

Ambivalence of naming : mere referencing or tacit denigrating in donald trump's political campaigning speeches.

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Abstract

This investigation aims at exploring how Donald Trump turned his 2016's election campaign into a denigration campaign. To this end, Rom Harré's (1999) Social Position Theory is employed to display the different ways in which Donald Trump (de)constructs the identity of his political opponents, namely President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Additionally, in this study, it is intended to demonstrate how Donald Trump constructed his self-positive identity. Through a qualitative analysis, the findings suggest that Trump systematically adopts a polarized strategy in his political argumentation. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and Immigrants are negatively positioned in his campaign speeches. Obama is represented as the traitor. He was trusted by American people, but he betrayed them by working for his own interests and the interests of the lobbyists who totally controlled him throughout his two terms. Hillary Clinton his, however; introduced as the unfit leader. She is corrupt and part of the rigged system. She is totally controlled by big elites who pull the strings. Her legacy is death, destruction, terrorism and weakness. Illegal immigrants are as well blamed to be the invaders who threaten the life of innocent American people. Contrarily, Donald Trump takes the stance of the competent and the voice of the voiceless. This deliberate and positive self-representation is, indeed, proved to be a strategy to enhance his credibility towards American people.

Keywords: Denigration, Negative, Positioning Theory, Positive.

Résumé

Cette recherche vise à explorer comment Donald Trump a transformé sa campagne électorale de 2016 en une campagne de dénigrement. À cette fin, la théorie de la position sociale de Rom Harré (1999) est employée pour montrer les différentes manières dont Donald Trump (dé)construit l'identité de ses adversaires politiques, à savoir le président Barack Obama et Hillary Clinton. En outre, dans cette étude, il s'agit de démontrer comment Donald Trump a construit son identité positive. À travers une analyse qualitative, les résultats suggèrent que Trump adopte systématiquement une stratégie polarisée dans son argumentation politique. Barack

Obama, Hillary Clinton et les immigrants sont positionnés négativement dans ses discours de campagne. Obama est représenté comme le traître. Le peuple américain lui faisait confiance, mais il les a trahis en travaillant pour ses propres intérêts et ceux des lobbyistes qui l'ont totalement contrôlé tout au long de ses deux mandats. Hillary Clinton, quant à elle, est présentée comme la dirigeante inapte. Elle est corrompue et fait partie du système truqué. Elle est totalement contrôlée par les grandes élites qui tirent les ficelles. Son héritage est la mort, la destruction, le terrorisme et l'incompétence. Les immigrants sont également accusés d'être les envahisseurs qui menacent la vie des Américains innocents. À l'inverse, Donald Trump adopte la position du compétents et se positionne comme la voix des sans-voix. Cette représentation délibérée et positive s'avère en effet être une stratégie pour renforcer sa crédibilité auprès du peuple américain.

Mots Clés : Dénigrement, Négatif, Positif, Théorie du positionnement.

Introduction

The perpetual quest for power always leads politicians to denigrate their opponents with the unstated hope of increasing their followers. In order to fulfil this selfish and pervasive interest, a politician negatively portrays these opponents in such a way that people see these latter worse than evils. Thus, naming and describing opponents in political campaign speeches can trigger ambiguity. Indeed, the words and expressions that he carefully selects to portray them are very pejorative and full of negativity. Doing so, it is hard to state without doubt whether the speaker is referencing or denigrating his opponents. In such a political discourse, the identity of the opponent is deconstructed according to the ideology of the speaker.

A close examination of Donald Trump's political campaign speeches in 2016 has permitted to point out that he names his political opponents in a biased way. This work displays the different ways in which Donald Trump constructs the identity of his opponents namely Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in his 2016 electoral campaign speeches. Thus, the topic of this paper is "Ambivalence of Naming: Mere Referencing or Tacit Denigrating in Donald Trump's Political Campaign Speeches". This subject triggers the following questions: how does Trump position himself and others in his campaign speeches? What are the denigrating markers in Trump's speeches? What are the linguistic markers of positive self-positioning in Trump's

speeches? This discussion intends to show that Donald Trump turned his electoral campaign into a campaign of denigration of others.

