovery of the Clintons' connection to the Whitewater real estate project in Arkansas. The Whitewater project was funded by a bank—Morgan Guaranty Savings and Loan—that failed, leading to investigations of the project and in the end costing the federal government \$73 million. Hillary was called to appear before a federal grand jury, though no charges were ever filed against her.

After moving past the Whitewater scandal and continuing on through her years of pursuing policy focused on healthcare and women's issues, Hillary was again thrust into the public eye during the infamous Monica Lewinsky scandal. In January of 1998, the sexual relationship between then-22-year-old Monica Lewinsky and 49-year-old Bill Clinton erupted in the media. Though it quickly grew out of control with public speculation and

¹⁰ "Hillary Clinton - Government Official, U.S. First Lady, Women's Rights Activist," *Biography*, accessed November 4, 2015, <http://www.biography.com/people/hillary-clinton-9251306>.

¹¹ "Special Report: Whitewater Timeline", *The Washington Post*, accessed November 4, 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/politics/special/whitewater/timeline.htm>

federal investigation on the grounds of sexual misconduct, Bill Clinton fiercely denied—to his family and staff, as well as to the public, over and over—having sexual relations with Lewinsky.¹² Although Bill would be faced with articles of impeachment in August of 1998, the Senate would fail to convict him in February of 1999, and he would continue on to finish the remainder of his second term.

Over the course of eight years, Hillary Clinton's trustworthy image was shaped positively and negatively by her time in the White House. Despite First Ladies often having fairly consistent access to good press, Clinton suffered unique obstacles, including formal involvement in legal investigations, leading the efforts on what many considered to be unsuccessful healthcare reform, and a publically marred marriage. The negative associations of potentially corrupt moral decisions, difficulties crafting successful policy, and taboo activity within her personal life would set the stage for many Americans to form complicated trust relationships with Hillary Clinton early on.

2.2 Hillary as a New York Senator

After cementing an iconic image as the 42nd First Lady of the United States, Clinton sought an office of her own, going on to be elected as the senator of the state of New York. Defeating Republican representative Rick Lazio, in the “most expensive, highest-profile Senate race in American history,”¹³ Clinton made history, becoming the first First Lady ever elected to public office. To many Americans, Clinton's success in taking office on her own merit was a laudable show of notable drive, intellect, and character. Entering into office on January 3, 2001,

¹² “A Chronology: Key Moments In The Clinton-Lewinsky Saga”, *CNN*, accessed November 4, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1998/resources/lewinsky/timeline/>

¹³ “Hillary Clinton Wins N.Y. Senate Race,” *ABC News*, January 6, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=122553&page=1>.

being reelected to the NY Senate in 2006, losing the 2008 primary election to Barack Obama, and continuing to serve as a senator until January 21, 2009 when she ascended to serve as the Secretary of State under President Obama, Clinton's time in the Senate was not uneventful. Over the course of eight years, she introduced 409 pieces of legislation to the Senate—a number higher than many in her party. However, only four of those bills ultimately passed through both chambers, and three were only ever made into law.¹⁴ While responsible for proposing an impressive amount of legislation, critics were left to question the reasons for Clinton's lack of success in actually passing the legislation further down the road, making it easy for many in New York to admire and respect Clinton for her seemingly hard work up front, while others just as easily raised suspicions about her ability to follow-through.

Hillary Clinton was serving as a Senator for the state of New York in September 2001 when the planes crashed into the twin towers, shaping her priorities for the state during her early Senate years. During the years following 9/11, Clinton made two significant, highly-profiled and highly controversial voting choices: She voted in favor of the Patriot Act in 2001, as well as the authorization of the War in Iraq in 2002.¹⁵ In addition to these voting decisions that would be highly criticized in years to come, Clinton also voted in favor of the Wall Street bailout in 2008.¹⁶ As an early indicator of Clinton's many publically controversial decisions during her time in the Senate, she publically expressed in 1999, before her time serving the state of NY, that she considered Bill Clinton's, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" push to be a policy failure; likewise, in 2000, she stated that although gay couples should be afforded rights, the sanctity of marriage did

¹⁴ Hillary Rodham Clinton, "Hillary Rodham Clinton," legislation, accessed October 20, 2015, <https://www.congress.gov/member/hillary-clinton/C001041>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ David Stout, "The Wall Street Bailout Plan, Explained," *The New York Times*, September 21, 2008, sec. Business, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/21/business/21qanda.html>.

not include gay unions.¹⁷ Over a decade later in 2013, Clinton finally came out in support of gay marriage, but her change in stance occurred late enough in the game that thousands of liberal Americans had already noticed Clinton's failure to support the quickly evolving progressive movement in support of gay marriage. Over the course of many years, Clinton's tendency to make controversial decisions, and then withdraw support from them later on, would cause significant damage to her reputation, and to the public's ability to trust her as a steady, confident lawmaker, rather than a notorious political shifter.

One of the last impressions that Clinton would make in her career in the Senate would be that of a senator juggling roll call votes while actively traveling on the campaign trail. From July 2007 until roughly September 2008, Clinton's voting record shows a considerable number of absences during voting periods. In that 14-month period, Clinton missed 202 roll call votes out of the 413 available—a 49% absence rate for over a year when she was still responsible for serving in office, regardless of her presidential ambitions.¹⁸ However, when viewing her voting record in entirety, from January 2001-2009, Clinton only missed 249 out of 2,616 available roll call votes—a 9.5% absence rate, considerably lower than her 2008 Democratic running mates Joe Biden with a 12.1% absence rate, John Edwards with 15.7%, and Barak Obama with 24.2% throughout their senatorial careers. While many applauded Clinton for balancing Senate votes so efficiently with campaigning,¹⁹ Clinton's absences from her Senate duties could potentially have served as a beginning site for contempt or even disapproval from others.

¹⁷ Rachel Weiner, "How Hillary Clinton Evolved on Gay Marriage," *The Washington Post*, March 18, 2013, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2013/03/18/how-hillary-clinton-evolved-on-gay-marriage/>.

¹⁸ "Hillary Clinton, Former U.S. Senator for New York," *GovTrack.us*, accessed October 20, 2015 https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/hillary_clinton/300022.

¹⁹ "Clinton Masters Juggling as Senator and Candidate," *ABC News*, October 3, 2007, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=3681544&page=1>.

2.3 Hillary's 2008 Presidential Campaign

Clinton's 2008 campaign for the democratic nomination was marked by encouraging highs and painful lows, all shaping her relationship with the public to a significant extent. As she entered the race in January 2007, Clinton was an obvious frontrunner. Having just won reelection as a New York senator in a landslide vote, Clinton had the name recognition, the endless address book full of financially supportive contacts, and the political resume to grant her political credibility. Clinton would go on to approach the campaign with confidence, anticipating her own success in the primaries,²⁰ until the campaign encountered obstacles including lack of funds, the strong challenger that was Barack Obama, and the execution of her own image struggles.

Though Clinton was able to generate significant funds initially, mismanagement of the campaign budget along with poor planning for the Iowa caucus put a damning dent in her wallet. "The Clinton campaign was meant to be shock and awe: big events in big states, sweep the board on Super Tuesday, overwhelm the less well-known competitors," according to Chip Smith, deputy campaign manager for Al Gore in 2000.²¹ Unfortunately, the campaign spent so much on polling and consultants, along with attention-grabbing venues for rallies and stops, that it was out of money by February 2008, forcing Clinton to take \$11 million from her own pocket.²² In an internal campaign memo that was leaked to the *New York Times*,²³ deputy campaign director, Mike Henry, urged the staff to consider skipping the Iowa caucus. When calculated out, campaigning in Iowa would cost \$15 million and 75 days of Clinton's presence, leading Henry to

²⁰ Joshua Green, "The Front-Runner's Fall," *The Atlantic*, September 2008, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/09/the-front-runner-s-fall/306944/>.

²¹ Suzanne Goldenberg, "How Hillary Clinton Turned an Air of Certainty into a Losing Run," *The Guardian*, June 3, 2008, sec. US news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/04/hillaryclinton.uselections20084>.

²² Yohana Desta, "Hillary Clinton's 2008 Campaign — What Went Wrong Last Time," *Mashable*, Apr 11, 2015, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://mashable.com/2015/04/11/hillary-clinton-2008-campaign-what-went-wrong/>.

²³ "Clinton Campaign Memo on Iowa," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2007, sec. U.S. / Politics, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/23/us/politics/23text-clinton.html>.

warn, “This effort may bankrupt the campaign and provide little if any political advantage.”²⁴

Once the memo became published, however, Clinton felt obligated to campaign in Iowa and do damage repair on a media narrative implying that Iowa did not concern her. Clinton would end up ranking third in the Iowa caucus, gaining little to nothing from the time spent there. The Clinton campaign’s grand intentions of shock and awe that crumbled into the mismanagement of funds and a forced attention turned towards Iowa served as potential factors in how America would perceive the unlikable candidate throughout the remainder of the campaign.

While Clinton began the initial campaign season as a powerful force, the little-known Senator, Barack Obama from Illinois, would prove to bring unbeatable momentum. The atmosphere in 2008 was that of a restless people. The country had just finished with President Bush, President Clinton, and then the second President Bush; voters were tired of the same old Washington game being run by political dynasties²⁵—they wanted change. While Clinton was a strong candidate in many ways, with a political resume packed full of leadership and experience, that political resume shaped her out to represent exactly what voters no longer wanted any more of: political elites who were going to continue to control the system. With Clinton’s eight years in the White House and six in the US Senate, she was hardly in a position to offer the revolutionary change that voters were looking for. Meanwhile, in addition to his powerful message of change, Obama’s grassroots organizing strategy was one that would allow him to successfully out-campaign Clinton and surge forward in the race. The character juxtaposition between Clinton and Obama likely shaped the way that many Americans perceived Clinton as an individual. Competing against a young fellow senator who represented hope, change, and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Suzanne Goldenberg, “How Hillary Clinton Turned an Air of Certainty into a Losing Run,” *The Guardian*, June 3, 2008, sec. US news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/04/hillaryclinton.uselections20084>.

community involvement, Clinton struggled to reject the label that was naturally thrust upon her as a Washington insider who was distanced from the people. These character-based labels would certainly affect the way in which a new generation of voters would go on to perceive, and thus, decide whether to trust Hillary Clinton.

In addition to how she was framed characteristically in relation to Senator Obama, Hillary Clinton experienced several individual image obstacles throughout the campaign of her own. Emerging from the gates with all of her strong qualities, Clinton had the potential for momentum. Her campaign framed her as fighting for the “Invisible Americans,” or middle-class workers. In addition to appealing to middle-class voters to grab the attention of the Democratic Party, the energy surrounding Clinton’s potential to be elected as the first female president was palpable. However, as Clinton campaign senior strategist, Mark Penn, was initially testing the waters with polls, preparing for a 2008 race, Penn ran a poll in Iowa just after her reelection to the Senate that had curious results. According to the poll, “Iowans rated Clinton at the top of the field on questions of leadership, strength, and experience—but most did not plan to vote for her, because they didn’t like her.”²⁶ Before even entering the race, Clinton faced the uphill battle of overcoming the constraints of her public image, and struggling to be likable. Stuck in the unfortunate position of someone who the public found difficult to like, Clinton’s fight to appear trustworthy throughout the campaign suffered as well.

Husband Bill Clinton soon entered the picture once Obama started to show power in the polls, but instead of doing Hillary a favor, he made matters worse. Coming to

²⁶ “A Chronology: Key Moments In The Clinton-Lewinsky Saga”, *CNN*, accessed November 4, 2015. <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1998/resources/lewinsky/timeline/>

Hillary's aid in the effort of trying to brand Senator Obama as not ready for office, Bill made publicized remarks about the senator, including the following comments²⁷:

"In theory, we could find someone who is a gifted television commentator and let them run. They'd have only one year less experience in national politics," delivered on PBS's "Charlie Rose" on December 15th, 2007

"Give me a break. This whole thing is the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen," addressing Obama's record on Iraq during a New Hampshire stop on January 7th, 2008

"The idea that one of these campaigns is positive and the other is negative when I know the reverse is true and I have seen it and I have been blistered by it for months is a little tough to take. Just because of the sanitizing coverage that's in the media doesn't mean the facts aren't out there," delivered at a New Hampshire campaign stop on January 7th, 2008

"Jesse Jackson won South Carolina in '84 and '88. Jackson ran a good campaign. And Obama ran a good campaign here," said to reporters in Columbia, S.C., on January 26th, 2008

As Hillary Clinton's campaign was attempting to position Hillary as a warm candidate in running a positive campaign, Bill Clinton was making outright negative remarks against Obama on the campaign trail, communicating obvious disrespect, and in some comments, tones of racism. Bill's close association and rhetorical identification with Hillary Clinton reflected negatively back onto Hillary, making it difficult for members of the public to trust Hillary, if they could not first trust Bill.

Yet another major fumble to add to Clinton's list of obstacles in her battle for appearing likable and trustworthy was a public recount of her 1996 trip to Bosnia that conflicted with the recorded account provided by the media. In the introduction to a foreign policy speech on Iraq, delivered on March 17th, 2008 in Washington, Clinton spoke of when she and daughter Chelsea

²⁷ Kevin Cirilli, "Bill Clinton's 8 Digs at Obama," *POLITICO*, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0912/80728.html>.

visited American troops on a trip to Bosnia.²⁸ In describing the trip, Clinton said that, “I certainly do remember that trip to Bosnia . . . There was a saying around the White House that if a place was too small, too poor, or too dangerous, the president couldn’t go, so send the First Lady . . . I remember landing under sniper fire. There was supposed to be some kind of a greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base.”²⁹ In an effort to illustrate how involved she had been in matters of foreign policy, Clinton shared this memory. However, media outlets as well as select members who had travelled with her quickly began to poke holes in the accuracy of the memory. The First Lady and First Daughter, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton, had been accompanied to Bosnia by a CBS news crew that had filmed the experiences of the trip, beginning with their arrival onto the tarmac, under no visible threat. Proceeding to shake the hands of surrounding soldiers there to greet them, still in the open air of the tarmac, Clinton shook the hand of a small Bosnian girl who presented her with a poem, after which they moved calmly to their base.

Days after Clinton delivered the Washington speech, countless media accounts and video recordings came forward to challenge Clinton’s over-dramatization of her Bosnia arrival. Clinton went on to explain to the media that she made a mistake when recounting the event, attempting to remind them that she is, after all, only human, and that she wasn’t worried about the memory flub doing great damage to her campaign. Despite her claim of an innocent misremembering, though, the incident raised important questions about whether or not the altered account was designed to intentionally garner extra credibility in the foreign policy realm,

²⁸ “Video Shows Tarmac Welcome, No Snipers,” *@politifact*, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2008/mar/25/hillary-clinton/video-shows-tarmac-welcome-no-snipers/>.

²⁹ “Clinton ‘Misspoke’ About Bosnia Trip, Campaign Says,” *The Caucus*, accessed October 21, 2015, <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/03/24/clinton-misspoke-about-bosnia-trip-campaign-says/>.

and whether the public was willing to look past what could have potentially been a bold-faced lie about diplomatic experience.

Countless factors including money mismanagement, challenging personality comparisons with Barack Obama, struggles with individual likability, and dishonesty made it difficult for the public to trust Hillary Clinton throughout her 2008 campaign. Though Clinton exhibited many strengths alongside these weaknesses as well, noting how her campaign deployed rhetorical appeals to try and recover when she hit rough patches is useful in assessing her overall rhetorical ability to be trusted.

2.4 Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State

Serving President Obama as the 67th US secretary of state, Clinton's time with the State Department is defined primarily through soft power. Soft power, coined by Dr. Joseph Nye in the late 1980s, refers to a country's power to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion, compared to hard power, in which force and coercion are directly employed³⁰; soft power more often relies on cultural influence and values to persuade foreign entities to align with the main actor.³¹ From January 21, 2009 to February 1, 2013, Clinton took to the role of the diplomat, traveling and discussing policy where needed. Much of what she accomplished included necessary image repair on the part of the United States through her unique strategy in forming "government-to-government" and "government-to-people" contacts.³² In addition to

³⁰ Jan-Phillip Wagner, "The Effectiveness of Soft & Hard Power in Contemporary International Relations," *E-International Relations*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/14/the-effectiveness-of-soft-hard-power-in-contemporary-international-relations/>.

³¹ "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, January 28, 2009, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/2004-05-01/soft-power-means-success-world-politics>.

³² "The Clinton Legacy," *Foreign Affairs*, accessed October 20, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2013-04-03/clinton-legacy>.

using her “considerable star power around the world”³³ to improve the unfavorable American image left from the previous presidency, Clinton also focused significant attention on increasing strategic relations with China, highlighted the importance of economic and public health issues in the record-breaking 112 countries that she visited,³⁴ and elevated the importance of women’s issues in the scope of security and stability throughout foreign nations.³⁵

Despite her considerable gains made through soft power and diplomatic efforts, Clinton’s limited use of hard power leaves her with the wide reputation of being a secretary of state who was largely “risk free.”³⁶ No matter the speeches delivered nor the image-repair aided through new connections, Clinton’s time as secretary of state was simply not defined by a singular accomplishment; she evaded no wars, struck no definitive peace deals, did not leave her mark on America’s legacy of crucial foreign policy moves. Foreign policy experts debate what could have lead to Clinton’s notable lack of risky behavior while serving: Whether due to strategically choosing to evade potential conflict in preparation for a second presidential run in 2016, President Obama’s distinct control exerted over his foreign policy in comparison to previous presidents, or the mere timing and nature of events in the international atmosphere during her state tenure—or quite possibly a combination of the three—the reputation of avoiding risk as Secretary of State is attributed to Clinton nonetheless, potentially shaping how she is perceived as a competent leader in foreign policy.

