

Manifesting Personal Brands in Politics:
Strategic Manoeuvring by Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the
Third US Presidential Debate of 2016

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MA Thesis
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April 2020

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UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

School of Languages and Translations Studies/Faculty of Humanities

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MA Thesis, 108 pages, 1 appendix (6 pages)

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In this thesis I investigate how the political brands of the two presidential candidates of the 2016 US presidential election, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, were manifested in their argumentation during the third and final presidential debate of 2016. The method used for the analysis is the extended theory of pragma-dialectics, which includes the notion of strategic manoeuvring. The theory allows the evaluation of how the candidates balanced the simultaneous objectives of adhering to the rules of argumentation while manoeuvring the discussion to a direction that was in their favour.

The analysis focuses on a 15-minute segment of the debate, the topic of which was fitness to be the president of the United States. The analysis indicates that both candidates strategically manoeuvred the discussion toward topics that were beneficial for their brand or detrimental to the opponent's brand. The most notable differences between Clinton's and Trump's argumentative strategies were related to the core characteristics of their brands: Clinton was a politically experienced insider, while Trump was a newcomer to politics and promoted the image of an uncorrupt outsider who "says it like it is."

Clinton highlighted her brand by demonstrating her well-preparedness with a full and coordinated argumentative strategy and premeditated argumentation structures. Trump, on the other hand, maintained his brand as a man of the people by arguing much more like an uneducated non-politician would. The most notable features of Trump's argumentation were the copious violations of the rules of argumentation, which indicate that his desire to "win" the argument overruled his desire to argue reasonably.

The findings of this study demonstrate that not complying with the rules of a critical discussion may be beneficial for the speaker's brand when their brand as well as the expectations of the audience allow it. However, when a person who is branded as someone who "says it like it is" and uses fallacious argumentation, the danger of the introduction of more radical ideas presents itself. Thus, critical thinking and awareness of the copious strategies used in political branding are becoming increasingly important.

Key words: Pragma-dialectics; Strategic manoeuvring; Political brands; Presidential debates; Presidential elections; Argumentation analysis

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1. Introduction

Personal branding in politics is an increasingly important phenomenon that has gone through a revolution in the past decade. Public persons' brands have always been a point of immense interest by the public, but since social media has rapidly expanded its scope, pace, and relevance, public figures' identity management has reached new realms. With various mediums through which to communicate, managing a public figure's brand requires careful planning by an extensive team of people. However, regardless of how successful a team is in presenting a desired kind of personal brand, the branded people themselves must exhibit behaviours consistent with their brand to be believable. This delicate task ought to be performed dependably in all situations, but problems may arise when a person is challenged or in a stressful situation. The most taxing circumstances are where a person's preparedness and commitment to their brand are tested, and a prime example of such a high-stakes situation are political debates. This study examines how different political brands are manifested in argumentation in a high-stakes debate setting — like that of the third and final debate of the 2016 US presidential election.

One of the driving elements of this study is the exceptionally divisive political and social climate that existed in the United States during the 2016 election period. People's mounting desire for a change in politics alongside the increasingly populist rhetoric surrounding it allowed a politically unexperienced celebrity businessman like Trump to enter the political arena. Trump's controversial style set him apart from the other presidential candidates — and, arguably, from any presidential candidate before him. Contrasting Trump's mould-breaking brand and style of communication with his opponent Hillary Clinton's more traditional and calculated manner presents an opportunity for evaluating how the political domain was shifting and how this shift was expressed in political brands. While the success of the utilization of the change and the results of the election are known when this thesis is being written — Trump having been in office for three and a half years — I will limit my discussion of the election period as extending only to the third presidential debate, which took place on 19th October 2016. As the analysis in this study is highly dependent on context, it is justifiable to limit the timeline to include only information the candidates and the potential voters viewing the debate had access to at the time of the debate. Necessary references to events taking place past this date are restricted to footnotes.

The main question this study aims to answer is how the personal political brands of the two presidential candidates in the 2016 US presidential election, Hillary Clinton and Donald

Trump, were manifested in the electoral discourse — namely in their strategic manoeuvring. The material of the analysis is the third presidential debate of 2016, where the two candidates debated for the last time before the election. The method chosen for the analysis is *pragmatic-dialectics* and specifically its extended theory, which includes the element of *strategic manoeuvring*. The theory allows the evaluation of how the candidates balanced the simultaneous objectives of adhering to the rules of argumentation and of manoeuvring the discussion to a direction that was in their favour. The candidates' strategic manoeuvres indicate what kind of an image¹ they believed to be necessary to reach potential voters, from which follows that their strategic manoeuvrings communicated their political brands. Strategic manoeuvres also indicate attacks against the political brand of the opponent, and as such attacks are frequent in political debates, they are interesting from an analytical standpoint. Thus, a second, supporting research question is: which elements of the opponent's political brand do Clinton and Trump deem central and consequently attack?

A third research question concerns the fallacies committed in the argumentations the candidates put forward. When a presidential candidate seems to break the mould in every aspect, like was the case with Trump, can they purposefully also break the rules of argumentation to underline a brand-related motive? In other words, do the candidates break the rules of argumentation — and thus commit fallacies — in a way that can be considered a pattern that is related to their brands? This has been chosen as a supporting research question because the two candidates were extremely different in their brands — including their communication styles. Clinton represented a more traditional politician, while Trump's brand was strongly that of an outsider from politics. Trump's style of communication was unusual in the U.S. political sphere, which means breaking the rules of communication in the debates may have been perceived as on-brand for Trump. This, in turn, may have made such rule breaking more permissible for him in the eyes of his voter base compared to how Clinton's rule breaking may have been received. While it might be a stretch to assume a voter base's feelings, it can be assumed that a candidate acts according to what they and their team believe voters want to hear, which means a candidate can be assumed to make argumentative moves in a way that they believe is acceptable in the eyes of their potential voters.

To reiterate, the main research question in this study is:

1. In what ways are Trump's and Clinton's political brands manifested in their strategic manoeuvring?

¹ The terms "brand" and "image" are used interchangeably in this thesis.

And the two supporting research question aimed to clarify the first, are:

2. Which elements of each other's political brands do Trump and Clinton attack by using strategic manoeuvring?
3. When the rules of a critical discussion are broken and strategic manoeuvring becomes fallacious, do the fallacies indicate a brand-related motive?

In both describing and analysing Clinton's and Trump's political brands, a comparative approach is adopted to highlight the differences between the candidates' styles and, correspondingly, the differences between a more traditional political style and a populist style of a newcomer to politics. The results of the study are also discussed partly comparatively to better examine the differences between the candidates' strategic manoeuvring in connection to their political brands.

Although Trump's and Clinton's debates and public appearances have been studied in depth (e.g. Savoy 2017; Aswad 2018; Nai and Mailer 2018; Liu and Lei 2018), there is yet to be found a detailed linguistic study on strategic manoeuvring in relation to their personal political brands. This study seeks to fill such a niche. As personal brands become increasingly central in politics, our understanding of their nature becomes more essential. Additionally, it is crucial to gain understanding of the kind of rhetoric that is viewed as permissible from a public figure, especially a politician, and of the rules of a critical discussion that may be deemed justifiably dismissible.

In the first background section of this thesis, chapter 2, the 2016 US presidential campaign period is discussed first in general terms, after which Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's backgrounds and their presidential campaigns are described. After this, I will illustrate how the 2016 elections were exceptional in how riddled with scandals the campaign period was. In the next background section, chapter 3, I will introduce the concept of political branding and depict the political brands Clinton and Trump built for themselves. The third background section describes televised presidential debates as a genre. The relatively extensive chapters on the background of the debate provide the necessary macro-context for the analysis and especially for understanding the justifications of the interpretative choices that are made. In chapter 5, the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation is presented with its extended theory of strategic manoeuvring. The analysis of the candidates' strategic manoeuvring in the third presidential debate is divided into three subchapters under chapter 6 according to the segments of the debate. After this, the findings are interpreted in context to the candidates' political brands. Finally, in chapter 7, the thesis and its findings are summarised and related to the broader context of the political domain.

2. The 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaigns

The 2016 U.S. presidential campaigns saw their first candidate announcements in March 2015, and they culminated in the 58th American presidential election held on 8th November 2016. The two candidates who entered the general election were former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and New York real estate mogul Donald Trump. Barack Obama was the sitting president at the time of the election, and he had held office for two consecutive terms from 2009 to 2017.

Hillary Clinton announced she would be running for president with a YouTube video published on 12th April 2015 (ABC News). The video is strikingly diverse, including people from different ethnic backgrounds as well as age groups and sexual orientations. In the short section where Clinton announces her candidacy, she speaks about the economy being unfairly stacked in favour of those already at the top, and that the well-being of America comes from the well-being of its families. These were the central themes of her candidacy. In her first major campaign rally, held on Roosevelt Island on 13th June 2015, Clinton again depicted herself as a champion of the ordinary Americans especially in the economic field, calling attention to income inequality and the low taxation of the wealthiest Americans. She underlined her background in politics, bringing attention to her suitability for the position. Clinton also referred to her being a female candidate, noting that the rally was held in a park — “a place with absolutely no ceilings” (ibid.). Clinton’s campaign slogan was “Stronger together” (Keith 2016). After Clinton’s primary competitor in the 2016 Democratic primary election, Senator Bernie Sanders from Vermont, endorsed Clinton (Merica and Zeleny, 2016), winning over Sanders’ millennial² voters became a significant objective for Clinton, and it steered her campaign towards a more liberal approach. Clinton and her running mate, Tim Kane, were officially nominated at the 2016 Democratic National Convention on 26th July 2016 (Healy and Martin 2016).

Donald Trump made his candidacy announcement speech on 16th June 2015 at Trump Tower skyscraper in Manhattan New York (TIME 2015). In his speech Trump stated that his wealth and success in business qualify him for president, reading off his net worth to the thousandth dollar (\$8,737,540,00, although Forbes found his net worth to be only half of this (Gass 2015b)). His wealth, Trump stated, frees him of sponsorships and other financial commitments usually prominent in politics. In his speech, Trump used belligerent language when discussing Mexico and the problem of illegal immigration, stating that “[w]hen Mexico

² People born between 1977 and the mid-90s (The New Strategist Editors 2015, 1), although the definition is debatable.

sends its people, they're not sending their best [...]. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with them. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (TIME 2015). This description outlined his announcement for intending to build a wall on the border between the U.S. and Mexico — one of the leading statements of his candidacy. It also communicated the tone of his candidacy in that it dismissed political correctness and aggravated many. Trump ended his speech by declaring the American dream dead and promised he would bring it back and (quoting his campaign slogan) “make America great again” (ibid.). Donald Trump’s main competition in the Republican primary elections was Texas Senator Ted Cruz. Cruz withdrew from the race on 3rd May 2016 and endorsed Trump. Trump secured the Republican nomination on 20th July 2016 and chose sitting Indiana Governor Mike Pence as his running mate in the election (Collinson and Copan 2016).

The Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and the Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump were two extremely different candidates in not only their current styles but also in their pasts and qualifications. In the next two sections, Clinton’s and Trump’s backgrounds, images in the public eye, and central campaign promises are presented. In the last section of this chapter, I will go through the several scandals that arose during the election period — many of which were products of the candidates’ colourful careers before entering the presidential race of 2016. Considering the two candidates’ backgrounds as well as the tumultuous election period provides a point of reference for the later analysis of their personal political brands.

2.1. Hillary Clinton

Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton (later referred to as “Clinton”; born 26th October 1947) had a strong background in politics prior to the 2016 presidential race, and her name was universally recognised. She is married to Bill Clinton, who served as the 42nd president of the United States for two consecutive terms from 1993 to 2001. She served as Senator representing the state of New York from 2001 to 2009, and she served as Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013. She ran for president in 2008 but lost the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama (CNN 2018). While Clinton is known for her substantial experience in politics, she has also been at the centre of scandals before and has not been particularly well liked by the public (Goren 2018, 114). Hillary Clinton was the first First Lady to run for President. This, in conjunction with her political background, while convincing some of her suitability for presidency, alienated those who called

for a change in politics and rebelled against the political dynasty her family represented (Flitter 2016).

In 1998, Hillary and Bill Clinton became the centre of a scandal, when it became public that President Bill Clinton had had an affair with a White House intern Monica Lewinsky (Bernstein 2007, 628–696). As Bill Clinton had initially on record denied any allegations of an affair, he was deemed guilty of obstruction of justice and perjury by the opposition Republican Party as well as some Democratic congressional representatives. An impeachment process was initiated, but Clinton was acquitted of all charges. Hillary Clinton publicly supported her husband through the scandal and has stated little about the incident to this day (ibid.).

After Bill Clinton’s presidency ended in 2001, the Clintons founded the Clinton Foundation, a private operating charitable non-profit organisation³. The foundation “builds partnerships between businesses, NGOs, governments, and individuals everywhere to work faster, better, and leaner” (Clinton Foundation website) and includes programmes in areas such as gender equality (the No Ceilings initiative), climate change (Clinton Climate Initiative), and health and wellness (the Opioids and Prescription Drug Abuse Reduction initiative), the major programmes amounting to 11 (ibid). The foundation has been the target of critics and sceptics over the years, as “an organisation that brings in billions of dollars in donations from around the world and is operated by an ex-president and a possible future president who served at a high level in another presidency creates all sorts of possible conflicts of interest” (Zurcher 2016b). The Clintons have been accused of non-transparency in disclosing their donators (Gaouette 2016), which ties to ethical questions over Clinton’s possible double interest as both Secretary of State and the owner of the charity (Carroll 2016b). The foundation has also been perceived by some as being merely a slush fund for the Clintons (Gaouette 2016c). These issues in connection to the campaign will be further discussed in section 2.3.

Hillary Clinton has always had a strained relationship with the press. She had to learn to “tame her tongue” (Clinton 2017, 118) after political firestorms following her statements. One of the most notable uproars was caused in 1992 amid Bill Clinton’s presidential campaign, when her professional ambition was scrutinized, and she stated in response “I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was to fulfil my

³ “A private operating foundation is any private foundation that spends at least 85 percent of its adjusted net income or its minimum investment return, whichever is less, directly for the active conduct of its exempt activities” (IRS 2017), meaning the foundation uses the donations directly on programmes it has conducted. This differentiates them from private non-operating foundations, which operate as a pass-through for donations to other charitable groups, who in turn do the concrete work in their programmes (National Center for Family Philanthropy 2011).

profession, which I entered before my husband was in public life” (NBC News 2016c). This statement was interpreted by some as an insult to American mothers, especially to those who stayed at home and chose not to work (Clinton 2017, 119). Following the commotion caused by her remarks, Clinton became much more cautious with her public statements (ibid.), and her relationship with the press became increasingly uneasy (Goren 2018, 114). While she has been accused of inauthenticity and coldness (Cunha 2016), some have defended her by stating inauthenticity is a necessary price for women in the public eye if they do not wish to be viewed as angry or shrill and risk being misunderstood if they do not stay composed at all times (Goren 2018, 112). In 2014, Clinton accused the press for upholding this double standard when talking about men and women in the public sphere, challenging them to become more self-consciously aware of the issue (Haberman 2014). Clinton’s awareness of this double standard carried into the debates and affected her presentation, as she was conscious of how she would be assessed if she, a female candidate, would have not been able to stay calm (Clinton 2017, 137).

In her presidential campaign, Clinton went after the votes of the same demographics Obama did in his campaigns: millennials, women, and people of colour (Marshall in Balz and Rucker 2016) as well as the LGBTQ+ community (The Office of Hillary Rodham Clinton 2017; Encarnación 2016). Clinton was successful in receiving support from women, although this was as much due to the voters’ antipathy towards Trump as it was to them appreciating Clinton (Page 2016). Clinton enjoyed the overwhelming support of African Americans due to her appropriately polished answers on racial questions during the campaign (Troy 2016). Clinton’s team updated the data-analytics-heavy campaign model used by Barack Obama, and her campaign concentrated especially on social media channels and microtargeting (Persily 2017, 63), customizing the emails they sent out to potential voters to be as personalized as possible (Higgins 2016). The Clinton tech team was enormous compared to other campaigns’ (Lapowsky 2016), and her team utilized a complex computer algorithm called Ada, which was employed in virtually every strategic decision the Clinton team made (Wagner 2016). In comparison, Trump’s campaign used little money on technological tools (Lapowsky 2016) — although his campaign did spend most of its budget on enabling Facebook tools with good results (Stahl 2017).

During the election period, many people thought Clinton would only be a continuation of Obama — a position she did not deny (Clinton 2017, 77) — and her campaign promises reflected that. She promised to increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$12 an hour (Carroll 2016a) and advocated for pay transparency and to close the pay gap between men and women (The Office of Hillary Rodham Clinton 2017). Clinton campaigned for free college

tuition at community colleges for children from families making less than \$125,000 a year (Gass 2015a). She also pledged to not raise middle class taxes but instead to raise them for the wealthiest 1% (Phillip, Wagner, and Gearan 2016) and promised affordable health care for more people by building on Obama's Affordable Care Act (The Office of Hillary Rodham Clinton 2017). Clinton pushed for comprehensive immigration reform, stating that she wanted to "offer hard-working, law-abiding immigrant families a path to citizenship" (Clinton 2015). Clinton's campaign promises reflected her desire to appeal to average Americans, racial and sexual minorities, and women.

Hillary Clinton's long career in public office has earned her the reputation of a competent politician, but she has also collected a substantial pool of those distrusting of her. Her visible role as First Lady as well as her own career and the scandals related to it have received criticism, and these issues carried into the presidential race of 2016 (Valentino, Wayne and Ocen 2018). Clinton had clear policies as well as the knowledge and competence to argue for her stance in debates. Her role was clearly that of a traditional politician, and she was justifiably seen as a force that would uphold the status quo and not as someone who would be a significant change from the previous administration, which greatly differentiated her from Donald Trump.

2.2. Donald Trump

Donald John Trump (born 14th June 1946) was already a well-known brand as his presidential campaign started. He is the son of business mogul Fred Trump, and he has managed the family real estate business (renamed The Trump Organization) from 1971 onwards. In addition to expanding the family business, Donald Trump has also started several side ventures. Some of these include Trump Airlines, University, Ties, Steaks, Suits, and Vodka. According to his financial disclosure from 2015, he is involved in altogether 515 organisations and entities, 318 of which bear either his name or his initials (Zurcher 2015). Trump also owned the Miss Universe and Miss USA beauty pageants from 1996 to 2015. Trump's success in the business world has earned him the image of a seasoned businessman and a tough negotiator. Lawsuits are one of Trump's central negotiation tools (Penzentadler and Page 2016), which indicates an aggressive style of doing business. He flaunted his skills in the book *The Art of the Deal* (ghost-written by Tony Schwartz), which was published in 1987 and became a New York Times Bestseller (Long 2016c). Trump advertised his image as a dealmaker — based partly on the book — heavily during the 2016 presidential campaign to his definite benefit (Wilkie 2017).

Despite Trump having never worked in government, prior to 2015 he had toyed with the idea of running for president several times. The first time was in 1987, when Trump bought full-page advertisement spaces in three major newspapers across the U.S., in which he expressed his views on foreign policy when the presidential campaigns were starting. Additionally, he announced plans on travelling to the first Presidential primary that year (Oreskes 1987). This sparked speculation over his possible bid for presidency, but ultimately he did not run. In 2000, Trump explored the option of running for president under the Reform Party but eventually dropped out. Trump considered running again in 2004 as well as in 2011 (Travis 2011). These flirtations with the idea of running for president, including the publicity it came with, could be argued to be clever business tactics as they increased his visibility. In fact, Michael Cohen, Trump's former lawyer, testified before Congress on 27th February 2019 on Trump's presidential campaign, saying "Donald Trump is a man who ran for office to make his brand great, not to make our country great. [. . .] Mr. Trump would often say this campaign would be the greatest infomercial in political history" (NBC News 2019). Cohen's testimony, if assumed truthful⁴, should be recognised when Trump's tactics in the presidential race are described and analysed. Even if Trump's goal was not to become president, his tactics were ultimately successful, which informs us of what it might require to prosper in the increasingly mediatized world of politics — if it might in fact be appropriate to treat a presidential campaign as an enormous infomercial.

A notably successful venture of Trump's was the reality TV show *The Apprentice*, which Trump hosted and produced and which ran in different formats for fifteen seasons starting in 2004. Trump's reality TV show was, according to some, the perfect way to prep his presidency bid. Roger Stone, Trump's core political confidante and long-time business acquaintance, said in a Frontline interview that:

[The Apprentice] is the greatest single asset to [Trump's] presidential campaign, because for 14 seasons, he is viewed by the voters, by the population, in a perfect light. Think about it. He's perfectly made up. He's perfectly coiffed. He's perfectly lit. He's in the high-back chair making tough decisions. What does he look like? He looks like a president. Now, I understand the elites say, "Oh, that's reality TV." Voters don't see it that way. Television news and television entertainment, it's all television. (Stone in Breslow 2016)

⁴Michael Cohen was disbarred in February 2019 for making false statements to Congress. He was also convicted to three years in prison for campaign finance violations he committed when working for Donald Trump (Orden 2019). As these are evidence of a history of untruthfulness, it can be argued that his testimony is undependable.

Stone may be correct. With the show, Trump built himself the image of a stern dealmaker who would stand up to anyone. While for many the idea that a reality TV background would be a suitable qualification for being a president is unreasonable, in our age, where media is present in all aspects of life, the standards for even the most serious and traditional of ideas are continually transformed.

The mediatization of politics is a relevant concept in the context of Trump and the media spectacle he provoked into existence. *Mediatization* means the long-term process of increasing direct and indirect media influence to and integrations in varying aspects of society (Esser and Strömbäck 2014, 4–6). Over decades, since the rise of mass media and especially the television, mediatized discourse has become a central way for politics to address the citizens. Adapting to the rules of the media is as essential as its use in order to stay relevant (Mazzoleni in Esser and Strömbäck 2014, 43), and in today’s media society this increasingly means creating “clickable” or shocking headlines — at least when catering to the majority citizenry (Persily 2017, 72). Donald Trump understands the significance and the nature of the media, and his expertise in handling it during the campaign earned him the screen time and the relevance that no traditional campaign running could offer. The New York Times estimated that Trump earned \$1,9 billion worth of free media attention during the campaign compared to Clinton’s \$746 million (Confessore and Yourish 2016). As politics is becoming more and more intertwined with the media, mere masterful visibility in the media may forecast a political role in the future. Whether or not Donald Trump’s decades-long career in the media spotlight was calculated and aimed towards a political goal, it absolutely did provide him a way to being a serious contender for the position of arguably the most powerful person in the world.

During his presidential campaign Donald Trump decidedly rejected a traditional political tone (Persily 2017, 64) and instead continued in the race with his trademark style, relying less on facts and more on his image and stoking the public’s feelings. Consequently, his speeches had little substance. Thematically Trump concentrated on immigration and terrorism as well as jobs, stability, and security, which reflected a Republican political inclination (Wang and Liu 2017, 311). Trump’s themes were narrower in scope than those of Clinton’s (ibid.), which also manifested in his comparably poor preparation for the debates. Few actual policies existed, and most were only wide-sweeping, often extravagant notions of what he would do if he was to become president and what disasters would occur if Clinton was elected (Sullivan in Balz and Rucker 2016). Many of the claims he made were later specified or changed completely as the reality of their outlandishness became evident (Eder and Parlapiano 2016).

In her PolitiFact article, Linda Qiu (2016a) lists Trump's most notable campaign promises. Trump made it very clear during the campaign that he would reform immigration policies to reduce illegal immigration. One of the most striking promises Trump made during the campaign, the one he announced his candidacy with, was that he would build a wall on the almost 3,000km long border between the United States and Mexico. This he repeated consistently throughout his campaign despite wide-ranging doubt raised against how realistic the aim actually was (ibid.). Other policies Trump upheld were a temporary Muslim ban (which some deemed unconstitutional as it bans people based on faith)⁵, repealing Obamacare and replacing it with a private alternative, repealing the Iran nuclear deal, and defeating ISIS (Qiu 2016a). The last point underlined Trump's staple topic when seeking for a strong emotional response from the voters: terrorism. As Americans at the time of the campaign believed in the serious threat of terrorism more than ever (Pew Research Center 2016), it was a remarkably effective method for evoking strong emotional responses from potential voters (Qiu 2016a). In the economic sphere, Trump's campaign promises revolved largely around creating and bringing back American jobs. His campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again", addressed the goal of economic prosperity (Keith 2016).

Donald Trump's campaign used little funds in comparison to Hillary Clinton's campaign (Persily 2017, 65). The only exception was Facebook on which Trump's team used more than Clinton — partly due to his late entry in the race, which demanded heavier investment in online campaigning (ibid.). Trump's campaign staff decided that the primary focus of their campaign was going to be on Hillary Clinton, and that talking negatively about anyone else was not allowed (Manafort in Balz and Rucker 2016). This, however, proved challenging, as Trump did not tolerate criticism nor was he able to restrain himself from commenting on issues not strictly related to Clinton (ibid.). Despite Trump's relatively modest campaign spending, his visibility — as discussed earlier — was impressive, as he is an expert in gaining free media attention.

Donald Trump's business and reality TV backgrounds paved his way to a game of presidential campaigning that he made the rules for and which only he truly knew how to play. While his policy agendas were deemed by some as shapeless and scopeless (Sullivan in Balz and Rucker 2016), and he was widely seen as unfit for the role of presidency (Goff in Balz and Rucker 2016), Trump was able to stay relevant. He flared up people's emotions with speeches and policy suggestions he knew would earn him headlines and free news coverage, and with

⁵ Trump followed up on the campaign promise and issued a travel ban, and it was approved by the supreme court (Gladstone and Sugiyama 2018)

his constant high-profile claims he ensured that he was the one setting the stage, and that other candidates must always acknowledge him and respond. In the next chapter, I will go through the numerous scandals and disparagements that surfaced during the campaign and which made the 2016 presidential race different from any before it. The scandals are central in understanding the unique context in which the presidential debates took place and the dynamic the two candidates had. The campaign era also demonstrates how a character like Trump is able to dodge responsibility over serious allegations and consequently be a serious candidate for being the president of the United States of America. This illustrates a shift in the American public's attitudes towards politics and fame as well as what a person with a particular image should or should not be able to do.

