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ENDANGERED INTELLECT: A CASE STUDY OF CLINTON VS TRUMP CAMPAIGN DISCOURSE

1. Introduction

Populism and demagoguery are terms that have become on vogue in journalistic jargon to label major political communication strategies aimed at consensus building. Another expression that has gained currency in the United States, especially during the 2016 presidential election campaign, is anti-intellectualism. The concept is indeed not new since the first American scholarly work to address the subject goes back to 1963. In that year, Hofstadter published his Pulitzer-Prize winning book *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, in which he describes anti-intellectualism as endemic to US society and a reflection of their cultural heritage. In a nutshell, the book discusses the tension between American intellectualism (synonymous with elitism) and egalitarianism in four distinct domains: religion, politics, business culture and education, with an eye to historical development. A milestone in its own right, the book has spurred further academic research in the field of education (e.g. Bloom; Howley et al.). The interest of political scientists on this topic, however, has been more limited. An exception is Lim's recent publication, which focuses on American anti-intellectualism as "a defining characteristic of the contemporary presidency" (2008, x). Lim identifies anti-intellectualism as a rhetorical situation in which "presidents talk a lot" but "say very little that contributes constructively to public deliberation."

The present study considers anti-intellectualism as a widespread phenomenon that affects contemporary culture and society in many respects. Anti-intellectualism is seen here as related to the promotion of a voyeuristic and unquestioning cultural orientation, which is attracted by spectacle without substance and allured by entertainment that diverts attention away from the real issues. One of the most obvious reverberations of such a cultural inclination in the political domain are image-oriented choices, especially during election campaigns. In the arena of politics, anti-intellectual voters (the majority) are prone to grant their support to candidates based more on politicians' portrayed images of themselves than on their proposals concerning future policymaking. For this reason, politicians work hard to construct appealing public images through which they can win the favor of their electorate. Jacoby describes this type of general situation in the US as one that is characterized by a celebration of video culture joined with anti-rationalism and a declining education system.

This paper also interprets anti-intellectualism in the domain of politics as connected to the lack of an intersubjective and ethical stance. This can be observed in the behavior of politicians who reject a priori the worldviews not conforming to their own, decline any debate with differing opinions and are unable to show empathy for others. Anti-intellectual people, in politics as well as in other realms, stick to their own identity and beliefs to the point that they cannot engage in any real dialogue, which would project them outside their strongly safeguarded "territory." When selfishness and self-righteousness replace reasoned debate, anti-intellectualism has certainly taken the lead.

Embedded in culture and social behavior, anti-intellectualism is also reflected in language, as this study intends to investigate. Here, it coincides with plain, poor and unrefined forms of discourse, characterized by catchy phrases and bathetic appeals. In the battleground of politics, anti-intellectual discourse is not only discourse lacking substance, it is rhetoric promoting simple us vs them dichotomies, celebrating the cult of personality, demonizing opponents and engaging in an instrumental use of fear to obtain support.

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2. Data and methodology

American election campaigns are hard fought contests for the candidates who compete on the opposite sides of the political spectrum (Trent and Friedenberg). The campaign is not only arduous, but it is also very long. It actually starts when the politicians from each of the two major political parties (Democrats and Republicans) who intend to run for president announce their candidacy. This is a very important moment for the candidates since at this time they officially "introduce" themselves to the American voters by setting the ground and spreading the seeds for what is to come. Thus, the campaign starts with the announcement speeches of the Democratic and Republican candidates, and this is the textual ground on which the different electoral narratives are fabricated. As every other political speech, an announcement speech is a great opportunity for politicians to present themselves and their goals in a positive light and to convince the electorate of their qualities. In addition, an announcement speech is the occasion in which people (future voters) form their first impressions about politicians, their personality and their political message.

This paper concentrates on the announcement speeches of the two opposing candidates who later turned into the actual frontrunners competing for the US presidency: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Clinton launched her campaign with a speech that was delivered in New York City on June 13, 2015.[1] Trump delivered his announcement speech, "Our Country Needs a Truly Great Leader,"[2] on June 16, 2015.

Research on American political rhetoric has pointed out that a progressive decline in intellectualism has occurred over the course of the last two centuries (Lim 2008). While an explanation for this general trend might have something to do with the shift from what used to be a primarily written culture to a more audio-visual culture, many questions about the actual causes of this widespread phenomenon remain unanswered. Why are people in the US (and possibly all over the world) becoming less and less "intellectual"? Is the development of new means of communication, especially social-media, having negative repercussions on people's intellectual capacities such as scrutinizing, examining, criticizing, and theorizing (a hypothesis endorsed by Bauerlein, who blames new technology for the intellectual shortcomings of young American digital natives)? Is the immediacy of globalization and the online universe reducing people's possibilities to use their intellect? Are teachers and professors to blame for training their students to get a job instead of helping them develop critical thinking and providing them with an education for their life (a question explored, among others, by Del Gandio)? These are all intriguing questions, which cannot be answered here and indeed go well beyond the scope of this paper.

As Lim admits, anti-intellectualism has turned into a distinctive trait of modern political discourse in the US. American politicians have become less articulate, and they now express themselves in a language that is much simpler than it used to be. The present study sadly accepts the state of affairs about the tragic fate that befell the intellect and intends to investigate political language and political discourse with a focus on anti-intellectualism. The linguistic analyses presented below interpret the concept of anti-intellectualism from two different but related perspectives. First, anti-intellectualism is seen as related to linguistic complexity as measured by certain textual features (e.g. sentence length, word length, number of complex words). Secondly, anti-intellectualism is seen as connected to characteristics of discourse such as representation of Self, representation of Other, and framing of political issues. This integrated approach to the examination of anti-intellectualism in American political language and discourse is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.

