

Lilla Petronella Szabó

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL?
A LINGUISTIC ACCOUNT OF THE PERSONALIZATION
OF AMERICAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Institution of Communication and Sociology
Department of Communication and Media Studies

Supervisor: Réka Benczes, DSc

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Corvinus University of Budapest
Doctoral School of Sociology and Communication Science
Communication Science Doctoral Program

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Doctoral Thesis

Lilla Petronella Szabó

Budapest

2022

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Acknowledgements

For the love of language, I would like to express my gratitude to my mentor, Réka Benczes. She was the first to show me the cognitive exploration of language, thought, society, and culture. In the past ten years that I have known her, I have been in awe of her curiosity about language and her meticulous approach to the smallest details in her work. I am thankful to her for holding my hand all along my PhD journey – I was able to arrive at this point owing to her guidance, encouragement, and endless support.

I am grateful to Petra Aczél, Judit Sass, and Ágnes Veszelszki for their generosity and for always being there for me when I was in need of advice. I continue to be fascinated by their creativity and exemplary work as teachers, researchers, and leaders.

I cherish the memory of Sándor Martsa, who was my supervisor as a BA student at the University of Pécs. I will always remember his wit, wisdom, and commitment to the study of language.

I am thankful to József Andor, Zsuzsanna Gergely, Gábor Győri, Irén Hegedűs, László Imre Komlósi, and Miklós Telbisz who taught me linguistics in Pécs. Their dedication and kindness have never ceased to inspire me.

My sincere thanks go to Gabriella Szabó and Balázs Kiss for taking a chance on me and providing the opportunity to research political communication from a linguistic perspective at the Centre for Social Sciences.

I am very lucky to be surrounded by my wonderful fellow doctoral students and friends, Zsófia G. Szlama, Alexandra Béni, Judit Sebestény, and Ágnes Virág. Their intellectual, mental, and emotional support helped me through the most challenging times in the past years.

I would like to thank Xénia Farkas, Tamás Tóth, István Benczes, and Tanja Gradečak for their kind help at different stages of my work.

I am much obliged to Gábor Kovács and Szilárd Tátrai, the referees of the earlier draft of this thesis for their thoughtful comments and efforts towards improving the manuscript.

I am thankful to László Kálmán for his help with all the administrative work during my studies.

Finally, none of this could have happened without the love and care of my mother, Csilla Petre and my brother, Áron Szabó. I will be forever indebted to my family and friends for giving me their full support in my endeavors.

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandfather, Pál Petre. He was one of the most hard-working, kind-hearted, and humble people I know, and I can only hope to follow his footsteps.

1. Introduction

Has political communication become person-centered? The question is all the more relevant in a world where citizens frequently encounter politics mediated by public officials, who appear on late-night talk shows, share family photographs on their social media pages, and live stream as they are playing video games. Thus, voters are exposed to content about individual politicians not only as professionals but as “human beings” on a daily basis (Langer, 2007, p. 373). At the same time, political collectives (e.g., parties) are declining. An illustrative example of this shift towards the increasing importance of individuals rather than parties in politics is a cross-national comparison of 26 democracies, which revealed that politics became more “personalized” in 24 of them in the past 50 years (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). This tendency has captured numerous political scientists’ and political communication scholars’ attention as well: the notion of *political personalization* became a prominent research topic (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019).

Yet what is exactly meant under the term of political personalization? The question has proven to have many possible answers. Despite the fact that there appears to be a consensus with regards to the *existence* of personalized politics (cf. Aczél, 2009; Balmas et al., 2014; Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014; McAllister, 2007, 2015b; Perloff, 2014, 2017; Plasser, 2008; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007), a universally accepted definition of political personalization does not exist. Apart from the *raison d’être* of the notion in modern democracies, the only feature of personalization about which scholars agree is that political personalization is a *process*: political communication has become more personalized with the passing of time. What researchers do *not* agree about is how to define political personalization and what we need to observe if we want to analyze political personalization.

The first challenge – how to define political personalization – is addressed in the following section (section 1.1.). Section 1.2. outlines the main aims of this research, while section 1.3. presents the communicative and linguistic framework within which personalization is interpreted. Section 1.4. provides an overview of the political and cultural context of the thesis. In section 1.5., political speeches – which provide the corpus of this research – are discussed. Section 1.6. states the hypotheses. The final section, section 1.7. reveals the structure of the thesis.