2.3. The Uniquely Scandalous Campaign

The 2016 presidential campaign was unique in nature compared to any previous campaign. Not only was one of the candidates a newcomer to politics, but Trump changed the circumstances entirely with his approach. The campaign era was riddled with scandals and only got more distasteful towards the end. Donald Trump, due to his lack of comprehensive knowledge of political processes, but also due to his understanding of the media, ran his campaign much like a reality TV show, relying heavily on the free media coverage that followed his flashy, emotion-evoking performances and inflammatory comments. The Republicans appeared to discard all unwritten rules of political campaigning and instead went with the style Trump was used to, which expertly stoked the passions of Americans. Hillary Clinton's campaign was in absolute contrast with Trump's with its traditional by-the-rules approach. Her policy outlinings gained comparatively little media coverage, as they could be considered boring compared to Trump's conduct. The way Trump ran his campaign set the tone for 2016 in terms of news and social movements, and this naturally affected his opponent's campaign. This section explores the scandals and controversies of the 2016 presidential campaigns that gained media attention and generated discussion. Many of the topics examined in this chapter were brought up in the debates either by the candidates or by the mediator, but they also set the tone for any interaction between the candidates, thus providing valuable background information.

One of the most marked features of the 2016 presidential campaign were the copious factually inaccurate statements made by Trump. PolitiFact⁶ fact checkers concluded that during

⁶ PolitiFact is a non-profit, nonpartisan fact checking website focused on American politics. It is the largest fact-checking organization in the United States, and it is run by journalists (PolitiFact 2018). While

the campaign the claims Hillary Clinton made were 74% “true”, “mostly true”, or “half true”, while the corresponding number for Trump was 31%. 28% of Clinton’s and 69% of Trump’s statements were “mostly false”, “false”, or “pants on fire” (Sharockman 2016)⁷. A 2017 study on the campaign era found that the two candidates formulated their arguments very differently following this attitude: Trump presented personal opinions that were often based on erroneous data, while Clinton justified her claims with valid data (Khoirunisa and Indah 2017, 170). Tony Schwartz, who ghost-wrote *The Art of the Deal*, used the term “truthful hyperbole” in his book to soften the implication that Trump lied continuously, stating: “[m]ore than anyone else I have ever met, Trump has the ability to convince himself that whatever he is saying at any given moment is true, or sort of true, or at least ought to be true” (Schwartz in Mayer 2016). Trump’s indifferent relationship with truth served him well amidst the scandals in which the entire presidential campaign was engulfed. Being no stranger to exaggeration, misrepresentation, and deceit, he was able to take full advantage of his opponents’ discredits, as well as disregarding and denying his own. While a politician’s dishonesty is certainly not unprecedented, the sheer volume of Trump’s falsehoods in comparison to Clinton’s is a testament to his character, and it certainly also echoed in the debates.

One of the most central controversies that surfaced during the campaigns was Hillary Clinton’s email scandal. It was reported on 2nd March 2015 that Clinton had used a personal email account for conducting governmental business during her time as secretary of state from 2009 to 2013 (Schmidt 2015). The story emerged, when Clinton’s aides had to review tens of thousands of her emails to separate work-related emails from personal ones to turn over the official emails (altogether 55,000) to the State Department for record-keeping purposes, and it was speculated that not all work-related emails were turned over (ibid.). Because the law requires that state officials’ correspondence to be retained as part of the State Department’s record for historians, congressional committees, and the media to use, an investigation into the matter was issued. In July 2016, the FBI concluded that there was no reason to bring a criminal case against Clinton (Schmidt 2015).⁸

Controversy also arose around the Clinton Foundation. During the campaign questions over Hillary Clinton’s position in the foundation resurfaced concerning especially the donors’

PolitiFact has faced criticism, it is widely regarded as a reliable source of unbiased information, and it won the Pulitzer Prize for national reporting in 2009 (Pulitzer 2009).

⁷ Clinton’s percentage numbers add up to 102% presumably due to rounding up the numbers, as PolitiFact does not report decimals.

⁸ Eleven days before the election the FBI announced that they were inspecting newly found Clinton emails, and only two days before the voting booths opened, FBI Director James Comey declared that Clinton or her aides should face no criminal charges in the matter (Schmidt 2015).

potential to influence Clinton’s decision-making in her official status. A prime example of this was the Uranium One deal made with the Russian government, which resulted in the Russian atomic energy agency, Rosatom, becoming one of the largest uranium producers in the world⁹. The Russians gained control over Uranium One in three stages from 2009 to 2013, and during this time the Clinton Foundation received donations from the chairman of Uranium One, which totalled to \$2.35 million. These donations were never disclosed despite Clinton having made a deal with the Obama White House to identify all donors publicly (Becker and McIntire 2015). The deal demonstrated the blurred line that seemed to exist between the Clinton Foundation’s business and that of the State Department, and it made sceptics suspect that the foundation was merely an instrument for foreign governments and powerful individuals to gain access to the State Department through donations (Carroll 2016b). While there was no evidence of the donations playing a role in the uranium deal, ethical questions were difficult to disregard despite Clinton vowing sincerity.

The Clinton controversies were fuel for Trump and his supporters, who nicknamed Clinton “Crooked Hillary” and consistently portrayed her as untrustworthy. Undermining her honesty was well founded based on the secretive and even questionable history the Clintons had (Carroll 2016b), and from Trump’s perspective this paralleled usefully with his notion of “the Clinton dynasty” — a feature of his anti-political populist rhetoric, which was heavily present throughout the campaign. One of the most used rally-cries in Trump’s events was “Lock Her Up!” (Stevenson 2016), which his supporters chanted any time her emails or the Clinton foundation were mentioned (Bossie in Balz and Rucker 2016). Trump stated in the second presidential debate on 9th October 2016 that if he won the election, he would have a special prosecutor investigate Clinton’s campaign (NBC News 2016d)¹⁰. Clinton’s “crookedness” was a central theme in Trump’s campaign, and his stance struck a responsive chord with disgruntled voters who were unhappy with the political ruling class.

Donald Trump’s tax returns became an issue during the 2016 campaign period. Trump never released his full tax returns, which every candidate before him had done since 1976 (Shear, Eder, and Cohen 2017). Releasing tax returns would have allowed the public to know

⁹ Uranium is a strategic asset in terms of national security, which means that global control over the uranium supply chain would hold enormous power. The problem with the Clinton Foundation in this matter was that several big donors to the foundation were among the people who sold the Russians the company that would later become known as Uranium One. Furthermore, uranium deals are accepted by a committee comprised of United States government agencies’ representatives, and one of the agencies that signed off the deal was the State Department, which was at the time headed by Hillary Clinton (Becker and McIntire 2015).

¹⁰ Trump retracted this statement after the election, and no investigation was launched (Hirschfield Davis and Shield 2016).

about for example the size and construction of Trump's businesses as well as possible conflicts of interest and inappropriate connections to for example foreign entities (Romney 2016). Not releasing the tax returns thus had the potential of making it more difficult for some voters to decide whom to cast their ballot for (Shear, Eder, and Cohen 2017). Trump defended his decision to not release his tax returns by saying he was under audit, although this was deemed an excuse because it would not have prevented him from releasing his tax returns from previous years (Romney 2016). Additionally, in the first presidential debate on 26th September, Clinton suggested that Trump did not want to release his tax returns because he does not pay income taxes, which Trump said makes him smart — a comment that did not resonate well with a large number of potential voters. Trump also stated he would release his tax returns when Clinton would release “the 33,000 emails that have been deleted” (NBC News 2016b). Both candidates thus had transparency issues that were difficult to overlook: Clinton with her foundation donations and emails and Trump with his tax returns. Both accused the other of dishonesty, and neither was able to completely discredit the allegations.

Social divisions and diversity, while they were not actual policy areas, became pressing topics during the campaign. When these issues were discussed in the political sphere, a divide in the U.S. society was highlighted, and a ridge between social groups deepened (Lilleker, Jackson, Thorsen, and Veneti 2016, 8). The most obvious example of this was racism. While racist language is not a novel phenomenon in U.S. politics, the degree to which it was utilized in the 2016 election campaign was remarkable. The tone was already set when Trump announced his candidacy and made racist comments about Mexicans (TIME 2015), and it continued throughout the campaign. Trump for example questioned a Hispanic judge's competence based on his ethnicity, which prompted US House Speaker Paul Ryan to call his remarks “textbook racism” (Kertscher 2016). Despite adamantly denying his racism (Reuters 2016), with his comments and behaviour Trump gained an undeniably racist reputation. Clinton contrasted Trump with her messages of unity and inclusivity.

Sexism and misogyny were another fundamentally divisive element of the campaigns. The most glaring example of this was the Access Hollywood tape, which leaked only days before the second presidential debate (held on 9th October 2016). On the tape Trump talks about seducing women and says, “[y]ou know I'm automatically attracted to beautiful... I just start kissing them, it's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it, you can do anything... grab them by the pussy [. . .]” (NBC News 2016a). Backlash to the tape was intense. Trump issued a videotaped apology in which he called the incident a distraction from the real issues at hand and sought to direct people's attention to Bill Clinton's

affair scandal and the allegations of sexual misconduct against him (The Liberty Daily 2016). In the second presidential debate, Trump called his comments on the tape “locker room talk” and denied that he has ever done the things he was talking about (NBC News 2016d). Sean Spicer, the Republican National Committee chief strategist, stated that it would have been impossible for any other candidate to withstand the controversy that rose over the tape (Balz and Rucker 2016). Trump made copious other sexist and misogynistic comments throughout the campaign. He for example accused Clinton of playing “the woman card” and said that if she were a man, she would not get 5% of the vote (BBC News 2016b). Many Republicans felt that because of Trump’s statements on not only women but also regarding for example immigrants and Muslims, they could no longer support him (Mehta 2016).

Trump was always a controversial candidate. He met adamant resistance not only from the Democratic Party but also from members of the Republican Party. The materialised in the Stop Trump (or #NeverTrump) movement, in which Republican members of Congress as well as other notable conservatives sought to prevent the nomination and later the presidency of Donald Trump (Goldmacher, Glueck, and McCaskill 2016; Johnson, McCray, and Ragusa 2018, 1). In addition, every living former US president voiced that they would not endorse Trump (Reilly 2016). There were varied reasons for Republicans not to endorse their party’s candidate in the 2016 election. Electoral motivations, such as a Republican lawmaker from a liberal state refusing to endorse Trump because it would hurt their image too much, and policy preferences were a factor for some, but by far the most influential element was identity. The most significant identity aspects affecting a lawmaker’s joining of the Stop Trump movement were gender and religion (Goldmacher, Glueck, and McCaskill 2016; Johnson, McCray, and Ragusa 2018, 6). These findings are hardly surprising considering Trump’s remarks on religion, gender, and race issues during the campaign, but their prevalence in the movement underlines the substantial negative backlash and wider discourse resulting from his rhetoric.

The 2016 campaign was arguably one that got the most media coverage compared to any previous campaign. In addition to this being the era of 24/7 news coverage and social media, this was at least partly due to the process being plagued with a variety of scandals that news agencies scrambled to stay on top of and report in a nonpartisan manner. The question of equal and fair reporting — although already a recurring theme in politics, as discussed by Waldman (2012) — rose to a new limelight during the campaign period. In a democratic Western society’s political campaigns, there is legitimate controversy between candidates, and the position of a journalist is to give room for the candidates to make their case and to act as the conduct between political entities and the public without casting moral judgements (Rutenberg 2016; Carlson in

Lilleker, Jackson, Thorsen, and Veneti 2016, 11). During the 2016 campaign, however, many reporters struggled to stay objective and professionally neutral in their reporting of Trump. Jay Rosen, a professor of journalism at New York University, wrote in July 2016 that Trump's candidacy uprooted the basic assumptions held by reporters on campaign journalism, making them question the seriousness of even often repeated claims such as "Mexico will pay for the wall" and fearing that if they report these claims seriously, they might become the joke themselves (Rosen 2016). Simultaneously, if a statement or action would have been left unreported, the candidate would get away with breaking the rules, and reproachable and morally unsound ideas may be normalized. Rosen similarly stated that "Trump is crashing the system — violating norms and assumptions that were previously taken for granted because so far, everyone who had reached the point of consideration had obeyed them" (ibid).

Some reporters and agencies eventually found noncommittal reporting on Trump impossible and seriously questioned whether he deserved neutral treatment. Journalist Jorge Ramos declared on the Time website that "[j]ust providing both points of view is not enough in the current presidential campaign. If a candidate is making racist and sexist remarks, we cannot hide in the principle of neutrality. That's a false equivalence" (Ramos 2016). Although journalists did uncover Trump's non-factual statements and scandals, this might have had little to no effect on the public's opinion of him. Studies have shown that US citizens have an extremely low level of trust in traditional news media (Van Aelst in Lilleker et. al. 2016, 16). Trump revelled in this fact, and during the campaign, the people's mistrust of the media seemed to turn into hatred. In his rallies, Trump often pointed out the media and spoke about their "false and unfair" representation of him, calling them "the most dishonest people I know" (ibid.). While the kinds of untruths Trump spoke might have weakened his candidacy had he ran years ago, they did not matter in the 2016 campaign (Muller in Lilleker et. al. 2016, 17). His statements became viral before their factuality could be verified, and Trump's expertise in handling the media — as well as undermining its authority — gained one more example.

The scandals of the 2016 presidential campaigns were many and varied, and they were binged and showcased in both professional and social media as well as by the candidates themselves. The question of fair and equal reporting was a pressing topic with which journalists struggled with. The tension that had built up over months between the nominees manifested itself for example when the two did not shake hands at the beginning of the second or third debate as is customary. Clinton has stated that the reason for this were the *Access Hollywood* tapes that had surfaced only days before the second debate, after which she "was not going to shake that man's hand" (Clinton 2017, 106). Trump and Clinton were the most disliked

presidential candidates the United States had seen in the past ten presidential cycles (Enten 2016). Part of this may be explained by the growing polarization of politics (ibid.), but it was also due to their histories in the public eye and the scandals that took place during the campaign. Thus, we can see that these issues clearly affected the dynamic and topics in the debates. They also demonstrated the political brands of the two candidates and how they were shaped, as discussed in the next chapter.

3. Political Branding

Brands exist all around in almost any context: we see them in for example supermarkets, fashion retail, and charities. Brands communicate value beyond the functional purpose of the entity and help us find a preferable option as consumers (Dean, Croft, and Pich 2015, 21). It has become generally accepted that political parties and candidates alike can be conceptualised as brands, and this consensus is articulated in the growing number of journals on the topic in the sphere of marketing and political science (Needham and Smith 2015, 1). Just as consumers may decide between two products based on the brand, voters may decide which political party or candidate they wish to endorse based on their political brands. In this chapter, the concept of political branding is defined, after which the personal political brands of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump during their presidential campaigns of 2016 are explored. The brands, which had their firm foundations in the two public figures' pasts and which were strengthened or revamped in the campaign era, form the background against which the analysis will be made.

3.1. Defining Political Branding

The concept of a political brand is elusive and inhibits multiple understandings in different contexts: media, political parties, and scholars alike have defined it in varying terms. Scholars have, in the lack of a unified frame, each projected their own interpretations of the term, thus largely missing a common ground and making it difficult to determine whether the results of different studies on branding are even comparable. Because of this variation in literature, I will in this study base the definition of the term *political branding* on Nielsen's (2017) definition, which is based on his extensive literature review on the matter. Nielsen's (126) minimal definition states that "[a] political brand is political representations that are located in a pattern, which can be identified and differentiated from other political representations." Identification refers to for example a presidential candidate's name being easily recalled, whereas differentiation indicates a candidate's distinction from other candidates (ibid.). Differentiation from other political brands is especially critical because many political entities have adopted a catch-all approach, where many agree on what results should be attained but differ in their views of how these ends should be accomplished (French and Smith 2010, 461).

Some have concluded that a political brand implies stability over time due to the many aspects it is constructed of (Nielsen 2017, 126), while others argue the opposite, believing that political brands are inherently unstable because they are vulnerable and difficult to control completely (Scammell 2007, 187). Dean, Croft, and Pich (2015, 23) note that flexibility is a

distinctive feature of political brands — especially in contrast to broader political ideologies — as brands need to be updated and adapted in correspondence to the needs of the citizens. Gobé argues the same, stating that “[s]peed has replaced stability,” and that brands ought to realize this to remain relevant (2001, xiii). In the fast-paced context of presidential campaigns, these adaptations need to be especially swift, as the backdrop candidates are viewed against (including for example possible scandals, other candidates’ brands, and defamation attempts by other campaigners) changes continuously. In addition to the general brand the candidate puts forth, they usually advertise different aspects of their brand in different regions, further highlighting the need for flexibility. A political debate setting tests a candidate’s ability to be flexible enough in their presentation that they reach as wide an audience as possible while still staying true enough to their brand that more devoted voters do not feel the candidate loses their defining characteristics.

Research distinguishes several different brand perspectives (Nielsen 2017), but while the categories differ based on the research tradition behind the categories and the tools used to target voters, the overlapping theme in all of them is the centrality of *emotional branding*. This indicates that in order to be successful brands ought to engage with consumers (or voters) on a sensory and emotional level (Gobé 2001, xv). As the visibility of the personal lives of politicians increases through for example social media, they are expected to appear exceedingly relatable and familiar to the public. Skilful application of consumer-centric and story-driven strategies can thus be extremely effective in forging lasting bonds between brands and consumers (Roberts in Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006, 50). One of the definite advantages of utilizing this kind of emotional content in branding is that it attracts media attention and has the potential to go viral on social media, which omits the need to pay for news coverage. This, as was mentioned previously, was clearly a tactic Trump and his team successfully utilized.

Consumer passion and brand loyalty are rarely acquired to the same degree with rational argumentation as they are by appealing to emotions (Van Aelst in Lilleker et. al. 2016, 16), and as the political sphere becomes more and more popularized, voters’ personal feelings associated with a political entity gain exceeding importance. When brands compete over the same voters, which is often the case in political catch-all approaches, the emotional connection made with voters are what may well determine the outcome. Especially when an anti-intellectual climate is on the rise in the US, the policy makers and political branders who rely too heavily on facts and figures are outshone by more emotional content (Van Aelst in Lilleker et. al. 2016, 16).

Utilizing emotional content in branding, effective as it is, makes a brand vulnerable to *doppelgänger brand images* created by opponents, competitors, or critics. This cultural backlash is characterized by loosely connected networks of people creating defamatory stories and images of the brand. These networks may include for example news channels, voters, antibrand activists, or opinion leaders on social media (Thompson 2006, 50), and their efforts often prompted by a candidate. While some *doppelgänger brand images* are intentionally defaming, others may be merely memes or jokes on social media that can, however, be damaging to a brand. Even these fragmented pieces of an alternative image may over time develop into, or at least promote, a consistent and meaningful negative representation of a brand (ibid.). In US politics, defamation campaigns against opponents have a long tradition, as does building *doppelgänger brand images* for political opponents. *Doppelgänger brand images* were especially visible in some of Trump's nicknames for his opponent, such as "crooked Hillary" and "nasty woman." Emotional branding also exposes parties to criticism about lacking detailed ideas (Cosgrove in Lilleker et. al. 2016, 27). This was proven with Trump: while his provocative style attracted attention it also highlighted his undefined policy outlinings (Balz and Rucker 2016).

It is worth noting that despite utilizing even skilful branding, it is certainly not inevitable that people will buy into the carefully crafted and advertised brands of politicians. In fact, marketing politicians like common household items has eroded people's belief in genuine democratic politics. Especially in combination with political scandals and the mediatization of politics, the public has become exceedingly sceptical of what they accept as truth (Parry-Giles 2014, 1–2). Additionally, rivalling candidates seek to discredit their opponents, and successful *doppelgänger brand images* can be detrimental to a brand. Sceptical can naturally be not only those who would vote for a competing candidate but also the avid supporters of a candidate whose sincerity may be questioned. These issues should be recognized as the discussion continues into the political brands of Clinton and Trump.

3.2. The Political Brands of Clinton and Trump

This section thematically explores the political brands Clinton and Trump built for themselves during their presidential campaigns. The topics discussed in this chapter provide the backdrop against which the later analysis of the debate will be made and to which the two candidates' strategic manoeuvrings will be linked in the discussion of the results.

As a political newcomer, Trump's brand was glaringly different from Clinton's, and he used this to his advantage. Because of the two candidates' differing backgrounds, people

had a narrower set of expectations for Trump than they had for Clinton (Sullivan in Balz and Rucker 2016), and Trump's non-political career gave him the opportunity to brand himself as an outsider from politics. He attained a reputation as an outspoken and authentic figure, establishing a decidedly anti-political stance and avoiding being strictly identified with the Republican Party (Greider 2016). Trump deemed political dynasties, like that of Clinton's, corrupt, and he called for a change (Flitter 2016). By positioning himself as an outlier, Trump was able to characterize himself as the voice of the people, not of the elite — a statement resonating with many voters despite Trump having lived an extremely privileged life.

Clinton contrasted Trump in that with her long career in politics she had the reputation of an insider. This was judged as a benefit by some and as a damning fact by others. The challenge for her team was to make her brand seem fresh while still respecting her existing identity (Rucker and Gearan 2015). Clinton already had an existing image of a relatively widely disliked politician, and one of the main goals of Trump's campaign was to strengthen that image (Savoy 2016, 18). Sean Spicer, the Republican National Committee chief strategist, stated that “[t]he narrative was already baked in. That was the beauty of her. In most campaigns, you're trying to define a candidate. She was defined as someone that people don't like and don't trust, and all we had to do was reinforce the existing narrative” (Balz and Rucker 2016). In a 2016 study Savoy concluded that this objective was enforced, and that Trump's style and rhetoric indeed sought to strengthen Clinton's image as unlikeable and untrustworthy (Savoy 2016, 18).

It is obvious that any presidential nominee would want to build an image of a proud American. Donald Trump embraced his national identity fully, displaying an extremely strong message of “America first” — something that was deemed his absolute objective were he elected president (BBC News 2016b). Clinton, in response, continually sought to undermine Trump's brand as a nationalist by deeming him and his statements un-American, especially in connection to his policy suggestions regarding immigration as well as his racist language (The Washington Post 2016). Clinton maintained a much more cooperative message than Trump, emphasizing the importance of national unity along with a cooperative intent towards other countries (Podesta in Balz and Rucker 2016).

Both Clinton and Trump had campaign slogans that underlined what they (along with their campaign staff) believed was what their targeted voters wanted from a candidate. For both candidates this meant a degree of nationalism in the message but from different angles. Trump's “Make America Great Again” was an extremely good slogan as it appealed to a belief a majority of Americans shared: that the country was heading in the wrong direction and required change (Whitler 2016). The message was also repeated at every opportunity, which

led to it being exceptionally well remembered by voters. In contrast, Clinton changed her slogan twice. Her original slogan “Hillary for America” was ambiguous and did not clearly communicate how voting for her would benefit an average American. Clinton’s campaign later transitioned to “Fighting for Us,” and towards the end of her slogan became “Stronger Together.” “Stronger Together” broadcasted not only that Clinton is a liberal candidate opposing the idea that people are only responsible for themselves but also demonstrates her strength in comparison to Trump: he divides, she unites (Waldman, 2016). However, because Clinton changed her slogan and because it was not consistently communicated like Trump’s singular message, it was poorly remembered by the public (Whitler 2016).

Clinton’s campaign strived to invoke a rejection of the values Trump promoted, which were based — according to her — on division, bigotry, and his history of abusing people (Podesta in Balz and Rucker 2016). This was done especially with the *Access Hollywood* tape, which Clinton’s campaign sought to cement as the perfect illustration of the essence of his character (Manafort in Balz and Rucker 2016). Clinton aimed to undermine Trump’s credibility and to expose the perceived unfeasibility of his policies as well as his unfitness for presidency for example by using his own words against him — a strategy also used in the debates (Benenson, Schwerin, and Mook in Balz and Rucker 2016).

As discussed earlier, previous studies have illustrated how Donald Trump’s regard of using words is different from experienced politicians’ (Wang and Liu 2017; Savoy 2016). Clinton’s fluent and calculated speaking style is traditionally fit for the brand of a politician, and it was in stark contrast with Trump’s common and simple style. Trump’s manner of speaking was much closer to the way people speak in everyday contexts than one conventionally fit for the political arena (Savoy 2016). Wang and Liu found, as did Savoy (2016), that Trump’s richness of vocabulary in interviews, campaign speeches, and TV debates was significantly lower than that of Clinton’s (2017, 306). Kayam also made similar findings and concluded that Trump employed this strategy to appeal to a wider audience (2017, 86). In a 2016 study Jacques Savoy found that Trump used persistent language (high frequency of words such as “must,” “has,” and “do”), and he used more negative emotion words than Clinton (17), highlighting masculinity. Both styles served the purposes of their users: Clinton enforced her brand as an accomplished politician, whereas Trump highlighted his strong masculine image (Savoy 2016, 18) and status as an outsider from politics. Trump wanted to be perceived as an authentic candidate who “says it like it is” and accomplished this by not filtering his words and often going off script — even though his campaign staff might have made suggestions on

whether he should voice certain thoughts. Roger Stone, who is close to Trump, has stated “[n]obody puts words in Trump’s mouth. Believe me, I’ve tried for 30 years” (Breslow 2016).