The purely quantitative analysis relies on a range of well-known readability tests (Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, Gunning Fog Score, SMOG Index, Coleman Liau Index, Automated Readability Index, New Dale-Chall Readability Index and Fry Graph) to account for the linguistic complexity of the political speeches as a measure of their anti-intellectualism. These tests, which represent objective and quantitative tools for estimating the difficulty of written language, are widely used in the US. They are all based on mathematical formulas relying on either a syntactic factor (number of sentences, number of words per sentence, number of syllables per word and number of characters) or a combination of a syntactic factor with a semantic one (difficulty of words). Some of the formulas were originally developed by writers (e.g.

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[1] www.time.com/3920332/transcript-full-text-hillary-clinton-campaign-launch/. Last visited October 20, 2016.
[2] www.blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2015/06/16/donald-trump-transcript-our-country-needs-a-truly-great-leader.
 Last visited October 20, 2016.

Flesh and Gunning), others by educators (e.g. Dale and Chall) and most of them have gone through adaptations that have increased their accuracy. The refined versions of the eight readability tests mentioned above are used in this paper with the aim of getting insights into the degree of the relative linguistic complexity of two important political texts: Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's announcement speeches as candidates for the US presidency.[3]

The second part of the analysis intends to explore the two political speeches in order to shed light on potential anti-intellectual features in their discourses. How is discourse constructed in each of the two texts? What is the discursive representation of the world that each text supports? The analysis utilizes methods of Corpus Linguistics to identify keywords in each of the political texts and relies on a Critical Discourse Analysis framework to investigate the impact of lexical choice on the construction of political and social reality. As Fairclough, among many others, has pointed out, linguistic acts are by nature strategic and texts are social spaces that are based upon lexical choices. Political speeches are prime examples of carefully crafted texts, where nothing can ever be neutral or simply happens to be uttered. Focusing on keywords that distinctively characterize each of the candidates' language and disclose their contribution to the discourse, this study aims to provide useful suggestions on their respective subjective constructions of reality. In particular, this study is inspired by systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday) to investigate how frequent lexical items that uniquely characterize each of the political speeches connect to two basic functions of texts, the ideational and the interpersonal. In any text, language functions ideationally as far as it represents experience and the world, and it functions interpersonally in creating social interaction between participants in discourse. With a focus on these basic functions of language (ideational and interpersonal), the analysis of the politicians' keywords in their specific contexts of usage is expected to give us important information about the politicians themselves (representation of Self), additional participants in discourse (representation of Other), and issues foregrounded (representation of subject matter). Furthermore, the study will consider the representation of relations between participants (Self and Other) and the framing of foregrounded issues according to certain political/moral values.

3. Analysis and results

3.1 Linguistic complexity

A basic calculation that can be applied to texts in order to get first indications about their linguistic complexity relies on measuring word length (number of syllables), sentence length (number of words), and percentage of complex words (polysyllabic words with three or more syllables). Table 1 displays the results of this basic measurement of complexity for each of the two political speeches under investigation. The calculations are provided by The Readability Test Tool,[4] a software that is freely available online.

Text statistics	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump
No of sentences	298	671
No of words	4752	6489
No of complex words	571	501
Percent of complex words	12.02%	7.72%
Average words per sentence	15.95	9.67
Average syllables per word	1.48	1.35

Table 1: Comparison of text statistics: Clinton vs Trump

Prima facie observations concern the respective length of the speeches. As Table 1 clearly indicates, Trump's announcement speech is longer than Clinton's and contains a higher number of sentences. Quantity per se, however, should not be taken as an indicator of complexity since more verbosity does not necessarily involve structures that are more complex. Indeed, the comparison between Clinton's and Trump's texts

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[3] In Fall 2015, the *Boston Globe* made an assessment of the language used by all of the US presidential candidates based exclusively on the Flesh Kincaid readability tests.
www.bostonglobe.com/news/politics/2015/10/20/donald-trump-and-ben-carson-speak-grade-school-level-that-today-voters-can-quickly-grasp/LUCBY6uwQAxiLvvXbVTSUN/story.html. Last visited October 20, 2016.
[4] www.webpagefx.com/tools/read-able/. Last visited October 20, 2016.

suggests that the first one is more elaborate than the second one. Clinton's speech contains a higher percentage of complex words (12.02% vs 7.72%), displays a more sophisticated sentence structure as a result of an average larger array of words per sentence, and shows a tendency to use words having a more complex syllable structure.

Another more elaborate way of measuring the complexity of a text is to calculate its readability, which is the difficulty of understanding a reading passage (Klare 1963). Among the different readability tests that have been designed for the English language, the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease and the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level are possibly the most widely used. They are employed in the field of political science, education and by the US government to establish the readability of different text types. These tests are similar in that they both rely on the same core measures (e.g. word length and sentence length), but their weighting factors are different resulting in an almost inverse correlation.[5] Thus, a high score on the Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease is expected to correlate with a low score on the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level. The Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease is based on a 0 to 100 scale, where an increase in the score correlates with ease of understanding, i.e. readability. The actual scores are graded as follows: 0-30 (very difficult to read), 30-50 (difficult to read), 50-60 (fairly difficult to read), 60-70 (plain English), 70-80 (fairly easy to read), 80-90 (easy to read), 90-100 (very easy to read). The Flesch Kincaid Grade Level equates the readability of a text to the US schools grade level system. The concept of a "grade level" is based on the US education system, and it refers to the number of years of education a person has had. Even though there might be differences among states and districts, the grading is roughly the following: 1-5 grade (elementary school), 6-8 (junior high school/middle school), 9-12 (high school). In the US, a text addressed to the general public should aim for a grade level around 8 (the end of junior high school). This would make it largely accessible in terms of its readability.

Other readability tests that provide scores on the base of the US schools grade level system include the Gunning Fog Score, the SMOG Index, the Coleman Liau Index and the Automated Readability Index (ARI). Compared to the others, Coleman Liau and ARI are more limited in scope since they rely on counting characters, words and sentences, whereas the Gunning Fog Score and the SMOG Index also consider number of syllables and complex words (i.e. polysyllabic words, with three or more syllables).