Donald Trump's positioning process is analysed in the light of the Positioning Theory of Rom Harré. Positioning Theory is a social psychological theory that explains how individuals construct their identities and relationships in relation to one another. It emphasizes that people construct and maintain social positions by defining themselves and others based on their attributes and values. Thus, the characteristics of this theory are in line with the objective of this research which is to how Donald Trump emphasizes his values and the flaws of his opponents.

In a bipartite division, this work sheds light on Donald Trump's denigrating and positive positioning strategies. The first part deals with the deconstruction of others' identity. The second part highlights the self-positive construction identity.

1. (De)Constructing Others' Identity

Election periods are moments where political leaders fight for power. This quest for power requires the persuasion of the voting population. In this fight, the only weapon allowed is that of language. As such, politicians adopt very specific linguistic strategies in their speeches in order to catch the attention of the audience. As Teittinen (2000 :1) maintains, "the winner of a public consensus is the party whose language words, terms and symbolic expressions are based on the reality, and the context is defined in proper discourse". One of the effective ways of attracting the attention of the audience is by positioning others as evil. In his 2016 pre-election speeches, the Republican candidate Donald Trump did not fail to position his political opponents, namely Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, as incompetent and wicked people who are harming the United States of America. The following lines of this article deal with the negative positioning of President Obama, Hillary Clinton and the illegal immigrants.

1.1. Barack Obama: The Traitor

Barack Obama was the president of the United States of America when Donald Trump delivered his pre-election speeches. Indeed, Obama is a political opponent of Donald Trump in the sense that they are from different political parties. Donald Trump being the running candidate of the Republican Party, and Barack Obama, the then president, from the Democratic Party. On top of that, President Obama is a fervent supporter of Trump’s main opponent, Hillary Clinton, in the running for the presidency of the United States of America. Throughout his pre-election speeches, Donald Trump consistently criticises President Obama for his treacherousness and his incapacity to make America great again. As an illustration of the negative positioning of Barack Obama, one can quote Donald Trump when he claims that

- (1) “He’s not a leader. That’s true. You’re right about that” (Trump, June 16, 2015).
- (2) “But he wasn’t a cheerleader. He’s actually a negative force. He’s been a negative force. He wasn’t a cheerleader; he was the opposite” (Trump, June 16, 2015).

Through these statements, Donald Trump questions the leadership of Barack Obama. According to him, President Obama is not a true leader. Thus, he does not believe that Barack Obama deserves to be the president of the United States of America. The repetition of the expressions ‘wasn’t a cheerleader’ and ‘negative force’ show that Trump means it and wants the audience to bear it in mind. As Kemertelidze and Manjavidze (2013 :2) maintain, repetition is “a figure of speech that shows the logical emphasis that is necessary to attract a reader’s attention on the key-word or a key-phrase of the text”.

Hence, the main function of repetition is to put emphasis on words in order to attract the audience. Van Dijk (1997 :35) strengthens this assertion when he contends that “repetition operations are one of the major strategies to draw attention to preferred meanings and to enhance construction of such meanings in mental modals”. Moreover, Donald Trump vividly rejects the healthcare policy promoted by

President Obama. His negative positioning of the Obamacare can be observed in the following excerpts:

- (3) “We have a disaster called the big lie: Obamacare” (Trump, June 16, 2015).
- (4) “But Obamacare kickcs in 2016. Really big league. It is going to be amazingly destructive” (Trump, June 16, 2016).
- (5) “We will repeal and replace disastrous Obamacare. You will be able to choose your own doctor again” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

The negative evaluation of the Obamacare are realized through ‘disaster’, ‘big lie’, ‘big league’, ‘amazingly destructive’ and ‘disastrous’. Through these pejorative expressions, Trump wants the audience to know that President Obama’s incompetency has reached a level like never before. It can be understood through these excerpts that the Obamacare is destructive for the whole healthcare system of the United States of America. On top of that, it prevents Americans from having their own doctors. A competent leader will never make such a harmful decision. Furthermore, Donald Trump gives evidences of President Obama incompetence at the economic level.