Trump’s brand was contrasted by Clinton’s history of rigid public appearances and general style. She has been accused of lacking warmth in her public appearances and has been deemed inauthentic, distant, and elitist (Cunha 2016). Bringing warmth to her brand thus became a definite point of interest in Clinton’s campaign (Chozick 2015). To achieve this, she for example often spoke about her family and especially her grandchildren, met people personally, and shared their emotional stories at rallies (Cunha 2016). Her husband, Bill Clinton, spoke at the 2016 Democratic National Convention not only about her accomplishments in her work but also at length about their life together (PBS NewsHour 2016). In an attempt to bring herself closer to millennial voters, Clinton tried to appeal to them in the form of memes and youth culture, but the effect was counteractive. Clinton for example learned to “dab” (an at the time new dance move) on the Ellen DeGeneres Show (CBSN 2016) and made a Pokémon Go -reference at a rally (CNN 2016a).

Donald Trump’s brand during the campaign was at its core that of an entertainer. While his campaign staff did attempt to restrain him at times for him to seem more presidential, Trump did not adhere to their expectations and relied instead on his personality — especially in debate settings (Manafort in Balz and Rucker 2016). Having been the host of a reality TV show, the role of an entertainer came naturally to him, and he embraced it, working with his celebrity status and skilful use of the media to gain constant attention and headlines. His lifelong business background made him a master in selling a feeling. He also expertly used Twitter to broadcast his opinions when no other outlet was available. Whether or not a voter agreed with him or not, it was undeniable that Trump’s campaign was prime entertainment and that his actions and statements sold papers. Clinton’s brand, in the end, was that of a competent endurer. She took Trump’s belligerent verbal assaults calmly and in debates systematically brought the conversation to serious topics in which she knew she dominated over Trump. Her brand was warmer than Trump’s, but this may have also been perceived as lack of strength, especially when Trump continually highlighted his image as a strong leader.

Although both Trump’s and Clinton’s teams went through great efforts to polish and strengthen their political brands, the messages they wished to convey were received with relatively poor success. Voters were increasingly unimpressed with their choices in the 2016 US presidential election. While both Clinton and Trump had their avid supporters — 11% were excited for Trump to win and 12% for Clinton (Kludt 2016) — for many the election was a matter of voting for the lesser of two evils or not voting at all (Long 2016). Thus, both

candidates, despite their enormous efforts during the campaign, were ultimately largely unsuccessful in stoking positive enough emotions in potential voters. Their brands were vastly disliked, which left many with a lukewarm attitude towards the election. Still, with the scandal-ridden election period and the two in many ways polar opposite candidates, Trump and Clinton's presidential debates broke viewer records and were scrutinized extremely closely (Nielsen 2016b).

4. Presidential Debates

This chapter has its focus on presidential debates. In the first subsection of this chapter, political debates are discussed in the terms of their genre, defining their general nature and the conventions surrounding them as well as their relevance today. After this, the specific material of this study, the third presidential debate of the 2016 election, is described. The description in terms of setting defined the limitations and rules for the debate as determined by the context.

4.1. Televised Presidential Debates as a Genre

Debates are a central element of political campaigning in a modern representative democracy (Benoit 2013, 7), and television is the principal channel the public gains its political information from (Newton and LaMay 2008, 2). In this chapter, the central features of televised presidential debates as a genre are characterized. The word “genre” is used here to differentiate televised presidential debates from other types of debates such as mock trials or group debates as well as presidential rallies and other campaign content where similar argumentation may be used. In pragma-dialectics (discussed in chapter 5) the specification of the contextual rules of a communicative activity type (such as court proceedings, advertorials, or trade treaties) are parallel to the rules the discussants implicitly or explicitly agree to at the beginning of the debate. Because of this, while the nature of presidential debates is not at the centre of the analysis of this thesis, it is essential to understand the wider context the third presidential debate of 2016 took place in as well as to appreciate the limitations set by the communicative activity type of a presidential debate (discussed in 4.2.).

Presidential debates are unscripted events, in which the candidates critically discuss topics that are usually presented by a moderator or by citizens. They are the most visible and widely viewed events of presidential campaigns, reaching the largest audience (Hansen and Benoit 2004, 122). Live debates have the benefit of revealing a candidate’s communication style better than any other campaign trail appearance and offering potential voters a chance to compare the candidates and their policies side by side as well as enabling them to judge the candidates’ statements in context (Schrott and Lanoue 2013, 690). They are thus an excellent platform for identifying and clarifying central issues (Schroeder 2016, 8). Additionally, the citizens — instead of news anchors or other politicians — are the ones deciding how the outcome of a debate is interpreted — a feature that is further highlighted in today’s Twitter-era. Debates thus grant potential voters an opportunity for truly collective discourse on important matters (Schroeder 2016, 331). Presidential debates are unique events during the campaign era

in that they are completely disconnected from campaign finance money. Unlike in campaign advertisements, the person with the most funds cannot buy more time on screen nor have their voice amplified (Schroeder 2016, 330). These features demonstrate the importance attached to televised presidential debates and help explain why preparation for them and the discussions surrounding them are traditionally taken very seriously.

No amount of rehearsal can fully prepare candidates for the scene they must perform for the voters under enormous pressure with the defensive armour of the campaign stripped away (Schroeder 2016, 136). Presidential campaigns recognise the tremendous importance of debate preparation and for example hold mock debates to best equip their candidate; Clinton's team, for instance, had a staff member dress and act like Donald Trump in rehearsal (Clinton 2017, 104). The entire preparation process is carefully concealed from outside entities (Schroeder 2016, 94). TV debates demand a certain amount of theatricality to hold the attention of the viewers, and while the importance of informational content is recognised, it is emotional appeal that lies at the heart of televised presidential debates — and at the heart of politics (Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse and Stevens 2005, 951). Style is more persuasive than substance, and star power is what carries the weight on television (Schroeder 2016, 20). Therefore, the candidates must prepare not only by rehearsing the facts but also by perfecting their manner, style of speaking, and physical presentation. Seizing the narrative of the debate is critical, which is why strategies such as pre-tested messages, calculated gestures (Schroeder 2016, 48), and, most importantly for this study, manipulating the direction of the conversation are critical to rehearse and master.

The debate strategy a candidate chooses with their team is largely dependent on the context of the debate as well as the personalities of the two candidates. However, according to Schroeder (2016, 55), there are three universal debate objectives that apply to all candidates. These are projecting leadership, likeability, and dispelling negative perceptions. Briefly discussing these objectives in relation to Clinton and Trump gives us a better view of the difficult and multi-faceted task they both had in the debate, but it also provides an opportunity to examine how the two candidates' political brands could be expressed specifically in the debates. These categories also present a more universal perspective of presidential debates to contrast the theoretical approach adopted in the study, enabling us to consider what average voters may pay attention to when evaluating debate performance.

Projecting leadership is the most basic objective. A president should above all be a competent leader, and while the debate setting does not correspond to the job of a president, it is where the candidates display their personal qualities to the voters and where they should seem

presidential. A calm manner and self-possessiveness highlight the positive qualities associated with leadership, while nervousness and inauthenticity make a candidate seem weak (Schroeder 2016, 55–56). Clinton’s team planned to project a strong image, “hit hard,” and stay calm in the debates (Clinton 2017, 105). Trump, contrastingly, was deemed an exceptionally authentic candidate as well as generally displaying the image of a masculine, authoritarian leader (Brown 2017) — the style he also brought to the debates. Clinton’s team prepared specifically with Trump’s aggressive style in mind (Clinton 2016, 104) so she could stay calm and strong in the debates.

Having the air of a true leader is vital in a presidential candidate, but voters also value *likeability* (Schroeder 2016, 57), and a presidential vote is above all a vote based on feelings (Cillizza 2016). A candidate must seem emphatic and relatable, and debates offer a more transparent platform for seeking a comfort level with the citizens than other campaign media might (Schroeder 2016, 57). If a candidate is successful in stoking the emotions and earning the empathy of the viewers, it may not matter whether they fail to accomplish any other goals in their debate. Emotional content will remain in the minds of the viewers much longer than the ideas expressed (*ibid.*). The 2016 presidential elections were special in that they saw two of the most disliked presidential candidates in the past ten US presidential cycles (Enten 2016). For Clinton, the main concern in terms of likeability was her perceived inauthenticity (Cunha 2016). Because presidential elections are usually binary choices, such unlikeability would likely have been detrimental to her had her opponent been any other person than Trump. Trump’s likeability, however, was even lower than Clinton’s among most voters (Cillizza 2016).

The matter of two disliked candidates paved an interesting road for Trump and Clinton leading up to the election. The two, as do all debaters, had the demanding task of appearing both respectful and vigorously assertive to seem likeable enough as well as competent (Schroeder 2016, 63). For Clinton and Trump, this effort was particularly challenging. Both had viciously attacked each other’s characters during the campaign, which conceivably made the balancing between being agreeable and decisive laborious; being too agreeable would have appeared passive and being too aggressive would have seemed unfair and petty (Schroeder 2016, 63). However, Mölders, Quaquebeke and Paladino found in a 2017 study that while a candidate whose voters emphasize morality benefits from being respectful in a debate, for a candidate whose target voters do not greatly emphasize morality, a disrespectful presentation might be more effective (132). This finding reflects exceptionally well the 2016 presidential debates because the choice between Clinton and Trump was viewed by many as a question of morality. This finding also contradicts Schroeder’s debate objective of *likeability* in Trump’s

case as Trump voters tended to think of morality differently and more loosely from others (Ekins and Heidt 2016). This is important to keep in mind when interpreting the results of the analysis because Trump's brand may have allowed for more rule breaking than that of Clinton's — or it might even require it to achieve consistency.

The third objective all candidates have in a debate is *dispelling negative perceptions*. The debate setting is an especially suitable platform for counteracting perceived weaknesses as the candidates already have a well-established image among viewers (Schroeder 2016, 58–59). For Trump the negative perceptions he sought to undermine were many, but one of the most central was that he was perceived as a misogynist because of his numerous comments supporting the assumption. On Clinton's side, the perceptions she sought to dispel were her perceived coldness and inauthenticity.

The success candidates have in achieving the three goals of a debate outlined by Schroeder (2016) is evaluated and disputed in the public evaluation following the debate — and, in recent years, increasingly in real time. Since their emergence in 1960, the public scrutiny of presidential debates stayed relatively the same for decades: viewers, as well as everyone else, had to wait until the end of a debate before being able to compare their notes and impressions of with more people than those sharing the couch. During the last decade, however, people have participated much more actively in the debate discussion in real time online, and most of this activity now occurs on Twitter (Schroeder 2016, 275). The 2012 U.S. presidential election proved to be a pivotal point in how debates are consumed and how the effect of social media is perceived by election officials. The race produced fifty-five times more tweets than the previous one (Mills 2016), which radically shifted the focus of the debate analysis and reactions from after to during the debate. This, in turn, forced campaigns as well as the press to reshape their approach (Schroeder 2016, 279). News outlets, for example, now follow Twitter intently during the debate, which means they can evaluate if there is significant backing to certain viewpoints they may want to voice in their post-debate analysis (Schroeder 2016, 282).

Televised debates are now scrutinized more intensely, much more quickly, and by many more people than ever before. This is not only more stressful for the debaters — especially as Twitter as a whole produces comparatively very negative content (Oz, Zheng and Chen 2018, 3414) — but it also, more than ever, encourages the use of rehearsed quips that could potentially go viral on social media (Schroeder 2016, 276). As the closed loop of journalists covering the debate — and campaigns in turn attempting to affect that coverage — has changed into an eager and open discussion in real time by anyone, the focus and significance of debates has been revolutionized. Immediate public reactions and judgements have become

received wisdom (Schroeder 2016, 275). This undoubtedly affects the debaters' preparation and performance, especially in terms of aiming for viral content.

While debates play an essential role in presidential campaigns, many criticize them for not living up to their potential. Zarefsky states that because debates have been formatted to television, they must cater to the viewers' limited attention span as well as add dramatic effect through the mediator (1992, 412). Schroeder agrees with this statement but points out that while televised debates may indeed emphasize showmanship over statesmanship, an interesting candidate can also be unpersuasive to viewers (2016, 335–336). Schroeder goes on to point out that the artificial setting of a debate also displays a candidate's ability to fare on their own and govern themselves, while working in the executive branch of the government demands the ability to manage a team of advisers and make compromises. Debates thus arguably prioritize non-crucial traits of a candidate (Schroeder 2016, 336).

Another criticism aimed at the formatting of presidential debates is that because of the limited time the debaters have for answering questions, the debate setting encourages rehearsed mini-speeches and one-liners at the expense of deeper discussion (Zarefsky 1992, 412). Others however argue that because debates are unscripted, they require much more spontaneity than any other campaign message form, making them if not authentic, at least less orchestrated (Benoit and Hansen 2004, 122). Because of these issues, some view political debates more as joint press conferences than actual debates. For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to view presidential debates as actual debates, although the aspect of rehearsed quips is also taken into count in the discussion of the results.

The significance of the effects presidential debates have on voters is as debatable as are their assets. While debates can affect viewers' assessment of a candidate's competence and personality (Benoit and Hansen 2004, 136), voters' predispositions to the candidates heavily influence their opinions of how the candidates perform (Benoit and Hansen 2004, 136–137; Baboš and Világi 2018, 737). Schrott and Lanoue found in a 2013 study that only about half of all debates seem to have any real effect on voting decisions (691). Contrary to what many political commentators may believe, voters are also highly aware of the nature of televised debates and are able to recognise the planted one-liners and manoeuvring candidates inevitably perform (Schroeder 2016, 337–338), which may well be a factor in lessening the effect debates have on voter choice. However, most viewers can enjoy the debates for their entertainment value while simultaneously being conscious of the immense machinery and tactics behind the spectacle (Boydstun, Glazier and Pietryka 2013, 254). Consequently, while campaigns certainly must exploit the potential of affecting voters through a convincing debate performance, they

must also acknowledge that the value of debates may lie more in entertainment and tradition than in swaying votes.

While today's debates are highly moderated, and every detail from the dressing rooms to podium positioning is meticulously negotiated and prepared, the reason they remain interesting is spontaneity. The possibility of a blunder or the complete verbal decimation of a candidate (Schroeder 2016, 10) as well as the conflicts between not only the candidates, but between expectations and performance and between preparation and spontaneity keep bringing viewers to their televisions (Schroeder 2016, 327). Additionally, as Twitter users actively take part in the debate analysis and comment in real time, the social aspect of the event is magnified, which enhances the significance of the occasion to the public and to the candidates' brands. Thus, although debates have a limited potency to meaningfully affect voters, they nevertheless remain an integral part of presidential races.

4.2. The Third Presidential Debate of 2016

The material of this study is the third and final presidential debate between the Democratic nominee for president, Secretary Hillary Clinton, and the Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump, in 2016. The debate was held in Thomas and Mack Center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on 19th October, with Chris Wallace of Fox News acting as the moderator. The debate consisted of six roughly 15-minute segments, in which each nominee had two minutes to answer the initial question, and the remaining time was reserved for open discussion. The topics and questions of each segment were chosen by the moderator, and they were not shared with the nominees beforehand. The main topics discussed in the debate included the question of how the constitution should be interpreted, abortion, immigration, the Russian government and Putin, how to grow the economy, fitness to be the president of the United States, foreign hotspots, and the national debt (NBC News 2016e).

Approximately 71.6 million people viewed the third presidential debate on TV (Nielsen 2016c), and an additional 1.7 million people watched it on YouTube, with 140 million viewers watching debate-related videos on YouTube. These numbers do not include the people watching the debate in for example parties, offices, or bars (YouTube Official Blog 2016). In comparison, the first presidential debate in 2016 had 84 million viewers (Nielsen 2016a) — thus becoming the most watched debate in TV history — whereas the second had 66.5 million viewers (Nielsen 2016b). The three debates rank as the most watched political live streams in history (YouTube Official Blog 2016).

The third debate was chosen as the material for this study because as the debate was held less than a month before the election (which was held on 8th November), this was the candidates' final major chance to influence voters. The stakes were high, and the candidates were under enormous pressure to argue convincingly to their favour while verbally disarming the other to tip the scales to their advantage. The format of the debate — the moderator asking broad questions about each candidate's policies with time restrictions on the answers and the opportunity for open discussion — is well suited for this analysis. These aspects make the third debate an excellent material for an argumentation analysis.

The entire 1,5h debate is too extensive to analyse in a study of this scale, so I have chosen to concentrate my analysis on only one segment of the debate: fitness to be the president of the United States. In this segment, the main points of issue the moderator introduced were Trump's inappropriate conduct towards women as well as that of Clinton's husband, the Clinton Foundation and the conflict of interest Clinton may have had as Secretary of State, and whether Trump would accept the results of the election. I have chosen this segment because it concentrates on some of the most central and dividing topics of the 2016 election and because the topics were mainly moral issues. As the voter choice between Trump and Clinton was largely deemed to be a choice of morality, analysing the two candidates' disputes on these topics provides a view of the very core of what was at stake in the election and what the defining differences between the two were. Additionally, the entire objective of the debate and the election period can be condensed into the question of who is better suited to be the president of the United States. Thus, the arguments the candidates put forward will reflect the topics they consider most central in determining fitness for presidency in themselves and in their opponent.

5. Pragma-Dialectics

When people are in dispute with each other about their differing opinions or beliefs, like in a political debate, they usually wish to solve these differences by exchanging their views about the issue. Reduced to its essentials, this means that a person who has expressed a view must be prepared to defend it, and, correspondingly, a person casting doubt upon a view must be prepared to attack it. A proper dispute, in which standpoints are both attacked and defended, and in which there exists a joint effort to settle the dispute, is a prerequisite to resolving a difference in opinion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 2). These are the foundations of the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, which was introduced in the 1970s at the University of Amsterdam by Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst. The theory has, in the following decades, been developed and augmented further to meet the needs of modern argumentation analysis (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe, Henkemans, Verheij, and Wagemans 2014, 517–518), and it has become one of the most significant theories in the field (Pajunen 2015, 272).

In the pragma-dialectical theory, argumentation is viewed as having the objective of “resolving a difference of opinion on the merits, so that its quality and possible flaws are to be measured by critical standards of reasonableness” (van Eemeren in van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 520). This means that the parties involved in a discourse are interested in maintaining an image of a person who plays by the rules of argumentation and that they will be held accountable for the things they have said (van Eemeren 2010, 42). A pragma-dialectician’s objective is thus to methodically bridge the gap between critical observation of discourse and its verbal moves (pragmatics) and well-considered, normative regimentation of reasoning (dialectics) in order to systematically integrate empirical and critical awareness (van Eemeren et al. 2008, 476).

Pragma-dialectics is especially well suited for deciphering two opposing parties’ argumentation, which is why it was chosen as the approach in this study. It offers a thorough theoretical base and the practical tools for analysing discourse, but it is also flexible enough to allow for the analyst to shape it according to their specific material and the objective of their study. Pragma-dialectics also accounts for a variety of specificities pertaining to the macro-context of the debate¹¹ under scrutiny, which is important for the purposes of this study. In this chapter, the pragma-dialectical theory is described starting from the theoretical basis and continuing to the more practical components.

¹¹ The term “debate” is in this study used synonymously with “the process of resolution of a difference in opinion,” as the term relates directly to the study conducted in this thesis.

5.1. The Meta-Theoretical Principles

The basic premise of pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation is in its four meta-theoretical principles: functionalization, socialization, externalization, and dialectification of argumentative discourse (van Eemeren et al. 2008, 476–477). The four principles are the basis of integrating the descriptive and pragmatic element of argumentation (speech act theory) and a normative notion of argumentation as critical discussion, resulting in a concept of reasonable argumentation (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 11).

Functionalization of argumentation refers to the idea that argumentation arises from the need to respond to — or from the anticipation of — a disagreement, and thus its function is managing differences in opinion (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 13). This function makes argumentation a purposive activity (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 7), and this purpose offers the basis for describing and evaluating argumentation (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 13). To achieve functionalization, verbal expressions are regarded as speech acts (discussed in 5.2.1.). Based on identifying a speech act, it can further be indicated what is invested in advancing a standpoint and what *the disagreement space* (the entirety of possible arguments connected to the central issue, such as the beliefs behind a certain argument) is (van Eemeren et. al 1993, 95). This helps clarify the context of the disagreement and how the argument is formulated around it (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2003, 54).

Externalization is achieved by recognising distinct commitments generated from performing speech acts in argumentative discourse. Instead of considering for example agreement as an internal state, it is specified as an external discursive activity. For example, ‘acceptance’ can be externalized from the discourse as the expression of a positive commitment to the discussed proposition¹² (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 55). Naturally there may exist various motives for a person to approach a standpoint in a certain way (e.g. adopting, defending, attacking, or rejecting it), but they can only be held accountable for what they have directly or indirectly expressed in speech or writing (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 54). As the analyser observes argumentation from an outsider’s perspective, the primary focus is on the commitments that can be externalised from the discourse and not on the internal reasoning processes or convictions of the participants (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 54). In other words, debaters are judged based on what they express, not on what they think.

Socialization is achieved by distinguishing the *protagonist* (the defender of a standpoint) and *antagonist* (the attacker of a standpoint) of the resolution process as well as

¹² In this study the terms *standpoint* and *proposition* are used synonymously.

how these positions are constructed in the collaborative context of argumentative discourse. The adopted positions are activated by the interactional context, as the participants are held to their speech acts and are obligated to justify their commitments. The interactional context is thus crucial in identifying the contributions made in a debate (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 56). In context to the roles of protagonist and antagonist, Pajunen notes that the roles are not fixed because there may be several different propositions in a discussion, and each of them demands a separate commitment (2015, 227–228).

Lastly, *dialectification* is realised by inserting the speech acts of both parties involved in the effort of resolving a difference in opinion into a perfect model of critical discussion, thus determining the nature and dispersion of the relevant speech acts (van Eemeren 2008, 477). Arguments that hinder getting to the resolution (such as repetitions) are typically left out of the analysis. This enables the analyst to investigate systematically how the presented arguments differ from a critical ideal (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 57). Dialectification thus applies the prescriptive element into pragma-dialectics. The normative model of ideal critical discussion offers the framework inside of which rational argumentation occurs, but as real argumentation rarely follows these rules strictly, the model enables us to see how, when, and why ordinary argumentation differs from the ideal (van Eemeren et. al. in Pajunen 2015, 279).

The four meta-theoretical principles (functionalization, externalization, socialization, and dialectification) direct the design of the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation and offer us a view of the theory's core. Based on these principles, the model of a critical discussion is formulated.

5.2. The Model of a Critical Discussion

When engaging in a critical discussion, parties attempt to reasonably reach an agreement on whether the standpoints at issue are acceptable or not by testing their defensibility against criticism (van Eemeren 2012, 440). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst developed an ideal model of a critical discussion in order to clarify and identify the elements involved in resolving a difference in opinion. The model is used to augment argumentative reality in a way that enables the analyser to see the extent to which the reality resembles the ideal model (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 23), and it indicates the analytically relevant explicit or implicit speech acts in argumentative discourse (van Eemeren 2010, 9). It is, essentially, “an instrument for doing justice to the vital intellectual, social and cultural interests that can be at stake in argumentative practice” (van Eemeren 2010, 4). The pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion is formed of four stages, which correspond to the stages an argumentative discourse must go

through — although they might not always be strictly in this order. The four stages of a discussion are the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage, and the closing stage (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 85).

The *confrontation stage* occurs, when a person expresses a standpoint, and another person expresses their doubt concerning the standpoint (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 85). In the presidential debate setting, the fact that a disagreement exists on an issue is stated by the moderator at the beginning of each segment. It should be noted, that in pragma-dialectics the statements at the centre of the argument are not limited to absolute truths but can also be matters of opinion (Pajunen 2015, 173). This point is especially crucial because in presidential debates the arguments usually concern the processes of achieving a certain goal and not whether the goal is worth pursuing, and the ways to getting to a certain result are typically matters of opinion. Similarly, issues of morality can be endlessly debatable and are often topics in presidential debates because they are a dividing factor for voters.

If the persons who have identified their difference in opinion decide to attempt solving it, they enter the *opening stage*. Here the matter of the dispute is established, and the parties determine a shared expectation of how the discussion ought to be conducted, including agreement on the procedure and argumentative obligations (van Eemeren et. al 1993, 27). The debaters must then be prepared to assume their roles as the protagonist and the antagonist, meaning that they also accept the obligation of supporting their views and replying to the challenges posed by the other debater (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 85–86). The opening stage is usually not fully represented in argumentative discourse, as for example discussion rules are often assumed to be agreed upon without explicit mention (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 99). The setting of a presidential debate provides a strict frame for the disputes, and the mediator addresses the time limitations and organisation of the discourse at the very beginning of the debate, and these rules the discussants agree to adhere to. The mediator in a presidential debate has several simultaneous roles, as they are not only responsible for keeping time and setting the stage but they also function as a kind of second antagonist and protagonist as they attempt to hold the debaters accountable and keep the debate on track.

After the roles of protagonist and antagonist are assumed, the debaters enter *the argumentation stage*. The protagonist defends themselves from the attacks of the antagonist, and both parties attempt to cast doubt on the other's statements and arguments. The antagonist of the argumentation can make the protagonist advance new argumentations until one of the parties is forced to give up their position as a protagonist or antagonist, and at this point the dispute is resolved (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 86). An important feature of the

pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion is that each new contribution to the discussion can be disagreed on and argued about further. This possibility of recursivity means the discussion can be limitlessly expansive (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 27).

In *the concluding stage*, it is decided in mutual agreement whether the dispute has been resolved. An attempt in resolving a difference of opinion will of course not always result in the dispute being resolved (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 86), but the difference in opinion may be unresolvable considering the parties' perspectives or current knowledge. In this case, the concluding stage establishes that the resolution is, at current stage, impossible (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 27). There are various circumstances in which the discussants' views are so cemented, that persuasion would be impossible — or in the political context, politically suicidal. In these situations, the dispute can be *settled* by a third party instead of being resolved (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe, Snoeck Henkemans, Verheij and Wagemans 2014, 528) — or in the case of political debates, cut off.