1.1. Defining the personalization of politics

Firstly, one side of personalization in politics is the tendency that politicians are increasingly foregrounded at the expense of parties and other political groups, such as administrations (Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; 4; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007; cf. Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015).¹ This aspect of personalization is illustrated by the naming of certain governments after the leader e.g., in 1979, Margaret Thatcher's election in the United Kingdom led to the "Thatcher ministry" (McAllister, 2007, 2015b; Reitan, 2003).²

Secondly, personalized politics is also frequently defined as the increased exposure of politicians' private lives (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014; Metz et al., 2020). The "politicization of the private persona" (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014, p. 156) means that certain politicians³ are willing to share the intimate details of their lives which, can refer to a wide range of activities from posting family images on politicians' social media accounts to sharing childhood anecdotes in campaign speeches.⁴ By way of illustration, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate in the 1992 elections, Arnold "Al" Gore shared the following story of his personal life in his nomination acceptance speech delivered at the Democratic National Convention (Perloff, 2014, pp. 244–245):

- (1) "Three years ago, my son, Albert, was struck by a car crossing the street after watching a baseball game in Baltimore. He was thrown 30 feet in the air on impact and scraped along another 20 feet on the pavement after he hit the ground. I ran to his side and held him and called his name, but he was limp and still, without breath or pulse. His eyes were open with the empty stare of death, and we prayed, the two of us, there in the gutter, with only my voice."⁵

The excerpt shows that Al Gore's detailed description of his son's accident (and his subsequent recovery) exemplifies the incorporation of non-professional and politically non-relevant

¹ In the context of electoral politics, Wattenberg (1991, 2004) terms the rise of politicians and the simultaneous decline of parties "candidate-centered" politics. Thus, candidate-centered politics is similar to personalization in the sense that it encapsulates the rise of the individual politician at the expense of the party.

² Thatcher's politics had such an impact on speakers that they coined the word *Thatcheresque* referring to characteristic elements of her policies. *Thatcherism* refers to her politics in general, while her followers are the *Thatcherites* (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Another example is the *Trudeaumania* which followed Pierre Trudeau's election in 1968 (McAllister, 2007).

³ Research shows that politicians are willing to share their private lives to different extents (Kiss, 2003; Langer, 2007; Langer, 2010).

⁴ The literature refers to different areas of life which are considered as the "private sphere." According to Langer (2007), it includes the politician's appearance, family, upbringing, lifestyle and religion as indicators of the private sphere, while Van Aelst et al. (2012) designated family, upbringing, love-life, and free time activities as indices of the personal sphere. Finally, Yaniv and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2016) observed politicians' family and upbringing in the context of personalization.

⁵ '92 Democratic Convention: Gore Text: 'This Nation Will Be Renewed,' Los Angeles Times, 17 July 1992. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1992-07-17-mn-3672-story.html>. Accessed: 12 November 2020.

elements into the politicians' campaign speech. Rahat and Kenig (2018, pp. 122–123) label this privatizing aspect of personalization as “a sub-type of media personalization.” However, as the above example shows, it is not only the media which is inclined to shift the attention from topics to people (i.e., to privatize political communication) but politicians themselves share personal stories.

The definition of the personalization of politics was traditionally determined from these two perspectives, i.e., “individualization,” the highlighting of politicians at the expense of political collectives (Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007) and “privatization,”⁶ which is the “politicization of the private” (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014, p. 156).⁷

These two approaches to the personalization of politics meant that conclusions about the existence and evolution of personalization were difficult to draw: numerous researchers tended to consider personalization either as individualization or privatization.⁸ The focus on only one of the elements, i.e., individualization or privatization can lead to the ignorance of relevant features of personalization. Moreover, Rahat and Kenig (2018) also note that in certain cases, scholars have created personalization definitions which are only sufficient for the purposes of the specific research (e.g., Druckman et al. [2009, p. 24] defined personalization as “a form of interactivity in which users can personalize their engagement with the campaign through the Web site”).

Thus, a generally accepted definition of political personalization is lacking. Rahat and Kenig (2018) maintain that one of the reasons why there is no consensus with regards to a growing tendency of personalization is that it has been approached from many different perspectives. Papers observing the very same elections arrived at different conclusions regarding the personalization of politics (Van Aelst et al., 2012). Therefore, an account on personalization which can incorporate both individualization and privatization is necessary in order to explore whether there is a personalizing tendency. In this research, political personalization is used in its broad sense to refer to both individualization and privatization. Accordingly, political

⁶ “Privatization” is also referred to as “intimization” in the literature (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, pp. 122–123).