- (6) “2 million more Latinos are in poverty today than when President Obama took this oath of office less than eight years ago. Another 14 million people have left the workforce entirely” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (7) “President Obama has doubled our national debt to more than \$19 trillion, and growing” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

As one can notice, Donald Trump provides some evidences of President Obama’s incapacity to maintain the economic benefits of the United States of America. Indeed, not only he has not been able to make the American economy thrive, but he has also been unable to keep it at the level of his predecessors. Consequently, this has led the country to an unprecedented economic troubles. Here, President Obama is made a scapegoat for the America’s economic problems. Scapegoating is, indeed, “the act of blaming and often punishing a person or a group for a negative outcome that is due, at least in large part, to other causes” (Rothschild et *al.*, 2012 :1148). In this tactic, “l’ensemble des maux qui frappent la société est attribué à un

opponent” (Toh, 2019 :121). In other words, all the ills that plague society are attributed to an opponent. Along with the same lines, President Obama is considered by Donald Trump as a traitor.

(8) “We get Bergdahl. We get a traitor” (Trump, June 16, 2016).

(9) “The irresponsible rhetoric of our President, who has used the pulpit of the presidency to divide us by race and color, has made America a more dangerous environment for everyone than frankly I have ever seen and anybody in this room has ever watched or seen” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

In the excerpt (8), Donald Trump compares President Barack Obama to Bowe Bergdahl, a United States Army soldier who deserted his post in Afghanistan. Hence, President Obama is the political Bergdahl. The American people trusted him by electing him as the president of the United States of America. But in return, he has betrayed them. In the illustration (9), one can notice that Trump vividly condemns President Obama for purposely setting apart the American society. Therefore, he is considered to be a traitor because instead of uniting the people of the United States of America, he has succeeded in dividing them through his ‘irresponsible rhetoric’. Through this rhetoric, the Republican candidate attempts to negatively position President Obama in his discourse. As Langenhove and Harré (1999 :16) maintain, “positioning can be understood as the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations”.

1.2. Hillary Clinton : The Unfit Leader

Donald Trump has always positioned Hillary Clinton as the unfit candidate regarding her records as Secretary of State in the Obama administration. The negative positioning of his opponent to the American presidency revolves around her ethical standing, her doubtful morality, her corrupted mindset, her incompetence and destructive records. As an opponent, Trump wants the audience to perceive her as a leader who is totally incapable of leading America to great achievements. The following illustrations corroborate this assertion.

- (10) “Big business, elite media and major donors are lining up behind the campaign of my opponent because they know she will keep our rigged system in place. They are throwing money at her because they have total control over every single thing she does. She is their puppet, and they pull the strings” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (11) “In fact, her single greatest accomplishment may be committing such an egregious crime and getting away with it – especially when others who have done far less, have paid so dearly” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Donald Trump negatively positions his main political opponent for her unethical and unmoral behaviour. According to him, she is corrupt by the lobbyists. So, if she is elected president, she will only work for the interests of those who have total control over her to the detriment of the American citizens. Thus, Trump intends to present the real moral disposition of Hillary Clinton. As Langenhove and Harré (1999 :21) maintain, “it is often sufficient to refer to the roles people occupy within a given moral order or to certain institutional aspect of social life to make actions intelligible and to understand the positions that people take”. Trump’s negative positioning of Hillary Clinton goes on as he contends:

- (12) “My opponent dismissed the VA scandal as being not widespread – one more sign of how out of touch she really is” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (13) “when a Secretary of State illegally stores her emails on a private server, deletes 33,000 of them so the authorities can't see her crime, puts our country at risk, lies about it in every different form and faces no consequence – I know that corruption has reached a level like never ever before in our country” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

A president of a great country such as the United States of America is supposed to be irreproachable, sincere, and credible. Thus, through the leaking of those scandals, Trump not only wants to present to the audience the kind of leader Hillary Clinton really is, but on top of that he wants to dissuade them from voting for her. Trump’s negative positioning of his opponent is not only done on her moral

disposition. He also positions her on her incompetence and destructive records. As Langenhove and Harré (1999 :21) state, “people can not only be positioned morally, they can also be positioned in terms of their individual attributes and particularities”. According to Donald Trump, President Obama should not have appointed Hillary Clinton as the United States Secretary of State, because her records at the head of this institution is catastrophic. As he states:

- (14) “America is far less safe—and the world is far less stable—than when Obama made the decision to put Hillary Clinton in charge of America’s foreign policy” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (15) “I am certain it is a decision President Obama truly regrets. Her bad instincts and her bad judgment—something pointed out by Bernie Sanders” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Through these statements, Donald Trump positions Hillary Clinton as the responsible for local and international instability. The negative positioning of Hillary Clinton is done on purpose. Indeed, she is Trump’s main opponent for the presidential election. Thus, it is an attempt to discredit her as much as possible. Consequently, she will eventually lose potential voters. In fact, it is very difficult for people to vote for a leader who lacks credibility. As Kouzes and Posner (2011 :18) state, “when leaders ask others to follow their new strategic directions, their visions of exciting possibilities of a better tomorrow, people first decide whether those leaders can be believed”.