In a political debate where a moderator enforces the time limits, it may be difficult to determine which of the four stages of progress the argument is on and on which stage it ends (Zarefsky 2008, 319). Ultimately, a resolution of a difference of opinion is rarely, if ever, accomplished on any issue in political debates. In addition to time limitations, this is because there are fundamental differences in how the two major political parties in the US feel certain issues — such as health care or foreign policy — ought to be handled. As these differences date back generations, and the issue is typically about by which means a certain shared goal should be attained, solving these differences in a presidential debate is clearly not the objective. Additionally, the topics, which are decided by the moderator, are chosen specifically because they are issues on which the two candidates' viewpoints differ the most. This is intended to result in an interesting and provocative debate for the viewers' benefit. and the resolution of a difference in opinion is intended to occur in an undecided voter's mind.

5.2.1. Speech Acts in Critical Discussion

The varying communicative acts made during an argumentation process are characterised as speech acts. This characterization enables the analyser to clarify the criteria the pragmatic moves should conform to (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 62). Van Eemeren and Grootendorst follow the dominant typology of speech acts in determining which kinds of speech acts contribute or resolving a difference in opinion at each stage of critical discussion (2004, 62). Identifying and classifying speech acts may be complicated in practice because many speech acts are performed implicitly. Additionally, all speech acts (except for assertives)

can indirectly operate as standpoints or arguments (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 62). The speech acts that contribute to a critical discussion are listed in table 1 according to the stages of discussion in which they can occur.

Table 1 Types of speech acts playing an immediate constructive role in the resolution process. Adapted from van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 67.

Stage	Type of speech act and its role in the resolution process
	ASSERTIVES
I	Expressing a standpoint
II	Advancing argumentation
IV	Upholding or retracting a standpoint
IV	Establishing the result
	COMMISSIVES
I	Acceptance or non-acceptance; upholding non-acceptance of a standpoint
II	Acceptance of the challenge to defend a standpoint
II	Decision to start discussion; agreement on premises and discussion rules
III	Acceptance or non-acceptance of argumentation
IV	Acceptance or non-acceptance of a standpoint
	DIRECTIVES
II	Challenging to defend a standpoint
III	Requesting an argumentation
I-IV	Requesting a usage declarative
	USAGE DECLARATIVES
I-IV	Definition, specification, application etc.

The first distinguishable speech act category are *assertives*, or assertive speech acts. By making an assertive speech act, the speaker declares a proposition and consequently commits to the acceptability of the proposition in question. Prototypically an assertive is a speaker’s pledge to the truthfulness of a proposition such as “I assert that Hillary Clinton and Shakespeare never met.” Often, however, assertives do not comment on the truth of a proposition but instead express their judgement on the acceptability of the proposition more widely: “Shakespeare is the greatest English poet.” (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 63).

Assertives may not only express the standpoint that is at the centre of the argument, but they can also be a part of defending a standpoint, or they can be how the argumentation process is brought to its conclusion. Concluding remarks, such as “I uphold my standpoint,” are also assertions (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 63–64). While the prototypical assertive is a strong assertion, the commitment attached to an assertive can also be weaker,

meaning the assertion is not simple or readily recognisable as such. Other types of assertives used to advance standpoints and arguments are for example statements, claims, assurances, predictions, suppositions, negations, and denials (ibid.). These functions amount to a majority of what collaboratively exploring competing viewpoints ought to consist of, which makes assertives the central element of the pragma-dialectical approach to analysing argumentative discourse (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 28). In practice, almost all argumentatively relevant conversational acts can be reconstructed as assertives (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 92). Assertive speech acts are not explicitly differentiated in the analysis of this study as they constitute the bulk of the debate.

The second kind of speech act category are *directives*. With a directive, a speaker tries to make the listener do or not do something. Prototypically, a directive is an order (“Come here”), but this requires the speaker to have authority over the listener. Questions are classified as directives because they are requests to reply to the speaker. Other types of directives are for example forbidding, challenging, recommending, threatening, and begging. In resolving a difference of opinion, constructive directives are challenges to defend a standpoint and requesting an explanation or a definition, while literal orders and prohibitions are taboo in a critical discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 64).

Commissives constitute the third type of speech act. With a commissive, the speaker commits to or refrains from doing something. Prototypically, a commissive is an explicit promise: “I promise I won’t tell anyone,” but agreeing and accepting are also commissives. Commissives can also be non-favourable for the listener, such as “I promise I will prove you wrong.” Some commissives, such as agreeing to the rules of the discussion, can only be performed if the other party is also willing to make the commissive (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 65).

Constituting the fourth type of speech act are *expressives*, which communicate a speaker’s feelings. The feeling can be for example thankfulness, happiness, hope, irritation, or regret. The sole expression of a feeling does not directly affect a resolution process, as it does not create a commitment for the speaker, but expressives can greatly affect the course the resolution process takes. For example, a speaker can express their unhappiness with how the discussion is going, or that the effort of trying to get to a resolution is pointless. This would certainly affect the listener’s way of proceeding in the discussion (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 65). However, as expressives are not central in resolving a difference in opinion, they are not included in Table 1.

Declaratives form the fifth type of speech act. A person with the authority to perform a certain declarative, with the mere performance of it, makes the declaration a reality (“I pronounce you husband and wife”). They are strongly linked to institutionalized contexts (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 66), and they cannot take place in rational discussions (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 109). The only exception to the rule is the subclass of usage declaratives, which a speaker performs when explaining, defining, or specifying something to the listener in order to clarify how a specific speech act should be interpreted (e.g. “Can you please clarify what you mean by that”). A speaker can request another person to perform a usage declarative at any stage of the discussion. They can serve an important role in preventing irrelevant or unjustified argumentative moves by for example, in the opening stage, exposing an apparent difference of opinion or, in the argumentation stage, preventing a premature rejection or acceptance of a standpoint or an argument (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 66).

The pragma-dialectical model of a critical discussion has the heuristic function of directing the analyst’s attention to the explicit or implicit speech acts that are analytically relevant in the analysis because they are connected to the resolution process (van Eemeren 2010, 9). With the knowledge of the ideal model of a critical discussion and the relevant speech acts, the analyst can begin to build a reconstruction of the discourse, which is then compared to the ideal model to determine possible rule violations.

5.3. Analysis as Reconstruction

The critical element of pragma-dialectical research is realised in the reconstruction of a discourse, which offers the basis for the analysis. The reconstruction connects the theoretical and philosophical components of the theory with its practical and empirical components. This, in other words, is where the normative and descriptive are combined (van Eemeren 2010, 8). A “theoretically motivated reconstruction of a discourse” is produced with tools offered by the pragma-dialectical theory resulting in an overview of the elements to which the ideal model applies — and which are thus to be taken into consideration when critically evaluating argumentation — while discarding irrelevant elements (van Eemeren 2009, 1). The core goal of the reconstruction is to expose the underlying argumentative organization of the discourse (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 24). This means revealing the propositions forming the essence of the arguments, the adopted positions of protagonist and antagonist, determining how standpoints are refuted or justified with the arguments, and how settling a dispute is helped by

the use of particular speech acts at different stages of the argumentation process (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 38).

Discourse can be reconstructed with four tools: deletion, permutation, addition, and substitution. *Deletion* is the abandoning of speech acts and parts of the discourse that do not serve a function in the resolution process (van Eemeren 2009, 1). Examples of irrelevant elements are for example clarifications, elaborations, and repetitions (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 61). In the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, it is also not purposeful to analyse the effects of for example loudness of voice or physical elements in argumentation, as these are not considered relevant in reaching the conclusion of an argument. However, repetitions can reveal how often a politician “falls back on the same argument,” meaning the defence of a standpoint is weak, or they may be an indication of an effort to elicit a specific response from the opponent (Sandvik 1997, 421). For this reason, repetitions are taken into consideration in this study when they appear to indicate issues of relevance.

Permutation refers to the purposeful rearranging of speech acts so that their purpose becomes clear in a way that may not be immediately evident from the original context (van Eemeren 2010, 14). There may for example exist parts of the confrontation stage that are postponed to the argumentation or concluding stage, and these ought to be rearranged to their “ideal” position in the process as described in the model (van Eemeren et al. 1993, 62). This is done in order for the process of resolving the difference of opinion is represented as fully as possible (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2014, 535).

Argumentative reality rarely resembles the ideal of a critical discussion, and this is largely due to undisclosed matters. This is why, when building the overview of the argumentative discourse, it is especially important to pay sufficient attention to *unexpressed premises*, which are elements of the argumentation that are left out intentionally or non-intentionally. Making these implicit elements of the discourse explicit is achieved with *addition*. (van Eemeren 2010, 13). For example, the division of the roles of protagonist and antagonist as well as other crucial starting points, are often left unexpressed because they are considered to be obvious or not worth mentioning. These elements need to be recovered in the reconstructive analysis to gain a thorough description of the discussion process and to avoid premature conclusions concerning insufficient discourse (ibid.). Sandvik raises an interesting point about reconstructing political argumentation, stating that characterizing the opposing party negatively may be interpreted as correspondingly characterizing oneself positively (1997, 427). Thus, regarding one’s opponent as for example “weak on border security” can be assumed to implicate that the speaker thinks the opposite quality (being “strong on border security”) is

positive and attaches the latter quality to themselves. Such a standpoint can be reconstructed into with the tool of addition.

Substitution is the reformulation of an opaque speech act in a way that its function becomes unequivocal (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 104–105). For example, rhetorical questions may function as arguments and are in the reconstruction reformulated as such (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 62). It should be noted that the way a standpoint is presented may be strategic and meant to elicit a certain type of response or only make possible certain types of supporting arguments for the response (van Eemeren 2010, 16). In such a case a substitution may be a disservice to the reconstruction. Tactics of these kind may be especially prevalent in presidential debates, where the debaters have had a long time to prepare the ways in which they wish to approach certain topics. For this reason, it is important to justify a substitution if there exist several possible interpretations of a speech act's function.

The reconstructions process, as a general rule, starts with deletion, so the process is made easier by excluding any excess material. The next step is permutation, so the stages of the resolution process become clearer. After this, addition offers a more complete picture of the relevant elements, and, finally, substitution results in the speech acts being more recognisable (van Eemeren 2010, 15). The process is carried out cyclically, going through it as many times as deemed necessary to achieve an overview that is analytically optimal. Often different transformation processes need to be carried out simultaneously concerning the same speech act (ibid.). Only when the reconstruction process is executed carefully and consciously, the resulting analytic overview can be the basis for evaluation and can bring out any possible fallacies committed in the discourse (van Eemeren 2010, 16).

On the basis of the analytic overview the analyser (1) establishes the difference of opinion that is the subject of dispute, (2) identifies the agreed upon point of departure and the material and procedural premises for the discussion, (3) assesses the explicit or implicit arguments and criticisms advanced in the argumentation stage as well as the types and clusters of arguments and (4) determines the structure and the conclusion of the argumentation process (van Eemeren 2010, 12). The analytic overview indicates the conceptual units the argumentative moves can be analysed in, meaning they are given the relevant theoretical terms, so that the systemic evaluation of the discourse has a clear point of departure (van Eemeren 2010, 13–14).

When reconstructing the main difference of opinion at the centre of the argumentative discussion, four distinct types of difference of opinion can be distinguished: *single nonmixed*, *single mixed*, *multiple nonmixed*, and *multiple mixed* (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 537). A

difference of opinion that includes only one proposition — and thus only one standpoint — is called single. When only one party commits to defending a standpoint, and the other party merely expresses doubt (e.g. “I’m not sure that’s true”), the difference of opinion is also called nonmixed. The simplest form of a dispute is thus called single nonmixed (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2008, 8). If a party does not only express doubt towards a standpoint, but rejects it, they adopt an opposing standpoint. This means the difference of opinion is mixed. Mixed differences of opinion have two elementary differences of opinion, both of which have a protagonist and an antagonist (ibid.). In practice, all differences of opinion analysed in this study are mixed because the two presidential candidates held opposing views in almost all matters.

If a party’s standpoint consists of more than one standpoint, it is a multiple difference of opinion (e.g. “I think they are unreliable but lovable”) (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2008, 8). Multiple differences of opinion are typical in disputes where the topics are complex — such as political debates — but in this study, the analysis is composed in a way that multiple differences of opinion are generally broken down and reconstructed as single differences of opinion to achieve better clarity. Because in this study the reconstruction of the discourse is not expressed in one reconstruction but in smaller fragments for legibility, the differences of opinion are, in practice, all characterized as single mixed. For this reason, the type of the differences of opinion are not explicitly stated in the analysis.

The defence of a standpoint can consist of only one single argument, but usually several single arguments are used in combination. The structure of such complex argumentation has to be determined for the argumentation to be evaluated. The complex argumentation structures are *multiple, coordinative, and subordinative* argumentation (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2002, 64). Multiple argumentation consists of independent and alternative defences of one standpoint. Each defence is a sufficient argument on its own, and if one argument is proven to be fallacious, this does not weaken the other arguments. Contrastingly, the components of coordinative argumentation are interdependent, and removing one would weaken the entire argumentation. One argument may not be sufficient by itself for example because it is too weak or it leaves room for objection, and coordinative argumentation is used cover holes in the argumentation (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2002, 64–65). In subordinative argumentation, if an argument is too weak on its own, another argument is given to defend it. The argument that is defended thus becomes a substandpoint, and its arguments become subarguments. Subordinative argumentation forms a chain of reasoning, and the weakest link dictates the strength of the whole (van Eemeren,

Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2002, 65–66). Different kinds of complex argumentation can be used in conjunction, and the resulting reconstruction of the argumentation can be very complex with various levels.

Empirical evidence serves as a crucial element in reconstructing a discourse, and there can be several components of this at play at once. These are for example ethnographic evidence (such as the political climate in the U.S. in 2016) and how discourse in general works as well as insight to how the participants themselves interpret what is occurring (van Eemeren et. al 1993, 44). Interactants are, in a sense, continually building a naïve reconstruction of the discourse based on their understanding of the background and purpose of the situation, and knowledge, and the understanding of the naïve reconstruction should guide the analytical reconstruction (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 93). The objective of the analyst is to achieve a coherent and consistent reconstruction that is accountable to the details of the discourse and is informed of the broader knowledge concerning the particular case at hand (van Eemeren et. al 1993, 44), but one that would also be recognisable to the people participating in the dispute (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 93) as well as, arguably, the viewers of the debate.

5.4. Rules for Critical Discussion and Fallacies as Rule Violations

According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst, all argumentation at every stage of a critical discussion should advance the process of resolving the difference in opinion. The pragma-dialectical discussion procedure thus includes rules for the behaviour of people who want to partake in a critical discussion. The rules apply primarily to the speech acts of the discussants, and they indicate whether a certain speech act advances resolving the difference in opinion, and thus, which speech acts the discussants are entitled or obliged to perform (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004, 135). Breaking one or more of the ten pragma-dialectical rules for critical discussion results in the speech act being fallacious. A fallacy is thus an incorrect and unreasonable move that interferes with the process of resolving a difference of opinion on the merits (van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe, Snoeck Henkemans, Verheij, and Wagemans 2014, 545). Next, the rules are explained as are the ways in which they can be violated. Attention will not be paid to all fallacies possible in a critical discourse. Instead, those violations of the discussion rules that are the most prominent and relevant to this study are focused on here. The pragma-dialectical rules for critical discussion, as defined by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004, 190–196, in quotations), are as follows.

1. *The Freedom Rule*: “Discussants may not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or from calling standpoints into question.” This rule can be violated by the protagonist at the confrontation stage for example by discrediting their discussion partner’s integrity, expertise, or impartiality (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 546).
2. *The Obligation to Defend Rule*: “Discussants who advance a standpoint may not refuse to defend these standpoints when requested to do so.” The protagonist can violate this rule at the opening stage, if they evade or shift the burden of proof. This happens for example if the protagonists maintains that there is no need to argue about a certain standpoint because it is self-evident, they personally guarantee its correctness, or they formulate the standpoint in a way that seemingly makes it immune to criticism (e.g. “Real men don’t cry”) (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 546).
3. *The Standpoint Rule*: “Attacks on standpoints may not bear on a standpoint that has not actually been put forward by the other party.” Both the antagonist and the protagonist can violate this rule at any stage of the discussion. This fallacy occurs for example when a party distorts the other’s standpoint by falsely presenting their own standpoint as the opposite of the opponent’s. A party can also attribute a false standpoint to their opponent by taking their words out of context by oversimplifying them by ignoring nuances or by generalising and exaggerating them (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 546). A difference of opinion is impossible to resolve if the discussants begin debating about a completely different standpoint than the one originally put forward (van Eemeren, Garssen, and Meuffels 2009, 22).
4. *The Relevance Rule*: “Standpoints may not be defended by non-argumentation or argumentation that is not relevant to the standpoint.” The protagonist can violate the relevance rule at the argumentation stage in two ways. One way is to present argumentation that does not apply to the standpoint that is under dispute. Advancing argumentation that is not relevant to the issue at hand occurs relatively often in political discussion, as the parties attempt to shift the focus of the dispute from the original topic to a more favourable one. Sometimes this is done explicitly (“I’d like to discuss something more relevant”), but often the shift is made more covertly as a strategic manoeuvre. Such shifts are in this study generally not regarded as fallacies, as the context

of the debate allows for topics to be brought up that are relevant on a larger scale — especially when the overall question behind such debates is “Who would be better suited for presidency.” Another way to violate the relevance rule is to promote a standpoint by using non-argumentative means, such as exploiting the emotions of the audience (e.g. prejudice) or by appealing to an authority that does not hold expertise (e.g. the populist fallacy of “everybody knows this”) (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 546).

5. *The Unexpressed Premise Rule*: “Discussants may not falsely attribute unexpressed premises to the other party, nor disown responsibility for their own unexpressed premises.” The rule can be violated by the protagonist, if they deny an unexpressed premise and attempt to escape accountability (“I’ve never *said* that”). The antagonist can violate the Unexpressed Premise Rule, if they distort an unexpressed premise by producing a reconstruction of the protagonist’s standpoint for which the protagonist cannot realistically be held accountable for, when the context as well as the available background information are taken into consideration (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 546–547).
6. *The Starting Point Rule*: “Discussants may not falsely present something as an accepted starting point or falsely deny that something is an accepted starting point.” Fallacies connected to the starting point rule can be committed at the argumentation stage by the protagonist by the falsely introducing something as an accepted starting point by for example attempting to conceal a premise in a question or suggesting it is self-evident, when it is in fact not, consequently attempting to evade the burden of proof. Respectively, the antagonist can violate the rule by denying a common starting point, which would prevent the protagonist from defending the standpoint based on what has already been accepted (van Eemeren et. al 2014, 547).
7. *The Validity Rule*: “Reasoning that in argumentation is presented in an explicit and complete way it may not be invalid in a logical sense.” The seventh rule can be violated in numerous ways at the argumentation stage by the protagonist. Such a fallacy can be for example falsely characterising a whole based on its individual part or vice versa (van Eemeren et. al 2014, 547).
8. *The Argument Scheme Rule*: “Standpoints may not be regarded as conclusively defended if the defence does not take place by means of appropriate argument schemes that are applied correctly.” Violations of the

argument scheme rule are in pragma-dialectics divided into three main categories. The first category, *symptomatic argumentation*, includes fallacies in which the argumentation is falsely expressed as a kind of symptom of the premise. An example of this would be person being ascribed a characteristic because they belong to a certain group (e.g. “he is selfish, because he is an only child, and only children are selfish”) or vice versa (e.g. “he must be an only child, because he is selfish and only children are selfish”) (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 548–549). The second category, *comparison argumentation*, refers to resemblance. Based on such argumentation, cases that resemble each other should be treated equally (e.g. “I did not get dessert when I didn’t finish my meal, so neither should my cousin”), and it becomes fallacious when it is not based on sufficient conditions for comparison (ibid.). *Causal argumentation* forms the third category, and such argumentation is fallacious when a causal relation is assumed without sufficient grounds for doing so (e.g. “I have a stomach ache, because I had two cups of coffee, and I’ve heard that coffee can do that”) (ibid.).

9. *The Concluding Rule*: “Inconclusive defences of standpoints may not lead to maintaining these standpoints and conclusive defences of standpoints may not lead to maintaining expressions of doubt concerning these standpoints.” This rule can be violated by the protagonist if they conclude that a standpoint is accurate because it has been defended successfully. The antagonist violates the rule by assuming that the fact that something has not been proven to be true means that it is automatically untrue, or vice versa. Similarly, it is unsatisfactory to assume that a discussion must end in either the positive or negative standpoint being proven correct, when there is also the possibility of contemplating a neutral standpoint (van Eemeren et. al. 2014, 548).
10. *The Language Use Rule*: “Discussants may not use any formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous, and they may not deliberately misinterpret the other party’s formulation.” This rule is possible to violate at any stage of the argumentation by either party.

Every element of the discussion procedure is checked for its adequacy in doing what it is designed to do (whether they aid or hinder resolving the difference of opinion) and whether or not it is acceptable for both discussants (van Eemeren 2013, 143). In a political debate, where the goal is not to genuinely convince the opposing party but instead the audience, both sides are

still expected to abide by the rules of critical discussion as if they were indeed trying to resolve their differing viewpoints by arguing reasonably. If they stray from the etiquette, their argumentation is deemed weak, and their credibility may suffer (van Eemeren 2008, 477).

A single argument must satisfy three criteria to be considered *sound*. Firstly, all statements that constitute the argumentation must be true. Secondly, the lines of reasoning behind the argument must be valid. Thirdly, the *argument scheme* (the way the arguments are linked to the standpoint) must be used correctly and appropriately (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2008, 93). In determining whether an argument is fallacious, the macro-context should always be considered (van Eemeren 2013, 150). Especially because fallaciousness can be considered to be a matter of degree — and the severity is judged based on the wider context — and not of nature, the judgement of fallacies is a matter of interpretation. It is also important to note, that simply because a party uses invalid argumentation by for example claiming that something is true because everybody thinks it is (a populist fallacy), it does not mean that the statement they are making is definitively untrue (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 180).

Political debates are characteristically complex disputes, as the issues at the centre of them are extremely convoluted. This means that in a political context, there can be various subordinative differences of opinion under one main difference of opinion, but the various opinions on different issues relate to each other more or less loosely (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 76). The participants in a critical discussion are, from the perspective of the analyst, given the benefit of the doubt in the reconstruction of the discourse in terms of the relevance of their utterances. If the communicative force of an utterance is questionable, it is interpreted as being as beneficial as possible to the resolution of the difference in opinion, thus maximising credit where it is due (*the maximally argumentative interpretation*) (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 2002, 43). Similarly, participants are presumed rational if this assumption is not contradicted (van Eemeren et. al. 1993, 48–49). The question in this study is broadly about whether a statement advanced as an argument can be considered relevant to the main issue at hand, which is the question of who is better suited for presidency. This allows for many kinds of arguments to be considered relevant, even if they appear to be irrelevant in the immediate context. This wider notion of relevancy is adopted because considering the macro context, a potential voter viewing the debate can be assumed to adopt the same approach in their “naïve reconstruction” of the discussion.

5.5. Strategic Manoeuvring

The concept of strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse was first illustrated in the 1990s by van Eemeren and Houtlosser, who sought to bring the pragma-dialectical approach closer to how argumentations works in practice, especially taking into count how parties navigate strategically in their arguments in order to gain advantage by aiming for effectiveness (van Eemeren in van Eemeren et al. 2014, 552). The expansion of the standard theory added to the theoretical tools of pragma-dialectics to achieve a more realistic and better-justified analysis and evaluation of argumentative discourse (ibid.). In this section, the extended pragma-dialectical theory of strategic manoeuvring is presented.

The standard theory of pragma-dialectics describes argumentation with the core objective of reasonability. While trying to stay reasonable, however, the arguing parties simultaneously pursue effectiveness, meaning they aim to solve the argument in their favour, which is a rhetorical goal. In other words, the arguers seek acceptance from the audience they are trying to convince — in the case of this study the potential voters viewing the debate — but if they wish to resolve the difference in opinion in their own favour based on the merits of the argumentative moves they make, they must also stay within the boundaries of reasonability according to the rules of critical discussion. While these two goals are not necessarily in contradiction of each other, there is potential for tension (van Eemeren in van Eemeren et al. 2014, 553). Generally, critically evaluated reasonable argumentative discourse is also effective from an empirical perspective, but pursuing effectiveness may interfere with the simultaneous goal of pursuing reasonableness, which *derails* the strategic manoeuvring (van Eemeren 2010, 41). Successful strategic manoeuvring is keeping the delicate balance between these two goals (van Eemeren et al. 2014, 553) while ensuring a logical continuation of the discussion (van Eemeren 2010, 7).

The expanded pragma dialectical theory including strategic manoeuvring is crucial for this study because the goal of presidential candidates in a televised debate is not necessarily to genuinely resolve a difference in opinion between the two debating parties, but to convince the audience of their propositions while appearing to adhere to the rules of critical discussion. The exceptionally high stakes of the situation demand intelligent balancing between effectiveness and reasonableness, and the tensions between the two objectives are accentuated. Additionally, the extended theory offers a well-suited basis for connecting the candidates' political brands to their argumentative choices in the debate as is demonstrated in the next subchapter.

5.5.1. The Three Aspects of Strategic Manoeuvring

Van Eemeren and Houtlosser have distinguished three aspects of strategic manoeuvring discussants use to balance reasonableness and effectiveness. These are *selection from the topical potential*, *adaptation to audience demand*, and *exploitation of presentational devices*. All three aspects are related to distinct types of choices in the manoeuvring. While the three types manifest themselves within a single argumentative move, regarding each of these aspects separately prevents the analyser from only evaluating the most conspicuous aspect while ignoring aspects that have hidden potential for impact (van Eemeren 2010, 93).