The one occurrence that most heavily defines Clinton’s time in the State Department, outweighing all advances made in diplomatic efforts, remains the September 2012 attacks on

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Hillary Clinton: Keeping the Peace,” *Correct The Record*, accessed October 20, 2015, <http://correctrecord.org/hillary-clinton-keeping-the-peace/>.

³⁶ Susan B. Glasser, “Was Hillary Clinton a Good Secretary of State?,” *POLITICO Magazine*, accessed October 20, 2015, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2013/12/was-hillary-clinton-a-good-secretary-of-state-john-kerry-2016-100766.html>.

Benghazi. The attack on the US diplomatic mission by Islamist militants in Benghazi, Libya occurred as a major crisis under Clinton's state tenure. Resulting in the violent death of four Americans, including US Ambassador to Libya, J. Christopher Stevens,³⁷ the Benghazi attacks quickly brought national criticism upon the White House, questioning whether Clinton in concert with President Obama handled the attack irresponsibly, or whether more could have been done to save American lives. As the aftermath of the attack unfolded, Clinton was accused of presenting flip-flopping stories to the families of the dead, and to the country, claiming on some occasions that the Benghazi attack had been sparked by an anti-Muslim video that had been released online that day, while sources show that at the time of these explanations, Clinton knew the attack to have been pre-meditated.³⁸ During this turbulent time in the country, many accused Clinton of being a flip-flop, a liar, and definitively untrustworthy.

Criticisms against Clinton for Benghazi extend out of her state tenure and into today, as Republican politicians along with thousands of Americans continue to strongly condemn Clinton's crucial failure in a moment of international crisis. On May 8, 2014, the House of Representatives voted to establish the Benghazi Select Committee, designed to investigate all "policies, decisions, and activities" contributing to the White House's handling of the Benghazi attacks.³⁹ On Tuesday, September 29th, 2015, in the midst of the 2016 election atmosphere, Republican Representative and member of the Select Committee, Kevin McCarthy, announced on Fox News's show, "Hannity," that, "Everybody thought Hillary Clinton was unbeatable, right? But we put together a Benghazi special committee, a select committee. What are her

³⁷ Anup Kaphle, "Timeline: How the Benghazi Attacks Played out," *The Washington Post*, June 17, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/timeline-how-the-benghazi-attack-played-out/2014/06/17/a5c34e90-f62c-11e3-a3a5-42be35962a52_story.html.

³⁸ "What Did Hillary Clinton Tell the Families of People Who Lost Their Lives in Benghazi?," *PolitiFact*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2016/feb/09/what-did-hillary-clinton-tell-families-people-who-/>.

³⁹ "About the Select Committee," *Select Committee on Benghazi*, accessed October 20, 2015, <https://benghazi.house.gov/about>.

numbers today? Her numbers are dropping. Why? Because she's untrustable...But no one would have known any of that had happened had we not fought and made that happen."⁴⁰ Though the exact goals or work of the Benghazi select committee are not known to the public, the quotation from McCarthy referring to committee efforts to target Clinton's reputation demonstrates that the attacks on Benghazi were at the time, and continue to be, a highly salient and widely powerful tool for damaging Clinton's ability to be trusted.

2.5 Hillary's 2016 Presidential Campaign

Throughout Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, as well as the months leading up to it, Clinton's image relied upon trust in many moments. Even before Clinton announced her formal plans to take a second run at the presidency on April 12th, 2015, much of the country had a hunch that they would see her name again. During these months leading up to Clinton's announcement, as she was preparing her "Hillary for America" campaign, the Republican National Committee was preparing their campaign for Americans against Hillary. A visit to the Republican National Committee's website at any point during the year 2015 would reveal, alongside pictures of GOP candidates, links to straw polls, and boxes highlighting various conservative values, a significant amount of anti-Hillary propaganda. In fact, the GOP's home page represents seemingly more of Hillary Clinton than it does of its own candidates. Upon navigating to the home page, out of the first nine boxes, videos, and articles available for clicking, six of those nine links contain content referring to Clinton, rather than to GOP issues (figure 2.1)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Jesse Byrnes, "McCarthy links Benghazi panel to Clinton's falling poll numbers," Text, *TheHill*, (September 30, 2015), <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/255411-mccarthy-links-benghazi-committee-to-clintons-polling>.

⁴¹ "Republican National Committee," *GOP*, accessed October 26, 2015, <https://gop.com/>.

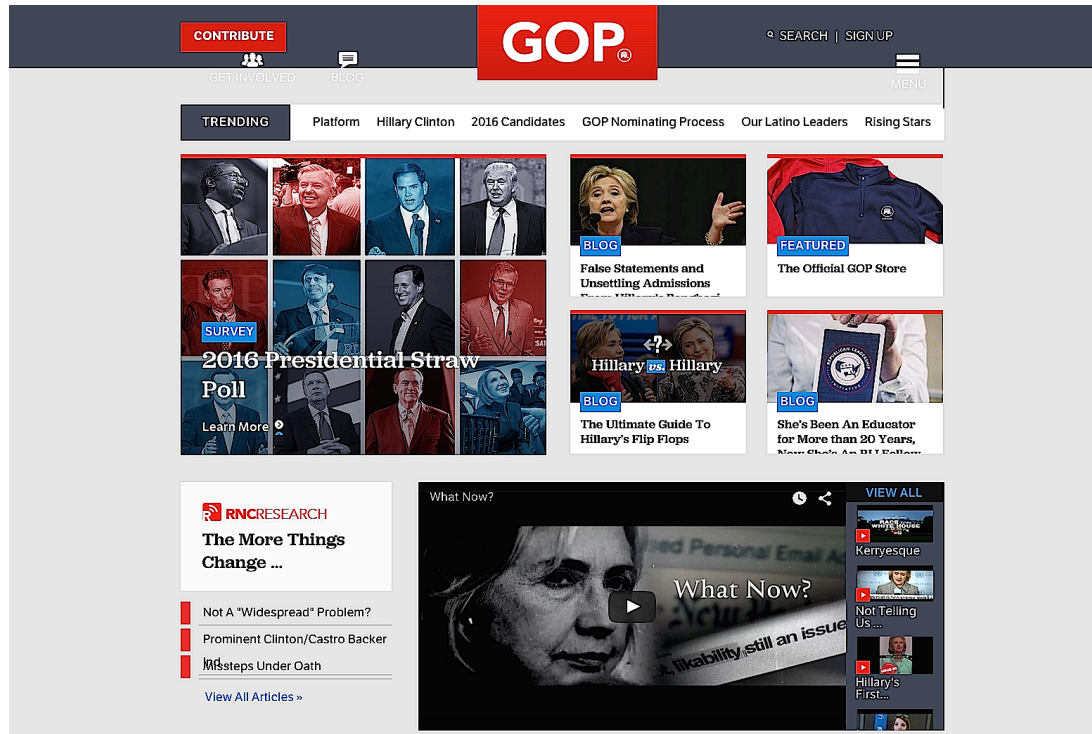


Figure 2.1: Clinton attacked online by the GOP

In addition to the six boxes, articles, and videos that are dedicated to Clinton, she is featured in two tabs at the top of the site: “Hillary Clinton,” listed second out of seven tabs, and “Benghazi,” listed seventh; each tab, upon clicking, leads to further articles, blog posts, and infographics about each of the listed topics. The content of these items dedicated to Clinton focuses predominantly on one issue: How Hillary Clinton cannot be trusted. With captions such as “False Statements and Unsettling Admissions From Hillary's Benghazi Testimony,” “The Ultimate Guide to Hillary’s Flip Flops,” “Missteps Under Oath,” etc., the theme of “untrustworthy” weaves through every aspect of Clinton’s highlighted image. This barrage of anti-Clinton propaganda was sponsored early on in the campaign process by a Republican party that knew that in order to ruin Clinton’s presidential chances, they first were going to need to instill Americans with a deep-seeded skepticism and distrust of the most viable 2016 democratic candidate. They were right. According to analysis of Clinton’s April 12th announcement from

The New York Times, “Rather than gliding into the spotlight as an above-the-fray former secretary of state, Mrs. Clinton entered the 2016 race in the midst of lingering questions about her exclusive use of a private email address while at the State Department and about donations from foreign countries to her family’s philanthropic foundation.”⁴² Thus, from before her campaign even began, Clinton’s reputation would be challenged by conservative media and the growing association of the word “untrustworthy” with the name “Clinton.”

In addition to protecting the credibility of her image from the Republicans, Clinton also had to bolster her image to stand strong in the face of the Senator who would become her 2016 primary challenger: Bernie Sanders. Sanders entered the presidential race on May 26th, roughly two months after Clinton. Campaigning on a platform of ideas considered radically liberal by the country—“revolutionary,” in Sanders’ own words—such as that our country is run by the wealthiest 1% and that the big banks need breaking up; that big money should be removed from politics; that climate change is one of the most serious problems of our age; that college tuition should be free for all; that it’s time to instate a living wage for real people living in the United States,⁴³ etc. Bernie Sanders slowly introduced his name and his plan for real, reformatory change to the United States. In these beginning months, Sanders started to gather attention, introducing policies so radically reformatory, that as he traveled the country and spoke to different groups, people gradually and curiously began to listen. By the time the first Democratic debate was held, on October 13th, 2015, Sanders had sky-rocketed in the polls, rivaling Clinton significantly for the support of liberal voters—a dramatic increase in popularity in just roughly under five months.

⁴² Amy Chozick, “Hillary Clinton Announces 2016 Presidential Bid,” *The New York Times*, April 12, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/13/us/politics/hillary-clinton-2016-presidential-campaign.html>.

⁴³ “Issues,” *Bernie Sanders*, accessed November 4, 2015, <https://berniesanders.com/issues/>.

Now, during the 2016 primaries, Clinton faces the same obstacle that she did with Barack Obama—remaining a likable candidate competing against someone with less money and political capital, yet with a new face, with change-driven ideas, and with a powerful, authentic momentum. In an interview with *Politico*, on January 22, 2016, President Obama stated that,

I think Bernie came in with the luxury of being a complete longshot and just letting loose. I think Hillary came in with both the privilege and burden of being perceived as the frontrunner. And, as a consequence, you know, where they stood at the beginning probably helps to explain why the language sometimes is different . . . Bernie is somebody who, although I don't know as well because he wasn't, obviously, in my administration, has the virtue of saying exactly what he believes, and great authenticity, great passion, and is fearless. His attitude is, 'I got nothing to lose.'⁴⁴

Whether Clinton is better prepared to face this recurring dynamic in 2016 than she was in 2008 will only be discovered as the primaries unfold. However, regardless of the candidate who ultimately advances to the general election, the comparison of Clinton's guarded, manufactured image, to that of Bernie Sanders' authentic pleas to bring about a people's revolution will inarguably challenge Clinton in her ability to appear trustworthy in comparison to her new opponent.

⁴⁴ "Full Transcript: POLITICO's Glenn Thrush Interviews President Barack Obama on Iowa, 2016, and the Choice between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders," *POLITICO*, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/01/off-message-podcasttranscript-obama-218167>.

Chapter 3: Foundational Literature and Methodology

Hillary Clinton's image, after nearly 40 years in the public eye, is as rich and complex as her political career itself. This study, however, focuses on examining Hillary Clinton's rhetorics of trust from the year 1992, during Bill Clinton's presidential campaign, to the 2016 primary election season unfolding in the present, with emphasis on five key moments of her public career. In order to dissect how her public image and her rhetorical appeals in crafting trust have been shaped, essential literature in the field can provide a necessary theoretical foundation for understanding the makings of trust, and driving toward answers to these ultimate questions: How performing gender authenticity has shaped the expectations that Clinton is expected to meet in order to be considered trustworthy, and through those altered public expectations, how her proclamations of trustworthiness have functioned as rhetorical appeals. I will analyze Clinton's rhetorics of trust in pursuit of answers to these questions, with work from the following theorists providing necessary rhetorical context for understanding Hillary Clinton, and how her appeals to public trust function.

3.1 Ethos of Aristotle and Isocrates

In Aristotle's famous treatise, *On Rhetoric*, he discusses rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion."⁴⁵ In explaining further that the *pisteis*, or the proofs—the means of persuasion—are made up of aspects that a rhetor both can and cannot control, he explores how to see "the given" around us in terms of what can and cannot be seen as persuasive. Of Aristotle's artistic proofs, there are three: Ethos, pathos, and

⁴⁵ Aristotle and George Alexander Kennedy, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37.

logos. The proof that is most relevant to this study is ethos, “found in the character of the speaker.”⁴⁶ Aristotle writes that, “[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others], on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt.”⁴⁷ In his explanation of ethos, Aristotle refers to the image that a speaker creates and supports of themselves—the power structures that they allude to and draw from as they speak—as the fair-mindedness that often sways listeners on the receiving end of rhetoric. Where there is “not exact knowledge but room for doubt,” he says, is when the ethos of a figure takes the place of exact knowledge, making an audience feel safe and secure enough in placing trust in that figure.

Aristotle goes on to later say that, “There are three reasons why speakers themselves are persuasive; for there are three things we trust other than logical demonstration. These are practical wisdom [phronesis] and virtue [arête] and good will [eunoia] . . . a person seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to the hearers.”⁴⁸ Through this discussion of various aspects of character, Aristotle touches on the various necessities for speakers to be trusted.

Before Aristotle, too, Isocrates elaborated on the role of character in persuasion with the following:

Mark you, the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow-citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by

⁴⁶ Ibid.,38.

⁴⁷ Ibid.,38.

⁴⁸ Ibid.,112-113

words? Therefore, the stronger a man's desire to persuade his hearers, the more zealously will he strive to be honorable and to have the esteem of his fellow-citizens.⁴⁹

As Isocrates speaks on rhetoric and its best practices in his autobiographical speech, “Antidosis,” he explains the importance of a public figure’s reputation. Going beyond Aristotle’s articulation of credence, Isocrates highlights the role of the public figure in society and the collective actions to their name, which affect the persuasion of their speech, even outside of the moment in which they are speaking.

In analyzing Hillary Clinton as a public figure, the notion of ethos is present in much of how she crafts appeals to be trusted. As Clinton’s rhetorics of trust shift in nature and in function as she moves from one public context to the next, it is important to continue asking whether her appeals to trust and authenticity in each situation align with the credibility of her public reputation—whether she represents wisdom, virtue, and good will, and how those aspects lend themselves to her overall power of persuasion. The work of both Aristotle and Isocrates lends itself nicely to this task.

3.2 Burkean Identification

Building on Aristotle’s and Isocrates’ ideas of evaluating figures through the rhetorical lens of credibility, Burke’s concepts lay the foundation for understanding the process of identification, and the bases on which audience members choose to relate symbolically with figures. In Kenneth Burke’s work on strategies of persuasion, he defines rhetoric as “the use of

⁴⁹ George Norlin, “Isocrates with an English Translation in three volumes,” *Harvard University Press*, accessed November 3, 2015.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0144%3Aspeech%3D15%3Asection%3D278>, Antidosis 278

words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.”⁵⁰ The persuasive nature of humans responding to symbols manifests widely throughout Burke’s work, particularly in regards to his notion of identification. According to Burke,

Individuals form selves or identities through various properties or substances, which include such things as physical objects, occupations, friends, activities, beliefs, and values. As they ally themselves with various properties or substances, they share substance with whatever and whomever they associate and simultaneously define themselves against or separate themselves from others with whom they choose not to identify.⁵¹

The idea that as individuals identify with others, they are sharing substances—or parts of themselves—and thus, communing over those shared substances is known as *consubstantiality*, used synonymously with the term *identification*.⁵² In seeing human agents and their substances that overlap with others as symbols, Burke argues that humans can use those symbols to tether ourselves to one another, creating alliances that motivate us in the future to act. Just as important as the notion of identification though, notes Burke, is the notion of division. In order for human agents to identify with one another, they must first be divided from one another in order to experience the moment in which shared substances draw them together.

Burke charts out three levels of identification. First, identification may be used as a means to an end, to create a sense of shared experience in the moment. When Hillary Clinton reminds Americans that she grew up as a part of a poor family living in a suburb of Chicago, she seeks to directly identify with lower and middle-class families in that moment as a means to an end.

⁵⁰ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 41

⁵¹ Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss, and Robert Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, 30th Anniversary edition (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2014), 190.

⁵² Foss, Foss, and Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, 190.

Second, identification can be formed through the shared substance of common enemies. When fighting for improved women's healthcare and blaming limited policies on ideologically wayward Republicans, Clinton attempts to identify with voters who may not necessarily like her as a politician, but may choose to rally along with her regardless, because those particular voters dislike the same Republicans who limit women's healthcare to a greater extent than they dislike Hillary.

Finally, the third—and often most powerful—form of identification operates in situations in which it affects human agents on unconscious levels, yet goes directly unnoticed. If Hillary Clinton knows that Bill Clinton and Barack Obama are figures that are well-liked by the American public, she may try to appear in public with them as often as possible. Although public appearances with popular figures may not seem like a direct attempt at persuasion to an American voter, Clinton and her campaign know that the more frequently she is seen with figures who are widely liked, the more closely voters will associate her with those well-liked figures, unconsciously identifying with Clinton and her ties to likeable figures in the process. Burke wrote that, “You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his.”⁵³ Through these three levels of identification, public figures can persuade audience members, changing attitudes and moving them towards action.

Understanding persuasion through the lens of Burkean identification aids this study in analyzing Hillary Clinton's attempts to relate to the American public. Through her rhetorics of trust, Clinton asks voters to ultimately place enough trust in her that they will vote for her; yet, in the process of crafting that request, she must ask them to identify with her first. Burke's notion of consubstantiality highlights the values or shared substances through which Clinton tries to

⁵³ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 55

form symbolic ties with her audience. Meanwhile, Burke's different levels of identification provide a necessary foundation for recognizing how Clinton's rhetorical appeals are operating.