People think a lot before following political leaders. This may be due to the fact that they do not want to be betrayed and disappointed after making the decision to follow those leaders. According to Kouzes and Posner (2011 :18), “every time you follow someone you do not trust, you erode your self-esteem: you are diminished in your own and in others’ eyes. Your worth depreciates, and you become less valuable to yourself and to others”. Trump, knowing this strategy, attempts to discredit his opponent as much as possible in order to sow doubt into the mind of her supporters and her potential voters.

The smear campaign continues as Trump accuses Hillary Clinton of supporting job killing agreements. The following excerpts corroborate this assertion.

- (16) “My opponent, on the other hand, has supported virtually every trade agreement that has been destroying our middle class. She supported NAFTA, and she supported China’s entrance into the World Trade Organization” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (17) “She supported the job killing trade deal with South Korea, She has supported the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The TPP will not only destroy our manufacturing, but it will make America subject to the rulings of foreign governments” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Donald Trump condemns his opponent for signing and supporting trade agreements that are not profitable for the United States of America. Through these declarations, he wants to convince the American people that Hillary Clinton is obviously not the right person for the job. A president must be a qualified and competent leader. On top of that, he must be willing to work for the well-being of his population. Hillary Clinton totally demonstrate the contrary. As a result, voting for her is voting for mediocrity, unemployment, poverty, and job killing agreements that are not profitable for the United States of America.

Subsequently, Trump sums up the political legacy of Hillary Clinton as follow:

- (18) “This is the legacy of Hillary Clinton: death, destruction, terrorism, and weakness” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Donald Trump, willing to win the presidential election, profitably makes use of language in order to discredit his main opponent. Thus, he negatively portrays her by claiming that death, destruction, terrorism and weakness are her political legacy. Through these pejorative expressions, Trump intends to demonize the Democrat candidate towards potential voters. Actually, for a leader willing to become president of the United States of America, having death, destruction, terrorism and weakness as legacy is disappointing. Doing so, he emphasizes his argumentation that Hillary Clinton is only good at doing wrong things. Finally, he negatively appreciates her egocentric pledge:

- (19) “My opponent asks her supporters to recite a three-word loyalty pledge. It reads: “I’m With Her”. I choose to recite different pledge” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Through this deliberate negative positioning, Trump intends to achieve a particular goal. According to Langenhove and Harré (1999 :24-25), “deliberate self-positioning takes place when someone intends to portray a particular identity usually in pursuit of a strategy or goal. In this case it clearly comes out that Donald Trump’s goal is to denigrate his opponent in order to position himself as the right candidate. As Helvaci (2018 :153) asserts, “representing the other in negative terms also contributes to the positive image of the self”. The smear campaign goes on and on as he shows hostility to people who immigrate to the United States of America.

1.4. Illegal Immigrants : The Invaders

Donald Trump shows hostility to illegal immigrants. According to Toh (2019 :30), “immigrants are undesired for they cause troubles”. This might be the reason why the Republican candidate adopts an anti-immigrant position. Indeed, in his speeches, he provides the reason of his hostility to immigrants. Following him, immigrants who come to the United States of America are not good people, but criminals and law-breakers. In the following excerpts, Trump presents immigrants as invaders.

- (20) “Nearly 180,000 illegal immigrants with criminal records, ordered deported from our country, are tonight roaming free to threaten peaceful citizens” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (21) “The number of new illegal immigrant families who have crossed the border so far this year already exceeds the entire total from 2015. They are being released by the tens of thousands into our communities with no regard for the impact on safety or resources” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

In these excerpts, Trump associates the illegal immigrants with criminality. As a result, he presents the American citizens as the potential victims of those illegal immigrants. Besides, he shows that illegal immigration not only causes the increase of homicide in the United States of America, but it also has economic consequences. The

numbers presented in the illustration (21) and (22) demonstrates the degree at which America is invaded by illegal immigrants. Subsequently, he mentions some consequences of illegal immigration in America.