The first aspect, *selection from the topical potential*, means that the arguer chooses the most suitable topic alternative available to them at a certain point in the discourse. This can mean for example choosing which topic of discussion, argument, or criticism best suits their goals (van Eemeren 2012, 554). As is evident from the meandering of the discussion topics in presidential debates, topical potential can be vast. However, the mere selection of a topic implies that the selected topic is pertinent to the discussion at hand. In addition to selecting topics, suppressing certain topics is also a noteworthy move (van Eemeren 2015, 358). In the confrontation stage, strategic manoeuvring in regard to topical potential aims at defining the confrontation in the most advantageous way possible, which means the debaters attempt to make the most useful choice of topic utilizing the available disagreement space. In the opening stage, strategic manoeuvring is used to create an advantageous starting point. This can be done for example by getting the opponent to make concessions, or by calling to mind their previous statements. In the argumentation stage, the parties choose the most favourable line of defence or attack allowed by and suited to the dialectical situation. In the concluding stage, the parties direct the outcome of the discussion to their favour by for example pointing out the consequences of accepting a particular argumentation (ibid.).

The second aspect is *adaptation to audience demand*, which means that the arguer should shape their choices to the frame of reference of the audience they want to reach (van Eemeren 2010, 94). This means appealing to the audience's preferences, good sense, and empathy thus attempting to create a kind of communion between the speaker and the listeners based on shared values. However, some argumentative moves may be appropriate to one portion of an audience while being completely inappropriate to others (van Eemeren 2015, 358). This is especially true in highly polarized political contexts, like that of the United States. Strategic manoeuvring in regard to audience demand manifests itself in the confrontation stage for example as avoiding contradictions and in the argumentation stage as referring to generally

agreed on principles of argumentation or citing widely accepted arguments (van Eemeren 2015, 359). Speakers try to attach to the central elements of their arguments the most widely shared sets of values. However, as disagreement over facts is more palatable than disagreements over values, value disputes are often steered to become disputes over facts (ibid.). Adaptation to audience demand is at the very epicentre of political discussions, and politicians tend to test the popularity of standpoints and arguments in order to find the most effective ones to be used at critical moments.

The techniques and style of language in presenting the selected elements in argumentation can be as important as the elements themselves, and the third aspect of strategic manoeuvring, *exploitation of presentational devices*, pertains to this (van Eemeren 2015, 259). Rhetorical figures are a common type of presentational device in argumentation that attract attention to themselves by being independent of the context and differing from the expected manner of expression. They are used to generate a change in the perspective in the hearer, and their success depends on at which point of the discussion they are used. Typical rhetorical figures are for example rhetorical questions, drawing attention to an issue by stating that you will not discuss it, and adopting the opponent's point of view to support your own claim. Choices at the level of words and syntax are also choices of presentational devices (ibid).

Certain types of strategic manoeuvring are extremely common in political debates, and these types may fall under one or more of the three categories of strategic manoeuvring (topical potential, audience demand, and presentational choice). Firstly, an extremely common and obvious tactic is to change the subject. There are many important topics the public is interested in, and thus redirecting the conversation to a possibly completely unrelated issue is expected when a potentially damaging subject emerges (Zarefsky 2008, 322–323). Straying from a question's topic is not necessarily viewed as damage control but can be interpreted as a sign of a candidate's grasp on a topic: for example, directing the conversation to a recent development or crisis demonstrates devotion and preparedness to answering to a crisis (Boydston, Glazier, and Pietryka 2013, 257–258). However, this tactic can be costly because it is fairly obvious and violates social protocol (one should not “dodge” a question).

Another type of strategic manoeuvring common to political debates is modifying the relevant audience. This is accomplished by (re)defining the scope of the argument, so that for example issues originally defined as highly technical (such as economic policy being the practical management of a complicated economy) are instead argued to be moral questions (such as how the wealthy should be taxed), or vice versa. This affects the generality of the concern, and when successful, alters the balance between proponents and opposers (Zarefsky

323). Redefining the issue can be a very effective manoeuvre as for example moral topics tend to be much more interesting to large audiences than technical issues

Another common strategic manoeuvre aimed at attracting a larger audience in a political debate is to appeal to both liberal and conservative presumptions simultaneously. Even in a highly politically polarized society like the United States, it is likely that individuals hold both conservative and liberal worldviews. They might for example believe that the government may interfere with the economy, but that it has no authority deciding what private relationships between consenting adults can or cannot entail. Elements of both conservative and liberal views may be combined strategically to increase chances of success. This can be done, for example, by presenting change as a revival of past conditions and not as a radical departure from the status quo, or by arguing that tax revenues can ultimately be increased by expanding government programs such as health care, as they can be argued to ultimately make people more self-reliant and economically productive (Zarefsky 2008, 323–324).

Strategic manoeuvring becomes fallacious if a party allows their rhetorical aims to overrule dialectical aims by violating one or more of the pragma-dialectical rules for a critical discussion (Snoeck Henkemans 2017, 270) — which is essentially the same thing as fallacies of argumentation. Committing a fallacy is thus the result of losing the balance between the simultaneous goals of being reasonable as well as effective. Detecting fallacious strategic manoeuvres can be challenging as reasonableness can be viewed more as a continuum, rather than fallacious and sound strategic manoeuvres being two completely different things (van Eemeren 2013, 149). In the pragma-dialectical view, judgments of fallaciousness are always to some degree contextual judgements (van Eemeren 2014, 566–567). In this study, specific soundness criteria for the strategic manoeuvres are not explicitly formulated in the theoretical section. Instead, as the context of the debate has been made clear with a thorough survey of its background, and as presidential debates are a relatively familiar mode of debate, judgements that are made in the analysis based on context are explained as they occur.

In the theory of strategic manoeuvring, both debaters are expected to choose a topic they handle well or suits their purposes best, to select a perspective most sympathetic to their audience, and to present their arguments in the most persuasive way (van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002, 139). The three aspects of strategic manoeuvring are illustrated in a single argumentative move and are expressed simultaneously in discourse, but each has their own effect (van Eemeren 2012, 554). A coordinated and systematic use of the three aspects of strategic manoeuvring at every stage of a discussion results in a full argumentative strategy that should enable its user to bring the discussion to an advantageous result in a specific discussion

stage and in the whole process of resolving a difference in opinion (van Eemeren 2015, 360). The identification of such systematic uses of manoeuvring is of particular interest in this study, as the execution of premeditated strategies is a manifestation of a candidate's manufactured political brand. While it would be optimal to account for all strategic manoeuvres for every argumentative move made to gain an exhaustive analysis, for a study of this scope this would be too extensive. Instead, with the objective of this study in mind, the strategic manoeuvres regarded as the most revealing are analysed.

6. Strategic Manoeuvring in Connection to Political Brands in the 3rd US Presidential Debate of 2016

In this chapter, under 6.1., the material of this study, a segment of the third US presidential debate of 2016, is analysed using the extended pragma-dialectical approach to reveal the strategic manoeuvring utilized by each candidate and whether they manoeuvre in a way that is fallacious. The term “debate” is here used to refer to the 15-minute segment that is analysed and not to the entire 1,5-hour debate unless explicitly stated otherwise. In chapter 6.2. the results of the analysis are interpreted in connection to Trump and Clinton’s political brands to answer the research questions. The main question is: In what ways are Trump’s and Clinton’s political brands manifested in their strategic manoeuvring? Two supporting questions are explored to formulate a better justified conclusion. 1. Which elements of each other’s’ political brands do Trump and Clinton attack by using strategic manoeuvring? 2. When the rules of a critical discussion are broken and strategic manoeuvring becomes fallacious, do the fallacies indicate a brand-related motive?

6.1. Analysis

The 15-minute segment analysed in this study is fitness to be the president of the United States. Under this main dispute, the moderator divided the dispute further into three subsections: Trump’s inappropriate conduct towards women, the Clinton Foundation, and whether Trump will accept the result of the election. This division is utilized in the analysis as well. All of these three subsections and the arguments the candidates put forward ultimately serve a common goal: to establish which candidate the better suited for the presidency. Thus, the relevancy of the arguments put forward by the candidates can be considered not only from the perspective of whether they are relevant to the specific subsection but also if they are relevant to the larger question. This interpretation permits a much wider repertoire of lines of argumentation, and it is also in line with what the candidates themselves as well as the viewers would consider relevant, which strengthens the interpretation.

In this study, the reconstruction of the discourse is not provided in the form of a complete dialogue. Instead, the reconstruction takes place section by section alongside the analysis, which allows a more comprehensible justification of the reconstruction and makes the analysis more legible. Equal attention will not be paid to each standpoint and argument as this would result in a redundant and overflowing analysis. Instead, analytic efforts are directed at those features in the argumentation that are most prominent and central for this study. The

structure of the argumentation is not evaluated at length in this study. The context of the debate sets restrictions on the structure of the debate in ways that would make an extensive evaluation difficult and, for the purposes of this study, fruitless. Standpoints and related arguments that are not picked up by the other party, or where the effort to resolve a difference of opinion is minimal, are not presented as full reconstructions. However, such short-lived argumentations will be considered in evaluating the parties' strategic manoeuvring, and the reconstructions in these cases are less explicit.

Not all elements of the pragma-dialectical theory are utilized in all parts of the analysis. Instead, the discourse is analysed carefully and always considering the objective of the study, thus allocating time and effort to the elements that most stand out from the discourse and that can be considered most relevant. The goal is not to determine the winner of the disagreements based on who argues more reasonably and commits less fallacies, but to explore the two candidates' styles of argumentation and strategic manoeuvring, so that the (in)consistencies in regard to their political brands can be evaluated. This warrants a flexible and flowing analysis to achieve the best results.

The confrontation stage of the dispute(s) was initiated a long time ago, as many of the issues are very broad and are under continual discussion in the political sphere — and all topics had been very visible during the campaign period as was discussed in the background section of this thesis. In addition, there is no need for the mediator or the other candidate to explicitly state that the other candidate has the opposing view from the candidate who is the antagonist, as this is evident from the context of the entire campaign period. The rules the two candidates implicitly agree to in the opening stage are dictated by the institutional context of the debate, which was discussed in chapter 4. Thus, it is justifiable to assume that the rules of the debate are the same throughout all of the disagreements in the course of the debate, and they do not need to be specified further in each individual initiation of the process of solving a difference in opinion. Additionally, as discussed earlier, the concluding stage is left out of the analysis as the discussion is always cut off by the moderator when the 15-minute segment is over.

Some clarifications of the way the transcription and the reconstructions of the discourse are marked are in order. Each segment is briefly outlined before the transcript of each subsection, and the analysis begins after the transcript. The transcript of the debate presented here is an altered version of a transcript by Politico (Politico 2016). Some markings have been changed to achieve better clarity and consistency: the turns of speech are numbered, attached to the turn numbers are the initials of the participants, double hyphens have been changed to em dashes, and parentheses have been changed into square brackets. M is the mediator, Chris

Wallace. T is Donald Trump, and C is Hillary Clinton. The segments are transcribed in their entirety. The audience's reactions are in square brackets, and they are included in the transcription because they convey how the candidates' argumentation is immediately received by some of the people the candidates are attempting to convince. Notable interruptions and overlaps in speech are marked with “— “as are discontinued lines of thought in the middle of a turn. A relatively simple transcription is justified here as the analysis does not concern for example interruptions, but the more general patterns of argumentation.

Each of the three subsegments is analysed separately, after which the results are examined as a whole and linked to the candidates' political brands in 6.2. The analysis in each section begins with the identification of the main difference of opinion — as defined by the moderator — and allocation of the roles of protagonist and antagonist in relation to it. The specific propositions and arguments of the protagonist and antagonist are reconstructed and analysed. Premises (both expressed and unexpressed) and argument schemes in the reconstructions of the argumentative discourses are in parentheses; argument schemes are in italics and premises are not. Argument schemes are not written out in cases where the connection between the statement and the argument(s) can be considered obvious. Assertive speech acts, which typically constitute the majority of the relevant speech acts in an argumentative discussion, are not differentiated explicitly in the analysis. Other types of speech acts are indicated when they are deemed significant.

After the analysis of the arguments relating to the main difference of opinion in the section, the analysis will continue with the reconstruction and analysis of other propositions the candidates put forward. The discussants sometimes put forward propositions they argue for at length, but which the opponent does not argue against or otherwise observe. These propositions and argumentations are reconstructed when they are extensive enough as they demonstrate a candidate's strategic manoeuvres, and, depending on the proposition, they can centrally relate to the major question in the segment and the whole debate, which is who should become the next president of the United States.

6.1.1. Sexual Assault Accusations

In this subsegment, the various accusations of sexual assault against Trump are discussed. The Monica Lewinsky scandal is also introduced, but as it is not brought up by the discussants, it is left out of the analysis.

01 M: We're going to get to foreign hot spots in a few moments, but the next segment is fitness to be president of the United States. Mr. Trump, at the last debate, you said your talk about grabbing women was just that, talk, and that you'd never actually done

it. And since then, as we all know, nine women have come forward and said that you either groped them or kissed them without their consent. Why would so many different women from so many different circumstances over so many different years, why would they all in this last couple of weeks make up — you deny this. Why would they make up these stories? And since this is a question for both of you, secretary Clinton, Mr. Trump says what your husband did and what you defended was even worse. Mr. Trump, you go first.

02 T: Well, first of all, those stories have been largely debunked. Those people, I don't know those people. I have a feeling how they came. I believe it was her campaign that did it just like if you look at what came out today on the clips where I was wondering what happened with my rally in Chicago and other rallies where we had such violence. She's the one and Obama that caused the violence. They hired people. They paid them \$1500, and they're on tape saying be violent, cause fights, do bad things. I would say the only way — because those stories are all totally false. I have to say that, and I didn't even apologize to my wife who is sitting right here because I didn't do anything. I didn't know any of these women. I didn't see these women. These women, the woman on the plane, the woman on the — I think they want either fame or her campaign did it. And I think it's her campaign because what I saw what they did, which is a criminal act, by the way, where they're telling people to go out and start fistfights and start violence — and I'll tell you what. In particular, in Chicago, people were hurt and people could have killed in that riot. And that's now all on tape started by her. I believe, Chris, she got these people to step forward. If it wasn't, they get their ten minutes of fame, but they were all totally — it was all fiction. It was lies and it was fiction.

03 C: Well —

04 M: Secretary Clinton?

05 C: At the last debate, we heard Donald talking about what he did to women, and after that a number of women have come forward saying that's exactly what he did to them. Now, what was his response? Well, he held a number of big rallies where he said that he could not possibly have done those things to those women because they were not attractive enough for —

06 T: I did not say that.

07 C: — them to be assaulted.

08 T: I did not say that.

09 C: In fact, he went on to say —

10 M: Her two minutes. Sire, her two minutes.

11 T: I did not say that.

12 M: Her two minutes.

13 C: He went on to say “look at her, I don't think so.” About another woman, he said “that wouldn't be my first choice.” He attacked the woman reporter writing the story, called her disgusting, as he has called a number of women during this campaign. Donald thinks belittling women makes him bigger. He goes after their dignity, their self-worth, and I don't think there is a woman anywhere that doesn't know what that feels like. So we now know what Donald thinks and what he says and how he acts toward women. That's who Donald is. I think it's really up to all of us to demonstrate who we are and who our country is and to stand up and be very clear about what we expect from our next president, how we want to bring our country together, where we don't want to have the kind of pitting of people one against the other, where instead we celebrate our diversity, we lift people up, and we make our country even greater. America is great

because America is good. And it really is up to all of us to make that true now and in the future and particularly for our children and our grandchildren.

14 M: Mr. Trump —

15 T: Nobody has more respect for women than I do. Nobody.

[Audience laughs]

16 M: Please, everybody.

17 T: And frankly, those stories have been largely debunked. And I really want to just talk about something slightly different. She mentions this, which is all fiction, all fictionalized, probably or possibly started by her and her very sleazy campaign. But I will tell you what isn't fictionalized are her e-mails where she destroyed 33,000 e-mails criminally, criminally after getting a subpoena from the United States Congress. What happened to the FBI, I don't know. We have a great general, four-star general, today you read it in all the papers going to potentially serve five years in jail for lying to the FBI, one lie. She's lied hundreds of times to the people, to Congress, and to the FBI. He's going to probably go to jail. This is a four-star general, and she gets away with it and she can run for the presidency of the United States? That's really what you should be talking about, not fiction where somebody wants fame or where they come out of her crooked campaign.

18 M: Secretary Clinton?

19 C: Well, every time Donald is pushed on something, which is obviously uncomfortable like what these women are saying, he immediately goes to denying responsibility and it's not just about women. He never apologizes or says he's sorry for anything, so we know what he has said and what he's done to women. But he also went after a disabled reporter, mocked and mimicked him on national television.

20 T: Wrong.

21 C: He went after Mr. And Mrs. Khan, the parents of a young man who died serving our country, a gold star family¹³ because of their religion. He went after John McCain, a prisoner of war, said he prefers people that aren't captured. He went after a federal judge born in Indiana but who Donald said couldn't be trusted to try the fraud and racketeering case against Trump University because his parents were Mexican. So it's not one thing. This is a pattern, a pattern of divisiveness, of a very dark and in many ways dangerous vision of our country where he incites violence, where he applauds people who are pushing and pulling and punching at his rallies. That is not who America is, and I hope that as we move in the last weeks of this campaign more and more people will understand what's at stake in this election. It really does come down to what kind of country we are going to have.

22 T: So sad when she talks about violence at my rallies and she caused the violence. It's on tape. The other things are false, but honestly I'd love to talk about getting rid of ISIS and I'd love to talk about other things.

23 M: Okay.

24 T: But those other charges, as she knows, are false.

The implicit proposition that can be reconstructed from M's statements and questions at the beginning of the segment can be interpreted as "you [Trump] have sexually assaulted women." This is the main elementary difference of opinion in this segment, and Clinton defends this proposition (protagonist) and Trump attacks it (antagonist). Trump's standpoint to the issue

¹³ In the United States, a gold star family is a family who has lost a member in a war.

is the opposite (“The accusation that I have sexually assaulted women is false”), which makes this a mixed dispute, thus making both debaters both the protagonist and antagonist in this segment.

Trump defends his proposition that he has not sexually assaulted women with multiple argumentation as well as subordinative argumentation for argument/standpoint 3. Trump’s proposition and arguments can be reconstructed as follows:

The accusation that I have sexually assaulted women is false because

1. Those stories have largely been debunked
2. I don’t know the people who are accusing me (*it is impossible to assault a person you do not know*)
3. Clinton’s campaign orchestrated the accusations or the women who accuse me want fame (the women are lying)
 - 3.1. Clinton and her campaign orchestrated the violence at Trump rallies (*this situation is similar enough to argument 4 that she can be assumed to have done the same thing*)
 - 3.1.1. People connected to her campaign are on tape telling others to cause violence at Trump rallies
 - 3.1.2. Clinton’s campaign paid people 1,500\$ to cause the violence
4. Nobody has more respect for women than I do (*a person who respects women would not sexually assault them*).

Argument 1 (“Those stories have largely been debunked”) appeals to an authority that is not identifiable from the immediate context and cannot reasonably have been identified from a wider context either — it could be Trump himself or his team who have “debunked” the claims, or it could be for example Fox News. At the time of the debate, no reports of a conclusion on the issue had been made, so it could not be reasonably stated as a fact that the accusations had been largely debunked. Regardless of who Trump is referring to in his appeal to authority, the argument must be judged to be a fallacy as the authority clearly does not in fact hold the authority in determining whether or not the accusations were true or not. Such a vague reference can be assumed fallacious on the grounds that a credible authority would have been named if there was one.

The truthfulness of Trump’s argument number 2 (“I don’t know the people who are accusing me (*and it is impossible to assault a person you do not know*)”) is debatable, but no definitive judgement could have been cast at the time of the debate because the accusations

were word against word. While there were pictures of Trump with the women who accused him, a high-profile celebrity like Trump can have pictures taken of him with people he does not in fact know, but only meets once and possibly exchanges a few words — a fact he has used to defend himself outside the debate. However, the symptomatic argument scheme (“*it is impossible to assault a person you do not know*”) might be a hasty generalization because “knowing” a person is a vague expression. This argument is, nevertheless, considered sound, although it is towards the middle of the continuum between sound and unsound and must thus be considered a weak argument.

In argument 3 Trump accuses Clinton of orchestrating the accusations and the women who made the accusations of lying because they want fame. He connects the proposition of Clinton’s campaign arranging the accusations to his proposition that her campaign also caused the violence at his rallies (argument 3.1.). As Trump’s subargumentation in supporting his statement/argument 3.1. (as discussed in the next paragraph) is in part reasonable, this argument and the argument scheme connecting it to the statement can be considered reasonable as well. The argument that Clinton’s campaign orchestrated the sexual assault accusations is not a strong one from an analytical standpoint, but it also cannot be considered completely fallacious. Trump does not explain the other part of the statement in argument 3, “The women who accuse me want fame.” This might not be a completely outlandish argument if there were only one accuser (as false accusations against celebrities have occurred), but nine women coming forward cannot reasonably be disregarded with such an argument, and it is thus considered very weak. The argument also demonstrates a tone-deafness concerning the social climate of 2016, which was strongly that of believing women when they talk about the sexual harassment they have experienced.

In subargument 3.1. Trump accuses Clinton’s campaign of orchestrating the violence at Trump rallies. People connected to her campaign were indeed caught on video talking about how it is easy make a Trump supporter lose their temper, and how there is script for causing violence at Trump’s events. There was, however, no talk in the videos about being violent like Trump says, but the people on tape talk about baiting Trump supporters to being violent by for example wearing t-shirts with provocative texts. In this case, Trump’s argument is fallacious based on the violation of the starting point rule as he exaggerates the events he presents as accepted facts. Concerning argument 3.1.2. (“Clinton’s campaign paid people 1,500\$ to cause the violence“), a person talking on said tape was indeed paid about 1,500\$ two weeks before a rally in which they were present (Politico 2016; Contorno 2016). There is no evidence of a connection between the payment and the rally, but a connection also cannot be denied. Trump’s

subargumentation for statement/argument 3.1. (“Clinton and her campaign orchestrated the violence at Trump rallies”) is thus partly fallacious and partly within reason — although unverifiable.

In a strategic manoeuvre of choosing presentational devices, Trump organises his words in accusing Clinton and her campaign in a way that absolutely makes it sound like Clinton is the person on tape telling people to cause fights. He seems careful not to exactly say that she is on tape, but the way he builds his sentences makes it sound like she is, when in fact the people on the tapes were two people connected to her campaign. This is a clever choice of a presentational device as the words suggest one thing without making the speaker commit to an actual proposal and having to defend it. However, Trump’s language is vague enough that it can be considered fallacious based on the language use rule, which prohibits a discussant from using confusingly ambiguous language.

Interestingly, Clinton does not comment on Trump’s statement about her and her campaign causing the violence at his rallies, but instead she keeps talking about Trump’s character. Nor does she really acknowledge Trump in this segment at all. All her turns could be taken from contexts, and they would constitute a mini speech in which others’ input is not needed. While this might be considered dodging the issue, it could also be a strategic manoeuvre of topical potential in that she chooses not to engage with Trump’s arguments with the intention of making Trump’s claim seem so outlandish it does not require attention.

Trump’s argument 4 “nobody has more respect for women than I do” is extremely questionable considering Trump’s remarks about women during the campaign period and especially regarding the Access Hollywood tape. While the statement is obviously hyperbolic, and what constitutes as “respecting women” is subjective, it is telling that the audience laughs when he says this. Trump’s image is clearly not that of someone who respects women, so stating it in such an exaggerated way highlights the negative view many potential voters have of him in this regard. The presentational device of using a hyperbole in this case is thus not well calculated. The argument scheme “*a person who respects women would not sexually assault them*” is reasonable and is used correctly, but a well-used argument scheme cannot save an argument that is weak, even if it is not fallacious.

Altogether, Trump’s argumentation for the main proposition “The accusation that I have sexually assaulted women is false” is either fallacious (argument 1) or very questionable and thus weak (arguments 2, 3, and 4). The topic is extremely damaging for him and difficult to manoeuvre within. Because of this, he tries hard to steer the discussion towards topics that are either damaging to Clinton, like her email scandal (17 T: “I will tell you what isn’t

fictionalized are her e-mails where she destroyed 33,000 e-mails criminally”) or beneficial for him (22 T: “I’d love to talk about getting rid of ISIS”) — or literally anything else than the current topic (22 T: “I’d love to talk about other things”). Clinton’s email scandal and terrorism were among Trump’s most successful and central topics in the campaign, so steering the conversation towards them, when the most disadvantageous topic for him is on display, is expected, and it could have been a good strategic manoeuvre had it been executed well. However, while these manoeuvres are clearly premeditated manifestations of selection from topical potential (suppressing a topic while simultaneously bringing up another), they are too awkward and obvious to be considered successful. Overall, the strategic manoeuvring Trump presents in this subsegment is rather lacking — and it is contrasted with Clinton’s extremely well premeditated manoeuvring, as analysed next.

Clinton uses multiple argumentation (arguments 1–4) and subordinative argumentation (3.1. and 3.2.) to support the core proposition. Her proposition and arguments can be reconstructed as follows:

I believe Trump has sexually assaulted women because

1. He has talked about times he sexually assaulted women (*talking about having done something means they probably have done it*)
2. Women have accused him of doing exactly what he has talked about doing (*accusing a person of doing something they have talked about having done is credible*)
3. He has no respect for women
 - 3.1. He has said the women who have accused him are not attractive enough for him to sexually assault
 - 3.2. He has called women disgusting
4. He thinks belittling women makes him bigger (sexually assaulting someone is belittling to the victim (*a person who wants to belittle women to make himself feel bigger is likely to sexually assault women*)).
 - 4.1. Arguments 3.1. and 3.2.

Arguments 1–2 and the subarguments 3.1 and 3.2 are concrete examples of Trump’s questionable behaviour. Using concrete examples as arguments is an excellent strategic manoeuvre of selection from topical potential, as exemplifying instances that are on video means that their correctness cannot be reasonably questioned. Trump, however, directly denies Clinton’s argument 3.1. (“He has said the women who have accused him are not attractive enough for him to sexually assault”) in turns 06 T, 08 T, and 11 T (“I did not say that”). A

strong repeated denial is powerful, but it is debatable whether or not Trump's denial can be considered truthful. Trump has said the things Clinton said he did about the women who accused him (CNN 2016b; Fox News 2016), although not in the exact words Clinton was using. Trump's denial can thus be considered to concern the exact paraphrasing Clinton used before she mentioned the specific instances (3.1. "He has said the women who have accused him are not attractive enough for him to sexually assault.") Trump's denial can, from this viewpoint, and considering the exact point in the conversation at which it occurred, be considered relevant.