3.3 The Narrative Paradigm

Walter Fisher,⁵⁴ in his foundational essay on human communication paradigms, argues that humans often communicate through crafting narratives. This paradigm centers on the idea that counting and recounting the events of our lives is a way of telling stories, and thus, relating to those around us. Fisher relates the idea to Burke's paradigm of dramatism,⁵⁵--the study of language through action— suggesting that we are constantly entering into conversations that have been going on around us even before we enter them, and that continue once we leave. By crafting these ongoing conversations into stories that are more relatable, we create a more accessible, symbolically richer representation of society.

The interconnected nature of narrative also brings the ability to create entire webs of thought, in which each piece of a narrative at hand holds a significance, and can be tied to another element of the same, or even a different story. Thus, being able to conceptualize how narratives fit into the scheme of surrounding narratives, or conversations, as Burke would say, is not only having a much deeper understanding of how particular ideas or actions are functioning rhetorically, but also, understanding the origin of the idea, and the possibilities for the idea to expand, grow, and apply itself in future context; understanding how one narrative shapes another is key in positioning the contexts of Clinton's life that are intricately woven to one another.

⁵⁴ Walter Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." In *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, edited by John L. Lucaites, Celeste M. Condit, and Sally Caudill, 265—287. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1999.

⁵⁵ Foss, Foss, and Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, 196.

Analyzing Hillary Clinton's rhetorics of trust through a narrative lens enables readers to see her communication as more than just the strategic manipulation of rhetorical tools, but rather, as the deliberate choices of an experienced actor, responding to contextual incentives in a political realm defined by woven loyalties and calculated contingencies. In this study, the narrative lens will serve, first, as an explanation for Clinton's actions. In order to understand how her various rhetorics are functioning, or why they were conceived in the first place, we must first be aware of the contextual surroundings that have defined and will continue to define her situation. Throughout the process of evaluating her past encounters with the American constituency, social attitudes about gender and competency, transparency, and relatability, political attacks from competitors, and persuasion tactics used in past political arenas, the construction of these contexts as pieces within a larger narrative will help to explain the rhetorical choices Clinton makes in relation to the moving variables surrounding her.

Second, viewing Clinton's communication through the narrative lens will lay the foundation for understanding her rhetorical choices as part of a pattern with a discernable structure. When analyzing persuasive appeals, examining the scope of the appeal can provide one with an understanding of how language itself functions; however, that understanding is limited. In broadening the analysis to how the appeal is functioning within the context of the overarching narrative, the reader begins to understand Clinton's rhetorical appeals as threads of a larger web that intertwine and affect each other as the web continues to grow, and the direction begins to change. With a clear view of the structure as well as the contextual constraints that Clinton's rhetorics of trust operate within, her communication can be more accurately understood.

3.4 The Ideograph

In viewing the political arena that Hillary Clinton calls home through the lenses of ethos, identification, and narrative, the intricacies of language on a micro level become increasingly significant. Michael McGee examines symbolic language from the perspective of power and ideology with his rhetorical tool, the ideograph. McGee's discussion of the ideograph⁵⁶ arises from a conflict between the notions of "ideology" and what previous voices in the discipline have called "the philosophy of myth,"⁵⁷ created as a construct to "explain the phenomenon of 'public' or 'mass consciousness.'" In his essay, McGee contends that Marx's conception of "ideology" attributes an unrealistically high portion of the control over society to be wielded by the wealthy elite of society,⁵⁸ while the "philosophy of myth" gives an unrealistic amount of power to poetically symbolic language. McGee argues that while neither are faulty constructs, a linguistic middle ground that fuses the two is needed.

The ideograph is a piece of politically-charged language that symbolizes abstract concepts from the dominant cultural ideology by evoking associations of socially-shared values, histories, and experiences into one easily-accessible word or phrase. By attaching the various abstract values to movements, ideas, and societal phenomena, these abstract concepts become easier to comprehend, to visualize, and to apply to everyday communication. However, in the process, these words that come to symbolize instances of cultural meaning become simultaneously immersed within a hierarchy of persuasive contextual connotations, which quickly translate into a the very fusion that McGee sought—symbolic language containing political power.

⁵⁶ Michael C. McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and ideology." In *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*, edited by John L. Lucaites, Celeste M. Condit, and Sally Caudill, 265—287. New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1999.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 426-427.

Ideographs are culturally bound, and thus can possess different meanings in different cultures, as well as in the same culture but throughout different historically defining pockets of time. Common examples of American ideographs are “liberty,” “equality,” “religion,” “freedom,” “property,” and “the American Dream.” Due to the interdependent nature of words within a linguistic system, ideographs are not defined singularly, but rather, in relation to each other; the concept of one ideograph is likely to be used within the definition of another, as value systems are often designed with a dynamic of intermingling values in mind. Therefore, the associations attached to ideographs are often closely tied to one another, representative of a network of ideologies, rather than isolated concepts. Because ideographs immediately begin to socialize citizens within their communities as they grow, becoming increasingly fundamental parts of people’s concept of society the longer that they exist within it, the persuasive powers over individual thought that ideographs possess are profound. In his essay, McGee provides the example of the Vietnam War⁵⁹: It’s no wonder, he argues, that so many young men willingly shipped off to fight a war that scores of the American population opposed—that few could clearly justify; the relentless use of ideographs such as *freedom* and *justice* and good old American *apple pie* told the society as a whole to understand the war as something Americans had to do, in the name of all the democracy-driven ideographs. The ideograph’s roots in a society’s grammar structure as well as its sense of collective identities makes it so highly rhetorical.

In the political arena, symbolic language tied up in constructions of power abounds. To analyze Hillary Clinton’s language through the lens of McGee’s ideograph is to recognize the weight that her individual words carry when used throughout her public discourse. From the words Clinton chooses to represent her personal brand, to the words she repeats throughout

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.428.

speeches and rallies, to the words she prints across Twitter and Facebook and on bumper stickers and t-shirts, the lens of the ideograph can decipher what power these words hold, and how it plays into the successes and the failures of her rhetorical appeals to the public to appear trustworthy.

The importance of the ideographic lens to this study lies also in identifying the cultural justification behind Clinton's rhetorical appeals. Because ideographs are so culturally bound, examining the specific power-language correlations chosen to build Clinton's image as a trustworthy official is paramount to understanding the successes and failures of the images at their core. In reality, the bulk of crafting a successful public image for Hillary Clinton, as with any public official, lies in task of choosing the right words for her to embody—which aspects of her character, which political aspirations, which core values of hers should be emphasized in order to create a reputation sure to garner respect from American citizens. The notions of ethos and identification are strong here too, playing into the creation of appeals. The linguistic responsibility though that lies in crafting a public image is recognizing that choosing words to represent who Clinton projects herself to be involves not only embodying those words at the core of what she stands for, but also, the interconnected stigmas of related words and the societal baggage that trailing connotations hold on the images as well.

By viewing Clinton's public moments through the lens of the ideograph, the images that she attempts to establish through trust rhetoric can be further analyzed beyond the ideas behind the images. In addition to imagery, Clinton's ideographic language can be analyzed for the networks of meaning and association bound up in ideological symbols, and nods to societal power that hover underneath the surface of the language that she chooses. The ideographic lens establishes a cultural explanation for the messages she sends, identifies which institutional norms

and powerful entities she is appealing to, and leads researchers to consider which public values are clashing with her professed values to cause her images to fail. In viewing Clinton's rhetorical appeals through ideograph, it becomes possible to discern the societal appeals to both culture and power function.

3.5 Gender Authenticity

Shawn Parry-Giles, in her book, *Hillary Clinton in the News: Gender and Authenticity in American Politics*, explores the concept of how authenticity can be complicated by gender through the specific case of Hillary Clinton. In examining how political authenticity is perceived by the American public, Parry-Giles analyzes the gender-based social constructs that cause public figures to be more highly trusted or more strongly aligned with, so long as they fit within those gender-based constructs that make sense to American citizens. In her work, Parry-Giles analyzes the fundamental difference between the crafting of male and female authenticity, and how those differences manifest in the race for gaining political credibility. On straying from the typical molds of gendered authenticity and ethos, Perry-Giles writes that,

Deviations from cultural archetypes of femininity and masculinity, which take on characteristics of nature and nurture, can be celebrated for evidence of gender progress. Gender transgressions can also become the objects of scorn and derision for those judged as straying too far from gender ideals. These historical constructs can form the basis of cultural anxiety and skepticism over an individual's authenticity, leading to a preoccupation with what some view as a political leader's anomalous behavior that can attract enhanced media scrutiny.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *Hillary Clinton in the News*... 12

In performing acts of constructed gender norms, Parry-Giles describes how Clinton can perform gender authenticity, aligning with typically female behaviors, and displaying what the country expects of a female public servant, of the wife of the President of the United States, etc.

However, as frequently as Hillary Clinton performs gender authenticity for the country, Parry-Giles notes, she more often defies that gender authenticity by adopting roles and actions contradictory to the public's expectation of gendered behavior. Frames of Hillary as an inauthentic housewife, an inauthentic First Lady, having an inauthentic marriage to Bill, and acting with an inauthentic connection to the state of New York (popularly accused of being a "carpetbagger") have all plagued Clinton at some point throughout her career. Parry-Giles's research acknowledges that, in Clinton's case, running presidential campaigns on being a strong female candidate posed a direct challenge to the gendered social constructs shaping who should be perceived as a national leader, and who should not be. Though many in the country were supportive of the idea of a female President when Hillary ran her campaign in 2008, many Americans also experienced a difficult time perceiving Clinton as a competent leader who was able to fit the presidential role. Because of those difficulties perceiving Hillary as a competent leader, Parry-Giles argues, Americans experienced further trouble perceiving Clinton as a trustworthy figure. By not adhering to social gender constructs, Clinton violated several socially-established norms, rendering her untrustworthy. For this study, analyzing the moments in which Hillary Clinton both performs and actively contradicts gender authenticity, and gains or loses trust because of it, are made more accessible with the work of Parry Giles.

3.6 Methodology for Artifact Analysis

Over the span of Clinton's 40 years in the public eye, countless appearances, statements, and involvements in various political controversies could provide ample material for rhetorical image analysis. With a specific focus on Clinton's appeals to trust and credibility from the American public, however, drawing analysis from key moments when she formed rhetorical trust in notable ways will serve this study best. The five events to be examined will be Bill and Hillary's January 1992 interview with 60 Minutes after the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Hillary's tears in New Hampshire days before the 2008 primary, Clinton's "3am Phone Call" ad from the 2008 primary election season, Clinton's social media messaging during her 2016 campaign, and her long-evolving 2016 email scandal. By evaluating these five moments with theoretical influence from the study of Aristotelian ethos, Burke's identification, Fisher's narrative, McGee's ideograph, Shawn Parry-Giles's gender authenticity, and Rob Asen's trust in deliberation, Hillary Clinton's rhetorics of trust can be thoroughly dissected as a tool proving widely useful to the rhetorical community.

Chapter 4: Analyzing Hillary Clinton and her Moments of Crafting Trust

With a 40-year-long career in politics and public advocacy under her belt, Hillary Clinton's experience in learning and practicing how to effectively craft trust with various publics is extensive. For the purpose of a focused and manageable study, this chapter features five moments from different points throughout Clinton's career, each rich with analysis on the art of crafting rhetorics of trust.

4.1 Hillary Rodham Clinton, no Tammy Wynette

In January of 1992, as the Clintons were quickly approaching what was expected to be a victory in the New Hampshire primary, a story that emerged from an Arkansas tabloid would cause Bill Clinton's presidential campaign to reel, and Hillary to have to define herself publically in relation to her marriage. In a story that broke on January 23rd in the Star, an Arkansas tabloid, former media persona and state employee Gennifer Flowers claimed to have had a 12-year affair with candidate Bill Clinton, providing taped phone conversations and transcripts to aid the written tabloid piece. Three days after the story broke and immediately began to appear in every major news outlet, Bill and Hillary sat down for a joint interview on a special abbreviated edition of 60 Minutes, directly after the Superbowl on Sunday, January 26th, to address the story to the country.

The 10-minute interview consisted of prompts primarily for Bill, including, questions such as, "Who is Gennifer Flowers? . . . How do you know her?"; "You've said that your marriage has had problems . . . what do you mean by that?"; "Are you prepared tonight to say that you've never had an extramarital affair?" After roughly nine minutes of back and forth between

Bill Clinton and the moderator, Steve Kroft, with occasional comment from Hillary, the following dialogue ensued:

KROFT: I-I think most Americans would agree that it's very admirable that you have stayed together, that you've worked your problems out, that you seem to have reached some sort of an understanding and an...and an arrangement...uh—

BILL: Wait a minute, wait a minute

KROFT: But—

HILLARY: (laughter)

BILL: Wait a minute...you're, you're looking at two people who *love* each other...this is not an arrangement or an understanding—this is a *marriage*...that's a very different thing.

HILLARY: You know, I'm not sittin' here as some little woman standin' by my man like Tammy Wynette—I'm sittin' here because I *love* him...and I *respect* him...and I honor what he's been through and what we've been through together, and you know if that's not enough for people, then heck, don't vote for him.⁶¹

As she explained her reasoning for standing by her husband on national TV, Hillary was not only building a case for why the public should continue to support Bill after the eruption of the scandal, but also, why they should continue to support her and her decision, and therefore, why the public should support the two of them as a team. In crafting this justification for why American citizens should take her word during the interview and move past the scandal, to focus instead on more pressing political issues, Hillary was attempting to persuade voters to put their trust in her—to trust her and Bill's assertion that the scandal need not be a concern, that their marriage was strong, and that moving forward with the campaign was the right thing for the country to do.

4.1.1 “Some Little Woman”

⁶¹ Classic New Orleans TV, *Bill & Hillary Clinton Extramarital Affairs 1992 60 Minutes*, accessed February 29, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DZyE41T56w>.

Through her commentary, Hillary Clinton attempted to create trust between herself and the public by appealing to her strong character. These appeals to her character can be examined in the embedded language of her interview comment detailed above. First, Hillary's use of the term "little woman" alludes to the stereotypical view of the role that women are typically expected to play in a marriage, and how Hillary defies that stereotype. Since Hillary Rodham and Bill Clinton met at Yale Law School in 1971⁶², each was on their own path to big things. Upon graduation from Yale Law, Hillary worked as a staff attorney for the Children's Defense Fund, in Cambridge Massachusetts, before returning to Washington a year later to serve on the presidential impeachment inquiry staff advising the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives during the Watergate Scandal.⁶³ After Nixon's resignation in 1974, Hillary moved to Arkansas with Bill, where she began teaching as a professor at the University of Arkansas. In 1976, a year after her marriage, Hillary joined the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, as Bill was running for the position of Arkansas State Attorney. Hillary was appointed to the board of the Legal Services Corporation by President Jimmy Carter in 1978; she went on to become a full partner at Rose Law Firm; she was twice named to the list of "The 100 Most Influential Lawyers in America; she co-founded the Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, and served on the boards of the Arkansas Children's Hospital, Legal Services, and the Children's Defense Fund, as well as the Board of Arkansas Businesses for TCBY and Wal-Mart; Hillary accomplished all of these things as her husband was serving the public.

Despite her marriage to Bill, Hillary had decided to keep her maiden name of Rodham, instead of adopting Clinton, in hopes of keeping her legal identity attached to her work and her

⁶² A. B. C. News, "Hillary and Bill: 'Immediate Attraction,'" *ABC News*, February 12, 2006, <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=123702&page=1>.

⁶³ "First Lady Biography: Hillary Clinton," *National First Ladies' Library*, accessed Feb. 29th, 2016, <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=43>

reputation as a defender separate from Bill's reputation that quickly grew increasingly political. Despite these wishes, however, as Bill ran for Governor in 1978, the people of Arkansas would develop a vocal public inquiry as to why the man who was running for Governor had a wife who didn't share his name. Though Bill won election in 1978, he lost the reelection in 1980, and would decide to run to take back his seat again two years later. As Bill ran in 1982 to reclaim his Governor's seat, Hillary finally made the decision—despite her feminist ideals and her wishes to associate her own name with her growing law career—to formally adopt the name of Clinton.

Though she went on from 1982 to be publically known as Hillary Rodham Clinton, and sometimes simply Hillary Clinton in her later years, Hillary's fight to retain her maiden name in pursuit of being her own woman and preserving her work reputation spoke to her strong ambition as a career woman. Hillary's life in the 70's, all the way through the early 90's was rife with countless prestigious jobs and appointments of her own right, pointing to her hard work, her success in many arenas, and her dedication to important causes.

In her comment during the last moments of the 60 Minutes interview, Clinton's rejection of herself being viewed as "some little woman" acted as a larger rejection of the expectation that all women should fit the popular housewife mold that she, for so many reasons, should not have been placed within. By reminding the audience of her widely-known past as an ambitious woman with many accomplishments of her own, Hillary set the stage for the public to see and trust her as a strong woman with ambitious character, regardless of the infidelity charges against her husband.

4.1.2 *Tammy Wynette*

In the act of evoking Tammy Wynette in her commentary, Hillary placed herself in opposition with not only the associations attached to Wynette's public image, but to the messages sent within her hit song released in 1968⁶⁴, "Stand by Your Man," as well. A simple song with few words and a slow tune, "Stand by Your Man" features several lines that speak to loyalty in marriage and undying forgiveness that wives should hold for husbands; while popular sentiments at the time, both in the country community and across the US, the messages ringing from several of the lines of Wynette's song offer Hillary reason to strategically dissociate herself from them as much as she was able.

First, Hillary defines herself by opposing the confusion and blind loyalty supported in Wynette's lyrics. One line featured towards the beginning of the song reads, "You'll have bad times, and he'll have good times/Doin' things that you don't understand/But if you love him, you'll forgive him/Even though he's hard to understand."⁶⁵ The lines describe a sense of confusion—a lack of ability on a wife's part to understand or make sense of a husband's actions. In dissociating herself from the message of this line, Clinton seeks to remove herself from the image of a confused woman who has lost the agency to see and recognize her husband's actions; instead, Clinton is more easily able to remind the American people of her persona as an intelligent woman who has proved her savvy over and over again in the arenas of law, politics, and more.