- (22) “One such border-crosser was released and made his way to Nebraska. There, he ended the life of an innocent young girl named Sarah Root. Her killer was then released a second time, and he is now a fugitive from the law” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (23) “Decades of record immigration have produced lower wages and higher unemployment for our citizens, especially for African-American and Latino workers” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Through these statements, Donald Trump intends to convince the American people about the danger of illegal immigration. Not only it threatens the American citizens, but it also threatens their jobs. As a result, the American people will adhere to his anti-immigration policy. On top of that, they will join him and support him on his desire to build wall to protect the borders of the United States of America.

During the pre-election period, Donald Trump has consistently denigrated all those he considers to be his opponents to his ambition to make America first. Anytime he mentions the names of Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and illegal immigrants one does not know whether he is naming them or denigrating them. His electoral campaign is totally turned into a smear campaign. Hence, he only emphasizes the negative attributes of his opponents. However, the discourse systematically changes when it comes to talking about himself.

2. Constructing Self-Positive Identity

Donald Trump’s election during the Republican primaries was even unexpected. This assumption is clarified by Crotty (2017 :3) who contends that “Trump was a surprise winner of the Republican primaries which fielded a group of 17 candidates, mostly minor political figures with a sprinkling of newcomers added”. The Republican went on to surprise again the American people by being elected President. It is in this perspective that Crotty (2017 :3) claims

that “the election of 2016 has no precedent in modern American history”. In other words, the outcome of the 2016 presidential election was unexpected since nobody thought that Donald Trump could win the election.

As a result, those vulnerable Americans felt happy to finally have a political leader who cares about their concerns. The person who will help them clear up all their frustrations. Crotty (2017 :3-4) confirms that the Republican Party nominee “managed to tap into their anger and frustration ; their sense of being left behind as the rest of the country did increasingly better ; their belief that minorities were getting preference for jobs at their expense ; and their fear of multiculturalism, that the America they had known was passing”. Thus, Donald Trump presents himself as the voice of the voiceless. Besides, he promises to ‘make America great again’. America where nobody is marginalized. America where all the citizens are treated equally. America where everybody has decent work which allows them to take good care of their families. The argumentation about Donald Trump’s construction of self-positive identity revolves around three main points : the competent candidate, the voice of the voiceless and the credible candidate.

2.1. Donald Trump : The Competent Candidate

Competency is one of the main qualities that a political leader must have in order to gain credibility from his followers. According to Zuydam (2017 :10), competency refers to “the knowledge, expertise and the experience of the speaker. In the case of political leaders this could relate to the knowledge, expertise, and experience necessary to adequately address societal and political issues”. Indeed, the strategy of displaying competency towards the audience helps political leaders in their persuasion process. Donald Trump did not fail to point out his competency in his pre-election speeches. As illustration, one can quote him when he states:

- (24) “I’ve employed—I’ve employed tens of thousands of people over my lifetime. That means medical. That means education. That means everything” (Trump, June 16, 2015).

(25) “I have made billions of dollars in business making deals— now I’m going to make our country rich again” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Through these excerpts, Donald Trump attempts to persuade the audience that he had a successful life in business. As a matter of fact, the audience will perceive him as a competent leader who will bring welfare to the American citizens. As he says himself, “now I’m going to make out country rich again” (Trump, July 21, 2016). This persuasive strategy which consists in displaying ones accomplishments is also noticed by Zuydam (2017). According to her, “to convince an audience of something a speaker can also refer back to his own qualities, showing that he has the necessary knowledge, expertise or skills to make certain statements and that audience can believe them to be correct” (Zuydam, 2017 :17). Nobuhiro and Ryosuke (2018 :6) reinforce this statement by asserting that “voters can observe candidates’ competency by observing their past experiences in political offices, careers in the private sector, educational achievement, and so on”. Since he has no political experience, Donald Trump emphasizes his achievements in the private sector. Political leaders can also promise great achievements if they are elected.

(26) “I am going to turn our bad trade agreements into great trade agreements” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

(27) “I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created. I tell you that” (Trump, June 16, 2015).