Clinton's argument 4 ("He thinks belittling women makes him bigger") is tricky to reconstruct because it can be considered as much an argument for the main proposition in this section as it can be a separate proposition altogether. I have, however, chosen to reconstruct it as an argument for the main proposition on the basis of maximally argumentative interpretation — and the argument is in a sense also a standpoint that should be argued in a reasonable way. The proposition "He thinks belittling women makes him bigger," here reconstructed with the same two arguments that supported argument 3, is an interpretation of Trump's behaviour and as such is a matter of opinion. Arguments 3.1. and 3.2., which are the only ones that reasonably can be reconstructed to support her proposition, cannot be considered to be enough of to justify expressing such a harsh opinion in a presidential debate, where matters of opinion are expected to be more thoroughly justified than in less formal contexts. Additionally, the argument scheme rule is violated as the argument scheme "a person who wants to belittle women to make himself feel bigger is likely to sexually assault women" is a fallacy of symptomatic argumentation. Because of the insufficient argumentation as well as the violation of the argument scheme rule, Clinton's argument 4 is deemed fallacious.

As a whole, Clinton manoeuvres the dispute in this section in a way that demonstrates thorough preparedness and understanding of her audience. She takes her argument number 3 ("He has no respect for women") under the main difference of opinion and makes it a standpoint, which she further widens to concern all people (a proposition that can be reconstructed as "Trump has no respect for people who are different from him"). She defends this redefined standpoint by providing argumentation in the form of examples of Trump's actions and statements of mocking others (all of which are true, and the incidents gained media attention during the campaign), which presented together constitute "a pattern of divisiveness" (turn 21 C). The central strategic manoeuvre Clinton utilizes here is adaptation to audience demand, and it leans on the premise that respecting others is a generally accepted value. The simultaneous selection from topical potential manifests in Clinton widens the scope of the proposition from Trump disrespecting women to him disrespecting people in general in order

to appeal to a larger audience. This shift in scope also demonstrates Clinton's unexpressed standpoint that even if the accusations of sexual assault were proven untrue, Trump would still be morally unfit for presidency. The entire reconstruction of Clinton's argumentation — consisting of multiple and subordinative argumentation — in this segment can be reconstructed as follows:

Trump is unfit for presidency because

1. Trump is un-American (the president of the United States should represent American values)
 - 1.1. He is divisive (the USA as a country should not be divisive)
 - 1.1.1. He is racist
 - 1.1.1.1. He said a federal judge could not be impartial because his parents were Mexican
 - 1.1.2. He is a misogynist
 - 1.1.2.1. He has talked about him sexually assaulting women
 - 1.1.2.2. Women have accused Trump of doing exactly what he has talked about doing
 - 1.1.2.3. He has no respect for women
 - 1.1.2.3.1. He has said the women who have accused him are not attractive enough for him to sexually assault
 - 1.1.2.3.2. He has called women disgusting
 - 1.1.2.4. He thinks belittling women makes him bigger
 - 1.1.3. He has no respect for people who are different from him
 - 1.1.3.1. Arguments 1.1.1. and 1.1.2.
 - 1.1.3.2. He mocked a disabled reporter
 - 1.1.3.3. He belittled John McCain, a war veteran and a prisoner of war
 - 1.1.3.4. He went after a gold star family because of their religion
 - 1.2. He promotes violence (and USA as a country should not promote violence and (*the president's values should reflect the shared values of the country*))
 - 1.2.1. He applauds people who behave violently at his rallies.

1.3. He has demonstrated with his statements and actions that he is not morally good (USA is a morally good country (*the president's values should reflect the shared values of the country*)).

In this complicated argumentation to support the proposition that Trump is unfit for presidency, Clinton hints at a standpoint she has demonstrated during the campaign as well: that Trump is un-American. This sentiment is expressed most clearly by Clinton in turn 21 C: “That is not who America is.” This standpoint is central enough that it is reconstructed as the argument supporting the main proposition of Trump’s unfitness for presidency. The main proposition is supported well and altogether non-fallaciously (apart from 1.1.2.4. as discussed previously, but this does not affect other arguments’ correctness because the argumentation is multiple and not coordinative). Clinton’s use of concrete examples makes her arguments for the more abstract arguments well-founded and more readily acceptable. In an interesting strategic manoeuvre, Clinton expresses her non-explicit standpoint of Trump’s un-Americanness towards the end of the subsegment, which means she has built up her case with argumentation preceding the actual standpoint. This reverse structure (a strategic manoeuvre of utilizing presentational devices) might be employed because Trump’s brand is so strongly American. If Clinton had established the standpoint before demonstrating how it is true, it might have been met with strong resistance because Trump’s brand is so contrasting, and consequently any arguments might have been disregarded. Utilising this presentational device demonstrates Clinton’s understanding of Trump’s brand and of his voter base.

Clinton’s turn 13 C is a powerfully built statement: “America is great because America is good. And it really is up to all of us to make that true now and in the future and particularly for our children and our grandchildren” is reconstructed argument 1.3. Clinton refers to Trump’s campaign slogan “Make America great Again,” and uses it against him. She attaches the moral quality of “bad” to Trump, and the opposite quality, “good,” to herself as is illustrated by the rest of her argumentation. Her argument with this statement would thus be that a morally bad president cannot make the country great because they would not represent its values.

Clinton makes a choice of presentational devices in choosing to situate some of her arguments in a story-like structure, presenting them as actions and reactions and using words that connect the instances together. This is displayed in turns 05 C and 13 C, where Clinton uses phrases “after that”, “what was his response?”, and “he went on to say.” Choices like these on the presentational level highlight the connections between the described events as well as making the argumentation easier to follow. This strategic manoeuvre is utilized to strengthen

her argument of Trump having a pattern of bad behaviour and to make the long and thoroughly prepared argumentation more comprehensible for the potential voters viewing the debate.

The entire topic of the subsegment is clearly beneficial for Clinton and damaging for Trump. Clinton is able to appeal strongly to one of her key demographics, women, with her entire argumentation. She also makes a specific comment in turn 13 C: “[Trump] goes after their dignity, their self-worth, and I don't think there is a woman anywhere that doesn't know what that feels like.” This is a call for unity, and demonstrates adaptation to audience demand by relating to their shared experiences. The comment compactly pits Trump against all women, not just the ones accusing him, and it pinpoints the essence of Clinton’s argumentation: Trump is the enemy. Altogether, Clinton’s argumentation concerning the proposition “I believe Trump has sexually assaulted women” is executed according to the rules of a critical discussion, and she uses selection from topical potential well.

In this subsegment, it is clear that Clinton has the upper hand in strategically manoeuvring the discussion to her advantage, demonstrating thorough preparedness, while Trump is forced to respond to her manoeuvres. Trump does attempt to change the subject to his staple topics of terrorism and Clinton’s email scandal, but Clinton does not respond but goes on with her argumentation concerning Trump’s un-Americanness and his consequent unfitness for presidency. Trump’s attempts to change the subject are too obvious and awkward to be considered successful. Trump also bypasses the other topic offered by the moderator: Clinton’s husband’s similar actions. Manoeuvring the discussion towards this topic would have been a more advantageous route, but Trump does not do so. Consequently, he is left as the underdog of this segment.

6.1.2. Pay-to-Play

In this segment, Clinton is the antagonist to the proposition “there existed a conflict of interest with Clinton dealing with the Clinton Foundation while she was secretary of state.”

25 M: In this bucket about fitness to be president there's been a lot of developments over the last ten days since the last debate. I'd like to ask you about them. These are questions that the American people have. Secretary Clinton, during your 2009 Senate confirmation hearing you promised to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest with your dealing with the Clinton Foundation while you were secretary of state, but e-mails show that donors got special access to you, those seeking grants for Haiti relief separately from non-donors and some of those donors got contracts, government contracts, taxpayer money. Can you really say you've kept your pledge to that Senate committee and why isn't what happened and what went on and between you and the Clinton Foundation? Why isn't it what Mr. Trump calls pay-to-play?

- 26 C:** Well, everything I did as secretary of state was in furtherance of our country's interests and our values. The state department has said that. I think that's been proven, but I am happy — in fact, I'm thrilled to talk about the Clinton Foundation because it is a world renowned charity and I'm so proud of the work that it does. I could talk for the rest of the debate. I know I don't have the time to do that, but just briefly the Clinton Foundation made it possible for 11 million people around the world with HIV AIDS to afford treatment and that's about half of all the people in the world that are getting treatment in partnership with the American health association.
- 27 M:** Secretary Clinton, respectfully, this is an open discussion.
- 28 C:** Well, it is an open discussion.
- 29 M:** The specific question is about pay to play —
- 30 C:** There is a lot of evidence about the very good work —
- 31 T:** And it's a criminal enterprise —
- 32 M:** Please let Mr. Trump speak.
- 33 T:** It's a criminal enterprise. Saudi Arabia given \$25 million, Qatar, all of these countries. You talk about women and women's rights? So these are people that push gays off business, off buildings. These are people that kill women and treat women horribly and yet you take their money. So I'd like to ask you right now why don't you give back the money that you've taken from certain countries that treat certain groups of people so horribly? Why don't you give back the money? I think it would be a great gesture because she takes a tremendous amount of money. And you take a look at the people of Haiti. I was in Little Haiti the other day in Florida, and I want to tell you they hate the Clintons because what's happened in Haiti with the Clinton Foundation is a disgrace. And you know it and they know it and everybody knows it.
- 34 M:** Secretary Clinton?
- 35 C:** Well, very quickly, we at the Clinton Foundation spend 90%, 90%, of all the money that is donated on behalf of programs for people around the world and in our own country. I'm very proud of that. We have the highest rating from the watchdogs that follow foundations. And I would be happy to compare what we do with the Trump Foundation which took money from other people and bought a six-foot portrait of Donald. I mean, who does that? I mean, it just was astonishing. But when it comes to Haiti, Haiti is the poorest country in our hemisphere. The earthquake and the hurricanes, it has devastated Haiti. Bill and I have been involved in trying to help Haiti for many years. The Clinton Foundation raised \$30 million to help Haiti after the catastrophic earthquake and all of the terrible problems the people there had. We've done things to help small businesses, agriculture, and so much else. And we're going to keep working to help Haiti because it is an important part of the American experience.
- 36 T:** I don't want you to help them anymore. I'd like to mention one thing. Trump Foundation, small foundation. People contribute. I contribute. The money goes, 100%, 100% goes to different charities, including a lot of military. I don't get anything. I don't buy boats. I don't buy planes.
- 37 M:** Wasn't some of the money used to settle your lawsuit, sir?
- 38 T:** No, we put up the American flag and that's it. They put up the American flag. We fought for the right in Palm Beach to put up the American flag.
- 39 M:** There was a penalty that was imposed by Palm Beach county —
- 40 T:** There was, there was and by the way, the money went to Fisher House where they build houses, the money that you're talking about went to Fisher House where they build houses for veterans and disabled veterans.
- 41 C:** Of course, there's no way we can know whether any of that is true because he hasn't released his tax returns. He's the first candidate ever to run for president in the last 40-

plus years who has not released his tax returns. So, everything he says about charity or anything else, we can't prove it. You can look at our tax returns. We've got them all out there. What is really troubling is that we learned in the last debate he has not paid a penny in federal income tax. And we were talking about immigrants a few minutes ago, Chris. Half of all undocumented immigrants actually pay federal income tax. So we have undocumented immigrants in America who are paying more federal income tax than a billionaire. I find that just astonishing.

42 T: We're entitled because of the laws that people like her pass to take massive amounts of depreciation on other charges and we do it. And all of her donors, just about all of them. I know Buffett took hundreds of millions of dollars. Soros, George Soros took hundreds of millions of dollars.

43 M: Mr. Trump —

44 T: — Let me just explain. All of her donors. Most of her donors —

45 M: Mr. Trump —

46 T: Have done the same thing as I did. And you know what she should have done? You know Hillary, what you should have done? You should have changed the law when you were a United States senator if you don't like it —

47 M: Thanks, we've heard this.

48 T: — because your donors and special interests are doing the same thing as I do except even more so. You should have changed the law, but you won't change the law because you take in so much money. I sat in my apartment today on a very beautiful hotel down the street.

49 C: Made with Chinese steel.

[Audience laughs]

50 T: I will tell you I sat there. I sat there watching ad after ad after ad, all false ads, all paid for by your friends on Wall Street that gave so much money because they know you're going to protect them. And frankly, you should have changed the laws. If you don't like what I did, you should have changed the laws.

The reconstructed core proposition in this subsegment, based on the opening turn 25 M, is “there existed a conflict of interest with Clinton dealing with the Clinton Foundation while she was secretary of state.” This is the main elementary difference of opinion. In relation to this proposition, Clinton’s position is decidedly non-explicitly stated, although negative (26 C: “Well, everything I did as secretary of state was in furtherance of our country's interests and our values”), while Trump adopts a positive standpoint (33 T: “It's a criminal enterprise”). Clinton’s negative standpoint with respect to the proposition and Trump’s doubt about her standpoint form the second elementary difference of opinion. As the dispute is mixed — meaning both parties commit to defending a standpoint — both Trump and Clinton act as protagonist and antagonist.

Clinton’s brief argumentation concerning the main difference of opinion can be reconstructed as follows:

There existed no conflict of interest with me dealing with the Clinton Foundation while I was secretary of state, because

1. The State Department has that everything I did as secretary of state was in furtherance of our country's interests and our values (*nothing done in the country's best interest and values can be regarded negatively*).

Trump's argumentation, in turn, can be reconstructed in the following way:

There existed a conflict of interest with Clinton dealing with the Clinton Foundation while she was secretary of state, because

1. The Clinton Foundation is a criminal enterprise
 - 1.1. The Clinton Foundation accepts donations from foreign entities in exchange to access to the US State Department.

Clinton's argument number 1 is an argument from authority (the U.S. Department of State), and here the authority is one of relevance. However, the argument scheme connecting the argument and the proposition is that nothing done in the country's best interest and values can be regarded negatively. The argument scheme is inappropriate because the end does not justify the means when speaking of matters of law, which makes the argument fallacious. It is interesting to note that the strongest response to the main difference of opinion from Clinton would be denial, but she does not explicitly deny the accusation, nor does she mention corruption. It could be argued that choosing a relatively weak line of defense (her argument in relation to an outright denial) could mean there is no stronger argument she could make, which makes the possibility of the accusation being true a more prominent one. Thus, it seems quite condemning that Clinton not only does not deny the accusation, but the comparatively weak argument she chooses is fallacious on the basis of the inappropriate use of an argument scheme.

As protagonist to the main difference of opinion, Trump's opening argument (1) is "It's a criminal enterprise." This is severe enough an accusation that reasonably it requires sufficient elaboration or supporting argumentation. Trump, however, does not explicitly provide any but treats the proposition as a fact. If Trump's argumentation is interpreted generously based on the wider context, supporting argumentation could be reconstructed as in 1.1. ("The Clinton Foundation accepts donations from foreign entities in exchange to access to the US State Department"). Considering this as a supporting argument, and noting the entire scandal surrounding the Clinton Foundation and the conflict of interest, Trump's argumentation is intriguing. However, as the FBI's investigation into the matter had concluded before the debate, Trump had no evidence to support argument 1.1. It should be noted, however, that because of the centrality of the issue, it is a valid assumption that Trump's proposition was accepted by many potential voters — because or despite his argumentation for it in the debate.

Altogether, both candidates' argumentation concerning the main difference of opinion in this segment is fallacious.

Clinton very quickly manoeuvres the conversation from the conflict of interest to the work the Clinton Foundation does. These arguments cannot be reconstructed as supporting Clinton's proposition of there being no conflict of interest because the Foundation doing great work would not negate the possibility. Instead, this is a very clear strategic manoeuvre of selection from topical potential as she is able to appear to stay somewhat on topic but also to turn the conversation completely to the positives of the Foundation. This manoeuvre would be on the verge of fallaciousness based on its irrelevancy to even the major question of who is better suited for presidency were it not for the moral connotations she suggests. The choice from topical potential in bringing up charity work allows Clinton to not only flaunt the work the Clinton Foundation does, but also to contrast it to the Trump Foundation in a way that is favorable to her. She says in Turn 35 C: "I would be happy to compare what we do with the Trump Foundation which took money from other people and bought a six-foot portrait of Donald. I mean, who does that?" This choice of topical potential demonstrates — again, with a concrete and verifiable example — that the Trump Foundation has used its money in a morally questionable way, which in turn would indicate that Trump is immoral and thus unsuitable for presidency.

Trump responds to Clinton talking about her charity by attacking it. Firstly, he points out the societal values of the countries that have donated money to the Clinton Foundation, and what accepting this money means. The proposition Trump makes in turn 33 T ("[—] Saudi Arabia given \$25 million, Qatar, all of these countries. You talk about women and women's rights? So these are people that push gays off business, off buildings. These are people that kill women and treat women horribly and yet you take their money") can be reconstructed as:

Clinton is a hypocrite because

1. She talks about women's rights but has accepted money from Saudi Arabia and Qatar who treat women badly (accepting money from someone means you do not morally condemn them).

The unexpressed premise is that by accepting money from these countries Clinton approves of their conduct towards women, which would make Clinton a hypocrite because she has been an adamant advocate for women's rights and equality in her campaign. The unexpressed premise of "accepting money from someone means you do not morally condemn them" is not considered fallacious in this context because it is a sentiment shared by enough people to consider it valid. Consequently, Trump's argumentation concerning Clinton's

hypocrisy is reasonable. By extending Trump's line of reasoning further to concern the main issue in the debate, it can be taken as an unexpressed standpoint that a hypocrite should not be elected as president of the United States based on their immorality, and thus Clinton should not be elected. Interestingly, Trump uses a question functioning as a directive to challenge Clinton when in turn 33 T he says "[—] I'd like to ask you right now why don't you give back the money that you've taken from certain countries that treat certain groups of people so horribly? Why don't you give back the money?" This manoeuvre of choosing a beneficial presentational device is clearly not meant as a genuine question but as a challenge to which it is impossible for Clinton to answer — and she does not.

In a second attack against the Clinton Foundation, in turn 33 T Trump states that "[—] I want to tell you [the people of Haiti] hate the Clintons because what's happened in Haiti with the Clinton Foundation is a disgrace. And you know it and they know it and everybody knows it." The proposition is "the people of Haiti hate the Clintons" and the reconstructed argument to support it is "everybody knows that what's happened in Haiti with the Clinton Foundation is a disgrace." The argument, however, uses a populist fallacy ("everybody knows") violating of the relevance rule and resulting in fallacious argumentation.

Trump responds to Clinton's comparison of their charities by stating in 36 T that "The money goes, 100%, 100% goes to different charities, including a lot of military. I don't get anything. I don't buy boats. I don't buy planes." In addition, in turns 38 T and 40 T Trump claims that Trump Foundation's money was not used to settle a lawsuit as the moderator says, but it was used to fight "for the right in Palm Beach to put up the American flag" and donated to Fisher House Foundation "where they build houses for veterans." Trump did indeed put up an American flag on a flagpole that was too large according to Palm Beach regulations, resulting in a lawsuit, and the settlement required Trump to donate to veterans' charities, (Cerabino 2015; Eder 2016). This fact makes Trump's claim of 100% of the Foundation's money going to charities a fallacy. The mention of the American flag and the veteran's charity is a choice of topical potential to appeal to potential voters with notions of patriotism. The presentational device of using the expression of "fighting for the right" to put up the American flag is meant to highlight Trump's devotion to the USA by showing he is willing to be sued for being patriotic. Considering his voter base, this is a well-chosen manoeuvre.

Clinton manoeuvres the discussion from the foundations to taxes, specifically Trump's missing tax returns and the fact that he does not pay federal income tax. The argumentation can be reconstructed as follows:

Trump should release his tax returns because

1. We cannot know whether he is telling the truth about financial matters without them (*tax returns reveal financial commitments*)
2. We cannot know whether he is telling the truth about anything without them (*tax returns reveal information on issues not relating to financial commitments*)
3. It is customary for a presidential candidate to release their tax returns (breaking a tradition is bad).

Clinton's argument 1. is relevant and valid in that it is true that financial commitments and possible conflicts of interest cannot be proven without the customary release of tax returns. However, she also makes the vague argument (2.) that the truthfulness of any of Trump's statements cannot be proven without him releasing the tax returns, and here the line of reasoning is clearly faulty because tax returns only relate to financial information. Clinton attempts to widen the scope of Trump's statements' possible unreliability resulting from the missing tax returns to concern issues on which the tax returns hold no weight. Consequently, argument 2. is deemed fallacious based on the violation of the argument scheme rule. As a strategic manoeuvre arguments 1. and 2. represent a choice from topical potential meant to make Trump seem unreliable, and to undermine all his claims about financial commitments. As a manoeuvre, this is well-founded, and as she brings this up in connection to Trump's lawsuit settlements, it also shows an understanding of the need for logical continuation in the discussion. This is a topic she absolutely had to bring up in the debate as it is so central, so seizing the opportunity at the right moment was crucial.

Argument 3. — concerning the custom of presidential candidates releasing their tax returns — is true in that it is indeed customary. The argument shows adaptation to audience demand, as breaking a 40-year tradition would be considered undesirable by many. However, it is not required by law for a presidential candidate to release their tax returns. While breaking the tradition looks suspicious, there is no absolute requirement. Clinton's argumentation is not fallacious, but it is also not very forceful, as resistance to breaking tradition is arguably not very strong value even if it is a popular one.

Clinton's argumentation concerning federal income tax can be reconstructed as follows:

Trump should pay federal income tax because

1. Not paying federal income tax is morally wrong (*doing public good by paying taxes is a moral duty*)
 - 1.1. taxes are used for the public good

2. Not paying federal income tax makes Trump a worse citizen than the illegal immigrants he bashes (a person who pays federal income tax can be considered a better citizen than one who does not)

- 2.1. Half of all undocumented immigrants pay federal income tax.

In making the statement in turn 41 C that “Half of all undocumented immigrants actually pay federal income tax” and Trump, a billionaire, does not, Clinton takes the unexpressed standpoint that not paying federal income tax is morally wrong especially from a billionaire. According to Clinton, half of all undocumented immigrants in the US are thus better citizens— and thus arguably more American — than Trump because they pay federal income tax. Clinton is accusing Trump of not measuring up to the people he has most bashed in his campaign, which would make him a hypocrite. Using Trump’s own ammunition against him — with a fact he cannot deny — is strategic manoeuvre of selection from topical potential as well as adaptation to audience demand, and it might outweigh the irrelevancy of the argument to the average viewer.

Trump’s opposing standpoint to Clinton’s unexpressed proposition of “Trump should pay federal income tax” can be reconstructed as follows:

I do not have to pay federal income tax because

1. The law allows me not to pay federal income tax
 - 1.1. Clinton does not want to change the law (Clinton can change the law)
 - 1.1.1. Clinton benefits from the laws herself (so she is a hypocrite)
2. Others in my position also do not pay federal income tax.

Trump’s argumentation between arguments 1 and 2 is considered coordinative, because neither argument is sufficient on its own to defend the morality of not paying federal income tax. While it is true that there are loopholes in the law allowing Trump and others in his position to not pay federal income tax, Clinton’s opposing standpoint is framed as a moral question and not as a question of lawfulness, and this is clear enough from the context for Trump and the potential voters to grasp. Clinton’s manoeuvre in bringing up the tax returns is thus aimed at undermining Trump’s moral character. In his argumentation, Trump infers the premise in 1.1. that Clinton could have changed the law. This is a violation of the starting point rule because Clinton as an individual clearly cannot be held solely responsible for changing a law when she was a senator. The unexpressed premise of Clinton being a hypocrite, expressed in argument 1.1.1., is a resurfacing of Trump’s continual effort of portraying Clinton as fundamentally untrustworthy.

Towards the end of the segment, Clinton makes the proposition that Trump's hotels are made with Chinese steel. This is a brief interjection, and it can be judged as a strategic manoeuvre to counter attach Trump's accusation of hypocrisy against her. As a major topic in Trump's presidential campaign was bringing back American jobs, him using Chinese labour to build his hotels could absolutely be considered hypocritical.

In this segment, neither candidate argues convincingly to support their standpoints concerning the main proposition. The segment, however, demonstrates well the way each candidate strategically manoeuvres the discussion towards topics that are beneficial from their viewpoint and that demonstrate central topics in their campaigns. Both Trump and Clinton aim to portray the other as hypocritical and as a liar via various tactics. Trump does this by portraying the Clinton Foundation as a criminal enterprise and by underlining Clinton's position as a political insider. Clinton does the same to Trump by referring to the way the Trump Foundation's money has been spent, and how he is both immoral and a hypocrite for not paying federal income tax — as well as him using Chinese labour to build his hotels. She also depicts Trump as a liar based on him not releasing his tax returns. Both candidates' strategic manoeuvring in this subsegment is thus aimed towards a shared goal.

6.1.3. Accepting the Results of the Election

In the third subsection of the segment on fitness to be the president of the United States, the moderator challenges Trump to answer whether he will honor the tradition of a peaceful transition of power and accept the results of the election.

51 M: Mr. Trump, I want to ask you about one last question in this topic. You've been warning at rallies recently that this election is rigged and that Hillary Clinton is in the process of trying to steal it from you. Your running mate Governor Pence pledged on Sunday that he and you, his words, will absolutely accept the result of this election. Today your daughter Ivanka said the same thing. I want to ask you here on the stage tonight, do you make the same commitment that you'll absolutely accept the result of the election.