Further distancing herself from this set of lines, Clinton is able to reject the theme of blind loyalty as well. Though showing faith in spouses despite difficult times is often a positive

⁶⁴ "Stand By Your Man by Tammy Wynette Songfacts," accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=6668>.

⁶⁵ "Stand By Your Man (Dave Audé Club Remix) - Tammy Wynette," accessed March 1, 2016, https://play.google.com/music/preview/T3a4jusnbcohvskna4mlsxhggf4?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics.

trait, doing so blindly and without reason is not representative of the behavior that Hillary Clinton displays. In her commentary in from the interview, when she elaborates on why she was “sittin’ here,” supporting her husband through his extramarital scandal, Clinton cites her justification for supporting her husband as being due to the fact that she “love[s] him, respect[s] him, and honor[s] what he’s been through and what [they had] been through together.” With these words, Hillary provided clear and detailed explanation to the country for the reasons she had chosen to appear resolute and by Bill’s side. Regardless of what her reasons were or how strong and convincing they may or may not have been in the eyes of the public, her ability to articulate what she valued in her relationship with her husband and why she deemed those aspects worthy enough to continue supporting him displayed decisiveness and control, as opposed to the blind and unjustified loyalty advocated clearly in the lyrics.

In distancing herself from Wynette’s lyrics, Hillary Clinton was also able to reinforce the message that as a career-focused woman, she had bigger things to do than performing wifely duties. The message emphasizing the importance of a wife’s duty to support and care for her spouse can be identified in the following lines: “Stand by your man, give him two arms to cling to/And something warm to come to/When nights are cold and lonely.” The sentiment of supporting your spouse and performing emotional duties to pick the other up in trying times is again a positive one, supported by many. However, the act of placing attention only on a woman’s responsibility to wait at home to provide emotional support was not aligned with the Hillary that the Clintons needed the world to know, which was the Hillary who was loving and supportive, surely, but also powerful and capable in her own right—the Hillary who was coming home at the end of the day and needing just as much emotional support after hours of working to pursue goals and improve the community. By rejecting the lyrics that advocated waiting at home

for your spouse to return from work and cheering them up through the night, Hillary had more opportunity to again remind listeners that, while a supportive spouse, Hillary had her own priorities, her own weight to carry in their marriage, and should be viewed with equal importance to her husband, the man running to be America's democratic candidate.

Finally, distancing herself from Wynette's lyrics allowed Hillary to display her priorities that she considered far more pressing than playing the scorned wife caught in an infidelity scandal. The line, "Stand by your man, and show the world you love him," paints a picture of a woman most predominantly concerned with the public image of a secure and loving marriage; while it is sure that the Clintons were meticulous when caring for their image—particularly in the midst of a presidential campaign—Clinton demonstrated in her commentary that assuring the public of the stability of her marriage was by no means her first priority. Throughout the interview with Kroft, both Bill and Hillary repeatedly emphasized their distain for the lack of privacy they had been treated with, and the importance of respecting their right to keep their marriage out of the spotlight, just as any other American couple would ask for in a similar situation. In addition to their expressed distain, both cited in different moments the importance of moving past the scandal and onto more real, pressing issues that were directly related to measuring a candidate's ability to successfully run a country. If these two themes advocated by both Bill and Hillary throughout the interview weren't enough, though, Hillary drives her point home in the very last sentence of her commentary: After detailing that she loved and trusted Bill, Hillary concluded with, "And you know, if that's not enough for people, then heck, don't vote for him." Hillary demonstrating that she was willing to lose votes in order to maintain a certain level of privacy for her and Bill highlights her many priorities that she deemed far more

important than the public's perception of a perfect marriage, relating back to her strong sense of character.

4.1.3 Respect, Honor, and a Delicate Balance

While the first half of her interview commentary consists of Clinton placing herself in opposition to the typical homemaker stereotype, the second half shows her placing herself within equal relational importance to her husband. Hillary's statement that, "I'm sittin' here because I love him, and I respect him, and I honor what he's been through, and what we've been through together," is built primarily on assertions referring back to herself; Hillary remains the main focus of this commentary. As she speaks of herself, she does not refer to herself in relation to her husband, but instead, refers to the relationship that they share. By following "what he's been through" with "and what we've been through together," Hillary raises her importance by placing herself at equal level with Bill in the scope of their relationship. Additionally, by using powerful ideographs such as *respect* and *honor*, Hillary is able to make her statement more solemn, drawing on the tones of formality and severity present in both ideographs, thus raising the significance of her words. By elevating herself to be equally as important as the man campaigning to be President of the United States, Hillary encourages Americans to view her as driven and aware of her self worth. Clinton's strategy of weaving this dialogue of respect and honor, and elevating her own importance to be equal to her husband's, only continues to support the public image that Hillary Clinton possesses strong character.

As Hillary Clinton elevates her own status to that of Bill's, however, she walks a rhetorically sophisticated line between both negating, and simultaneously claiming, the status of a wifely figure. Much of Hillary's commentary rests on the thematic message that she does not

fit your idea of a typical housewife; rather, she is an independent career woman who can be trusted to exhibit strong character and forge her own path. However, in the act of emphasizing that she “*love[s]* him...*respect[s]* him...and honor[s] what he’s been through and what [they’ve] been through together,” Hillary shifts directions, and begins to pull herself closer to Bill, now emphasizing their marriage and the nature of their intertwined relationship. By putting the focus on how the two have acted together, sharing relationship experiences as a pair, Clinton begins to emphasize her role as a part of a whole—as an individual acting in relation to her husband. This crucial shift highlights Clinton’s attempts to simultaneously claim two conflicting grounds—both typical and atypical wife. In implying first that she should be admired for her strength as a career woman, negating the stereotypically gendered marriage roles, Clinton attempted to garner public trust for her strong character and her driven women’s rights initiatives. However, when painting herself as a loving and respecting wife, she attempted to simultaneously garner trust for performing stereotypically female roles, and exhibiting socially constructed gender authenticity. In employing these conflicting messages, Clinton claims two positions—each worthy of trust in their own way—and oscillates back and forth between the two as the national conversation shifts, using each public identity to build up trust as the context of the moment calls for.

Through one short yet impactful interview that was viewed by citizens around the country, Hillary Clinton drew on her strong character to build trust with the American public, in conjunction with her married status when it proved to be convenient. In being reminded of Clinton’s accomplishments—the causes she cared about and the work ethic she possessed—Clinton sought to construct the image of a figure whose motives were honorable, and whose personality possessed a great deal of depth. Comparatively, in strategically assuming her role as a supportive wife and performing expected female authenticity, Hillary also constructed the

image of a trustworthy female figure. Both Clinton's strong shows of career woman and loving wife-driven character contributed significantly to her strategy in building public trust.

4.2 Hillary's New Hampshire Tears

Of the moments throughout her public career when Hillary Clinton has showed herself to be trustworthy, shedding tears at a coffee shop on the eve of the 2008 New Hampshire primary sits high atop the list. Days after coming in third in the Iowa caucus, trailing Barack Obama and John Edwards, and hours after receiving new poll numbers that showed her trailing senator Obama in New Hampshire as well, Clinton spoke to an audience of 16 undecided, female voters inside of the Café Espresso in Portsmouth, NH. In the midst of a question and answer session, then 64-year-old Marianne Pernold raised her hand to ask what she later called a "chick question," saying that, "I admire her and I wanted to know her as a woman"⁶⁶; the following interaction transpired:

PERNOLD: As a woman, I know it's hard to get out of the house and to get ready. And my question is very personal: How do you do it? How do you...keep upbeat, and...and so wonderful?

CLINTON: Uh, you know...I think—

PERNOLD: Who does your hair?

(audience laughter)

CLINTON: Well luckily I do have, uh, on special days I do have help. If you see my every day and, if you, you know, look on some of the websites and listen to some of the commentators, they always find me on the day that I didn't have help. Um...It's not easy. It's not easy. Umm...and...and I couldn't do it if I just didn't, you know, *passionately believe* it was the right thing to do. *(long pause)* I...you know, I have so many opportunities from this country...I just don't want to see us fall backwards...you know? *(starts to tear up, shakes head in hand)*

(audience applauds)

CLINTON: So...

(audience applauds)

⁶⁶ "This One Moment Changed Hillary Clinton's '08 Campaign - CNNPolitics.com," *CNN*, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/20/politics/hillary-clinton-new-hampshire/index.html>.

CLINTON: ...And you know, this is *very* personal for me. It's not just political, it's not just public. I *see* what's happening. And we have to reverse it. And some people think elections are a game, they think it's like who's up or who's down...it's about our *country*, it's about our kids' futures....and it's really about all of us, together. You know some of us put ourselves out there and do this...against some pretty difficult odds...and we do it, each one of us, because we care about our country. But some of us are right and some of us are wrong. Some of us are ready and some of us are not. Some of us know what we will do on day one and some of us...haven't really thought that through enough. And so, when we look at the array of problems we have, and the potential for getting...really spinning out of control...this is one of the most important elections America has ever faced. So...as tired as I am—and I am—and as typical as it is to kind of keep up what I try to do on the road, like occasionally exercise, and...try to eat right, it's tough when the easiest food is pizza...I just *believe* so strongly in who we are as a nation. So I'm gonna do everything I can to make my case, and...you know then the voters get to decide. Thank you, all.

Though this exchange was immediately surrounded by a flurry of analysis—questions of whether or not Clinton's brief tears were fake, critiques that crying wouldn't get her to the White House—the vulnerability that Clinton displayed in this moment humanized her in a way that voters had not seen before, nor had they expected, opening the door for a perception of a softer, more personal Hillary Clinton.

4.2.1 Navigating Gender with Tact

Breaking down into tears during her coffee shop discussion helped Hillary Clinton to align with a stereotypically female behavior, reassuring the public of her traditional gender role, and inviting trust that many had been previously hesitant to give. In addition to performing typical gender authenticity with her show of tears, however, Clinton was also able to use rhetorically savvy strategies to craft an answer to Pernold's question that incorporated the tricky issue of gender. Pernold's question probed not just what was specific to Clinton, but rather, a question often asked by and of the working female demographic: *How do other women juggle it*

all? The deeper connotations of the question draw from the societal demands that are made of women to run a home, raise a family, succeed at work, and somehow still have time to take care of themselves and manage their personal image. By beginning her question with, “As a woman, I know it’s hard to get out of the house and get ready...” and ending with, “Who does your hair?” Pernold enabled Clinton to address the many plights of modern women by tapping into a question that was inherently gendered, and allowing Clinton to perform her gender authenticity to an even further extent.

The question “how do you manage to juggle it all-how do you keep it all together?” offers a unique rhetorical opportunity when asked of women. Though the expected response to this question may consist of tips or tricks for time management, many women over the course of past decades have used this question as a doorway into the realm of admitting that they don’t, in fact, have it all together, and that they truly can’t fulfill their social expectations to do it all. The act of a speaker “coming clean,” admitting that they are imperfect and that they struggle immensely to keep up with a societal expectation of juggling many personas is a powerful rhetorical move. Not only does this confession push back on those societal expectations, but it also shields the user from criticism, and creates communal bonds between the speaker and the audience.

First, the potential for falling into sexist language deters critics from commenting on female accounts of struggling to keep up with societal expectations. Though it is possible to make counterarguments to the claim that the bar of expectations is set too high for women, it is very difficult to do so tactfully. A majority of the time, any critique of women admitting that they’re unable to juggle all of the expected tasks at once comes across as unsympathetic to the double standard that women face; coming off as unsympathetic or unsupportive in the face of

this double standard often translates to sexist attitudes. For this reason, Clinton's tears likely gained her an increased amount of voter sympathy for her performance of gender authenticity, while simultaneously shielding her from gender-based criticism.

Next, Clinton identifies rhetorically with the female community through her confession of struggling against societal obstacles. In the purest form of identification, Clinton links her plight to those of ordinary women all across America. Though there are many aspects of Clinton's life that make her difficult to connect to—issues of class, lifestyle, and national recognition for a majority of her adult years—Clinton's moment of expressing to a largely female audience that she too struggles to always eat right, gets caught in the spotlight on her worst days, and often feels overwhelmed by the pressure of it all harkens back to similar feelings of inadequacy that women of all social status deal with on some level. By identifying rhetorically with the women in the coffee shop, and the women reading and watching the story in the news, on tangible, relatable levels, Clinton becomes less of a distant politician, and more of an understandable peer deserving of public support. Clinton's account went a long way in reminding women of common struggles that draw them together, calling for a sense of woman-to-woman community.

4.2.2 Making the Moment Authentic to Hillary

In addition to the rhetorical power of her heartfelt moment, Clinton's answer to the emotional question proves to be unique to her experience and her character in a number of ways, serving to paint her as a trustworthy figure. Most notable about seeing Hillary Clinton well up not only in public, but on camera and in front of voters, was certainly the unexpected rarity of the act. Friends of Clinton who accompanied her to the event commented to *The New York Times*

afterwards that they were “struck by the moment; one said she had only seen Mrs. Clinton tear up like this once in decades, and it happened in private.”⁶⁷ Not only are emotional displays unusual for Clinton, but they are also not typically reflective of her character. In the past, when pressed with awkward or difficult questions, Clinton has been known to respond with quips or snide remarks, instead of showing any signs of vulnerability. Countless examples of Clinton’s snarky moments in public reinforce the fact that emotional responses are highly atypical for Clinton, which ultimately lead this moment to work in her favor. The more rare and unusual the emotional display was to Clinton’s character, the more likely that it was not planned nor acted out, but that it was a genuine moment of emotional display that she was unable to control; that very relatable, very human loss of control sparked an invitation for voters to view Clinton as authentic and trustworthy. After running an entire campaign designed to emphasize Clinton’s strength and resilience, seeing the woman who was painted to be so strong tear up publically was a reminder to voters that Clinton was as human as anyone else, in both the race and in the voting booths.

Clinton’s ability to connect her tales of past vulnerability was enhanced by the details of her story that were unique to her experience. While answering a question that has been posed to countless women over the years worked to Clinton’s benefit in helping her to appear trustworthy, incorporating details that spoke to her specific experience helped her to be genuine and authentic. Poignantly, she mentions getting caught by reporters. Clinton shares that, “If you see me every day and, if you, you know, look on some of the websites and listen to some of the commentators, they always find me on the day that I didn’t have help;” here, Clinton references the stress that being in the media spotlight causes, and how having her life constantly open to the

⁶⁷ Patrick Healy, “Clinton Tears Up; Talks About Campaign Strains,” *The Caucus*, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/07/clinton-tears-up-talks-about-campaign-strains/>.

American public—a cause of stress that existed for her even before the launch of her presidential campaign—is a unique obstacle to which she must consistently adapt. She mentions as well the challenges presented by the campaign trail, in adding that, “as typical as it is to kind of keep up what I try to do on the road, like occasionally exercise, and...try to eat right, it’s tough when the easiest food is pizza;” these details draw sympathy for Clinton as she goes through most of her campaign never showing the struggles, never asking for sympathy, until this unexpected moment that is believably unique to her.

Even beyond the surface-level details though that mark Clinton’s campaign accounts as unique, are the deeper references within her speech that come off as authentic. Roughly halfway through her speech, Clinton moves from talking about her life on a micro level, to discussing her role in the campaign in a larger sense. In saying that, “this is *very* personal for me...it’s about our *country*, it’s about our kids’ futures,” Clinton subtly—whether intentionally or not—draws an allusion to her work many years earlier for the Children’s Defense Fund. From her time as First Lady in the White House, Clinton’s tenacious desire to throw herself into health care policy for children and families was widely known and heavily commented on in the news. With her history as a children’s advocate following her Yale Law years, and later following her to the White House, Clinton has the credibility to be able to reference children and families’ issues, and have those references stand slightly stronger than they would for other candidates.

As her response continues on, Clinton ties in references to political experience that proves unique to her experience as well. Though Barack Obama was many things during his campaign that Clinton was not able to be—young, hip, and able to provide a fresh take on politics that the country was eager to see—Clinton lead senator Obama by a landslide in years of experience and know-how. As she continued on through her response, Clinton fell into a rhythm

of comparing herself abstractly to her challengers in strategic “us” and “them” terms: “Some of us are ready and some of us are not. Some of us know what we will do on day one and some of us...haven’t really thought that through enough.” Within this comparison of experience and readiness to hold office, Clinton reminded the audience of her experience that she brought to the table, and emphasized the work that she still managed to do very well, despite the exhaustive toll that being on the campaign trail consistently took. By incorporating this slew of personal details into her response, Clinton’s account was easy to be received as genuine and spoken candidly from the heart, rather than a vaguely sweeping appeal that risked sounding forced and inauthentic. The elements that made Clinton’s response her own helped her to be perceived as honest and trustworthy.

4.2.3 Political Appeals Bolstering Trust in Clinton

In her response, Clinton displayed crucial vulnerability as she shifted from speaking about her personal struggles, to relating back to them politically. For a woman known for her efforts to stay in charge and in control of what’s happening around her, derailing from her political script to welling up emotionally is a surprising turn to make at a public event. After minutes of speaking personally, Clinton managed to segue smoothly back to a realm where she could discuss politics, but still in a personal way. In this shift, however, Clinton displayed vulnerability; speaking personally—and especially through a tear or two—has backfired on several candidates in the past, the most widely-known being the 1972 Governor of Maine, Ed Muskie.⁶⁸ Historically speaking, venturing into the realm of emotional displays is highly risky for politicians, compared to the much safer strategy of speaking purely in terms of platform.

⁶⁸ “Edmund Muskie’s New Hampshire ‘Cry’—1972.” *The Washington Post*, 1998.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/special/clinton/frenzy/muskie.htm>

Ultimately, though, by revealing her conscious shift in the middle of her speech back to political subject matter where she was most comfortable, Clinton revealed her vulnerability to the American voters. By showing that she, too, was nervous about remaining vulnerable and allowing herself to speak freely about personal struggles, she showed an authentic human side that was trustworthy and believable. Additionally, through this vulnerability, Clinton opened doors for Americans to identify with her fear and her hesitancy on a human level, as something everyone has experienced. Despite the criticisms that condemned Clinton for cutting her personal moment short and reverting back to political references when she had the chance, like a typical politician would, the fear and the vulnerability that the shift represented worked well for her in the end.