Each of these tests was used to measure the readability of Clinton's and Trump's presidential campaign announcement speeches. Table 2 shows the individual scores obtained for the different readability indices by each of the speeches.

Readability Indices	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump
Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease	65.6	82.4
Flesch Kincaid Grade Level	8.1	4.2
Gunning Fog Score	10.1	6.4
SMOG Index	8.1	5.3
Coleman Liau Index	10.7	7.9
Automated Readability Index	7.8	2.4

Table 2: Comparison of readability 1: Clinton vs Trump

The scores reported in Table 2 were also calculated online with The Readability Test Tool. Results from the automated calculation indicate that both Clinton's and Trump's texts are readable, an outcome to be expected, given the fact that the politicians address a large audience of American citizens. However, the results also show differences in the complexity of the two texts as measured by the 6 distinct readability tests. Overall, Trump's speech appears as less complex (i.e. more readable) than Clinton's. The reading ease score of Trump's speech equals 82.4, which is classified as 'easy to read' or conversational English, while the corresponding score of Clinton's speech is 65.6, coinciding with "plain English." Scores given by each of the tests based on the US schools grade level system confirm the difference between the two candidates. Trump's text has an average grade level of about 5, which indicates that it should be easily understood by 10 to 11 year olds. Clinton's text has an average grade level of about 9, meaning that it should be easily understood by 14 to 15 year olds.

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[5] The formula to calculate the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease score is: 206.835 - 1.015 x (words/sentences) - 84.6 x (syllables/words), while the formula for the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score is: 0.39 x (words/sentences) + 11.8 x (syllables/words) - 15.59.

In order to avoid possible biases deriving from the different size of the investigated speeches, two other readability tests were used, the Dale-Chall and the Fry Graph. For this study, the Dale-Chall calculator[6] was used to process the first 600 words of each of the two political speeches. In contrast to the previous formulas, the Dale-Chall has the advantage of combining a syntactic with a semantic factor. The calculation is based on both sentence length and number of difficult words, where difficulty is measured in terms of expected unfamiliarity with the words used. A graded wordlist of 3,000 words is compared to the text sample to determine potentially difficult words and a US grade level is calculated based on the number of difficult words with average sentence length. Besides the Dale-Chall calculator, the Fry Graph free readability tool[7] was also employed on the same samples of the two speeches (600 words each). The Fry Graph formula considers sentence length and the number of syllables per 100 words. The accuracy of the Fry Graph formula is similar to that of the Dale-Chall when they are used to measure the readability of texts above the primary level. However, since the original Dale-Chall formula consistently overestimated difficulty, while the Fry Graph would consistently underestimate difficulty, adjustments factors were applied that yielded the following results.

Readability Indices	Hillary Clinton	Donald Trump
New Dale-Chall Index	9-10	5-6
Fry Graph	10	4

Table 3: Comparison of readability 2: Clinton vs Trump

These additional calculations confirm the marked difference in readability between Clinton and Trump. Clinton's text results adequate for a 9 to 10 grade level, whereas the greater simplicity of Trump's speech makes it an appropriate read for a 5 grade level.

As the name suggests, the Fry Graph tool provides a visual representation of the grade level of a text. It is indeed one of the most popular and reliable readability graph test. Thus, Fry Graph scores reported in Table 3 were deduced from the following graphs.
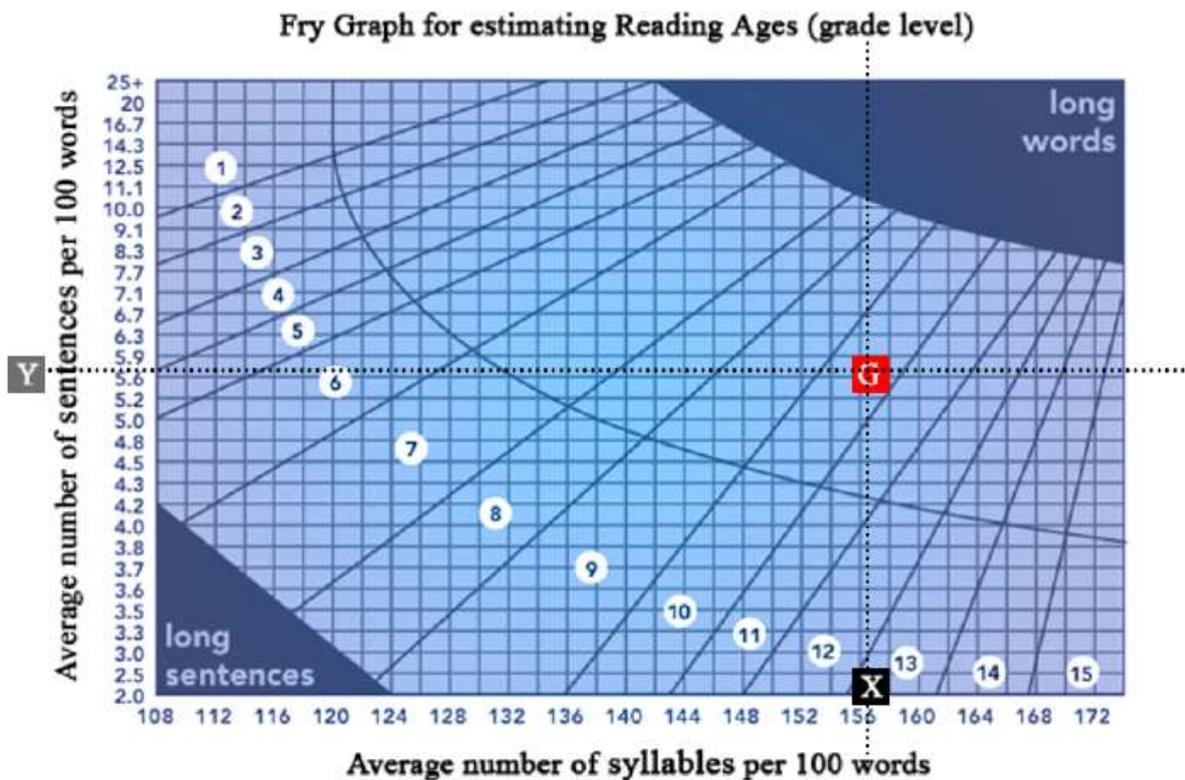