52 T: I will look at it at the time. I'm not looking at anything now, I'll look at it at the time. What I've seen, what I've seen, is so bad. First of all, the media is so dishonest and so corrupt and the pile on is so amazing. "The New York Times" actually wrote an article about it, but they don't even care. It is so dishonest, and they have poisoned the minds of the voters. But unfortunately for them, I think the voters are seeing through it. I think they're going to see through it, we'll find out on November 8th, but I think they're going to see through it. If you look —

53 M: But, but —

54 T: Excuse me, Chris. If you look at your voter rolls, you will see millions of people that are registered to vote. Millions. This isn't coming from me. This is coming from Pew report and other places. Millions of people that are registered to vote that shouldn't be registered to vote. So let me just give you one other thing. I talk about the corrupt media. I

talk about the millions of people. I'll tell you one other thing. She shouldn't be allowed to run. It's -- She's guilty of a very, very serious crime. She should not be allowed to run, and just in that respect I say it's rigged because she should never —

55 M: But, but —

56 T: Chris. She should never have been allowed to run for the presidency based on what she did with e-mails and so many other things.

57 M: But, sir, there is a tradition in this country, in fact, one of the prides of this country is the peaceful transition of power and no matter how hard fought a campaign is that at the end of the campaign, that the loser concedes to the winner. Not saying you're necessarily going to be the loser or the winner, but that the loser concedes to the winner and the country comes together in part for the good of the country. Are you saying you're not prepared now to commit to that principle?

58 T: What I'm saying is that I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense, okay?

59 C: Well Chris, let me respond to that because that's horrifying. You know, every time Donald thinks things aren't going in his direction, he claims whatever it is, is rigged against him. The FBI conducted a yearlong investigation into my e-mails. They concluded there was no case. He said the FBI was rigged. He lost the Iowa caucus, he lost the Wisconsin primary, he said the Republican primary was rigged against him. Then, Trump University gets sued for fraud and racketeering. He claims the court system and the federal judge is rigged against him. There was even a time when he didn't get an Emmy for his TV program three years in a row and he started tweeting that the Emmys were rigged against him.

60 T: Should have gotten it.

[Audience laughs]

61 C: This is a mind-set. This is how Donald thinks, and it's funny, but it's also really troubling. That is not the way our democracy works. We've been around for 240 years. We've had free and fair elections. We've accepted the outcomes when we may not have liked them, and that is what must be expected of anyone standing on a debate stage during a general election. You know, President Obama said the other day when you're whining before the game is even finished —

[Audience applauds]

62 M: Hold on, folks.

63 C: — It just shows you're not up to doing the job. And let's be clear about what he's saying and what that means. He's denigrating, he is talking down our democracy. And I, for one, am appalled that somebody who is the nominee of one of our two major parties would take that kind of position.

64 T: I think what the FBI did and what the Department of Justice did, including meeting with her husband, the Attorney General, in the back of an airplane on the tarmac in Arizona, I think it's disgraceful. I think it's a disgrace.

65 M: All right.

66 T: I think we've never had a situation so bad

[Audience applauds]

67 M: Hold on, folks. This doesn't do any good for anyone. Let's please continue the debate [—]

In this segment, the central question “Will you accept the result of the election?” can be reconstructed as the standpoint “Trump should commit to accepting the results of the election.” Trump acts as the antagonist to this proposition, and Clinton acts as the protagonist.

Trump adopts the opposite position, which can be reconstructed as “I do not have to commit to accepting the results of the election,” and to this position he is the protagonist, while Clinton is the antagonist. Clinton’s argumentation to support her proposition can be reconstructed in the following way:

Trump should commit to accepting the results of the election, because

1. The peaceful transition of power is a central value of democracy and of the USA (*such a central value should be respected*).

Trump’s contrasting argumentation can be reconstructed as follows:

I do not have commit to accepting the results of the election, because

1. The race is rigged against me
 - 1.1. The media is dishonest and corrupt and they are against me
 - 1.1.1. The New York Times wrote an article about it
 - 1.2. Pew has reported that there is voter fraud
2. Clinton should not be allowed to run for presidency
 - 2.1. She is guilty of a serious crime
 - 2.1.1. The email scandal.

Clinton’s multiple argumentation for her proposition “Trump should commit to accepting the results of the election” consists of only one argument. Argument 1 (“The peaceful transition of power is a central value of democracy and of the USA”) is voiced partly in turn 61 C, where Clinton does her own version of substitution: “[—] let’s be clear about what he’s saying and what that means. He’s denigrating, he is talking down our democracy.” The fact that this is the only argument to support Clinton’s proposition highlights the argument’s significance because it hints that no other argument is needed. The argument centrally demonstrates adaptation to audience demand, as Clinton refers to a system Americans (at least those who would conceivably vote in a presidential election) collectively believe in: democracy. Leaning an argument against the foundation of a Western society is a bold manoeuvre, but in this situation, it is appropriate, as a candidate not committing to accepting election results would be unprecedented. Manoeuvring the question to being so fundamental is an attempt to gain as many proponents for her view as possible because democratic values appeal to both conservative and liberal voters, thus gaining as wide and acceptance for her propositions as possible.

Trump’s repeated commissive in this subsegment is “I will tell you [whether I accept the results of the elections] at the time.” His argumentation to support his proposition “I do not have commit to accepting the results of the election” consists of one argument (“the race is rigged against me”) for which there are three subarguments. Argument 1 is a topic Trump had

discussed during the election period as well — as exemplified by Clinton. Subargument 1.1. (“The media is dishonest and corrupt and they are against me”) is also a topic Trump flaunted during the campaign. The argument he puts forward to support the claim (1.1.1.: “The New York Times wrote an article about it”) is too vague to determine which article Trump means, so its validity — and, consequently, the validity of 1.1. — is left unanswered, and the argumentation is deemed fallacious based on violating the obligation to defend rule by evading the burden of proof. Trump’s subargument 1.2. is presumably (Lopez 2017) based on a 2012 article, which in fact discusses the US voting system in general, and not voter fraud (Pew Charitable Trusts 2012). This subargument is thus fallacious on the basis of its irrelevancy. Argument 1.3. demonstrates adaptation to audience demand as Trump appeals to the widely shared sentiment that a criminal — or, arguably, even someone who has been even criminally investigated — should not be allowed to run for presidency. However, argument 1.3. (“Clinton should not be allowed to run for presidency”) is fallacious because the FBI’s investigation to Clinton’s emails resulted in no indictment, which leaves Trump’s argumentation baseless.

Trump’s argumentation in this subsegment is thus altogether fallacious. His main argument in terms of frequency and depth is argument 2. “Clinton should not be allowed to run for presidency.” The reason for choosing this argument referring to Clinton’s email scandal as a disqualifier is a familiar argument from him and from other Republican candidates. While the email investigation had been finished in July and resulted in no charges (which makes the argument fallacious as it violates the starting point rule), the topic was — or was presumed by him and his team to be — popular enough among his voters and potentially undecided voters to warrant it being raised. The proposition that Clinton should not be allowed to run is (fallaciousness aside) also a strong response to Clinton’s proposition of Trump’s undemocratic manner. The severity of Clinton’s proposition arguably requires an equally serious response, which Trump’s proposition delivers. Strategically manoeuvring the arguments one presents to fit the severity of the critical discussion topics demonstrates an understanding of the required balance between the discussants’ propositions and arguments.

Clinton ultimately manoeuvres her argumentation towards the larger question of who should be elected president, making her proposition on the main difference of opinion a part of the larger argument. She argues that because Trump refuses to commit to the election result — which she argues demeans democracy — he is not a valid presidential candidate. She uses the same strategic manoeuvre as before as she chooses to precede her statement of “Trump is not a valid presidential candidate” with concrete, verifiable examples of Trump’s actions in the past,

demonstrating a pattern. The reconstruction of Clinton’s argumentation in this segment is as follows:

Trump is not a valid presidential candidate, because

1. He refuses to commit to accepting the results of the election (he peaceful transition of power is a central value of democracy and of the USA (*such a central value should be respected*))
2. He is unpresidential
 - 2.1. He cannot take it when things do not go his way (which is a childish an unpresidential trait)
 - 2.1.1. He says things are rigged when he does not win
 - 2.1.1.1. He accused the FBI when they did not convict Clinton
 - 2.1.1.2. He accused the Republican primary when he did not win the Iowa caucus and Wisconsin primary
 - 2.1.1.3. He accused the court system and a federal judge when Trump University was sued for fraud and racketeering
 - 2.1.1.4. He accused the Emmys when the Apprentice did not win an Emmy.

Clinton uses concrete examples (subarguments 2.1.1.1.–2.1.1.4.) to build a case that Trump’s mind-set is fundamentally flawed in that whenever things do not seem to go his way he whines — which she argues is an unpresidential quality and means he is not suited for the job. In turn 63 C Clinton uses the expressive “I, for one, am appalled” when talking about Trump’s non-commitment to the results, which is aimed at making Trump’s position sound disgusting, and which underlines her argument. The examples of Trump’s past actions Clinton uses are notable, and the entities he has accused of being rigged have a reputation of reliability: the FBI, the Republican primary election, the court system, and a federal judge. This choice in topical potential underlines the severity of Trump’s pattern of behaviour. The last example is the Emmys, which can be assumed to have been added for humorous effect (their reliability is more subjective). The topic works as Trump takes the bait and responds: “Should have gotten it” (60 T), and the audience laughs. The Emmy example makes Trump seem slightly ridiculous — especially when he cannot resist responding — which is a strategic manoeuvre of choosing an argument that best suits one’s purpose. The impression Clinton paints of Trump with her unpresidentiality argument is itself that of a somewhat childish figure (a person who throws a tantrum when they do not get their way). With this in mind, baiting Trump to engage in an

argument to make him look petty — as winning an Emmy holds no relevance in a presidential race — can thus be deemed to demonstrate a coordinated effort in strategic manoeuvring.

Trump's response to Clinton's Emmy example could, however, also be interpreted as a joke, in which case Trump would have manoeuvred well by making light of Clinton's example and thus inferring that the issues she lists are not very serious. Clinton's response to him and the audience's laughter (61 C: "[—] it's funny, but it's also really troubling"), however, is also a strategic manoeuvre of adapting to audience demand. She acknowledges the audience's reaction and joins in their sentiment but immediately takes the conversation back to the "troubling" nature of the pattern she portrays him of having. This strategic manoeuvre illustrates Clinton's ability to adapt to the audience's emotional reactions and continue her argumentation accordingly, curbing the potential negative effect a light-hearted moment may have on whether the audience takes the rest of her argumentation seriously. Controlling the tone of the discussion by manoeuvring so advantageously indicates experience and preparedness on Clinton's part — although if Trump's comment is assumed to be a joke, it demonstrates an excellent sense of tone.

In this segment, Clinton, again, uses the presentational device of a story-like structure in her argumentation. She also uses "we" a lot, which is a presentational device underlining a message of unity. In her argumentation, Clinton leans on the authority of president Obama as she quotes him in 61 C and 63 C: "President Obama said the other day when you're whining before the game is even finished [—] it just shows you're not up to doing the job." By quoting president Obama, Clinton aligns herself and her values with him and his values and implies that Obama agrees with her concerning Trump's unpresidentiality. This is also an appeal to an authority as it could be argued that Obama, being a president, knows what the job requires. By referring to Obama's argumentation in her own support for a proposition and aligns herself with him, Clinton utilizes adaptation to audience demand by appealing to a desire for continuation. Such a desire can be strong, although it is counteractive when considering potential voters who believe that politics should change.

The strategic manoeuvring both Clinton and Trump utilize in this segment is aimed at demonstrating that their opponent is unfit for presidency. Trump take the unfitness argument one step further and asserts that Clinton should not be allowed to run for presidency at all. Clinton appeals to issues of morality, while Trump argues his point by referring to Clinton's email scandal and other instances he argues are criminal. The segment illustrates how both debaters aim to intensify the severity of their accusations as the debate progresses.

6.2. Strategic Manoeuvring as Indicator of Political Brands

In this section, the results of the analysis are interpreted by linking them to the candidates' political brands. The objective is to answer the main research question (in what ways are Trump's and Clinton's political brands manifested in their strategic manoeuvring?) with the support of the two subquestions: which elements of each other's political brands do Trump and Clinton attack by using strategic manoeuvring, and when the rules of a critical discussion are broken and strategic manoeuvring becomes fallacious, do the fallacies indicate a brand-related motive? These questions are answered in separate segments for each of the candidate, after which a short summary is provided.

6.2.1. Clinton's Political Brand

In the analysed section of the third US presidential debate of 2016, Clinton's brand is consistently demonstrated in her own as well as Trump's strategic manoeuvring. One of the most central brand qualities for Clinton was her image as an experienced politician. This part of her brand manifested itself clearly in how her strategic manoeuvring displayed thorough preparation. She for example utilized two repeated strategic manoeuvres in combination with each other when arguing for her proposition that Trump was not a viable presidential candidate because of his un-Americanness. The first strategic manoeuvre was the presentational device of demonstrating a point before asserting the central proposition, or in other words, putting forward arguments before revealing the standpoint. As was discussed in the analysis section, using this kind of a presentational device has the benefit of making the hearer more receptive to the proposition, which may shift the feelings of some undecided potential voters.

The second repeated strategic manoeuvre was the choice of topical potential of using verifiable, concrete examples as arguments. By using examples that had been widely reported and that are on video, Clinton made it impossible for Trump to deny them. Because of Trump's aggressive brand and because he was known to have a complicated relationship with truth despite his image of someone who says it like it is, Clinton had to use such arguments. If Trump had argued that the examples did not amount to a pattern or that they did not demonstrate what Clinton said they did, he would have been interpreted to admit to having done them, which would have been worse than not acknowledging them at all. Essentially, Clinton put Trump in a corner from which there was no other escape than the often obvious manoeuvre of changing the subject — which Trump did. Systematically using these two strategic manoeuvres in combination indicates a full argumentative strategy, which highlighted Clinton's brand as a skilful politician who could coherently manoeuvre an intense situation. In addition, Clinton

committed considerably less fallacies than Trump, and her fallacious strategic manoeuvring was most often the result of argument scheme rule violations and not providing sufficient argumentation to support a proposition.

Throughout the debate, Clinton was more concerned with the smooth and logical continuity of her argumentation (which is an indicator of the correct use of strategic manoeuvring) than Trump was. This was manifested in how Clinton manoeuvred the changes in topic rather fluidly, making the new topic seem like it is absolutely relevant to the issue at hand. This was shown for example when she said she was thrilled to talk about the Clinton Foundation in the segment concerning pay-to-play, but instead of arguing at length that there was no conflict of interest, she turned the discussion to charity work. She also typically used connective language to clearly link her arguments to each other and to her propositions.

There was, however, a downside to Clinton's chosen argumentation strategy: the smoothness of her argumentation and the clearly premeditated argument structures resulted in her mostly speaking in monologues — a downside of televised debates, as was discussed by Zarefsky (1992, 412). While she seized the narrative, she did not appear to be taking part in a dialogue, which is what an effort to resolve a difference of opinion ought to be. This meant that her strategic manoeuvring was not as strong as it first might seem as she disregarded the logical continuation of the debate in favour of her strategy of seeming well-prepared and ignoring Trump's strategic manoeuvring to make it appear inconsequential. Only twice in the segment analysed in this study did she appear to respond to Trump — both instances being in the subsegment on pay-to play. First she brought up Trump's tax returns — which gave her the opportunity to dive into yet another rehearsed monologue — and towards the end of the segment she interjected the discussion with the remark that Trump's skyscrapers are made with Chinese steel. While Clinton may be viewed to have demonstrated her brand as an endurer by approaching Trump's argumentation like that of a bully, it also made her seem unresponsive.

As demonstrated with several examples above, Clinton's polished and elegant style of strategically manoeuvring the discussion was an intrinsic part of her brand as an accomplished politician. When contrasted to Trump, Clinton's style had its definite benefits when considering those voters who were alienated by Trump's more simple style. However, it must be noted, that for many potential voters the calculated style of a traditional politician was not what they wanted from a candidate. Those looking for a change in politics were likely to be alienated by Clinton's fully predesigned argumentation. Clinton's unresponsive and tailored approach also had the potential of underlining her undesirably aloof brand image.

Clinton sought to dispel the coldness and inauthenticity attached to her brand in her strategic manoeuvring by referring to shared experiences. In her argumentation on Trump's sexual assault accusations, she said, "Donald thinks belittling women makes him bigger. He goes after their dignity, their self-worth, and I don't think there is a woman anywhere that doesn't know what that feels like" (turn 13 C). With this argument, she aligned herself and her experiences with those of an average woman and illustrated that she could relate to their experiences. Another example of a strategic manoeuvre aimed at gaining relatability points was her mentioning the Emmys when arguing that Trump cannot take it when he does not win. The light-hearted example had the presumably intended effect of amusing the audience — although the laughter was due to Trump taking the bait — and making Clinton seem less cold, after which she was able to bring the discussion back to serious issues. Both examples were designed to make Clinton appear more genuine and approachable.

Clinton's seemingly side-tracked argumentation against the pay-to-play proposition, where she explained in-depth about the Clinton Foundation's charity work, also highlighted her softer image. While it was off topic, it was on brand. The topic of charity also underlined the difference between Clinton and Trump's philanthropy. Any charity work Trump might have been doing was not communicated in depth during the campaign era or before it, and his image was strongly steered towards a masculine and authoritarian leader, so the image of an unselfish or empathetic person was not connected to Trump's political brand. Contrastingly, because Clinton had systematically worked towards a warmer political brand in her campaign, the topic of charity work was beneficial for her. While the irrelevancy of Clinton's argument was glaring when analysed according to the rules of a critical discussion, and her weak defence against the pay-to-play accusations made the allegations seem more legitimate, to a potential voter this strategic manoeuvre may have demonstrated an empathetic and humanitarian side of Clinton.

One of the major brand-related motivations for Clinton in the debate was to strategically manoeuvre in way that underlined her image as a unifying force. She did this mainly by strengthening the doppelgänger brand image of Trump as a divider of the American people, most prominently presented in the segment on the sexual assault allegation, where she argued that Trump was racist, misogynistic, and had no respect for people different from him. By using the strategy of attaching negative qualities to the opponent and consequently attaching the opposite, positive quality to oneself (Sandvik 1997, 427), she made herself appear unprejudiced and cooperative.

Clinton underlined her image as a continuation of president Obama when she quoted him in the segment on accepting the results of the election. Her alignment with him based on

the quote was a strong indicator of her political brand as a force of continuity rather than of change — the latter quality being connected to Trump. Clinton also implied her appreciation for continuity when she argued that Trump should release his tax returns because every presidential candidate had done so for over 40 years. Clinton's brand as essentially an extension of Obama's two presidential terms was an obvious turn off for some voters, while for others it was either desirable or a lesser of two evils compared to Trump's promise of uprooting many of the changes implemented by Obama.

One of the main propositions Trump aimed to solidify with his strategic manoeuvring in the debate was that Clinton was a hypocrite. He first made this proposition in the segment on pay-to-play, when he accused Clinton of hypocrisy on the basis that she claimed to be an advocate for women, but she took donations from countries in which women are treated badly. He inferred the same proposition later in the same segment, when he claimed that in reality, Clinton herself benefits from the laws that allow Trump not to pay federal income tax. The latter argument was also strongly connected to Trump's efforts to strengthen Clinton's image as a political insider in negative light. By referring to Clinton's ties to Wall Street, Trump strengthened Clinton's doppelgänger brand image as a part of a political dynasty with special interests — an image that was in contradiction with her carefully built political brand of someone who is on the side of the average American, not of the 1%. As Clinton's experience was one of her strongest assets for her brand, Trump's attacks against it in the debate were well-aimed — albeit not executed flawlessly.

Trump consistently looked for opportunities to characterize Clinton as unreliable and immoral. These arguments rose partially from his proposition that Clinton orchestrated both the violence at his rallies and the sexual assault allegations. Another way he made these propositions known was by bringing up the email scandal and her associated role as a corrupt, long term insider to politics. Trump took the argument of unreliability further by proposing that Clinton should not have been allowed to run for president because she had committed crimes in her role as Secretary of State. These allegations were a strong response to Clinton's assertions on Trump's unpresidentiality.

Clinton's political brand was manifested clearly in how both she and Trump strategically manoeuvred in the debate. Her strength was her experience in politics, along with which came her ability to strategically manoeuvre skilfully in the debate. The flipside of Clinton's political experience was the fact that she was viewed by many as being a part of a political dynasty. Trump had continually painted Clinton as a corrupt political insider during the campaign, encapsulated in her term "Crooked Hillary," and he argued for this viewpoint in

the debate as well. Clinton also demonstrated a downside of her experience and well-preparedness in her argumentation strategy. Her strategic manoeuvring manifested in her speaking mostly in monologues during the debate, which had the side effect of making her seem inauthentic and unresponsive. This strengthened the image she had tried to battle against by broadcasting an image of warmth and relatability. Clinton strategically manoeuvred to counteract this effect by arguing in ways that made her seem more relatable, and by talking about her charity work, which strengthened a warmer side of her brand. Clinton used her critique of Trump to portray herself as a force of unity as well as continuity — brand qualities that were in contrast with those of Trump's and that were thus beneficial for her considering many potential voters.

6.2.2. Trump's Political Brand

Trump's brand of a genuine and straightforward political candidate — as opposed to the corrupt and insincere politicians he argued Clinton represented — was one of the fundamental aspects of his image, and his strategic manoeuvring in the debate highlighted this. Trump used his trademark unfiltered style, and for example interrupted Clinton several times — and he also spoke over the moderator. As maintained by Maarek, interrupting an opponent has the desired effect of making the interrupter appear strong while also breaking the speaker's rhythm and unbalancing them, but it also carries the risk of seeming rude (2016, 197). Rudeness, however, was clearly not a concern for Trump, as it was one of the staples of his political brand and it was strongly connected to his image as the rare political candidate who “says it like it is.” There was also a good reason for Trump not to appear to have manners: as Mölders, Quaquebeke and Paladino found in their 2017 study, a candidate whose voters do not strongly value morality, may benefit from a disrespectful style of presentation.

Trump's unfiltered strategy demonstrated his desire to make potential voters feel like he represented them, and he could be argued to have said what he believed voters might want to say themselves. Trump's argumentation style brought politics closer to their level of rhetoric and was aimed at making it easier for them to trust him and possibly give him their vote. In addition to the interruptions, Trump was overall less concerned with continuity in manoeuvring the discussion than Clinton, and consequently his propositions and arguments were often difficult to follow. He tended to jump from one statement and argument to the next without the necessary connections to logically tie the manoeuvres together. While this might have allowed Trump to go through many topics within the limited time, it resulted in less defined argumentation and, consequently, weakly defended propositions.

Trump's communication style in the debate reflected his desire for rhetorical effectiveness and "winning" an argument, which was consistent with his existing brand of a powerful leader — someone who could "make America great again." Trump's desire to win easily overrode his need to be dialectically reasonable, and this was demonstrated in the copious fallacious arguments Trump made in the debate. He often used arguments that were fallacious due to their untruthfulness or due to him appealing to authorities that were not, in fact, authorities on the issue. By arguing and strategically manoeuvring in a way that is fallacious, Trump demonstrated and strengthened his political brand as a strong authoritarian leader: such a leader arguably does not need proof to back up their claims, but the claims ought to be accepted because the leader says so. While such reasoning is obviously fallacious from an analytical standpoint, it had the potential of persuading the potential voters who were less concerned with such issues. Because Trump's voter base had a relatively loose notion of morality, as discussed by Ekins and Heidt (2016), Trump's choice of fallacious and thus immoral arguments demonstrates what he believed his voters would value and what kinds of infractions they would disregard. This finding demonstrates that Trump did indeed have a brand-related motive to use fallacious strategic manoeuvring.

Trump's brand during the campaign had been partly tied to him controlling any discussion (or the headlines) and forcing his opponents to respond — a strategy that, again, strengthened his masculine and authoritarian brand. However, in the analysed section of the debate, Clinton largely refused to engage with Trump and monologued instead, and the one time Clinton engaged with something Trump said, she baited him. Trump's response to Clinton's bait on the Emmy issue had the effect of making him look slightly ridiculous — or, if considered deliberate, he could be seen as funny and down-to-earth. By controlling the course of the debate and making Trump the underdog, Clinton was able to turn the tables and make him seem ill-prepared and even weak in comparison.

One of the most significant issues for Trump's political brand was that he was perceived by many as being misogynistic, and when the topic came up in the debate he had few options of strategically manoeuvring. Trump's argumentation for his main proposition in the segment concerning the sexual assault accusations ("The accusation that I have sexually assaulted women is false") was either fallacious or weak. This was to be expected because the scandals around the topic were many and prominent during the campaign period, and Trump could not escape the image of someone who does not respect women with any argumentation reasonably available for him at the time. His copious sexist and misogynistic remarks made it extremely difficult for him to manoeuvre the topic in a beneficial way, especially as Clinton's

argumentation in the segment was strong. This meant that his best option was to try to strategically manoeuvre using the topical potential available for him by changing the topic.

The topics Trump chose in trying to steer away from the sexual assault allegations were very on-brand and well chosen as such, since they were some of his most popular talking points: terrorism and Clinton's email scandal. The terrorism topic would have been beneficial for Trump as it was one of the central themes of his candidacy, and the email scandal would have been damaging for Clinton. Either option would have thus been excellent had the strategic manoeuvring been successful. This strategic manoeuvre was, however, executed poorly as Trump seemed too desperate to take the conversation elsewhere, as he said, for example, "I'd love to talk about other things." Such an obvious indicator of dodging a question does not only make the speaker appear rude because they are violating social protocol, but because it is weak strategic manoeuvring, it also demonstrates weak rhetoric skills — an undesirable quality for a presidential candidate no matter how rude they might be allowed to be.