Within her political commentary, Clinton preemptively condemned the horserace mentality of campaigning through a strategic rhetorical structure. Halfway through her speech, Clinton stated somberly that, “This is *very* personal for me. It’s not just political, it’s not just public. I *see* what’s happening. And we have to reverse it. And some people think elections are a game, they think it’s like who’s up or who’s down . . . it’s about our *country*;” in making this statement, Clinton prevented critics from accusing her of doing just that in the moment—playing the political game. By coming out and saying that politics should be about our country and our children, rather than the fame and the hype of the race, Clinton robs any skeptic of the chance to claim that she was feeding into playing the game by trying to fake her tears. This preemptive strike helped Clinton to sound more genuine and protect herself from impending criticism.

Finally, Clinton gave her response in a soft tone of voice, going against strategic political norms, but gaining points for authenticity. Mayew, Parsons, and Venkatachalam, in their study of the pitch of male voices, discuss the importance of people vying for leadership positions to speak

with a deep and low pitch for a better chance at being perceived as fit to lead.⁶⁹ This and other studies have shown that the deeper and lower the pitch of one's voice, the more competent they seem (and thus, the more well-suited for leadership). Though Clinton exhibited a typically low and steady pitch of voice throughout her campaign, her pitch rose higher and her voice fell softer as she let her guard down amongst strangers in the coffee shop. Both her high pitch and her soft volume—characteristics of female voice patterns—correlate to less success in being perceived as a strong or competent leader. In the act of sacrificing a strong, presidential voice in the moment for a softer, more personal tone that showed weakness, Clinton illustrated high levels of authenticity, being real and trustworthy with her immediate audience, as well as the American public tuning in outside of Café Espresso.

Hillary Clinton's moment of weakness, forming tears in the face of a personal question and an undecided audience, proved to reveal higher levels of trustworthiness to voters that had not yet been seen from her during the campaign. While parts of her speech helped Clinton to appear trustworthy as she fed into the deeply-rooted social gender binaries, other aspects of her speech were bolstered and protected by strong identification and strategic rhetorical moves.

4.3 Hillary Clinton, Answering the 3am Call

During the 2008 Democratic primary race, one ad stuck out among many others that shaped the way Hillary Clinton assured the American public that she could be trusted. As the primary races were nearing their end, Hillary's "3am Phone Call" ad aired ahead of the March 4th election in Texas,⁷⁰ where voters were still on the fence. The 30-second spot begins with a shot

⁶⁹ William J. Mayew, Christopher A. Parsons, Mohan Venkatachalam, "Voice pitch and the labor market success of male chief executive officers." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 34.4 (July 2013): 243-248.

⁷⁰ Mark Benjamin, "It's 3a.m. Who do you want answering the phone?" *Salon*, March 6, 2008, http://www.salon.com/2008/03/06/commander_in_chief_2/.

of a suburban home at night, painted white and surrounded with bushes while the camera zooms in, music begins to play, and we hear the sound of a phone start to ring; the narrator begins to speak, and the camera switches to an image of a small blonde girl, sleeping innocently in a child's room. As the narration continues, the camera continues to show children in different homes, from different families, all sleeping peacefully as the music gently builds, and the following narration continues:

It's 3am and your children are safe and asleep. But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing. Something's happening in the world. Your vote will decide who answers that call: Whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military, someone tested and ready to lead in a dangerous world. It's 3am, and your children are safe and asleep. Who do you want answering the phone?

****Music plays****

I'm Hillary Clinton, and I approve this message

As the ad enters into the last ten seconds of footage, the camera shifts from images of children in bed, to a parent opening the door to check on their sleeping children. After four seconds of the parent checking on their children through the door, the ad settles on the final image of Hillary Clinton answering a phone in her office: The camera shows the close-up features of her face with a telephone next to her ear, her campaign logo in the lower, left-hand corner, and the text, "VOTE March 4th Attend Your Precinct Convention at 6:45pm on March 4th" in the bottom center-right of the screen. The rhetorical construction of the ad draws heavily on trust throughout to emphasize the confidence that voters are encouraged to find within her vast political experience.

4.3.1 Safety in Experience

Many strategically phrased narrations within this ad serve to remind the viewer of the superior record of experience that Hillary Clinton possessed. First, Hillary's diplomatic experience as First Lady is emphasized through language insinuating global importance. The lines "something's happening in the world," along with "Whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military..." both reinforce the importance of foreign involvement in a future president who will be answering a late night phone call. These lines emphasize Clinton's diplomatic experience as First Lady, when she travelled to foreign countries on presidential business, met with foreign leaders at dinners and events in the white house, and absorbed much of the knowledge of foreign interaction by simply being in the White House with the man who dealt with foreign policy for a span of eight years. These lines serve to remind viewers of this experience, and reinforce the belief that those eight years of exposure and proximity to foreign relations, compared to competing Senator Barack Obama's three years in the US senate, made Hillary Clinton a stronger candidate to trust in the midst of global turbulence.

Hillary's resilience is highlighted as well in language that references overcoming difficult obstacles. The line "someone tested and ready to lead," references the past struggles of Hillary Clinton, many of which were publically drawn-out and broadcast for the country and the world to see. Whether it be Hillary and Bill's struggle with the Whitewater case, for which they were publically investigated; the infamous Monica Lewinsky scandal that tested Hillary's marriage, as well as her ability to overcome intensely personal public scrutiny; additional allegations of Bill Clinton's infidelity that came from other women both before and during Bill's presidency,

including Gennifer Flowers, Myra Belle Miller, Paula Jones,⁷¹ and others; or Hillary and Bill's ability to out-weather multiple exhausting campaigns for public office—there was no doubt that out of the two candidates competing for the Democratic nomination, Hillary Clinton had indeed proved her ability to persevere through excruciating public obstacles, and remain focused on her path onwards. In reminding the public that Hillary had been tested by many trying experiences, and remained on track despite them all, viewers were encouraged to trust the woman who was tough and not easily defeated.

Finally, Hillary's experience dealing with one of the largest American crises to date is referenced in language alluding to sudden danger. The spot begins with an image of a quiet house, and a calming line, "It's 3am and your children are safe and asleep." Immediately following this induced sense of calm, however, is the addition, "But there's a phone in the White House and it's ringing. Something's happening in the world." A peaceful scenario is suddenly disturbed with the concern that something is going on in the nation's capitol effectively invites a sense of worry, before the viewer even knows what to worry about. The fact that this unknown threat is occurring in the middle of the night implies sudden danger. Meanwhile, the sharp rhythm created by *simple sentence, period, simple sentence, period, simple sentence, period*, builds an abrupt tone that serves to draw the viewer even further into anxious concern. These affective factors work together in the ad to call upon the association that voters have of crises—some of the most sudden and dangerous moments that our country will face. The last major American crisis that the country faced was the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. Clinton had barely begun her time as a senator for the state of New York when the attacks shook the city, devastating New York and the rest of the country for months to come. The language that is

⁷¹ Glenn Kessler, "A Guide to the Allegations of Bill Clinton's Womanizing," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/12/30/a-guide-to-the-allegations-of-bill-clintons-womanizing/>.

reminiscent of crisis in this ad reminds viewers—whether directly or indirectly—that while her competitor, Barack Obama, was working with home politics in the state of Illinois, Clinton was picking up the pieces of a national tragedy on a much larger scale, getting first-hand experience of the pain and the fear and the urgency that comes with leading a country through a time of real danger. Drawing on her experience of dealing with national crises, Hillary Clinton built trust into her experienced reputation by reminding voters that they should feel safest in her hands.

4.3.2 Targeting Obama

While many interwoven aspects of the 3am phone call ad build the trust that Clinton aimed to achieve with voters, the spot had a more specific purpose to achieve: to attack Senator Barack Obama. As the democratic primary race was neck and neck, and Clinton had just suffered a tough loss to Senator Obama in Iowa, Clinton desperately needed an advantage to edge Obama out of his rapidly growing popularity. This ad served as a specific reminder to voters that, as hip and viral of a candidate as Obama may have been, Hillary Clinton was the candidate who would bring more stability and experience to the role of watching over the country. Not only did Clinton need to highlight her experience to offset Obama's trending support with young people, but she also needed to offset her disparity in gender. As a male candidate, Barack Obama stepped into the race with an attractive political profile and an infectious message of hope and change; Senator Obama gained traction rapidly, despite countless obstacles tied to being relatively unknown at first, alongside his background and ethnicity. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton was battling different obstacles, ranging from rampant media sexism, to the public questioning whether they trusted a female with one of the most powerful positions in the world. Though

Senator Obama certainly had his own obstacles to deal with, the issues of gender disparity were not among his list.

Clinton fought fiercely throughout her campaign to strike a balance between strong enough to be seen as a competent leader, yet soft enough to be likeable and relatable to the voting public. Though not being likable enough is ultimately cited as a major part of her downfall in the 2008 primaries, before she had to be concerned with softening her image, Clinton first had to be concerned with hardening it. After spending a majority of her public life being known as the wife of a governor, and then as the First Lady of the United States, Clinton had to take great steps to rebrand herself as her own politician with agency. Though there was no doubt that Hillary Clinton had been known by the public as a head-strong career woman from the beginning, doing the extra image work to sell herself as strong and competent enough to “run with the boys” was a challenge in itself. As the primaries raged on, and Hillary was compared again and again to her male counterparts, and then subsequently undermined again and again by the sexist tones in the media, gender associations and the hard-yet-soft balance that she continuously strove to reach became underlying mountains that she was quickly failing to overcome. To increase her support and assure voters that she was indeed a candidate just as viable as her male counterpart, she had to shift the focus of the conversations in the news from underlying gender disparities that she could not win, to the non-gendered arsenal of national experience that she could win. In the act of creating a space where she would not be questioned by underlying gender comparisons, but instead would shine in her superior record of political experience, Hillary was forced to build trust in a rhetorical space where gender would not work actively against her.

In her effort to refocus the national conversations on experience, the power of the gender disparity between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama was confirmed. Proving in a qualitative manner that issues stemming from gender disparities between Clinton and Obama—contested issues such as strength, toughness, likability—caused serious damage to Clinton’s chances in the race is a difficult task, dependent on several countless variables. However, examining the choices that Clinton’s campaign made in how to spend time and money to frame her most strategically to the public is telling of which factors were most cumbersome for Clinton to overcome. Producing an ad in which the subject matter fought to emphasize her experience allowed Clinton to make an offensive choice, reminding the public of her positive attributes, rather than attempting to beat back accusations of not meeting the country’s presidential standards in a defensive manner and continuing to feed into the gender-related conversations. In the Clinton campaign’s choice to highlight non-gendered strengths in their ad, they revealed the exact struggle that Hillary as a candidate was facing: constantly losing the battles fought over gendered conversations. However, in the process, the Clinton campaign proved to highlight just how significant of a factor the gender disparities played in candidate success. In their attempt to not make the final legs of the race about gender, they inherently revealed the weight that the gendered issues carried. Thus, to effectively craft a sense of trust with the voting public, Hillary turned to her record of experience to build the foundation as a trustworthy candidate.

4.3.3 Appeals to Male Authority

While the thrust of Clinton’s “3am Phone Call” ad aimed to foster trust in her experienced political record, the ad also draws additional support from instances of male authority. Clinton’s ad is reminiscent of a similar ad created by Walter Mondale’s presidential

campaign in 1984. Mondale's entire 30-second ad consists of a camera slowly revolving around a red telephone, as a narrator reads the following dialogue in a deep, steady voice:

The most awesome, powerful, responsibility in the world lies in the hand that picks up this phone; the idea of an unsure, unsteady, untested hand is something to really think about. This is the issue of our times. On March 20th, vote as if the future of the world is at stake. Mondale: This president will know what he's doing, and that's the difference between Gary Hart, and Walter Mondale.

Clinton's ad most glaringly draws from Mondale's earlier version in the warning that the candidate who voters elect will be on the other side of a very important phone, answering a critically important call when the country is most vulnerable. Alongside warning voters that the tested experience and the steady know-how of a candidate will be highly-preferable to a candidate who doesn't know what they're doing, the two ads also share an emphasis on national security and global concerns. Though Mondale's ad never mentions global affairs directly, the red, blinking phone serves as a reference to the cold war, symbolizing the "emergency hotline," or communication line between the US and the then-Soviet Union, as Americans in that time period feared the impending threat of nuclear war.⁷² In addition to the symbol of the phone and the national security emphasis, Clinton's ad replicates the narration of that in Mondale's—a deep, steady male voice keeping with similar pitch and pace as the images play on the screen. This list of similarities between Mondale and Clinton's ads enabled voters who were old enough to remember Mondale's campaign when it aired, to recognize the parallel when it played years later, this time advocating for Hillary Clinton. In replicating an ad made by the former United States Vice President to Jimmy Carter, Clinton draws on the reputation and the authority of a

⁷² "There Never Was Such a Thing as a Red Phone in the White House," *Smithsonian*, accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/there-never-was-such-a-thing-as-a-red-phone-in-the-white-house-1129598/>.

widely-liked president, and his acting vice president. Though Clinton's ad did not require voters to have an awareness of Mondale's for the ad to be powerful and persuasive in the year 2008, for those who did recognize the parallel, the feelings, associations, and priorities that they carried at the time of viewing Mondale's ad naturally transferred to Clinton's similarly-staged message years later, increasing the significance of the experience for many viewers. Drawing on the reputation of Walter Mondale and Jimmy Carter in her message contributed to the brand of trust that a certain population of voters would build with Clinton as a candidate while watching her ad.

Clinton also draws on the authority of her husband, Bill Clinton, within the narration of her message. The lines, "Whether it's someone who already knows the world's leaders, knows the military," send the message to viewers that Hillary Clinton is an experienced candidate, for certain. However, the specific experience that is being drawn on within this sentiment is worth noting. Though Hillary did have seven years of senate experience under her belt at the time this ad aired in 2008, the concept of knowing the world's leaders makes reference to a slightly higher position than just a New York senator, that would give one fuller access to the very highest leaders of the world: The President of the United States. In residing in the White House for eight years, living and working alongside the President, and acting as a diplomat herself, Hillary Clinton drew on her White House experience to give herself credibility in a global landscape. In doing so, she simultaneously drew upon the authority of the man who was once the most powerful man in the country, her husband, Bill Clinton. As viewers absorb the spot, it is nearly impossible to form a relationship of trust with Hillary as a candidate without also factoring in the credibility of the name that her husband brings.

In addition to drawing on two powerful males for authority and recognition, Clinton downplays her own femininity in the spot to strengthen her image. Clinton doesn't appear in the ad until the last 10 seconds, when she is heard saying, "I'm Hillary Clinton, and I approve this message," as a still image of her appears on the screen. The image (figure 2)⁷³ consists only of a close crop of her upper body. In the frame, she wears a dark tan suit and undershirt, a gold chain, red lipstick, and glasses with black frames, as she holds a telephone to her ear in one hand, intently gazing down to somewhere off the screen. The crop is so closely zoomed-in on her face and shoulders, in fact, that the entirety of her head is not even pictured in the frame. The strategic framing of this still photograph serves to downplay Hillary's femininity, in order to make her image appear to be strong and in command. The very center of the frame focuses on Hillary's shoulder—a part of the body commonly associated with strength and masculinity, while the tan color of her suit evokes an image of someone prioritizing the need to be professional and reserved, rather than fashionable. Though she is pictured wearing lipstick and a gold chain for a necklace, both the lipstick and the necklace are plain and simple, doing little to create a feminine aura. The most striking aspect of her downplayed femininity is evident through the fact that Hillary's hair is barely pictured within the frame; the top of the frame cuts off in the middle of her forehead, above her eyes. This leaves the viewer to assume that her hair is pinned and up, in a way that would have needed to be styled specifically for that purpose, given that her longer hair would have otherwise naturally shown behind her ears. With Hillary represented primarily by a protruding shoulder, no falling hair, muted colors, and minimalist makeup and jewelry, all while wearing a serious facial expression, the image of a strong and masculine leader seeps easily through. The masculine tone within the ad works to further shape trust in Hillary as an

⁷³ Endedrural, "Hillary Clinton 3 AM Campaign Ad," *YouTube*, accessed April 20, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ_z9TpdI9A

experienced figure, unmarred by feminine qualities that could be potentially interpreted as weakness.



Figure 4.3: Hillary's Attempts at Diminished Feminism

Clinton's campaign went to great lengths to emphasize experience and downplay femininity in Hillary's 3am Phone Call ad in several ways. By highlighting her experience through allusions to her previous accomplishments, drawing on the authority of other reputable male figures, and downplaying her own femininity, the campaign was able to focus the ad on the topic of experience, removing gender almost completely from the conversation. In doing so, however, the ad reveals just how deeply entrenched the gender disparity was within the primary race, that Clinton's campaign needed to shift ads to focus away from gender-stemming topics in order to evoke great power. Through this series of strategic choices, Clinton continued to build

and shape trust between herself and the voters through topics that were neutral to gender, allowing trust to come more from campaign-controlled messages, and less from the images painted and hotly contested in the media.

4.4 Grandmother Clinton Goes Social

When grandbaby Clinton made her way into the world, Hillary began using her new status as grandmother to draw trust from the country. Since the birth of Charlotte Clinton Mezvinsky on September 27th, 2015, instead of shying away from the fact that she is now both a presidential candidate and a grandmother—a combination that many predicted to be problematic for Clinton—Hillary has embraced her new role in yet another boundary that she is boldly crossing. The birth of granddaughter Charlotte presented an opportunity for Clinton to rebrand herself. The fact that Hillary Clinton has not only acknowledged the new role, but has fully integrated it as a part of her identity, is perhaps most evident in her online social platforms.