Fig. 1: Clinton's score on the Fry Graph

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[6] www.readabilityformulas.com/free-dale-chall-test.php. Last visited October 20, 2016.
[7] www.readabilityformulas.com/free-fry-graph-test.php. Last visited October 20, 2016.
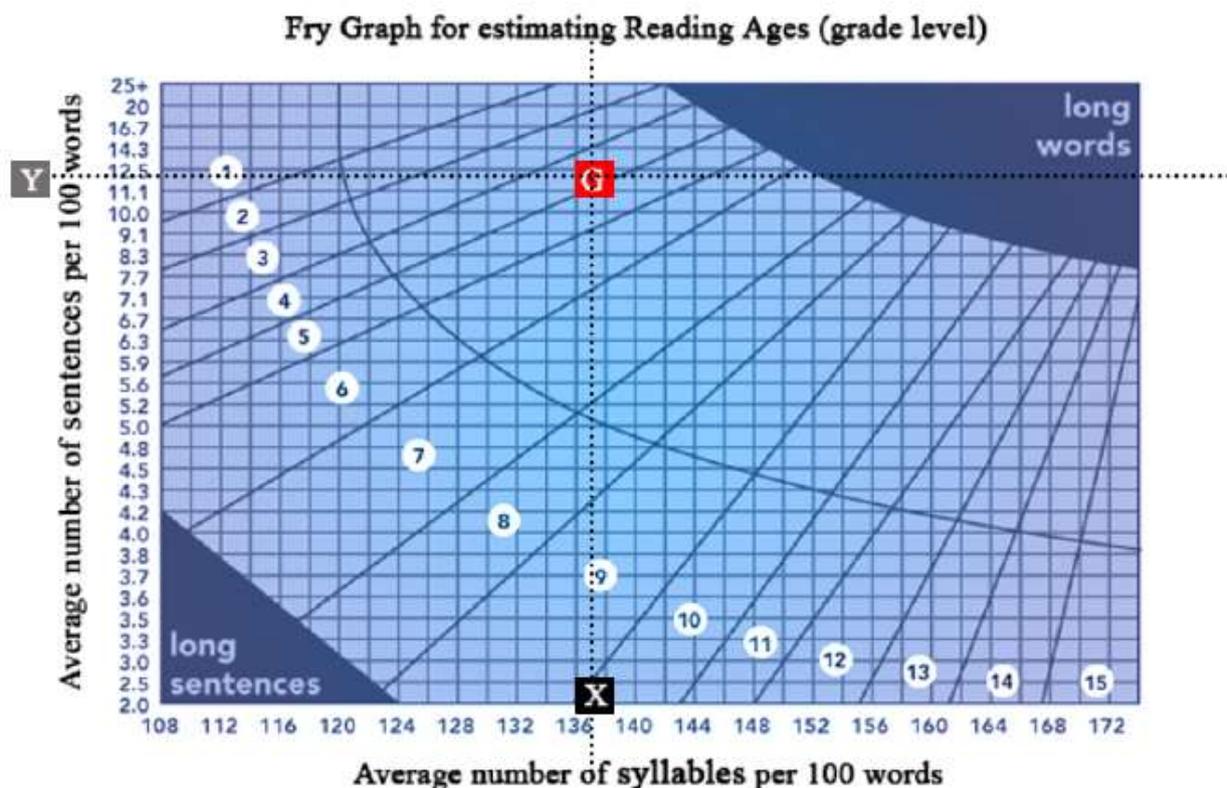
Fig. 2: Trump's score on the Fry Graph

In the graphs above, the grade level (G) is plotted on the chart at the intersection between the two variables (X: average number of syllables per 100 words, and Y: average number of sentences per 100 words) and the number between the two parallel lines represents the US grade level.

To sum up, the eight different readability tests that have been used to calculate the linguistic complexity of Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's election campaign announcement speeches show that according to statistical measures Trump's text is significantly simpler than Clinton's.

3.2 The framing of discourse

As mentioned above, an announcement speech is a very important occasion for an American politician running for president to establish a first rapport with the audience. Selecting the right words, the ones that "resonate" with the audience, to use Edelman's terminology, is crucial for attracting attention and building consensus. Words that stick into people's minds are "winning" words because they create an implicit engagement between the electorate and a political candidate.

As research in cognitive linguistics demonstrated (Lakoff 2004), politicians frame discourse by selecting combinations of words that through reiteration transform certain subjective interpretations of reality into the most 'natural' ways of looking at reality. Similarly, sound bites contribute to the public construction of a politician's vision and message. They are short and easy to remember expressions that are incessantly hammered into people's heads not just by politicians but especially through the media that guarantee for their diffusion and pave the way for their acceptance. Politicians and communication experts are well aware of the tactical use of words and phrases for influencing people's thoughts and behaviors in their daily life activities and, crucially, when they go to the ballot and vote for a president (Luntz 2007).

As these observations suggest, verbal language plays an important role in persuading voters. Of course, other factors should not be underestimated. Research has shown that the paralinguistic features that characterize communication as well as personality traits, physical appearance and overall radiance are instrumental in the complex process of convincing the audience of one's reliability, trustworthiness, sincerity and suitability for becoming the next commander in chief (Charteris-Black 2014; Ekman 2003).

Another aspect that should not go unnoticed is the active involvement of communication experts and ghostwriters in the creation of a product to be offered for consumption to the general public (Ritter and Medhurst 2004). American political speeches are among the best examples of planned discourse, which is aimed at transmitting a well-crafted political message. Each politician constructs their own reality and they partly do so relying on words.