⁷ The literature also defines “presidentialization,” an increased leadership role as a sub-category of personalization (Langer, 2007; Passarelli, 2015). However, the term is more applicable to leadership techniques, rather than political communication, and therefore, will not be discussed here.

⁸ A systematic analysis of the academic literature carried out by Van Santen and Van Zoonen (2010, p. 49) revealed that the personalization of politics has been defined in *seven* different ways. They created three main categories to which these seven definitions belong: a) narratives about the individual competence of politicians; b) stories about politicians' private lives; and c) emotional accounts of experiences. Clearly, such conceptual vagueness makes it problematic to draw generalizations about the phenomenon of personalization.

personalization is a process by which the politician's self is foregrounded instead of the collective identity (such as their party or cabinet). In this definition, "self" refers to "A person's or thing's individuality or essence at a particular time or in a particular aspect or relation; a person's nature, character, or (occasionally) physical constitution or appearance, considered as different at different times." (Oxford University Press, n.d.). As this definition shows, a politician's self involves them as individuals and their "essence" which includes the professional and private angles of their life. It must be added that personalization in politics is not considered as an "absolute term" (i.e., politics cannot be viewed as either personalized or not personalized) but a "relative term," in the sense that there are different degrees of personalization (Unger, 1971).

1.1.1. What is not the personalization of politics?

Having defined the personalization of politics, it is also essential to determine the notions which fall outside the concept of personalization. Two such terms are mentioned here: "personification" and "personality politics."

Firstly, political personalization does not mean that the individual politician represents the whole party (Kiss, 2003, pp. 11–12). According to Kiss (2003, pp. 11–12), we need to distinguish personalization from "personification," the latter referring to the process of individual politicians becoming the embodiments of their parties. In contrast, personalization places politicians in the foreground in the sense that parties become "attachments" or "appendices" to individual politicians, entailing that leading politicians could exist without parties (Kiss, 2003, pp. 11–12; cf. Wattenberg, 1991, 2004).

Additionally, the commonly held view that the most personally popular politician is capable of winning elections needs to be addressed, as the personalization of politics does not equal "personality politics" (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). Research showed that the positive evaluation of individual politicians' traits did not become an indicator of success as politics shifted towards personalization (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). In fact, drawing on data retrieved from the American National Election Studies (ANES)⁹ surveys, Wattenberg (1991, 2004, 2015) reported on a *decline* in presidential candidates' personal popularity in the United States.¹⁰ He noted that presidential candidates gradually scored less since the 1950s when

⁹ <https://electionstudies.org/> Accessed: 12 November 2020.

¹⁰ An influence on voting behavior was reported on the basis of the negative assessment of other parties' (namely, other than the party voters sympathize with) political leaders on the basis national election surveys in 14 Western

ANES started to record voters' opinion on candidates' personal qualities, such as integrity, competence, reliability, and charisma. In light of these surveys, the question arises how candidates' decreasing personal popularity is related to the personalization of politics. Apparently, more negative views on politicians are not the *causes* but the *effects* of personalized politics. According to Wattenberg (2015, p. 78), "the more the American public sees of its leaders and prospective leaders, the less they like them." As presidential nominees were moved to the forefront, they also became more vulnerable and exposed to *ad hominem* attacks which can be considered as a factor in the decline of their popularity (Wattenberg, 2015, p. 82). Besides, it is not always the most personally appealing candidate, who wins the presidency. By way of illustration, John F. Kennedy – who is generally believed to have been a charismatic nominee – scored considerably less on personal popularity as compared to Richard Nixon in 1960 (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015).¹¹ Thus, the results of the ANES surveys indicate that personal popularity is not a key to winning presidential elections (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015).¹²

To sum up, the personalization of politics must be distinguished from personification (i.e., politicians do not embody their parties). In addition, personalization needs to be discerned from personality politics. While personalization means that the politician is foregrounded instead of the political collective, personality politics refers to the positive effect of certain individual traits in politicians.

1.1.2. Personalization – a process

Another crucial characteristic of personalization is that it is understood as a *process*,¹³ rather than an isolated occurrence (Karvonen, 2010, p. 4; Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 124). Accordingly, it is held that at $t+1$ time, politics is more personalized as compared to t time (Karvonen, 2010, p. 4; Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 124). Despite the apparent consensus that political

European parliamentary democracies between 1961 and 2018 by Garzia and Ferreira da Silva (2021). The statistically significant results demonstrate a relationship between negative party-leader evaluations and vote choice.