One of the main strategies employed by politicians to enhance their credibility is by promising great accomplishments if they are elected. Zuydam (2017) labels competency through promises as ‘soft skills’. According to her, soft skills include providing vision and inspiring one’s audience. Thus, Trump pledges to change the job-killing policies initiated by his predecessors. As president, Donald Trump will bring back jobs for the American people. On top of that, he will create new jobs that will considerably bring down unemployment and increase the living standards of some American citizens. As he claims, “I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created” (Trump, June 16, 2015). Doing so, he intends to match

his political agenda with the needs of the American citizens. Zuydam (2017 :3) enriches this statement when she asserts that to be able to gain credibility, “the audience’s needs, interests and wishes should be perceived to match with what the leader in question has to offer”. In other words, a political leader needs to be at the service of the people. This includes being their voice at all levels.

2.2. The Voice of the Voiceless

A political leader who intends to be elected president must be able to convince his followers that he is not into politics to fulfil personal interests, but his willing to be elected is motivated by the fact that he wants to deal with the problems of the population. As such, he must demonstrate that he cares about his people. Caring is, indeed, a fundamental element in the quest for credibility of the political leader. According to Zuydam (2017 :10), caring “entails that the public needs to be convinced that the speaker is listening to them, that he has their interests at heart, and that he is—in the case of political leaders—not in politics to fill his pockets”. Kouzes and Posner (2011 :28) back up this statement by contending that credible political leaders “do not focus on satisfying their own aims and desires; they look for ways to respond to the needs and interests of their constituents. They are not self-centered; they are constituent-centered”. Throughout his campaign speeches, Donald Trump has demonstrated that he is not running for his own welfare; he is rather willing to work for the interest of the American people. He wants to be their voice at the Oval Office. The following illustrations show the love that he has for people.

- (28) “I have embraced crying mothers who have lost their children because our politicians put their personal agendas before the national good” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (29) “Every action I take, I will ask myself: does this make better for the young Americans in Baltimore, in Chicago, in Detroit, in Ferguson who have as much of a right to live out their dreams as any other child America ?

As the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump promises not to act like the current administration who does not care about American citizens. Instead, he will make sure that each

and every American citizen is treated well. As president, he will only work to improve the living conditions of all American people. Not like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton who work for the interests of the lobbyists and for themselves. Through the illustrations (28) and (29), it comes out that the candidate Donald Trump is truly affected by innocent American people who tremendously suffer due to the inefficiency of the current government. As a result, he commits himself to win the election for all those people who have been suffering for so long. The following lines corroborate this statement.

- (30) “So to every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future, I say these words to you tonight: I’m with you, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you” (Trump, July 21, 2016).
- (31) “My pledge reads: “I’M WITH YOU—THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I am your voice” (Trump, July 21, 2016).

Through these excerpts, it comes out that Donald Trump takes the stance of the political leader who will be more responsive to the needs of American citizens. As the voice of those voiceless people, he will amplify their voices and concerns. As such, Donald Trump provides an alternative to the rigged ruling system that has been developed over the years. Besides, it clearly comes out that American citizens are at the center of his political agenda. As a result, American people will perceive him as the only candidate who is capable of fixing their problems. Hence, they will cast their vote for him so that he can represent their interests in government. As Kouzes and Posner (2011 :3) affirm, “people willingly follow the direction of someone who attuned to their aims and aspirations, worries and fears, ideals and images”. The strategy of caring plays a paramount role in the process of questing for the allegiance of people. It permits people to evaluate the degree of credibility of the political leader.

Conclusion

Donald Trump turned his 2016 campaign speeches into speeches of tacit denigration. Anytime he has to mention the name of Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and immigrants, only pejorative

expressions are accentuated. Following him, these people are only good at doing bad things. He constructs an identity of traitor to Barack Obama. Obama was trusted by American people, but he betrayed them by working for his own interests and the interests of the lobbyists who totally controlled him throughout his two terms. Hillary Clinton his, however, presented as the unfit leader. She is corrupt and part of the rigged system. On top of that, she is totally controlled by big elites who pull the strings. According to him, a candidate whose legacy is death, destruction, terrorism and weakness is not worth leading the United States of America. Illegal immigrants are blamed to be the invaders who threaten the life of innocent American people. Contrarily, Donald Trump takes the stance of the competent and the voice of the voiceless. This deliberate and positive self-representation is, indeed, proved to be a strategy to enhance his credibility towards American people.

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