Since in politics words really matter and repeated words matter even more, the analysis discussed below considers how the most frequent words in the speeches of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump contribute to the construction of a coherent discourse that supports a specific representation of: a) the candidate, b) other agents/patients in the narrative, and c) political issues. The analysis will also consider the relation between participants in the narrative and the framing of issues in line with political/moral values (see Degani 2015 for an investigation of Democratic values in Obama's election campaign speeches).

Table 4 provides the lists of the 30 most frequent words in each of the two candidates' speeches as well as the frequency of occurrence of each word. The listed words were manually extracted from two distinct Wordlists generated by Wordsmith tools after excluding all instances of function words. In this study, the selected category of content words includes nouns, adjectives, verbs (excluding modals and auxiliaries) and adverbs with an adjectival base, including those ending with the –ly suffix and the ones that can function as both an adjective and an adverb (e.g. fast).

Hillary Clinton		Donald Trump	
Keywords	**Frequency**	**Keywords**	**Frequency**
America	30	*people*	55
Americans	23	*know*	46
people	23	*great*	39
work	22	*said*	35
country	19	*country*	29
new	18	*say*	28
know	17	*get*	25
family	15	*China*	23
make	15	*need*	23
hard	14	*got*	22
President	14	*good*	20
believe	13	*make*	19
get	13	*right*	18
want	13	*big*	17
families	12	*world*	17
American	11	*billion*	15
better	11	*jobs*	14
need	11	*money*	14
world	11	*think*	14
economy	10	*Trump*	13
help	9	*believe*	13
years	9	*Mexico*	13
health	8	*take*	13
jobs	8	*Ford*	12
pay	8	*happen*	12
right	8	*love*	12
women	8	*nice*	12
working	8	*time*	12
build	7	*bring*	11
business	7	*build*	11

Table 4: High-frequency words in Clinton's and Trump's speeches

As Table 4 shows, among Clinton's and Trump's 30 most frequently used words, there is a pool of terms that both politicians employ in their speeches. These include nouns (*people*, *country*, *world*, *jobs* and *right*), verbs (*know, make*, *believe*, *get*, *need* and *build*), and adjectives (*good* and *right*). As this list indicates, different word forms of the same lexeme counted as instances of the same word (e.g. *good* and *better* were

considered as the same word). For the scope of the current study, however, it is more relevant to focus on the range of words among the 30 most frequent ones in the two speeches that each text uniquely displays. These words are highlighted in bold in Table 4. A comparison between the terms that distinctively mark the rhetoric of one politician in contrast to the other can offer important insights into Clinton's and Trump's individual constructions of discourse. By choosing one word instead of another, and by using that word recurrently, a politician is creating a kind of sociolinguistic map of reality and sending a specific message to the electorate.

The question to be answered at this point is the following: how do major differences between Clinton's and Trump's messages emerge from an analysis of their idiosyncratic lexical choices? Since terms belonging to different word classes can give us different types of information about a text, for each of the candidates distinctive, highly frequent lexical items have been arranged according to word classes as illustrated in Tables 5 and 6. The frequency of occurrence of each word is reported in brackets next to the term.

Hillary Clinton		
Highly frequent nouns	**Highly frequent verbs**	**Highly frequent adjectives**
America (30)	*work* (13)	*new* (18)
Americans (23)	*want* (13)	*hard* (14)
family (15)	*help* (6)	*American* (3)
President (14)	*working* (5)	*working* (3)
families (12)	*pay* (4)	
economy (10)		
work (9)		
years (9)		
American (8)		
health (8)		
women (8)		
business (7)		
pay (4)		
help (3)		

Table 5: Clinton's highly frequent lexical items per word class

Donald Trump		
Highly frequent nouns	**Highly frequent verbs**	**Highly frequent adjectives**
China (23)	*said* (35)	*great* (39)
money (23)	*say* (28)	*big* (17)
billion (15)	*think* (14)	*nice* (12)
Mexico(14)	*take* (13)	
Trump (13)	*happen* (12)	
Ford (12)	*love* (12)	
time (10)	*bring* (11)	

Table 6: Trump's highly frequent lexical items per word class

3.2.1 A comparison of highly frequent nouns: Clinton vs Trump
When comparing Clinton's and Trump's high-frequency nouns, a first observation concerns the difference in the number of Participants, in functional linguistics terms, featuring in their narratives. A higher number of Participants than Trump's characterizes Clinton's text (14 vs 7 nouns). In her speech, Clinton refers to people (*Americans*, *family*, *President*, *families* and *women*), places (*America*), social issues (*work*, *health*, *pay* and *help*), economy (*economy* and *business*) and the abstract concept of time (*years*). In his speech, Trump talks about people (*Trump*), places (*China* and *Mexico*), economy (*billion*, *money* and *Ford*) and time (*time*). As merely suggested by these lexical preferences, Clinton's speech portrays a sociolinguistic landscape that is populated by a larger and more diversified group of animate Participants than Trump's. Furthermore, Clinton uses nouns that hint at social engagement while Trump does not. As far as nouns suggest, Trump's speech focuses on the representation of Self, while Clinton's is inclusive of other people and shows concern for social issues. In Trump's text, high-frequency nouns appear to silence the interpersonal dimension of communication.

An analysis of nouns in their contexts of usage provides additional insights about the candidates' depiction of themselves and their relationship with the American electorate. Starting with the noun she uses most recurrently, Clinton refers to *Americans* to accomplish different political aims, such as

a) transmitting her social engagement (e.g. "If you'll give me the chance, I'll wage and win Four Fights for you. The first is to make the economy work for everyday *Americans*, not just those at the top."[8]),

b) showing her empathy (e.g. "Advances in technology and the rise of global trade have created whole new areas of economic activity and opened new markets for our exports, but they have also displaced jobs and undercut wages for millions of *Americans*."),

c) empowering American citizens (e.g. "As we have since our founding, *Americans* made a new beginning. You worked extra shifts, took second jobs, postponed home repairs…you figured out how to make it work."),

d) asking for cooperation (e.g. "There are allies for change everywhere who know we can't stand by while inequality increases, wages stagnate, and the promise of America dims. We should welcome the support of all *Americans* who want to go forward together with us.").