¹¹ Nixon's overall score of personality evaluation was +69, while Kennedy received +23 scores in 1960. This meant that for every 100 respondents there were 69 more positive than negative comments in the case of Nixon and 23 more positive than negative comments in connection with Kennedy (Wattenberg, 2015, pp. 83–84).

¹² According to Wattenberg, (1991, 2004, 2015) US citizens' vote depends on candidate issues rather than the personality of individual politicians. The data retrieved from the ANES surveys showed that instead of personal factors, respondents commented on issue concerns in relation to presidential candidates. On the contrary, Kirkpatrick et al. (1975) documented a steady increase in the importance of presidential candidates' personality as a main drive behind voting behavior between 1952 and 1972.

¹³ Note that the opposite process, i.e., "depersonalization" is also possible; depersonalization means that political groups become more central, and individuals are pushed to the periphery (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 117).

personalization is a process (cf. Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007), there is a limited number of studies which observed it longitudinally.¹⁴

1.1.3. The consequences of personalized politics

Why is it necessary to study political personalization? As noted in section 1.1.2., political personalization is a trend, the existence of which is widely accepted in the literature. However, the question may be raised whether political personalization has any real-life consequences apart from a change in political communication itself. Therefore, what follows is a brief account of the alleged effects of political personalization with regards to politicians – whose language use is at the heart of this study.¹⁵ Personalization in politics was approached by numerous scholars from a normative perspective, namely, they either considered it as a negative or a positive trend, which affects democracy (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013; Pedersen & Rahat, 2019). Hence, I also draw attention to those aspects which are potentially beneficial for or harmful to democracy.

First of all, in terms of democratic governance, McAllister (2007, p. 584) remarked that leaders have a higher level of autonomy in policy making because they receive their mandate from voters rather than their parties. However, this mandate – which is based on voters' sympathy towards leaders – may make it more difficult to hold leaders accountable, which is harmful to democracy (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019).

With reference to leaders themselves, the potential of political personalization to highlight politicians' private lives and personal characteristics is presented as a potentially negative consequence of the process by Rahat and Kenig (2018, pp. 209–210). They argued that the emphasis on the intimate details of politicians' lives and on their personal (non-political) characteristics conceivably shifts the focus from politically relevant issues. For example, because of the depiction of candidates' private lives in the media, there is a possibility that voting is based on emotions rather than rationality (however, this presupposes that non-personalized politics is based on rational thinking rather than emotions; Langer, 2007). Nevertheless, as political institutions are on the decline, an increased interest in politicians may draw citizens towards political participation (Mazzoleni, 2000). This aspect of personalization

¹⁴ Exceptions include Karvonen (2010); Langer (2007, 2010); Marino et al. (2021); Rahat and Sheafer (2007); Rahat and Kenig (2018).

¹⁵ For an extensive discussion about the effects of political personalization, see Rahat and Kenig (2018, pp. 208–221).

was also confirmed by experiments concluding that political personalization prompted a higher level of political engagement from citizens (Kruikemeier et al., 2013). Therefore, the capability of the phenomenon to engage more citizens – possibly those who otherwise would not be interested – in politics is a generally positive feature (cf. Rahat & Kenig, 2018).

Thus, both (potentially) negative and positive effects on democracy generated by political personalization have been documented. Regardless of their arguments for or against personalization, scholars agree that it does not leave democracy intact (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019), which explains its prominence in political research. This study cannot comment on the immediate effects of political personalization (for example, whether speakers whose language use is more personalized are more successful at elections). Rather, it provides a means of analyzing personalized language use, which can generate data on the basis of which more immediate consequences of personalization in politics can be calculated.

1.2. *The aims of the research*

A second challenge for the study of political personalization – apart from its definition – is *how* it can be examined: more precisely, what the indicators of political personalization are. Needless to say, numerous solutions were provided by scholarly work in this regard as well: from the submission of individual bills in the Israeli parliament (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007), through the media representation of politicians as professionals versus private people (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014; Langer, 2007, 2010), to the explicit expression of their emotions on social media (Metz et al., 2020), several factors were considered as signs of political personalization. Naturally, the numerous research designs have prompted contradictory results: while some aspects of politics, such as the decline of political parties confirms political personalization in Western democracies (Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018), other indicators, as the increased effect of party leaders on the outcome of elections provided mixed results (Karvonen, 2010).