4.4.1 Weaving Issues into Identity

With an active presence on Twitter, Clinton was quick to adopt the label of grandmother and connect it to her public identity that is already heavily interwoven with women's issues. In the “Bio” section on one's Twitter profile, in which a user can describe themselves to the public, Hillary Clinton's digital biography reads:

Wife, mom, grandma, women+kids advocate, FLOTUS, Senator, SecState, hair icon, pantsuit aficionado, 2016 presidential candidate. Tweets from Hillary signed -H

When dissected, seven of the ten attributes listed in this biography to describe Clinton can be directly linked to women's issues, including: Wife, mom, grandma, women+kids advocate, FLOTUS, hair icon, and pantsuit aficionado. Brimming with gendered connotations, each term in this bio acts as an equally powerful ideograph; each ideograph carries meaning charged with implications of historical matriarchal roles, socially-constructed gender expectations, and implications of power positions available to the women who claim these descriptors as their own. The cultural influence present in these carefully chosen ideographs creates a strong and rhetorically complex meaning intended to be drawn by online followers.

By defining herself as a wife, a mother, and now, a grandmother, Clinton is inviting the country to see her as a matriarch figure traditionally believed to bring strength and stability to families. America has known Hillary Clinton for 36 years as a mother and 41 years as a wife;⁷⁴ through the passing of time, those roles continue to reinforce themselves and cement into existing public perception. However, the new label of grandmother allows for resurgence and recreation of Hillary's matriarchal brand. Entering into a familiar yet new role of "caring guardian" serves as an opportunity for Clinton to remind the public of her motherly status, as well as her ability to oversee and protect—her instincts to solve and to nurture. Not only is she able to reemphasize her role in building families in a traditional, maternal sense, but to simultaneously reinvent what it means to be a grandmother in the act of care-giving—to add nuance to the task of protecting America's children. By drawing on yet another title that reminds the country of Hillary's maternal status, she taps into the symbolic ties of motherhood and loving guardianship that help the public to trust in her as a protective figure.

⁷⁴ "Hillary Clinton Biographical Timeline.," *Hillary Clinton Quarterly*, January 22, 2010, <http://www.hillaryclintonquarterly.com/hillary-clinton-biographical-timeline/>.

The inclusion of Hillary Clinton's defining political roles alongside her motherly content help to ingrain women's issues as part of Clinton's political identity. The combination of descriptors in Clinton's bio include those that appeal to maternal symbolism (wife, mom, grandma), those that display her political achievements (Senator, SecState, 2016 presidential candidate), and those that allude to women's issues as part of her character (women+kids advocate, FLOTUS, hair icon, pantsuit aficionado). Rhetorically, each category holds a different significance. The descriptors that display maternal symbolism define Clinton's biological and familial roles that she holds within her life on a private level; her political roles tell readers what she has achieved in the capacity of her career—what work she has performed for the government on a state level; finally, the descriptors that allude to her personality and her character tell readers what she believes as a human actor—which beliefs and values guide her on an individual level.

In placing this collection of ten rich, ideographic terms next to one another in a bio section with three differing levels of rhetorical implications, the implications of each term begin to intermingle with one another, seeping and absorbing into neighboring terms until the bio as a whole has achieved an overall significance—an overall identity. As powerful ideographs such as “mother,” “grandmother,” “women+kids advocate,” “Senator,” “SecState,” “hair icon” all meld into each other, stringing one after the other, the differing symbolisms of maternal figure, political authority, and women's issues supporter become further rhetorically associated with one another, as they all collectively refer back to the subject, Hillary Clinton. Choosing descriptors of differing significance to work in tandem with each other and create a unified, overarching identity for a subject not only creates an image of a complex subject, but implies that the differing levels of description go hand-in-hand—that a woman who *is* a wife and a mother and a grandmother, and *has* served as the FLOTUS, a US Senator, the Secretary of State, and a 2016

presidential candidate *should* believe in being a women+kids advocate, and balancing femininity, strategy, and power through being a hair icon and a pantsuit aficionado. By associating terms with differing rhetorical significance as a collective text, Clinton's campaign works to imply that advocating for women's issues is just as firmly and naturally a part of Clinton as her new biological role as Grandmother Hillary.

4.4.2 Relatable Family Figure

Using narrative as a rhetorical frame, Clinton draws on the power of social platforms to tell her story, and position herself as a relatable family figure. With the capabilities that social media holds to elevate individual and collective experiences through words, images, video, and sound, and to unite communities through shared content, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more increasingly allow for the art of digital storytelling to unfold. Jennifer Stromer-Galley, in her work on the use of digital communication technologies (DCTs) in presidential campaigning, writes that, in 2008, "[Clinton's] campaign used DCTs to round out Clinton's cold, wonkish image with warmth and playfulness."⁷⁵ Now, in 2016, Clinton's campaign returns to the strategy of eliciting that same warmth and playfulness from social platforms, drawing even more heavily this time around on the ability to identify with her voting publics by weaving herself into the center of many online stories. On December 21st, 2015, Clinton's campaign published an article titled, "7 things Hillary Clinton has in common with your abuela." The article features the following text:

⁷⁵ Jennifer Stromer-Galley, *Presidential Campaigning in the Internet Age* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 121.

It's no secret that Hillary is loving her role as grandma. And she was thrilled to learn that next summer, her granddaughter Charlotte will have a sibling to play with. She's always happy to talk about her "beautiful, perfect" granddaughter, she's an eager volunteer for babysitting duty, and whenever she travels around the country, she makes sure to bring back a gift for Charlotte—sound familiar? Here are seven more ways Hillary is just like your grandmother.⁷⁶

From this point on, the article proceeds to list seven similarities between Clinton and the typical Hispanic grandmother figure, the *abuela*, alongside coordinating photos and graphic images. The seven similarities listed are that, "She worries about children everywhere...", "She knows what's best...", "She reacts this way when people le faltan el respeto ...," "She reads to you before bedtime...", "She isn't afraid to talk about the importance of el respeto (especially when it comes to women) ...," "She likes to highlight accomplishments...", "and she had one word for Donald Trump ..." (underneath which is a graphic image of Hillary saying, '¡Basta! Enough!'). Finishing up the article is the line, "Everybody loves *abuela*—even this guy," followed by a picture of Hillary with a man who is presumed to be a popular Hispanic musician at a concert, though the photo is not captioned.

Through this short and accessible article accompanied by bright colors and graphic images, Clinton's campaign tried to relate Hillary's new grandmotherly role to that of the traditional Hispanic *abuela*, telling miniature narratives with emotional and cultural significance to draw members of her target audience in. In telling these miniature narratives, Clinton's campaign attempted to convince Hispanic voters why they should feel more closely connected to Clinton as a candidate—why they should think of her like they would think of their own family. This article was released during the months gearing up to the primaries, as Marco Rubio and Ted

⁷⁶ "7 Things Hillary Clinton Has in Common with Your Abuela," accessed March 9, 2016, <https://www.hillaryclinton.com/feed/8-ways-hillary-clinton-just-your-abuela/>.

Cruz were also threatening to have a strong potential hold on the voting Hispanic population. Unfortunately for Clinton, this article was one failed narrative that voters were not buying. The same day that the article was published, a wave of criticism broke out from Hispanic and non-Hispanic voters alike, accusing Clinton's campaign of blatant Hispanic pandering, to the point of condescension. The following is only a spattering of the outrage that erupted across Twitter following the publishing of the article:

One of my abuelas, from Utuado, worked washing the dishes and picking coffee since she was 11 years old. Hillary is #NotMyAbuela⁷⁷

#NotMyAbuela because she didn't have to live in poverty with 14 kids and suffer because over half were separated over a border⁷⁸

Mi abuela was a woman of color, spoke only spanish, and faced racism&sexism. @HillaryClinton is #NotMyAbuela and needs to stop hispandering⁷⁹

Latinos aren't one size fits all. It takes more than a few Spanish words & cute pictures to get the Latino vote. #hillaryabuela#NotMyAbuela⁸⁰

My abuelas were strong women & how dare you try to emulate a strength & struggle you will never understand #NotMyAbuela⁸¹

Though the lack of tact in the article's execution showed a short-sightedness in potential social implications, an absence of cultural understanding, and an overall desperation to identify rhetorically with the Hispanic community despite looming ramifications, the attempt to remain relatable through miniature narratives of shared experience in the article reveals the Clinton

⁷⁷ Katie Rogers, "Hillary Clinton Is 'Not My Abuela,' Critics Say," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/24/us/politics/hillary-clinton-is-not-my-abuela-critics-say.html>.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Katie Rogers

⁷⁹ "#NotMyAbuela: Twitter Users Mock Clinton Post Aimed at Hispanic Voters," USA TODAY, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2015/12/22/notmyabuela-twitter-users-mock-clinton-effort-reach-hispanic-voters/77787146/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid., #NotMyAbuela

⁸¹ Ibid., #NotMyAbuela

campaign's preferred mode of building trust within particular voting demographics. Though the blatant pandering ultimately backfired on Clinton's campaign, creating an open door for incoming criticisms from the Hispanic community, the decision to invest in associating grandmother Clinton with Hispanic abuelas demonstrates the potential—had the campaign's attempt been successful—that existed to build trust through public recognition of a beloved, familial archetype. In addition, the incredible volume to which these criticisms were shared in the immediate wake of the article's appearance speaks to the immense power that storytelling holds within social platforms.

In her 2016 presidential campaign announcement video, Clinton drew similarly on narrative through online content to frame herself as a relatable family figure. Months before the abuela article was released, Hillary's campaign demonstrated their already heavy reliance on digital storytelling through her campaign announcement; Clinton's announcement came in the form of a video, rather than a public rally or a televised speech. On Sunday, April 12th, 2015, the video was released in a media-style blitz through various online channels, quickly spreading the message that Hillary was finally once again throwing her hat in the presidential ring. Throughout the two minute and 15 second video, American citizens of all ages and races tell the camera what big life changes they're preparing for, before Hillary appears on screen to declare her candidacy, and her desire to champion those life changes for all American people; as the video progresses, upbeat music grows steadily stronger in the background. The transcript of the video below reads:

FEMALE 1: I'm getting ready for a lot of things. A lot of things.

FEMALE 2: It's spring, so we're starting to get the gardens ready, and my tomatoes are legendary here in my own neighborhood.

FEMALE 1: My daughter is about to start kindergarten next year...and so we're moving, just so she can belong to a better school.

MALE 1 (Speaking Spanish with English subtitles): My brother and I are starting our first business.

FEMALE 3: After five years of raising my children, I am now going back to work.

FEMALE 4: Every day, we're trying to get more and more ready and more prepared.

MALE 2 (holding FEMALE 4's stomach): A baby boy coming your way.

FEMALE 5: Right now, I'm applying for jobs. It's a look into...what the real world will look like after college.

MALE 3: I'm getting married this summer to someone I really care about (reaches to hold the hand of a nearby male).

CHILD: I'm going to be in a play and I'm going to be in a fish costume. We're little tiny fiiiishessss.

FEMALE 6: I'm getting ready to retire soon. Retirement means reinventing yourself in many ways.

FEMALE 7: Well, we've been doing a lot of home renovations.

MALE 4 (sitting next to FEMALE 7): But most importantly, we really just want to teach our dog to quit eating the trash.

FEMALE 7: And so we have high hopes for 2015, that that's going to happen.

MALE 5: I've started a new career recently. This is a fifth-generation company, which means a lot to me. This country was founded on hard work, and it really feels good to be a part of that.

HILLARY CLINTON: I'm getting ready to do something, too. I'm running for president. Americans have fought their way back from tough economic times, but the deck is still stacked in favor of those at the top.

Everyday Americans need a champion, and I want to be that champion. So you can do more than just get by—you can get ahead, and stay ahead. Because when families are strong, America is strong. So I'm hitting the road to earn your vote, because it's your time. And I hope you'll join me on this journey.⁸²

Amidst this collection of American concerns, what stands out more prominently than Clinton's announcement to run for President is how many populations she is striving to identify with in the meantime. Among the host of issues mentioned in the announcement—finding work, returning to work, retiring from work, taking care of children, taking care of loved ones—there are very few potential viewers who would not be able to relate to a single concept presented. With America's youth in young children and millennials, to senior citizens, to everyone in-between represented

⁸² ABC News, *Hillary Clinton's 2016 Presidential Campaign Announcement (OFFICIAL)*, accessed March 23, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N708P-A45D0>.

in the video, alongside actors of various races and sexual orientations, Clinton aims to be relatable in her campaign announcement through diverse representation.

To increase her relatability to the majority of Americans, the story presented in Clinton's video focuses mainly on middle class issues. Grand displays of wealth are absent from the video, as the majority of actors portray the struggles they're preparing to overcome, and the solutions they're hoping they'll find. The themes of the actors within the video finding ways to support themselves, expressing hope for the future despite the obstacles that they face, and expressing gratitude for the things that they do have are all interwoven into the message that Hillary Clinton hears middle class voices and prioritizes middle class concerns. By distancing herself from wealthy Americans, Clinton is able to paint a rich and convincing picture that although she is personally a member of the upper class, she clearly sees and understands the problems faced by the overwhelming majority of her constituency, and should not be perceived as different from or inaccessible to middle class voters.

Finally, Clinton's video taps into the emotional aspect of narrative to portray her as a relatable candidate. While several middle class themes such as concern for the future, humble gratitude for successes, and struggling to provide for oneself make up the majority of the announcement video, these themes are foundationally driven by human emotion. Various open displays of the emotions of fear, anxiety, doubt, hope, resilience, gratitude, trust, and love are what elevate this video to the highly relatable level that it is able to achieve; seeing fellow humans through these same open displays of emotions is how people most poignantly identify with one another. As Clinton uses this video to announce her 2016 candidacy, she simultaneously tells a story of the voices that she believes represent her fundamental issues; she traces a path of the conversations that she intends to have as she moves through her campaign;

she draws on the emotionally-laden, intrinsically human interactions on camera as persuasive elements that will inevitably transfer over to her character in the eyes of American voters.

4.4.3 Starting Conversations

As granddaughter Charlotte appears throughout much of Clinton's media, it becomes clear that Hillary Clinton uses her role as a new grandmother strategically to launch larger conversations onto a national scale. Baby Charlotte acting as a rhetorical springboard can be seen on the social media sight, Pinterest. Pinterest is a sight where users can set up public profiles, in which they create themed "boards;" each board plays host to different types of categorized digital content, consisting mainly of visual images and links to content originally housed on other websites. Examples of digital content found within boards on Pinterest may circulate around themes such as "clothes I like," "recipes to try," "products on my wish-list," etc. Hillary Clinton's Pinterest homepage opens with a headshot of Clinton atop the page description: "Granddaughter gift ideas, hairstyle inspiration, favorite moments, and some other things." Right away, the page description gives visitors the perception that Clinton's Pinterest account will serve as a resource for items considered more personal than political—items relating to the family, the home, the more individually intimate. Surveying the boards will reveal content collections such as advice for dressing up as Hillary Clinton for Halloween, tips & materials for throwing a debate watching party in your home, pictures of Clinton and her supporters on the campaign trail, along with other content areas relating to Hillary's life and her campaign. A certain board titled, "Newest (and Best) Job: Grandmother" features images of children's clothing, picture books, and more. However, these images of what seem initially to be resources for raising children turn out to serve additional functions. While each picture or link acts as a

child-raising resource in its own right, each image is also captioned with language that strays from the unspoken theme of personal-over-political in Clinton's carefully crafted Pinterest realm. Instead of focusing on children in the home, many of the captions are politically motivated, structured like the following:

"Yes, we're going to make sure that [my granddaughter] Charlotte has every chance in the world but I want every baby, every one of your babies and every baby you take care of to have exactly the same chances." –Hillary at a Chicago Childcare Event⁸³ (captioning an image of Clinton reading to children)

"Becoming a grandmother has made me think deeply about the responsibility that we all share as stewards of the world we inherit and will one day pass on. Rather than make me want to slow down, it has spurred me to speed up. As Margaret Mead said, children keep our imaginations fresh and our hearts young, and they drive us to work for a better future." Hillary, *Hard Choices*⁸⁴ (captioning an image of Clinton holding Charlotte)

"The perfect gift for a future voter."⁸⁵ (Captioning an image of a Clinton-themed onesie)

Though Clinton's campaign may strive to create spaces that resonate with voters on deeper, more personal levels than platform or voting record, the campaign inevitably deploys rhetorical strategies to continue to insert political ideas in deceptively packaged ways. Discussing children as America's youth, and playing the familial role of a grandmother in public have the potential to act as "bridging topics," in which Clinton can appear to be referencing an innocent, depoliticized subject matter in one moment, yet continue to draw on underlying implications that remain inherently political, while then

⁸³ "Newest (and Best) Job: Grandmother." *Pinterest*, accessed March 25, 2016, <https://www.pinterest.com/hillaryclinton/newest-and-best-job-grandmother/>

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Pinterest

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Pinterest

effortlessly segueing to politicized speech in the next moment. Through Charlotte and Clinton's role as a grandmother, Clinton can grant herself access to the populations of voters who want to hear her speak on family and children and women's issues; these interactions are crucial for voters to be able to identify and build trust with Hillary simultaneously as a political candidate with big ideas, as well as a wise and protective motherly figure. In the act of using granddaughter Charlotte as a rhetorical bridge to speak on family matters, yet eventually transitioning later on to interconnected family-based policy, Hillary Clinton is able to instigate and carry out broader political conversations behind the veil of family-based matters.