In other words, Clinton uses the term *Americans* to construct a discourse characterized by the following messages: 'I work for you/I work to make your lives better than they are' (a), 'I know about your sufferance and I want to be close to you' (b), 'you are great people who can do great things' (c), and 'together, we can do better' (d).

Besides these, other words in Clinton's speech confirm a typically Democratic framing of issues. Her discourse around the words *family* and *families* is one that shows concern for the economic problems afflicting the lives of many Americans, especially as far as children and their future are concerned (e.g. "I believe we should offer paid *family* leave so no one has to choose between keeping a paycheck and caring for a new baby or a sick relative," "Our country won't be competitive or fair if we don't help more *families* give their kids the best possible start in life"). Her rhetoric supports an inclusive economy that can work for each and every American family (e.g. "raising the minimum wage is a *family* issue"). She also exhibits her sensitivity towards social groups such as immigrants and LGBT who are commonly more disadvantaged ("So we should offer hard-working, law-abiding immigrant *families* a path to citizenship. Not second-class status," "we should ban discrimination against LGBT Americans and their *families* so they can live, learn, marry, and work just like everybody else"). Overall, she appears to be a strong supporter of the Democratic value of equality; it is as if she were saying 'I care for you all because I believe we are all equal.' Clinton also personalizes her political message by referring to her own family. As she says, her family taught her an important lesson: everyone should be granted equal opportunities. This is illustrated in the passage reported below:

> I believe that success isn't measured by how much the wealthiest Americans have, but by how many children climb out of poverty…
> How many start-ups and small businesses open and thrive…
> How many young people go to college without drowning in debt…
> How many people find a good job…
> How many *families* get ahead and stay ahead.
> I didn't learn this from politics. I learned it from my own *family*.

Furthermore, Clinton's credibility in her struggle to serve all American families is enhanced by her previous commitments ("I've spent my life fighting for children, *families*, and our country. And I'm not stopping now"). Significantly, Clinton also alludes to the larger significance of family by exploiting the NATION IS A FAMILY conceptual metaphor that linguists have identified as rooted in people's understanding of politics (Lakoff 1996). The Democratic politician identifies the nation with a family who is at their best when focusing on their common core, those shared values that keep people together ("Like any *family*, our American *family* is strongest when we cherish what we have in common, and fight back against those who would drive us apart").

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[8] All example quotes in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are from either Clinton's or Trump's announcement speeches for the US presidency. In the quotes, the relevant keywords are marked in italics.

If Clinton's usage of the words *family* and *families* helps her convey the idea of equality as a fundamental American value, her usage of the word *President* foregrounds an image of American politics as guided and inspired by almost mythicized ideals. In her speech, she refers to President Roosevelt, President B. Clinton, President Obama and herself as future President of the United States in order to emphasize the Democratic commitment with a specific political and moral vision of the country. She calls this vision the "promise of American democracy" and she defines it as Roosevelt's legacy.

> *President* Roosevelt called on every American to do his or her part, and every American answered. He said there's no mystery about what it takes to build a strong and prosperous America: "Equality of opportunity… Jobs for those who can work… Security for those who need it… The ending of special privilege for the few… The preservation of civil liberties for all… a wider and constantly rising standard of living." That still sounds good to me. It's America's basic bargain.

This "basic bargain," upon which Roosevelt's view of America was founded, has been cherished and shored up by other Democratic politicians.

> When *President* Clinton honored the bargain, we had the longest peacetime expansion in history, a balanced budget, and the first time in decades we all grew together, with the bottom 20 percent of workers increasing their incomes by the same percentage as the top 5 percent.
> When *President* Obama honored the bargain, we pulled back from the brink of Depression, saved the auto industry, provided health care to 16 million working people, and replaced the jobs we lost faster than after a financial crash.

As a Democrat, Hillary Clinton commits herself to pursue this 'mission' for a better, more just, more equal America.

> America can't succeed unless you succeed.
> That is why I am running for *President* of the United States.
> Here, on Roosevelt Island, I believe we have a continuing rendezvous with destiny. Each American and the country we cherish.
> I'm running to make our economy work for you and for every American.
> For the successful and the struggling.
> For the innovators and inventors.
> For those breaking barriers in technology and discovering cures for diseases.
> For the factory workers and food servers who stand on their feet all day.
> For the nurses who work the night shift.
> For the truckers who drive for hours and the farmers who feed us.
> For the veterans who served our country.
> For the small business owners who took a risk.
> For everyone who's ever been knocked down, but refused to be knocked out.
> I'm not running for some Americans, but for all Americans.

By using the word *President*, Hillary Clinton endows her rhetoric with a sense of political continuity that sustains a clearly Democratic ideological orientation.

In line with these observations, Clinton's discussion about *women* is one that supports gender equality ("And it is way past time to end the outrage of so many *women* still earning less than men on the job — and *women* of color often making even less"). It also gives her the chance to discredit and attack the Republican opponents for their general disrespect of women and their rights ("They (Republicans) shame and blame *women*, rather than respect our right to make our own reproductive health decisions").

In marked contrast to what has been commented so far, Trump's speech appears as one that celebrates the candidate himself, especially in relation to his richness, which is presented as a salient value in his discourse. Whenever the word *Trump* occurs, it stimulates associations to properties, material belongings

and wealth, more generally. First of all, the proper noun *Trump* is associated to Tower (*Trump Tower*) not just to provide a reference to the setting where the speech is delivered, but to supply the audience with some evidence of the Republican candidate's great wealth. Trump Tower is one among his many real estates.

> So I have a total net worth, and now with the increase, it'll be well-over $10 billion. But here, a total net worth of — net worth, not assets, not — a net worth, after all debt, after all expenses, the greatest assets — *Trump Tower*, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Bank of America building in San Francisco, 40 Wall Street, sometimes referred to as the *Trump building right* opposite the New York — many other places all over the world.