Amid the multiple perspectives regarding the indicators of personalized politics, the aim of this work is twofold. Firstly, it wishes to contribute to the study of political personalization by providing a *linguistic* means of analyzing the phenomenon. To achieve this goal, American presidential nomination acceptance speeches given for the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention between 1932 and 2020 are analyzed. Therefore, the second outcome of the thesis is that it explores the role of language in the process of meaning-

making in a specific domain of political communication, namely political speeches (see section 1.5.).

1.3. Communicative and linguistic framework

As section 1.2 pointed out, this thesis explores political personalization in terms of language use. More specifically, the phenomenon of personalization is observed with the help of deixis, a subfield of pragmatics (namely, the study of language use in context). Deixis is traditionally considered as an umbrella term for those words and phrases which point to a specific place (*here, there*), time (*now, then*), or person (*I, we*) within the discourse context. To explore political personalization, the focus will be on person deixis, and more narrowly, the prototypical indicators of person deixis: first-person singular (1PS) and first-person plural (1PP)¹⁶ pronouns in the subjective case, namely *I* and *we* (Tátrai, 2010, 2011, 2017b). Although personal pronouns have already been investigated with regards to political personalization (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014), to the best of my knowledge, an attempt has not yet been made to analyze the language of political personalization from the perspective of linguistics.

How can the analysis of person deixis take us closer to the exploration of how we perceive personalization? In order to reflect on this question, a broader view of the perception and construction of the world around us through language use needs to be discussed.

The linguistic cognition of our environment rests on the notion of embodiment and on discursive grounds as well (Tátrai, 2017b, p. 902). Embodied cognition encapsulates the idea that as human beings, we perceive reality through our bodies, i.e., the build of the human body influences the way we perceive our surroundings and consequently, the way we construe and express our experiences through language is influenced by embodiment (Evans & Green, 2006; Johnson, 1987, 2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003, 1999; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). However, the interpretation of these experiences alone would not suffice; linguistic representations are also based on human interaction, which corresponds to the discursivity of linguistic cognition (Tátrai, 2017b, p. 905; cf. Tátrai, 2011).

Person deixis can be interpreted both in terms of embodiment and discursivity. Firstly, in terms of experiencing and constructing the world through our body, deixis corresponds to the act of “pointing out” which is mapped into deictic expressions (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 100). For

¹⁶ The abbreviation of the first-person singular (1PS) and the first-person plural (1PP) follows Wales (1996).

example, when President Trump noted in his 2020 nomination acceptance speech “I stand before you tonight honored by your support...” (Trump, 2020)¹⁷, he “pointed out” that he, the speaker (*I*) stands before the presidential nominating convention (*you*). The way deixis and embodiment can be connected is further explored in chapter 3.

The phenomenon of deixis can be connected to direct interaction between humans (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b) and for this reason, it is very much embedded in discursivity as well. Deictic expressions rely on the joint attention between communicating humans, who then direct and follow each other’s attention through deictic expressions (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). This operation is highly context dependent. If we were only familiar with the beginning of Trump’s speech cited above, i.e., “I stand before you tonight,” it would be impossible to interpret without any contextual knowledge (e.g., who the speaker was, where and when the speech took place; cf. Tátrai, 2017b, pp. 953–954).

Thus, deixis is rooted in our embodied experience of pointing things out on the one hand (Marmaridou, 2000). On the other hand, the social and discursive origin of deixis manifests in the fact that prototypical deictic expressions presuppose the contextual knowledge of the discursive situation (including the speakers involved, the time and the place of the interaction; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). So far, deixis was discussed within the dimension of language and cognition. In what follows, its functioning in language use is addressed.

The construction and expression of our experiences through language translates into language use, which is considered here as a social human activity occurring on two levels (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). On the one hand, humans share their experiences of the world by creating representations accessible to others (“intersubjective level”); on the other hand, when humans communicate their experiences to others, they nurture interpersonal relationships as well (“interpersonal level”; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). This dyadic nature of linguistic activity is depicted in Figure 1.

¹⁷ Presidential nomination acceptance speeches are cited in parentheses. The links directing to the texts of the speeches are listed in the Sources section.