In other instances of selection from topical potential to redirect the discussion, Trump manoeuvred the conversation towards patriotism, namely veterans and the American flag. This occurred in the section on pay-to-play, when Trump responded to the moderator's question about whether the Trump Foundation's money had been used to settle a lawsuit or a penalty. By stretching the truth about the lawsuit and the donations made to a veterans' charity, Trump made himself seem very patriotic, especially when claiming they "fought for the right [—] to put up the American flag." Without the knowledge of the nature of the lawsuit, this statement truly does make Trump seem like a patriot. Donating money to a veterans' charity has strong patriotic connotations, as it is arguably a form of thanking veterans for their service for the country. By bringing up these topics in the discussion — although unsuccessfully — Trump stressed his essential Americanness.

Because Trump's political brand was first and foremost that he was a patriot and a "true American," Clinton made various attacks against the truthfulness of this image. In the subsegment concerning the sexual assault accusations against Trump, Clinton took the central difference of opinion and redefined the standpoint — and the issue — from "Trump has sexually assaulted women" to "Trump has no respect for women" to "Trump has no respect for people who are different from him." By arguing for the last standpoint with concrete examples, Clinton presented Trump's questionable actions as a "pattern of divisiveness," which she suggested is an un-American value. This led to her core proposition of Trump's unfitness for presidency based on his un-American values — a dominant theme for her both during the campaign and the third presidential debate. While Clinton's argumentation contained several

key issues from the campaign period, the proposition that Trump was un-American was a central one. Clinton also hinted at this proposition in her argumentation concerning Trump not paying federal income tax, when she said that half of undocumented immigrants pay taxes but Trump, a billionaire, does not. With this argument, Clinton challenged the notion of Americanness by inferring that a non-citizen who pays taxes is more American than Trump. Clinton's systematic efforts to strategically manoeuvre in a way that would corrode Trump's patriotic brand demonstrated her understanding of the image's centrality for Trump's voter base.

With the aforementioned federal income tax issue, Clinton also depicted Trump as a hypocrite. The same doppelgänger brand image characteristic — in contradiction with Trump's consciously built brand of a refreshingly honest and frank candidate — was brought up by Clinton with the strategic manoeuvre of comparing the finances of the Clinton Foundation and the Trump Foundation, as she brought up the Trump Foundation's money being used to purchase a portrait of Trump. Another example of the hypocrisy argument was Clinton's mention of Trump using Chinese labour to build his hotels. The arguments of hypocrisy also tied to her standpoint that Trump was immoral.

Trump's political brand, just as Clinton's, was clearly demonstrated in the debate. His image as a strong leader and as an outsider from politics was illustrated in his strategic manoeuvring, which was fallacious relatively often due to non-factual statements. In addition, his argumentative strategy was closer to one utilized by an average citizen in the same situation, as his argumentation was not as coherent and structured as Clinton's, which arguably made him appear more strongly connected to his voter base. The unfiltered and rule-breaking argumentation underlined his brand of genuineness — an aspect Clinton attempted to erode by arguing he was a hypocrite. One of Clinton's main propositions in the debate was that Trump was not a valid presidential candidate due to his un-Americanness resulting from his divisiveness and un-American values. Trump, on his end, made choices from topical potential in his argumentation that were extremely patriotic and strengthened his brand as a true American.

7. Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this thesis indicates that both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump strategically manoeuvred in the third US presidential debate of 2016 in ways that were consistent with their political brands. Both candidates had chosen argumentative strategies that were aimed at solidifying the positive aspects of their brand and undermining the other's political brand. The defining feature behind how the candidates approached the debate was the fact that because of their starkly contrasting brands, the expectations they faced differed greatly from one another. Trump's brand was that of a political outsider, and he was thus not expected to debate like a traditional politician. His brand not only allowed but also demanded him to derail his strategic manoeuvring to be consistent. Clinton's brand, on the other hand, was much more traditional, and because of her long career in politics, the expectations for her in the debates were higher than for Trump. She had to strategically manoeuvre much more carefully as her political brand allowed for less straying from the rules of a critical discussion. These conclusions support the findings made in previous studies, where the two candidates' language use as well as their attitude towards truth were found to be contrasting (Kayam 2017; Wang and Liu 2017; Savoy 2016; Khoinurisa and Indah 2017).

The nature of the extended pragma-dialectical approach as a methodological tool is such that any analysis and consequent interpretations are matters of judgement. While I have aimed to justify the analytical choices made in this study, it is clear, that a number of different readings would have been possible and that the choices reflect the objectives of this thesis. It is also important to note that the analysis in this study concentrates on one 15-minute segment of the debate, and while the issues raised in the segment were wide-ranging, they naturally offer only a narrow view of the way Trump and Clinton manoeuvred strategically. Although the material was chosen based on its potential to accurately depict the candidates' styles, it is a relatively short segment and cannot be viewed as a comprehensive representation of their communication styles. However, because the implications of the patterns of strategic manoeuvring each candidate exhibited are demonstrated to be connected to the political brands of the candidates as manifested during their presidential campaigns, the conclusions gain more reliability. It should also be pointed out that the parts of the analysis leaning on audience reactions are to be viewed especially critically because a comprehensive interpretation of the reactions would have required a multimodal approach.

Trump's overall success in terms of branding was strongly connected to the existing social climate of 2016 that allowed alternative — or questionable — views, such as Trump's

populist and hypermasculine notions, to be perceived as reasonable. A hunger for a change in politics meant a change in the way politicians should express themselves, and Trump filled this political vacuum. As Trump voters were less concerned with issues of morality than Clinton's voters were, Trump was able to use less sophisticated strategic manoeuvring to his advantage in the debates. By arguing less like a politician and more like an average voter, Trump demonstrated his brand as an outsider from politics, which resonated with many Americans wishing for a change.

Both candidates strategically manoeuvred with their target audiences in mind, which in Trump's case shows that fallacious argumentation can be used to gain strategic advantages. This finding implies that the extended pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation should have a wider notion of successful strategic manoeuvring, and that it might be beneficial for it to include the strategic use of fallacies when the opponent's (or whoever is the object of persuasion) moral specificities are taken into consideration. Further research on the connection between strategic manoeuvring and moral issues would thus be valuable for the development of the pragma-dialectical theory.

Candidates like Trump who disregard rules of a critical discussion and brand themselves as representatives of the true voice of the nation are, because of their relatability, able to legitimize strands of discourse that would otherwise be unsavoury or controversial. When the personal and the political brands are successfully integrated via the promotion of the relatability of a candidate, an issue can be framed as "personal" or "a matter of opinion" even when the issue is factually inaccurate — as was the case with Trump's various statements during the debate. While the topic might not be taken seriously at first, if it is discussed enough in the public sphere, its acceptability is obscured by exposure. Herein lies the difficulty with the mediatization of politics. When political figures compete for the spotlight, and shock value may determine success, people can be desensitised to increasingly radical ideas. Resisting the shift of politics becoming less concerned with coherent and realistic policies deserving of support and more interested in clickability is an increasingly important task in our age.

The findings of this study demonstrate the mediatization and recontextualization of political discourse. Traditional political rhetoric may be losing its grip as political content is more accessible than before and consumed more widely, resulting in political entities competing for attention. Thus, the "clickability" of a statement as well as the relatability and familiarity of a candidate — instead of the brand of a more traditional, experienced politician — may be what makes a politician stand out and receive votes. Politicians are expected to adapt to this, but voters ought to assume responsibility for the consequences of their media

consumption habits as well. While our shortening attention spans demand shock value and defy prolonged immersion into informational content, each of us is responsible for our own critical thinking concerning not only politics but also of the society politics is a mirror of.

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Appendix 1: Finnish Summary

Poliittisten vaikuttajien brändit ovat aina olleet merkittävä ilmiö. Niiden keskeisyys on kuitenkin alkanut korostua entisestään sosiaalisen median aikakautena, jona informaatiota tuotetaan ja kulutetaan kiihtyvää tahtia. Mediassa shokeeraavat otsikot ja klikkattavuus korostuvat asiasisällön kustannuksella. Lukuisat viestintäkanavat tarjoavat uudenlaisia mahdollisuuksia poliittiselle brändäykselle, mutta ne myös edellyttävät taustatiimeiltä huolellista suunnittelua ja koordinoitua. Riippumatta siitä, kuinka menestyksekkäästi yksittäisen poliitikon tiimi onnistuu hänet brändäämään, on poliitikon itsensä myös kyettävä ilmentämään ja viestimään brändiään johdonmukaisesti. Haasteita asettavat erityisesti stressaavat tilanteet kuten väittelyt, ja näissä yhteyksissä poliitikon sitoutuneisuus brändiinsä joutuu testiin paineen alla. Tässä tutkielmassa selvitetään, miten poliitikot ilmentävät brändejään väittelyssä argumentoinnin keinoin.

Tämän tutkielman aineistona on 15:n minuutin segmentti Yhdysvaltojen vuoden 2016 presidentinvaalien kolmannesta vaaliväittelystä, jossa olivat vastakkain republikaanien ehdokas Donald Trump ja demokraattien ehdokas Hillary Clinton. Väittely pidettiin 19.10.2016, ja se oli yksi kaikkien aikojen katsotuimmista poliittisista livelähetyksistä. Väittelyyn kulmineitui koko poikkeuksellisen skandaalintäyteinen kampanja-aika. Kampanjan aikana merkittävimmät skandaalit olivat Clintonin sähköpostikohu ja siihen liittynyt eturistiriitaepäily koskien hänen rooliaan valtiosihteerinä ja Clinton Foundationin omistajana, sekä Trumpin lukuisat rasistiset, seksistiset sekä muutoin epäkorrektilt tai valheelliset kommentit. Sekä sosiaalinen että ammatillinen media seurasivat kohuja herkeämättä, ja monet ammattijournalistit kyseenalaistivat puolueettoman raportoinnin keskeisyyden johtuen Trumpin skandaalinhakuisuudesta ja välinpitämättömästä suhtautumisesta totuuteen. Monet kampanja-ajan kohut ja ilmiöt olivat keskeisessä roolissa ehdokkaiden poliittisten brändien muovautumisessa ja horjumisessa.

Trumpin brändin ydin oli hänen erillisyytensä poliittisista sisäpiireistä. Trump korosti sitä, että hänen mittava omaisuutensa vapautti hänet kampanjalahjoitusten mukanaan tuomista sitoumuksista, jotka yleensä velvoittavat poliitikkoja. Hän käytti imagoaan liikemiehenä hyväkseen vedoten miellettyyn menestykseensä pätevyyden indikaattorina. Trump brändäsi itsensä isänmaalliseksi kansanmieheksi, joka puhuu asioista suoraan ja niiden oikeilla nimillä. Rehellisyyden imagoaan — jota hän piti elossa huolimatta siitä, että hän jäi jatkuvasti kiinni epätosista väittämistä — Trump vertasi Clintoniin, jonka hän maalasi osana

korruptoitunutta poliittista eliittiä. Clintonin brändi oli monin tavoin Trumpin vastakohta. Hän korosti poliittista kokemustaan ja esitti itsensä yhdistävänä voimana — vastakohtana Trumpin hajottavalle ja vastakkain asettelevalle retoriikalle. Clintonin pitkä ura politiikassa ja julkisuudessa kantoi kuitenkin mukanaan myös imagoa epäautenttisesta ja epärehellisestä poliittisen dynastian jatkumona toimivasta sisäpiiriläisestä. Sekä Trump että Clinton pyrkivät johdonmukaisesti heikentämään toistensa poliittisia brändejä kampanja-aikana ja käyttivät lukuisia kohuja sabotoinnin välineinä.

Trumpin ja Clintonin poliittiset brändit sekä tavat, joilla he ilmensivät niitä, olivat äärimmäisen erilaiset. Trumpin sääntöjä rikkova tyyli oli poliittisella arenalla uutta, mutta sen menestyksekkäys kertoi siitä, että se vastasi yhteiskunnan tarpeeseen. Tämä luo erinomaisen lähtökohdan sen tarkasteluun, miten vuonna 2016 vallinnut yhteiskunnallinen ilmapiiri ja erityisesti politiikkaan kohdistunut muutosjanoisuus sallivat poliittisessa yhteydessä poikkeukselliset keinot sekä brändäyksessä että argumentoinnissa.

Ehdokkaiden argumentointia lähestytään laajennetun pragma-dialektisen argumentaatioteorian näkökulmasta. Teoria käsittää argumentoinnin sosiaalisena, kielellisenä ja rationaalisenä toimintana, jossa osapuolet pyrkivät ratkaisemaan erimielisyyden argumentaation sääntöjä noudattaen testaamalla näkökulmiensa hyväksyttävyyttä. Teoria tarjoaa ideaalin argumentaation mallin, johon todellisuudessa havaittua argumentaatiota verrataan. Mallissa erotetaan neljä argumentoinnin vaihetta, joiden sisällä osapuolilla nähdään olevan erilaisia velvollisuuksia. Ensimmäinen vaihe on *vastakkainasettelu*, jossa erimielisyyden todetaan olevan olemassa. *Avauksessa* erimielisyys määritellään, ja osapuolet sitoutuvat puolustamaan omia näkökantojaan yhteisten (usein implisiittisten ja tilannekohtaisten) sääntöjen mukaan. Myös protagonistin (näkökannan puolustaja) ja antagonistin (näkökannan vastustaja) roolit jaetaan. *Argumentaatiovaiheessa* protagonistipuolustaa näkökantaansa antagonistin hyökkäyksiä vastaan, ja kumpikin osapuoli pyrkii kyseenalaistamaan toisen lausunnot ja argumentit. Argumentaatiovaihe päättyy, kun toinen osapuoli luopuu roolistaan, tai kun tilanne muutoin katkeaa tai päätetään. *Päätätövaiheessa* osapuolet toteavat yksimielisesti onko erimielisyys ratkaistu. Erityisesti poliittisissa väittelyissä erimielisyyden ratkaisu väittelijöiden kesken ei ole oletettu lopputulos, vaan ratkaisun oletetaan tapahtuvan suostuteltavana olevan yleisön mielissä.

Todellisuudessa havaitusta argumentoinnista tehdään rekonstruktio, jonka pohjalta argumentaatiota analysoidaan. Rekonstruktion avulla nostetaan esiin erimielisyyden ratkaisemista edistävät argumentit, protagonistin ja antagonistin roolit, sekä väittelyn rakenne. Rekonstruktio saavutetaan neljällä pragma-dialektisellä työkalulla. Ensimmäinen työkalu on

poistaminen, jolla tarkoitetaan niiden elementtien poistoa, joiden ei katsota edistävän erimielisyyden ratkaisemista. *Permutaatiolla* järjestetään puheteot tarvittaessa uudelleen niin, että niiden funktio prosessissa saadaan selvästi esille. *Lisäyksellä* sanoitetaan implisiittisesti ilmaistut näkökannat ja argumentit näkyviksi. *Substituutiolla* uudelleenmuotoillaan epätarkat puheteot, jotta niiden rooli erimielisyyden selvittämisessä saadaan esille. Työkaluja käytetään syklisesti, kunnes saavutetaan mielekäs analyttinen katsaus, jonka pohjalta voidaan aloittaa analyysi.

Argumentaation rekonstruktion pohjalta voidaan arvioida, täyttävätkö osapuolet ne velvoitteet, joihin he sitoutuvat osallistuessaan kriittiseen keskusteluun erimielisyyden ratkaisemiseksi. Pragma-dialektinen argumentaatioteoria määrittelee kymmenen sääntöä, joita osapuolten tulee noudattaa. Jos osapuoli rikkoo jotain näistä säännöistä, hänen puhetekonsa katsotaan virheelliseksi. Sääntörikkomukset ovat kuitenkin tulkinnanvaraisia, sillä argumentin relevanttius nähdään jatkumona, ja lisäksi kontekstitekijät vaikuttavat tulkintaan. Säännöt ovat seuraavat¹⁴:

1. Vapaussääntö: Keskustelijat ovat vapaita esittämään näkökantansa.
2. Perusteluvollisuussääntö: Näkökanta on perusteltava pyydettyä.
3. Näkökantasääntö: Ainoastaan esitettyjä näkökantoja vastaan on oikeus hyökätä.
4. Relevanssisääntö: Näkökannan puolustaminen sallitaan vain relevantilla argumentaatiolla.
5. Lausumattomien premissien sääntö: Puhuja sitoutuu omiin lausumattomiin premissihinsä. Toiselle ei aseteta virheellisesti premissiä.
6. Lähtökohtasääntö: Puhuja ei saa virheellisesti esittää jonkin olevan hyväksyty lähtökohta, eikä yhteisesti hyväksytyjä lähtökohtia saa kieltää.
7. Validiteettisääntö: Argumentoinnin taustalla olevan päättelyn tulee olla loogista.
8. Argumenttiskeemasääntö: Argumenttiskeemoja tulee käyttää oikein.
9. Päättäntösääntö: Näkökannasta voi pitää kiinni vain, jos sitä on puolustettu lopullisesti.
10. Kielenkäyttösääntö: Käytetyn kielen tulee olla selkeää ja yksiselitteistä. Vastapuolta ei saa tahallaan ymmärtää väärin.

¹⁴ Suomennokset mukaillen John Pajusen luvusta kirjassa *Ajatuksia tutkimiseen: Metodisia lähtökohtia*. 2015. Sivut 270–282. Toimittaneet Toivo Salonen ja Seppo I Sotasaari. Lapin yliopistokustannus, Rovaniemi.

Laajennetun pragma-dialektisen teorian strategisen luovinnan¹⁵ käsite mahdollistaa sen tarkastelun, miten ehdokkaat tasapainottelivat väittelyssään kahden samanaikaisen tavoitteen välillä: toisaalta väittelijät pyrkivät noudattamaan argumentoinnin sääntöjä, ja toisaalta he pyrkivät vaikuttavaan eli suostuttelevaan argumentointiin. Vaikka nämä kaksi tavoitetta eivät lähtökohtaisesti ole ristiriidassa, voi liiallinen suostuttelevaan argumentointiin nojaaminen rikkoa argumentoinnin sääntöjä, jolloin argumentoinnista — ja tämän seurauksena myös strategisesta luovinnasta — tulee virheellistä. Strateginen luovinta toteutuu kolmella tavalla, jotka ilmenevät samanaikaisesti. Ensimmäinen puhujan oletetaan tekevän itselleen edullisimmat valinnat kaikista niistä mahdollisista aiheista, argumenteista ja kritiikeistä, jotka ovat sillä hetkellä mahdollisia. Toiseksi puhujan oletetaan mukautuvan yleisön vaatimukseen vetoamalla heidän mieltymyksiinsä, empatiaansa ja järkeensä. Kolmanneksi puhujan oletetaan valitsevan tehokkaimman tavan esittää argumenttinsa. Toteuttamalla johdonmukaisesti kaikkia kolmea tapaa puhuja ilmentää argumentaatiostrategiaa, jolla hän suuntaa keskustelua itselleen edukkaasti — tai vastapuolelle epäedullisesti.

Tutkimuksessa analyysi kohdistui yhteen kolmannen vaaliväittelyn 15-minuuttiseen osioon, jonka aiheena oli ehdokkaiden kelpoisuus presidentiksi. Osio oli edelleen jaettu kolmeen alaosioon, jotka koskivat Trumpiin kohdistuneita seksuaalisen häirinnän syytteitä, Clintonin eturistiriitaa hänen toimiessaan Yhdysvaltain ulkoministerinä omistaessaan the Clinton Foundationin, sekä sitä, sitoutuiko Trump hyväksymään vaalituloksen. Segmentti valittiin, sillä aiheina olevat asiat olivat keskeisiä elementtejä ehdokkaiden brändeissä ja siinä, millä keinoin ehdokkaat pyrkivät horjuttamaan toistensa brändejä. Lisäksi kysymys siitä, kumpi on soveltuvampi presidentiksi, on aihe, johon kaikissa presidentinvaaleissa pyritään etsimään vastausta, ja kaikki muut kysymykset voidaan johtaa koskemaan tätä kaiken kattavaa dilemmaa.

Analyysissä esille nousivat kandidaattien äärimmäisen erilaiset tyylit argumentoida ja johdatella keskustelua. Clintonin huolellinen valmistautuminen ja kokemus näyttäytyivät suunnitelmallisina argumentaatorakenteina ja koordinoitusti käytettyinä strategisina luovintoina. Clinton käytti argumentointinsa tukena faktoja, kuten videolle tallentuneita tapauksia ja rakensi argumenttinsa tarinamaiseen muotoon korostaakseen tapausten yhteyttä ja saadakseen tuotua väittämänsä esille selkeämmin. Hän myös esitti usein

¹⁵ Suomenos: Lehtonen, Juha 2016: *Viisiportaisen menetelmän kehittäminen kuvallis-tekstuaalisen argumentaation analysoimiseksi pragma-dialektisessä viitekehyksessä. Esimerkkianalyysinä kolme Oikeutta Eläimille -järjestön Facebooktilapäivitystä*. Filosofian pro gradu -tutkielma. Jyväskylän yliopisto.

argumenttinsa ennen varsinaista väittämää, minkä voidaan tulkita olevan esitystavan valinta, jolla yleisöä pehmitetään faktuaalisilla esimerkeillä ennen väittämää, joka on tulkinnanvarainen johtopäätös faktoista. Clintonin argumentointityylin kääntöpuoli oli se, että äärimmäisen suunniteltu ja monologinomainen esitystapa voidaan tulkita epäautenttiseksi, mikä ilmentää juuri sitä, mihin monien muutoshalu poliittisella kentällä kohdistui. Toisaalta se, että Clinton ei suurelta osin osallistunut vastavuoroiseen keskusteluun saattoi olla strateginen valinta, jolla hän pyrki osoittamaan Trumpin argumentoinnin epäsopivuutta. Monologeillaan Clinton myös pakotti Trumpin väittelyn altavastajaksi ja pakotti tämän reagoimaan omiin strategisiin luovintoihinsa.

Clintonin keskeinen pyrkimys väittelyssä oli osoittaa perustelluksi väitteensä siitä, että Trump oli epäamerikkalainen ja siten epäsopiva presidentiksi. Alleviivaamalla ominaisuuksia, jotka tekivät Trumpista hänen mukaansa epäamerikkalaisen, Clinton pyrki murentamaan Trumpin isänmaallista brändiä ja vastavuoroisesti liittämään vastakkaiset, positiiviset ominaisuudet itseensä. Clinton korosti rooliaan yhdistävänä voimana, kun taas Trumpin hän argumentoi olevan hajottava ja eripuraa kylvävä. Clinton pyrki myös lisäämään brändinsä autenttisuutta ja samaistuttavuutta näennäisen spontaaneilla ja hauskoilla kommentteilla sekä puhumalla hyväntekeväisyydestään. Clinton rikkoi argumentaation sääntöjä verrattain vähän, minkä voidaan katsoa olevan indikaattori kokemuksesta ja luotettavuudesta — jotka olivat hänen keskeisiä brändiominaisuuksiaan.

Trumpin argumentointityylin havaittiin poikkeavan merkittävästi Clintonin tyylistä erityisesti siinä, millaisia argumentteja hän esitti väittämiensä tueksi. Trumpin lukuisat argumentaationsääntöjen rikkomukset olivat pääasiassa seurausta epätotuudenmukaisuuksista ja mielipiteiden esittämisestä faktoina. Rikkomukset sijoittuvat pragma-dialektisesti tarkasteltuna useiden eri sääntörikkomuskategorioiden alle. Tällä totutulla tyylillään Trump havainnollisti epäpoliittisuuttaan pitämällä argumentointityylinsä lähellä sitä, miten keskiverto amerikkalainen saattaisi argumentoida. Trumpin argumentointityyli ilmentää sitä, miten halu ”voittaa” väittely voi suistaa strategisen luovinnan raiteiltaan. Tyyli tuki hänen maskuliinista ja autoritääristä brändiään. Trump pyrki suuntaamaan keskustelua pääasiassa Clintonin sähköpostiskandaaliin sekä isänmaallisiin aiheisiin. Hän pyrki myös johdonmukaisesti alleviivaamaan väittämänsä siitä, että Clinton oli osa tekopyhää ja korruptoitunutta poliittista eliittiä.

Kandidaateille asetetut odotukset olivat hyvin erilaiset. Kansan silmissä Clintonilta sallittiin lähtökohtaisestikin vähemmän sääntörikkomuksia, sillä hänen perinteisen politiikan brändinsä edellytti myös perinteisempää argumentointityyliä. Trumpin vastakkainen

brändi uutena tulokkaana ja kansan äänenä taas salli enemmän rikkomuksia argumentaatiossa. Tutkimusten mukaan Trumpin kannattajakunnalla oli löyhempi suhtautuminen moraaliin kuin esimerkiksi Clintonin kannattajakunnalla. Tämä tukee tulkintaani siitä, että suosimalla maksimaalisen suostuttelevia keinoja argumentaation sääntöjen noudattamisen sijaan, Trump kykeni vetoamaan kannattajiinsa paremmin. Täten voidaan päätellä, että argumentaation sääntöjen rikkominen oli odotettua ja jopa edellytettyä Trumpilta.

Tutkimuksessa osoitettiin Trumpin ja Clintonin ilmentäneen poliittisia brändejään johdonmukaisesti kolmannessa vaaliväittelyssään. Kumpikin kandidaatti suuntasi keskustelua itselleen edullisiin ja toiselle epäedullisiin aiheisiin, ja molempien argumentointityylit tukivat olemassa olevia brändejä. Kandidaatit myös osoittivat toistensa brändien keskeisten tekijöiden tuntemusta potentiaalisten äänestäjien silmissä pyrkimällä murentamaan kyseisiä brändiominaisuuksia. Tuloksissa ilmentyy Yhdysvaltojen yhteiskunnallisen ilmapiiriin sekä sosiaalisen median vaikutus poliittiseen kontekstiin. Kysymys onkin, halutaanko kyseenalaiset keinot sallia muutoksen varjolla. Kun raja politiikan ja muun median välillä alkaa hämärtyä ja otsikoiden klikattavuus korostuu asiasisällön kustannuksella, painottuu kansalaisten vastuu siitä, millaiset keinot nähdään oikeellisina ja miten shokeeraavaa retoriikkaa sallitaan sääntöjen rikkomisen kustannuksella.