With his money, Trump can buy extraordinary things and edify 'marvelous' buildings. In his narrative, money makes him into a super hero, someone who can "shock" people for his unbelievable achievements, a person to admire for his capacity to buy what is well beyond the reach of the majority of people.

> You know, we're building on Pennsylvania Avenue, the Old Post Office, we're converting it into one of the world's great hotels. It's gonna be the best hotel in Washington, D.C. We got it from the General Services Administration in Washington. The Obama administration. We got it. It was the most highly sought after — or one of them, but I think the most highly sought after project in the history of General Services. We got it. People were shocked, *Trump* got it.

The simple logic of Trump's political message appears to be the following 'Since I'm rich, I can get anything I want, and so you should vote for me.' Furthermore, Trump presents his wealth as a guarantee for his moral integrity as the future leader of the US. According to his argumentation, having so much money will be a safeguard against corruption from other actors in the political arena. This is an idea that he elaborates when he tells the story about Ford planning for a manufacturing plant in Mexico. As the story goes, Trump, in his role of commander in chief (if not earlier), will make a personal phone call to the head of Ford (who is one of his friends) to make him pay higher taxes for importing his goods into the US. On such a circumstance, no bribery will ever be possible due to the mere fact that Trump "doesn't need anybody's money."

> So under President *Trump*, here's what would happen: The head of Ford will call me back, I would say within an hour after I told them the bad news. But it could be he'd want to be cool, and he'll wait until the next day. You know, they want to be a little cool. And he'll say, "Please, please, please." He'll beg for a little while, and I'll say, "No interest." Then he'll call all sorts of political people, and I'll say, "Sorry, fellas. No interest," because I don't need anybody's money. It's nice. I don't need anybody's money. I'm using my own money. I'm not using the lobbyists. I'm not using donors. I don't care. I'm really rich…that's the kind of mindset, that's the kind of thinking you need for this country… because we got to make the country rich.

Trump's discourse suggests very explicitly not just that money rules but also that money (and himself as its embodied version) is the only solution for America.

The emphasis on the representation of Self that characterizes Trump's discourse in contrast to Clinton's more inclusive rhetoric is also confirmed by a comparison in their usage of personal pronouns. The Republican candidate shows a predilection for first singular personal pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*), which account for 50% of his usage of personal pronouns. Clinton, on the other hand, prefers first plural pronouns (*we*, *us*, *our*), which amount to 43.5% of all the personal pronouns she uses. It is also telling to observe how Trump depicts himself when applying the first personal pronoun *I* in what Halliday defines relational attributive and relational identifying processes.

> I have so many websites, I have them all over the place.
> I have the best (golf) courses in the world.
> I have lobbyists who can produce anything for me.
> I own a big chunk of the Bank of America Building.
> I'm really rich.

> I am in competition with them (Islamic terrorists who have become rich and build hotels in Syria).
> I'm a free trader.
> I'm a private company.
> I am a nice person.

Trump wants American people to know that he owns a lot and that he is a skillful and successful businessperson. His public image encompasses these specific facets of his personality.

A comparison of Clinton's and Trump's high-frequency nouns denoting places (Clinton's *America* vs Trump's *China* and *Mexico*) adds interesting details to the orchestration of their respective electoral discourses. Clinton consistently uses the word *America* to endorse Roosevelt's inspiring Democratic vision of how the nation should go ahead and prosper. Interestingly, the word *America* does not feature among Trump's lexical preferences and a corpus search revealed that the phrase *Bank of America* accounts for nearly half of its few occurrences in his speech. Instead of America, the countries referred to in Trump's text are *China* and *Mexico*, both of which are portrayed as enemies to be fought against. China and Mexico are accused of economically killing the United States and of stealing the jobs of American citizens (e.g. "*China* has our jobs and *Mexico* has our jobs"). On top of this, Mexico is also depicted as guilty for sending criminals, drug dealers and rapists to the US ("When *Mexico* sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists"). In Trump's view both nations are taking unfair advantage of the US and his solution to the problem consists in changing tax regulations and building a wall along the Mexican border ("I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have *Mexico* pay for that wall").

The sharp ideological divide between Clinton and Trump is confirmed by an analysis of the highly frequent lexical items that they use to discuss the economy (Clinton's *economy*, *business* vs Trump's *billion*, *money* and *Ford*). Clinton talks about an "inclusive *economy*" that "works for every American" and where "hard work is rewarded." In her speech, the word *business* occurs in the nominal compounds *business owners* and *business leaders* and it is used chiefly to refer to *small business*, for which political leaders should care more. As she says, her own father had a "small *business* printing drapery in Chicago" that could "provide (her family) with a middle-class life." In contrast to this, Trump frames the economic issue by promoting his wealth, by accusing other countries (chiefly China and Mexico) of taking American money away, and by promising the electorate that he will bring this money back to the US.

3.2.2 A comparison of highly frequent verbs and adjectives: Clinton vs Trump

When analyzing words belonging to the word class of verbs, important aspects that can be investigated concern their semantics and the selection of participant roles that can potentially be filled given the semantic structure of verbs. As show in Tables 5 and 6, Clinton's and Trump's speeches exhibit a different array of high frequency verbs. Following the terminology of systemic functional grammar, Clinton's verbs belong to the categories of material processes (*work*, *working*, *help* and *pay*) and mental processes (*want*), while Trump's verbs fit into the categories of material processes (*take* and *bring*), mental processes (*think* and *love*), verbal processes (*said* and *say*) and existential processes (*happen*, which is used with the meaning of 'come into being'). Basically, types of processes differ in terms of what they construe. Thus, material processes construe the material world of doing, mental processes construe the inner world or they may project the inner world of consciousness outside, verbal processes construe saying and existential processes construe existence. Each of these verbal typologies allows for more than one participant role, with the exception of the existential group. Frequencies of occurrence of individual verbs point to the fact that the category of material processes is best represented in Clinton's speech (68% of her high frequency verbs belong this this group), while the semantic category that is most recurrent in Trump's s text is that of verbal processes (50.4%). In terms of Participants, the Actors of Clinton's material processes include American people, specific groups within society (immigrants, LGBT and nurses), members of her family (her mother and her grandfather), the future leader of the nation (the next President), herself, and an abstract entity (the economy). The actions that these Actors perform are framed positively and the emphasis tends to be on their

efforts in doing things. In the case of Trump's verbal processes, the role of Sayer is filled most of the times by the candidate himself (*I said* amounts to 57% of all occurrences and *I say* to 50%). Otherwise, the Sayer is one of Trump's friends, or it qualifies as a general, unspecified referent (*someone*, *people*, with the meaning of 'human beings in general').