Transitioning back to twitter, Clinton's campaign captures the essence of grandmotherly wisdom through a hashtag to instigate further online dialogue. As Twitter is a platform known for starting national conversations and citizens having a space to advocate for a host of issues, Clinton's strategic blend of advocacy along with self-branding comes as no surprise. The mobilization of Clinton's authority as a grandmother in hashtag form began on February 3rd, 2015, when Clinton's campaign tweeted the following:

The science is clear: The earth is round, the sky is blue, and #vaccineswork. Let's protect all our kids. #GrandmothersKnowBest⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Hillary Clinton Verified account, "The Science Is Clear: The Earth Is Round, the Sky Is Blue, and #vaccineswork. Let's Protect All Our Kids. #GrandmothersKnowBest," microblog, @hillaryclinton, (February 3, 2015), <https://twitter.com/hillaryclinton/status/562456798020386816?lang=en>.

In a tweet that went viral, Clinton's campaign made her position on vaccinating children clear amidst the national crisis that was occurring as increasing numbers of parents were deciding against vaccinating their children. In doing so, the campaign drew on Clinton's authority not only as a nationally-recognized political power, but as a maternal figure as well. This move rhetorically supported the campaign's pro-vaccines argument with the logic and credibility of both a highly-educated public figure versed in health and public policy, as well as a mother-turned-grandmother full of practical experience in caring for children, and a personal investment in the well-being of families. By deploying both lines of ethos as Clinton's campaign joined the online vaccination conversation, the argument for vaccinating children strengthened. However, this blending of ethos benefitted Clinton's campaign as well. By taking advantage of the trope of grandmotherly wisdom, Clinton was able to further gain access to demographics online who were interested in family matters both in the politicized and de-politicized senses. The hashtag #GrandmothersKnowBest could effectively fit into the vast context of domestic conversations fueled by family members on Twitter, just as seamlessly as it could contribute to political conversations fueled by activists, or simply civically-invested citizens, on the social platform. The purpose of a hashtag on Twitter is fundamentally built upon connecting strangers through a universally-accessible portal to communities that are building and sustaining a common dialogue. Thus, the Clinton campaign's move to create a versatile hashtag appealing to both Hillary's roles as a family woman and as an advocate was a move to ultimately begin to build and further shape future online conversations centered around Clinton and her campaign discourse.

While using social media savvy to start national conversations about family issues, Clinton's campaign preemptively prevented public conversations concerning her old age as well.

Born on October 26th, 1947⁸⁷, America watched throughout the course of 2015-2016 as Hillary Clinton has campaigned to be the President of the United States as a 67-turned-68-year-old woman. With the three previous US presidents holding office over the past 24 years all being inaugurated at a notably younger age—Barack Obama taking office at the age of 47, George W. Bush taking office at the age of 54, and Bill Clinton taking office at the age of 46⁸⁸—Hillary Clinton's old age inevitably became a point of conversation during the 2016 cycle. Embracing the grandmother label helped Clinton to turn her old age into a positive attribute, and to address the issue directly, so that others who were prepared to use it as an attack were unable to do so first. By willingly identifying herself as a grandmother—a powerful ideograph in itself—Clinton opened doors that then enabled her to claim related connotations as well, such as “nurturing,” “protective,” “loving,” “wise,” “experienced,” “knowledgeable,” and more. In touting the role of grandmother, Clinton was able to acknowledge her old age, while simultaneously gaining the rhetorical benefits of identifying with a beneficial family label lovingly revered by millions Americans. As Clinton openly addressed her age through narrative methods on social media, and tied that narrative strategically to familial themes that would benefit her image, Clinton was able to start conversations that worked in her favor, while preventing those that would incur negative results.

As Hillary Clinton adds the role of “grandmother” to the already impressively long list of hats that she has and often continues to wear, more doors open for her in shaping a reputation that the public can relate to. By branding herself openly and excitedly as a grandmother, she can rhetorically tap into portraying herself as a maternal family figure, alongside being a respectable

⁸⁷ “First Lady Biography: Hillary Clinton,” *National First Ladies' Library*, accessed April 17th, 2016, <http://www.firstladies.org/biographies/firstladies.aspx?biography=43>

⁸⁸ *Wikipedia*, “List of Presidents of the United States by age,” accessed April 17th, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Presidents_of_the_United_States_by_age

politician; she can be personable, loving and protective, while also being qualified, decisive, and strong; she can bridge the social gap between reading to children at night, and running the country. Social platforms abound with the potential for people to use storytelling in powerful ways that elevate voices and unite communities. In embracing her grandmother status particularly through social content, Clinton adds to her ability to build and reinforce trusting relationships with voters through irrefutably formational online platforms.

4.5 Wading through “Emailgate” 2016

In December 2014, a scandal that had been brewing since 2009 came to light that would quickly become Hillary’s 2016 campaign nightmare. On March 15, 2013, a month after stepping down from the position of Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton was exposed for going against US policy by having sent government emails through a personal email account, rather than an email address officially registered with the State Department, during her time in office. Though Clinton’s use of a personal email address began as a little-known issue to the public as it was quietly unfolding on a state level, it burgeoned over the a period of months into a national scandal that would test the country’s trust in the former Secretary of State like it had never before been tested.

4.5.1 The Context of the Scandal

The long evolution of Hillary Clinton’s email address saga began when a Romanian hacker by the name of Marcel Lazăr Lehel, self-identified as “Guccifer,”⁸⁹ previously known for

⁸⁹ “Hillary Clinton’s Emails: What You Need to Know,” *Newsweek*, accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.newsweek.com/hillary-clinton-email-private-server-top-secret-362822>.

targeting online information belonging to the Bush family as well as Colin Powell⁹⁰, hacked the email account of senior adviser and close confidant to the Clintons, Sidney Blumenthal, in March 2013. Screenshots of Blumenthal's email account published by Guccifer after the hack revealed frequent communication exchanges between Blumenthal and Clinton, through Clinton's personal email address, hdr22@clintonemail.com.⁹¹ Since 1950, when Truman signed the Federal Records Act into law, policies dictating the regulation and record-keeping of official government communication have been evolving along with advances of technology. Not only do past iterations of the Federal Records Act state that government officials are required to preserve certain interactions—electronic and otherwise—for government purpose, but the Foreign Affairs manual, updated in November 2005, additionally states that “sensitive but unclassified” material should *not* be exchanged through personal email accounts where day-to-day interactions cannot be adequately protected.⁹²

As the discovery that Clinton was conducting business as the Secretary of State over a non-government server came to light in March 2013, it made very few waves. However, a year later during the summer of 2014, the House Select Committee on Benghazi requested copies of Clinton's emails from the time of Benghazi, which lead the State Department to then realize that they had no copies of official emails on file from the time of the attack; now, America had reason to notice Clinton's relationship with her email. As accusations about secret motives, reckless behavior, and putting national security at risk flooded in from the media and the American public, Hillary Clinton spent the year 2015 providing explanations as to why she had

⁹⁰ “Hacker Targets Clinton Confidant In New Attack,” *The Smoking Gun*, March 15, 2013, <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/documents/sidney-blumenthal-email-hack-687341>.

⁹¹ Glenn Kessler, “Hillary Clinton's E-Mails: A Timeline of Actions and Regulations,” *The Washington Post*, March 10, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/03/10/hillary-clintons-emails-a-timeline-of-actions-and-regulations/>.

⁹² *Ibid.*

used a personal email address, and why it was a far less serious issue than the country had been lead to believe. Unfortunately for Clinton, each time a new development unfolded in the national investigation, Clinton's explanation of events shifted right along with it. Through multiple adjustments to a continually evolving explanatory tale, Clinton attempted to justify her actions and reestablish trust with the American people.

4.5.2 Privacy and Convenience

As the issue made its first of many appearances into the public eye, Clinton appealed to the everyday privacy and convenience of a personal email that voters could relate to. On March 10th, 2015, Clinton spoke at a press conference hosted by the United Nations and addressed the controversy, stating that⁹³,

When I got to work as Secretary of State, I opted for convenience to use my personal email account, which was allowed, by the State Department, because I thought it would be easier to carry just one device for my work, and for my personal emails, instead of two. Looking back, it would have been better if I'd simply used a second email account, and carried a second phone, but at the time, this didn't seem like an issue... We went through a thorough process to identify all of my work-related emails and deliver them to the State Department. At the end, I chose not to keep my private, personal emails—emails about planning Chelsea's wedding, or my mother's funeral arrangements, condolence notes to friends, as well as yoga routines, family vacations, the other things you typically find in inboxes. No one wants their personal emails made public, and I think most people understand that and respect that privacy.

In this explanation, Clinton attempts to identify with everyday citizens, appealing to the same privacy and convenience that they would ask for in her situation. When faced with a request to conduct one's work with a single, primary email address, accessible on any device—as opposed

⁹³ "Hillary Clinton News Conference," *C-SPAN.org*, accessed November 1, 2015, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?324777-1/hillary-clinton-news-conference>.

to a second email address, housed on a separate laptop or phone, and carried everywhere in addition to personal devices, yet reserved exclusively for government work—the request to use a singular email address sounds to many like a reasonable request. As hundreds of thousands of Americans work daily with email and understand the mental stress that overwhelming email pressures can cause, voters can easily sympathize with a plea to make life simpler.

Alongside the appeal to a simpler, more consolidated email protocol, Clinton makes a plea to the American people to respect what she has been no stranger to asking for in the past: a reasonable amount of privacy with her information. Throughout the various moments in her life when her family has been under the spotlight of the national media, Hillary has often asked the public to afford her the simple privacy with delicate personal matters that any person might appreciate being offered themselves. This plea has repeatedly worked well in the past, reminding citizens what they often forget: that public figures are more similar to them than they tend to believe. As Hillary reminds the public that she deals with family affairs such as weddings and funerals—mundane scheduling such as vacations and yoga—just like normal citizens do, and as she asks for her emails that she deleted out of personal choice to be disregarded, Hillary is able to seem more removed from her government position, more relatable to the average American, and thus, easier to sympathize with and easier to trust. As Hillary takes rhetorical steps to draw connections between herself and the American people, she makes it easier for voters to perceive her as a person trying to do her job and live her life free of hassle, rather than a corrupt government official. In reminding voters that she never meant to cause a problem—that she simply shares their desires for privacy and convenience—American citizens are able to trust and agree with the same sentiments echoed from Clinton, that they value themselves.

4.5.3 Transparency

In the second phase of her email explanation, Clinton appealed to willful transparency to gain back the trust of the people. Upon the State Department's realization during the summer of 2014 that email exchanges were missing from official record, after the Benghazi Select Committee had gone looking for them, Clinton agreed to provide record of her emails to cooperate and aid the documentation process. After volunteering to hand over copies of her emails to the department, on March 4th, 2015, Clinton tweeted the following:

I want the public to see my email. I asked State to release them. They said they will review them for release as soon as possible.⁹⁴

In the coming weeks after handing her 55,000 pages of email over to the State Department, Clinton would proudly declare in interviews and in press conferences that turning over those copies of her emails had not been demanded of her, but rather, that she was doing so voluntarily to help clear up the mess that the now national story had devolved into. Whenever given the chance to say so, Clinton declared that her compliance was voluntary and cooperative, and that she was doing so in the name of transparency, so that everything would be out in the open. By appealing to this sense of transparency and voluntary cooperation, Clinton hoped to gain the trust of the public.

It is well known among politicians that many Americans are naturally skeptical of government figures and their tendencies to be anything but transparent; this sentiment is

⁹⁴ Hillary Clinton Verified account, "I want the public to see my email. I asked State to release them. They said they will review them for release as soon as possible," microblog, @hillaryclinton, (March 4, 2015), <https://twitter.com/hillaryclinton/status/573340998287413248?lang=en>

particularly true about the public's perception of the Clintons. Given all the past scandals that the Clinton family had been through—Gennifer Flowers, Whitewater, Monica Lewinsky—getting the public to trust that Hillary was innocent in the midst of yet another scandal in her life was going to be an uphill battle. Appealing right away to transparency and stating that she had nothing to hide—that Clinton eagerly wanted the public to see what was going on—served as a rhetorical move to help entice voters to let their guards down, recognize her good intentions, and empathize with her desire to include the public in the ongoing developments. Clinton's willing transparency, as well as her confidence that everything would blow over, further served to entice voters to trust in that confidence, and adopt the same perception of her innocence. In appealing to this good-natured wish for transparency and public inclusion, Clinton gave the public an incentive to put their trust in her.

4.5.4 Shift to Institutional Blame

In the third phase of her email explanation, Hillary attempted to illustrate how the wrongdoings in the case evolved from flaws in the State Department's system, rather than any flaws in her own judgment. Towards the end of the 2015 summer months, as regulating institutions slowly combed through the records of the emails that she had provided, inspectors begin to discover several interactions containing classified material that had occurred over her personal and unprotected server. As this information was gradually released to the public, Clinton shifted between three different iterations of her story.

First, as regulating institutions accused her of handling classified material over personal servers, Clinton claimed that she had not sent nor received any material that was classified *at the time it was sent*. In response to this claim, Inspector General, Charles McCullough, came back

and negated that, based on the sample documents that they had began to comb through, there was indeed material discovered that had clearly been of classified nature when it was being sent or received.⁹⁵ In response to this claim, Clinton then shifted again to say that the emails she received had never been *marked* as classified, meaning that there had been no way for her to distinguish between classified and unclassified material. Faced with this accusation, the regulating institutions came back a second time and asserted that certain material is always considered classified, simply due to its nature. Finally, Clinton came out to say that many of the State Department's protocols in designating what is and isn't classified, and what is and isn't allowed, are significantly outdated, and often confusing. Each time Clinton shifted from one explanation to another, her credibility suffered. However, each iteration of Clinton's three explanations share a common theme: That it was systematic, institutional factors that were complicating her actions, not her poor judgment.

By attempting to shift the blame to the State Department's protocols and off of her individual judgment, Clinton worked to frame herself as a victim within a larger problematic system, rather than an individual with ulterior motives, trying to manipulate it. Throughout the development of the scandal, Clinton consistently remained calm, confident, and eager to explain her situation, assuring the American people that she acted as any person would, and that she had nothing to hide. Putting the blame further on the system, and drawing attention to the difficulties that the system forces staff to deal with, serves to elicit sympathy from the American people, most of whom can relate to a larger system that has at some point inhibited their ability to work effectively, or to succeed in seemingly simple tasks. In putting her pure motives—to be able to conveniently send emails—in contrast to the State's confusing and

⁹⁵ CBS News August 5, 2015, and 12:11 Am, "FBI Investigating Security of Hillary Clinton's Emails," accessed April 11, 2016, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/fbi-investigating-security-of-hillary-clintons-emails/>.

difficult to understand protocols, Clinton worked to draw sympathy and support from her audience, appearing to be more of a relatable victim trying to do her job, than a scheming politician. Drawing this comparison served to help Clinton entice voters to trust her story, and to sympathize with the obstacles she found herself up against.

4.5.5 Incorporating Humor

In addition to continuously altering her explanations as the controversy developed, Clinton attempted many times to lighten the mood by adopting a humorous tone when speaking on the matter. Despite Clinton's most earnest attempts to convince the public that the email scandal was nothing more than an overblown, partisan attack, it continued to gain traction in the media. As she realized that this problem wasn't going to go away for her any time soon, Clinton turned to humor to try and humanize herself and elicit understanding from the American people. Below are examples of remarks made by Clinton as the scandal was unfolding:

"You may have seen that I recently launched a Snapchat account. I love it—I love it...those messages disappear all by themselves."⁹⁶ -August 14th, 2015, at the Iowa Democratic Wing Ding Dinner Speech

When asked if she tried to wipe the contents of her personal server clean, Clinton answered, "What, like with a cloth or something?"⁹⁷ -August 18th, 2015, Town Hall in Las Vegas

Later during that same conference, when asked if she was worried that the email controversy would linger into campaign season as she was trying to exit the press conference, Clinton turned around, replying, "Nobody talks to me about it other

⁹⁶ "Clinton's 7 Eyebrow-Raising Email Comments - CNNPolitics.com," *CNN*, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/08/19/politics/hillary-clinton-emails-9-comments-list-2016/index.html>.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

than you guys,” gesturing to the group of journalists with her hands in the air and continuing to exit the building⁹⁸

Though making these jokes about the situation was likely Clinton’s attempt to show the public that she remained strong and un-phased by the accusations, as well as to show a side of herself with personality that was simply human, Clinton’s cavalier attitude translated to many Americans as off-putting. By trying to insert humor into her commentary, Clinton demonstrated an attempt to alleviate the tension of the accusations, and coax voters into a mode that was more casual than accusatory; by laughing the issue off together, Clinton and the American people could have potentially connected through a shared disdain of a story that was blown unnecessarily out of proportion.

Clinton’s attempts at making the situation humorous backfired on her in the eyes of the majority of the American people. However, the strategy to insert humor into the scandal reveals her attempt to entice voters to trust her by doing four things. First, by appearing to be confident and unconcerned about the matter, Clinton hoped to calm voters and give them the assurance that they could trust her; if she’s wasn’t worried about the problem, citizens could feel as if they needn’t be either. Second, by framing herself as a good-natured person who could exercise a sense of humor and make a joke on her own behalf, Clinton would have been able to seem like more of a relatable, humanized person, rather than a scheming politician. Next, by cracking a joke, Clinton attempted to decrease the amount of political jargon being thrown around, making the conversation itself less accusatory, as well as more accessible to regular citizens through the shared language of comedy. Finally, had her jokes been successful, they would have offered the

⁹⁸ Chris Cillizza, “5 Mistakes Hillary Clinton Made in Her Latest E-Mail Press Conference,” *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/08/19/5-things-hillary-clinton-did-wrong-in-her-nevada-e-mail-press-conference/>.

American citizens an opportunity to share a connection with Clinton through an equally enjoyed moment; possessing shared experiences often allows people to feel closer to one another, thus lowering the boundaries and making it easier to trust one another. Though these humorous attempts by Clinton have not yet proven to be successful, her underlying strategy for attempting to establish trust can be dissected and understood.