The semantics of the most recurrent verbs indicates that Clinton's discourse is construed around concrete actions accomplished by different actors. To the contrary, Trump's speech seems to be built upon the words uttered by himself, by people who are close to him or by someone who remains unspecified.

The analysis of high frequency adjectives provides further suggestions about each of the two politicians' major concerns, as expressed in their public addresses. Overall, the adjectives that are most frequent in Clinton's speech (*new*, *hard*, *American* and *working*) show her propensity for crafting a rhetoric of care and nurturance towards American people and their families. She uses the adjective *new* to discuss the negative impact of the current economy on American people ("Advances in technology and the rise of global trade have created whole *new* areas of economic activity and opened *new* markets for our exports, but they have also displaced jobs and undercut wages for millions of Americans") and to propose changes that can favor workers as well as small businesses ("I will give *new* incentives to companies that give their employees a fair share of the profits their hard work earns"). She also relies on the word *new* to celebrate, patriotically, America's capacity to renew itself and move ahead ("As we have since our founding, Americans made a *new* beginning. You worked extra shifts, took second jobs, postponed home repairs…you figured out how to make it work"). Another sign of a typically North American framing of political discourse comes from Clinton's preference for employing the adjective *hard* in association with work. On the one hand, her words support the vision of hard work as a fundamentally American value. On the other hand, they give voice to her Democratic view of fairness and the idea that all people who work hard should get a fair reward for their efforts ("We can build an economy where *hard* work is rewarded"). Lastly, the adjective *American* modifies the words "people", "family" and "belief" and *working* precedes "people", "conditions for workers" and "immigrant families."

In line with the analysis of Trump's lexical preferences that has been discussed above, the examination of the most recurrent adjectives in his speech (*great, big* and *nice*) confirms a general orientation towards Self. The adjective *great* occurs chiefly in the context of his political motto for the presidential election campaign ('Make America *great* again'), but it is also used to describe himself as a "truly *great* leader", as a person who makes "*great* product" and "*great* deals", owns "*great* hotels" and will build "a *great* wall." Similar positive connotations are attributed to his own family, and in particular to his father, who did a "*great* job" and was a "*great* negotiator," and to people who are close to him either because they work for him ("I have lobbyists who can produce anything for me. They are *great*.") or because he calls them friends ("A friend of mine is a *great* manufacturer"). Trump only gives a negative connotation to the adjective *great* when he refers to Obama and addresses him as a "*great* cheerleader." His uses of the adjective *big* also contribute giving shape to a discourse that is consistently self-praising and foregrounds his economic power. He has assets ("And I have assets — *big* accounting firm, one of the most highly respected — 9 billion 240 million dollars"), constructs and owns big buildings ("I own a *big* chunk of the Bank of America Building") and is approached by big banks ("In fact, one of the *big* banks came to me and said, 'Donald, you don't have enough borrowings. Could we loan you $4 billion'? I said, 'I don't need it. I don't want it'"). Significantly, the adjective *big* is negatively connoted when it is used to attack economic competitors (China) that threaten the US superpower as well as political opponents (Obama) and their (mis)management of foreign policy. Thus, Trump talks about the "*big* tariff" charged in China for US imports, the "*big* lie," as he defines the Obamacare, and the "*big* vehicles" that are sent to Iraq and left to the enemy. Coherently, the adjective *nice* qualifies Trump himself ("I am a *nice* person") and is used in the verbal phrase "to be *nice*" to provide a positive evaluation to the assertions that he is running for president of the US and he does not need anybody else's money. Trump also employs the word *nice* ironically to describe a reporter who made unpleasant comments about him.

4. Conclusion

This study started from the assumption that American political rhetoric has become anti-intellectual because of a more general transformation in culture and society, which affects the everyday life of ordinary people. In order to investigate political anti-intellectualism from a linguistic perspective, the study has concentrated on

Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's 2015 announcement speeches for the US presidency. Anti-intellectualism has been explored along different lines. On the one hand, it has been interpreted in terms of linguistic complexity and measured with well-known and widely used readability tests. On the other hand, it has been evaluated in relation to the construction of specific electoral discourses, crafted with the aim of winning consensus.

The analysis reveals a marked qualitative difference between the speeches of the Democratic and the Republican candidates. Statistical measurements indicate that Trump's language is by far simpler than Clinton's. He employs the vocabulary of a 5 grader, while she expresses herself in a way that is considered adequate for the kind of general public politicians address. As far as their discourses are concerned, the analysis of Clinton's and Trump's high frequency lexical items in their contexts of use confirms the divergence between them. Overall, the personal profiles of these two politicians as emerging from their speeches are strikingly different. Clinton emphasizes her concern for American people, she commits herself to work for improving their lives and, more generally, she conveys a message in favor of a civic democracy in which she devises policies for the country as a whole. Her words speak in favor of an interpersonal engagement that is at odds with anti-intellectualism, as interpreted in this study. On the contrary, Trump's discourse is brash and self-aggrandizing. It focuses almost exclusively on himself as a man of common sense and great business ability, while promoting an anti-intellectual culture of fear, suspicion and conspiracy (China and Mexico are enemies), and catering to populist anger with extremist proposals (building a wall along the Mexican border). To conclude, the linguistic analyses of Clinton's and Trump's announcement speeches show that the Republican candidate is pushing anti-intellectualism in American politics to a new extreme.

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