4.5.6 Taking Responsibility

After months of Clinton's email scandal being featured on the news, and multiple versions of her explanation being spoken, analyzed, and combated, Clinton finally came forward to take responsibility for her actions. As the summer months of 2015 turned to fall, and the scandal had been tested and argued from every possible angle, it began to be clear to Clinton's campaign that no explanation was going to make the problem go away. What the public was awaiting most at that point was to be reassured that the woman running for President could still be held accountable for her actions. Clinton refused over and over again to apologize for actions that had been legally permitted, in fear that apologizing would legitimize the scandal even further. But on Tuesday, September 8th, 2015, Clinton finally apologized to the country during an interview with ABC News, stating the following:

CLINTON: I am confident by the end of this campaign people will know they can trust me, and that I will be on their side and will fight for them and their families. Um...but I do think I could have and should have done a better job, uh, answering questions earlier. I really didn't...um...perhaps appreciate the need to do that. What I had done was allowed, it was above board, uh but in retrospect, certainly, as I look back at it now, even though it *was* allowed, I should have used two accounts—one for personal, one for work-related emails. That was a mistake, I'm sorry about that, I take responsibility. Uh...and I'm trying to be as transparent as I possibly can.

INTERVIEWER: Did you make a mistake?

CLINTON: I *did*. I did. As I said, it *was* allowed, and there was no...hiding it—it was totally above board, everybody in the government *I* communicated with, uh, and that was a lot of people (laughs), knew that I was using a personal email. But I'm sorry that it has...you know, raised all these questions. I do take responsibility for having made what is clearly not the best decision.⁹⁹

After trying and failing for so long to direct the scandal in countless different directions, coming forward and taking responsibility for the events ultimately proved to be the most successful strategy for Clinton. In releasing an apology to the American people, though presented in a hesitant tone and on a date that was long overdue, Clinton finally took responsibility, not only for putting national security at risk, but for causing such high levels of concern in the meantime. Issuing an apology and taking responsibility for her actions made it significantly easier for Clinton to begin to earn back respect and trust from the portions of the population whose trust she had lost along the way.

Key in analyzing this apology is noting that, once Clinton finally did apologize to the country, she did not apologize for having a personal email account, but instead, apologized for the confusion that the email caused; she apologized for the chaotic way that the story unfolded and affected those listening to the news, but not for her original actions at the heart of the story. In noting the difference between the two types of apologies, many Americans discounted the apology as disingenuous, and moved on, finally giving up on the long-belabored scandal. However, for many, the gesture was still likely appreciated. By appearing genuinely subdued and aware of her mistakes on camera, stating multiple times that she had been wrong, and acknowledging head-on what her thought process had been, the American people were able to

⁹⁹ Maggie Haberman and Amy Chozick, "Hillary Clinton's Long Road to 'Sorry' Over Email Use," *The New York Times*, September 11, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/12/us/politics/hillary-clinton-email-secretary-of-state.html>.

more clearly understand Clinton's side of the story, and see by the look on her face that she was no longer smug, but had genuinely recognized the errors that she had made. Despite all of her varied appeals to privacy and convenience, to eager and willing transparency, to institutional blame, and to humor, the strategy that served Clinton best in gaining back the trust of the American people was holding herself accountable in the end.

Chapter 5: Discussion

It is without a doubt that over the course of 40 years, the ability to build and keep a trusting bond with various publics has been crucially important for the advancement of Hillary Clinton's career and image, yet still not without its complications. Through examining pivotal moments over the course of her public life that are rich in attempts to rhetorically craft trust, patterns can be discerned, and conclusions begin to materialize that shed light on the process of trust in the making.

5.1 Persuasive Appeals in Use

Throughout the moments examined in this study, several strategies proved to be consistently present and effective in Hillary Clinton's pursuit of building trust. The rhetorical strategy exhibited by Clinton most often—being the only appeal present in all five moments of this study—was Clinton's appeal to her experience and her background. In each of the five studied moments, Clinton took time and care to remind her audiences of all her previous work, as well as the wisdom and the know-how that she has gained along the way. By reminding the American public that she is experienced in leadership and political advocacy, Clinton strives to calm the public into believing that a figure who is well-rounded and experienced in their field is a figure who they can and should trust.

Most frequently exercised after appeals to her experience, were Clinton's attempts to show that she was relatable, she exhibited strong character, and she had honorable priorities. The art of being relatable is nothing new to American politicians. In fact, the ability to identify rhetorically with an audience on some level is arguably a necessity in gaining any audience's

trust. However, as a woman who gained notoriety for her political power, distinguished by her wealthy status and the very ability to achieve benchmarks which the majority of Americans will never have access to, the crucial practice of continuing to reinforce her similarities to the American people, and the rhetorical levels she identifies with them on, cannot be under-valued.

Attempts to relate to her audience were overwhelmingly successful in the moments when Clinton urged America not to forget that at her core, she is still human: desiring basic rights to privacy, falling victim to stress and societal gender expectations, and taking pride in familial responsibilities, just like anyone else. Exercising humility and putting focus on shared human desires proved to often strengthen her plea to be perceived as relatable. In accordance with Burke's theory of identification, showing Americans that she was consubstantial to them—sharing substances with average people, and thus, sharing experiences—worked as a means to an end of effective association. Comparatively, when Clinton attempted to rhetorically identify with Americans too far beyond the point of reason, her request for trust was openly rejected. In cases such as the #NotMyAbuela social media pushback, where Clinton blatantly attempted to pander to audiences, creating an offensive analogy in the process, she was not viewed as relatable, but instead, as inconsiderate and disillusioned. Similarly, in wanting to identify with the average American throughout her email scandal when explaining her desire to carry one device instead of two, she instead came off as reckless. For Clinton, in her attempts to be a relatable and consubstantial figure, being aware of which connections are valid to draw to the American people, and which are not, is key.

In arguing that she exhibited strong character, Clinton was often able to gain trust for her values that many Americans shared, or at the very least, respected. Taking advantage of ideographic language when referencing her values further aided Clinton in giving her values an

added dimension of cultural significance. When discussing her personal beliefs through ideographs, Hillary Clinton tapped into larger national values that not only made her into a complex and honorable individual, but shaped her to align with nationally-recognized symbols as well, such as strong career woman, women's rights advocate, and nurturing, matriarchal figure. Through these symbolically powerful tools of language, Clinton was able to let her values persuade Americans that she was a figure they could trust. The only moment in which her values did not aid her in appearing trustworthy was during the email scandal; though she insisted throughout the scandal that she was legally within her limits and would never betray the expectations of the country or of the State Department, her proclamation of character could never act as a substitute for what Americans had wanted to hear all along—an apology.

Similar to her appeals to strong character, appealing to her honorable priorities in times of public doubt typically served to morally elevate Clinton to a figure who deserved to be trusted. In moments of having to explain or defend her positions, the act of claiming that she had priorities much bigger and more pressing than the events of a given time was rhetorically strategic for Clinton. In reminding the public that there were more serious national issues to discuss than her marriage or how she sent her emails—that doting over grandchildren on social media was fun, but starting dialogues about the country's children was more significant—Clinton worked to simultaneously deescalate the obstacles in her path, and to reassure the public that she had honorable intentions, and was persistently fighting to work towards them. Referencing her greater priorities only seemed to backfire on Clinton in addressing her emails, when her priorities of moving past the scandal failed to align with the priorities of the public: ensuring that their national leaders were not above being held accountable. The key to gaining

trust by appealing to overarching priorities, in the case of Hillary Clinton, lies in being able to justify your priorities as more significant than those being attacked at the time.

Finally, not to be forgotten from trust attaining strategies is the appeal to transparency. While the previously listed appeals proved to most often be successful, Clinton claiming to the American public that she wished to be transparent was a rhetorical strategy that was heavily dependent upon context and authenticity. Out of the two moments analyzed in this study that involved appeals to transparency, one attempt to appeal to transparency worked incredibly well for Clinton, while the other did not. After Hillary broke down into tears at an event in New Hampshire, just days before the 2008 primary, her poll numbers rose significantly, and her performance in the primaries was better than expected. During her speech in New Hampshire, Clinton was open and vulnerable, and willing to share information about her struggles with her audience of strangers, proving to be a less guarded version of herself in that moment than the country had come to know. Fast forward eight years, however, to Hillary's email scandal during her 2016 campaign, when transparency served her far less. In the beginning months as the scandal started to unfold, Clinton proclaimed, first in one widely-publicized tweet, and then later in several interviews and speeches, that she wanted her emails to be released so that the public could see them—she wanted to be held accountable. This transparency did not gain Clinton much goodwill.

Though difficult to pinpoint the factors that caused these two instances to vary so widely in success, authenticity and context certainly played a strong role. In 2008, when Clinton displayed her public tears, she was not required to do so; Clinton could have recited any number of canned or distant responses that would have protected her from being openly vulnerable after the question. Despite the choice Clinton had in the moment though, she chose to be open and

sincere with her audience, voluntarily sharing her struggles. Choosing transparency on her own volition revealed a raw authenticity to Clinton that much of the country had not yet seen. In 2016, however, the situation was quite different. Though Clinton declared that she wanted to be transparent, offering public access to her papers, there was a strong sense from the country that her choice was anything but voluntary. At the time of claiming to be transparent, Clinton was under significant pressure from investigating bodies, as well as the media, left with dwindling strategies to appear calm and collected. At the time of broadcasting her transparency, few people throughout the country perceived the act to be truly voluntary, while most saw it as a self-serving attempt to remove the scandal from the media as quickly as possible. Clinton's two different instances reveal the tricky nature of appeals to transparency: In order to be perceived as trustworthy, the decision to be open with the public must also be voluntary and of honorable intentions, and not a remaining last resort.

5.2 Troubles with Trust

While many of Clinton's above appeals have presented her with varying levels of success, several factors still prohibit her ability to be truly trustworthy. Clinton's actions show a consistent trend in the lack of both forethought, and kairotic intuition. In several moments analyzed in this study, Clinton exhibited poor choice in both commentary or content she chose to produce, and poor timing that she chose to use to do so. In the case of Clinton's social content during her 2016 campaign, the campaign's intent to draw connections to the Hispanic community and be perceived as more relatable in Clinton's abuela article were clear. However, the campaign's inability to look forward and weigh the potentially harmful consequences of an

article that blatantly pandered to a specific demographic shows a clear weakness in the decision-making skills of Clinton's campaign team.

Much like the campaign's failure to consider the potential damages that might result from an offensively overreaching article, the decision to let Clinton's email scandal unfold for over eight months without extending a formal apology was a catastrophic misjudgment of the situation and all of the contributing factors. To trust in a presidential candidate, for citizens, is to feel secure in putting the quality of one's life—the future opportunities they will be afforded and the laws they will be subject to—in the hands of another. However, when Clinton and her advisors are unable to realize that America has been waiting six months for a simple apology, placing trust in her as a national leader becomes significantly more difficult to justify.

Even Clinton's attempts at humor during the time of the email scandal, though potentially effective in theory, were executed with the wrong tone, and under the wrong timing. As a world leader with the power to influence policy for better or worse, to spark diplomatic treaties or the beginning of wars, to inspire either hope or fear throughout the country, communication skills matter. Proving herself to be someone who struggles with reading audience cues, as well as recognizing inopportune timing, Clinton gives the public further incentive to be wary of trusting her as a competent leader.

As the next potential leader of one of the most powerful countries in the world, displaying a habitual lack of forethought and kairotic timing significantly affects Hillary's ability to be perceived as trustworthy. Despite her resume of countless public, personal, and political victories throughout her career, the ability to recognize key aspects of what differentiates one moment from another, and when and how to best deliver messages are skills that must be learned. Until she proves to the country that she can go a significantly longer period of time

without ending up in the news for a problematic post, a scandal, or a poorly-timed comment, Hillary Clinton will likely continue to suffer from being more difficult than others to trust.

5.3 Dealing with Gender

While the strategic use of classic rhetorical appeals, mixed with elements of Clinton's own personal strengths and flaws certainly take a role in shaping her ability to build bonds of trust with the American people, the much larger role that gender plays in determining the likelihood of achieving that trust is indisputable. Throughout the moments analyzed in this study, Hillary is most successful when she is either playing into her gender expectations and performing Parry-Giles' gender authenticity, or when she is fiercely advocating against it. Hillary's ability to become more likable after crying in New Hampshire was not owed to delivering a new or novel speech; rather, the country was moved by this moment in which Hillary performed stereotypical gendered qualities, such as a soft approach, vulnerability, and emotional weakness. By performing these expected gender behaviors, Hillary Clinton finally appeased the American people who had disliked her—whether consciously or subconsciously—for breaking societal roles and behaving outside the expected norm for women. Once she showed that she could, in fact, align with stereotypically female behaviors, she eased the concern of those Americans confused by disregard for gender-dictated behaviors, performed “female authenticity” with great ease, and was rewarded in the New Hampshire elections. Similarly, by openly adopting the roles of nurturing grandmother and national matriarch on social media during her 2016 campaign, Clinton gained more credibility as a trusted female figure. By performing traditional maternal actions across her social content, and intertwining herself with women's issues as a proclaimed

advocate, she was able to gain the trust of Americans who value gender roles and sticking to them.

Comparatively, when Clinton works to actively critique and distance herself from expected gender norms, her trustworthiness also increases. After her 1992 interview that quickly garnered attention for her Tammy Wynette commentary, Hillary established her view of being on equal footing as Bill, enabling America to perceive her as a strong, driven woman standing up for her right to privacy and refusing to apologize for doing so. Her efforts to push back on the gender expectations being thrust upon her during the interview contributed to viewers being able to see her greater priorities and her strong character with increased clarity, leading forward-thinking Americans to admire her, and trust in her as a figure who would oppose socially-enforced gender norms. Her active opposition to being perceived as a passive wife-figure gained her trust from the American public.

While the techniques of openly performing gender authenticity, and openly negating it both work well in gaining Hillary Clinton public trust, the moments in which she remains neutral on gender incite less attention, and thus, less opportunity for that trust to be earned. In Clinton's 3am phone call ad, gender was present indirectly, but was never out-rightly discussed. Though this ad was successful in its own right, as Clinton touted her experience with national security, the ad carried the burden of needing to do well and shift the conversation away from gender, in order to offset her sinking poll numbers, due to gender-based attacks earlier throughout the primaries. In order for this ad to make a difference in her overall success at the polls, Clinton had to put in an increased effort to design an ad free of gender, and distract from gender-based criticisms, while not getting any increased show of gender-based support in return. This imbalance of time and resources that were input, against the comparatively little that was gained,

shows a distinct obstacle in gendered conversations that Clinton is forced to maneuver around to succeed in her campaign.

Similarly, of the major arguments made throughout the unfolding of the email scandal, gender bias was not among them. Though there were the occasional whispers on social media and little-known publications detailing how Clinton wouldn't have had to face such scrutinized national charges if she were a man, or how her male predecessor Colin Powell was guilty of the same charges but was never equally attacked in the media, these arguments never rose to become prominent aspects of the national conversation. As the country watched the email scandal unfold, they did not expect Clinton to perform as an expert on anything rooted in gender; instead, they expected her to perform as a credible and competent leader. That task, however, is more difficult than it sounds. As a female figure in a society ruled by gender norms, Hillary Clinton will always be viewed as a less trustworthy leader for defying expected female roles. When she is given the opportunity to either perform or negate these gender expectations, she is able to rhetorically address her gender, and give the public the opportunity to believe in either her ability to align with female expectations, or to advocate against them. In situations where she is not given opportunity to address her gender, however, the public's concern lingers, but she is robbed of the opportunity to affect the conversation. Hillary stumbled through her email scandal, succeeding with some arguments, while failing to be persuasive with most others. While gender did not play a direct role in the scandal itself, Clinton was negatively affected by the gender-neutral nature of the media debacle.

Hillary Clinton is a passionate public servant, an experienced leader, and a formidable force to those who stand in her way. To claim that Clinton's gender prohibits her from being able to build public trust would not only be false, but also, deeply insulting to a woman who has

worked a lifetime to climb a very tall, very steep ladder. However, to claim that gender is not significantly intertwined with the dynamics of building trust would be an equally egregious error. Even in 2016, the ideas of power and competency are still tied so strongly to gendered expectations, following the observations of Parry-Giles, that when public figures such as Hillary Clinton defy those roles, they become confusing to many—they become hard to understand; what we cannot bring ourselves to understand, we can rarely allow ourselves to trust. Gender norms, though having been consistently and openly challenged now for years, are still firmly-rooted within the foundation of how we build trust with those whom we can only know from a distance. Gender expectations serve as a major impediment to Clinton’s ability to craft trusting relationships with citizens across the country; she must work twice as hard as male-counterparts to seek out opportunities to contribute to gender-driven conversations, in order to be seen as a prominent figure in the dialogue. Conversely, in moments when gender does not manifest as part of the conversations she contributes to, she must work twice as hard to appear credible and trustworthy in other ways. Though Clinton’s gender does not ultimately control how trustworthy she can be deemed or how far she will go in her endeavors to return to the White House, gender politics are crucial to understanding the foundational obstacles that Clinton must take into account when asking for trust from the American public.

5.4 Conclusion

The process of planning for, establishing, building, and maintaining trust is rhetorically complex, as it asks participants to relinquish knowledge and control—what members of the public are often taught to hone and to cling to most tightly—for faith in another. Just as classic

rhetorical appeals to elements such as experience, relatability, character, political priority, transparency, and humor often aid public figures like Clinton in establishing public trust, inherent weaknesses—both rhetorical and personal—such as a consistent lack of forethought or kairotic intuition, can just as easily disintegrate those trust-building attempts for someone living in the public eye. In the case of Hillary Clinton, however, the ability of a public figure to effectively build trust rarely lies in their individual tactics, but in larger, circulating systems, such as how the public perceives them to abide by gender constructs, and display various types of social authenticity at any given time. Though none of the above factors will decide ultimately what Clinton can or cannot achieve in the realm of public trust, this study contributes to analyzing the complex dynamics of how trust functions in the eyes of Americans, and for public figure, Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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