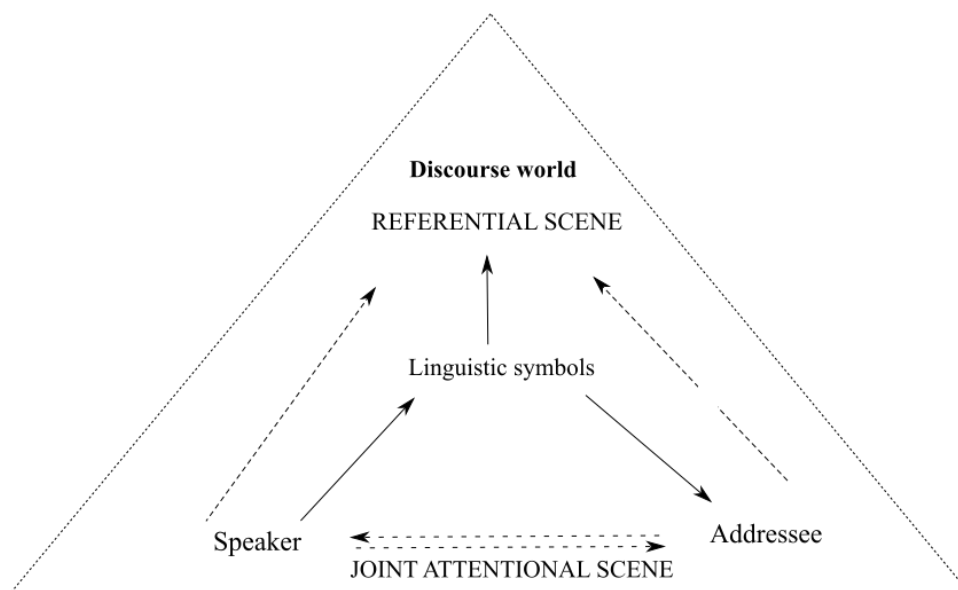


Figure 1. Language use on the intersubjective and interpersonal levels; Tátrai (2011, p. 39, 2017b, p. 913).

As Figure 1 shows, the linguistic activity takes place within the so-called “discourse world,” which provides a frame within which meaning making occurs (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).¹⁸ The discourse world (within which the speaker and the addressee operate) includes three main components: 1) the joint attentional scene; 2) the linguistic symbols; and 3) the referential scene (Tátrai, 2017b, p. 907; cf. Tátrai, 2011, p. 31). The joint attentional scene can be considered as a discourse¹⁹ within which the speaker can direct the attention of the addressee to things and events in the world; thus, the speaker influences the addressee’s attention and interpretation of the world (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). Linguistic symbols are employed and contextualized within the joint attentional scene. The referential scene is considered as a scene, event, or state, which is made available by the speaker to the addressee with the means of linguistic symbols within the joint attentional scene (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). Finally, the dashed arrows between the speaker and addressee designate the interpersonal connection between discourse participants, as they also pay attention to each other (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).

In the current research, the speaker’s role is fulfilled by the presidential candidates, while the audience constitute the addressees. By means of the linguistic symbols – the subjective first-

¹⁸ Note that the broken line around the discourse world means a connection to the outside world (that is, outside of the discourse; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).

¹⁹ Discourse is defined as a speech process, the participants of which share their experiences and maintain their interpersonal relationships within the joint attentional scene (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).

person pronouns in this case – the politicians point to themselves (1PS *I*) and to the referents of the 1PP *we* (referential scene) which are to be interpreted within the joint attentional scene.

1.4. The political and cultural context: the United States of America

Personalization research has focused on numerous countries so far, with a general emphasis on Western democracies (namely, Western Europe and the United States of America). In this study, the personalization of politics in the United States of America is under scrutiny, as it is believed to be the country where a tendency towards person-centered politics started (Adam & Maier, 2010). Thus, one reason for selecting US politics for analysis is that personalized politics is a “natural state of affairs” in the country (Ohr, 2015, p. 11). However, this does not mean that an evolution towards more personalized politics did not occur in the United States, i.e., American political communication allegedly became more personalized over time. Therefore, political communication in the country can serve as a starting point for investigations in different (for example, parliamentary) systems. A second reason why US politics is significant is that an ongoing process of “Americanization” was observed by scholars which means that many aspects of life – including political communication – adopted the “American way” (see section 1.4.2.).

1.4.1. Presidential system in the United States

As noted in section 1.4., it is often considered as a given fact that political communication in the United States was always personalized because it is a presidential system. The presidential system in the United States of America is unipersonal, i.e., the president is the executive branch of government in one person (Tan, 2017) and thus, their political success is not dependent on party politics (McAllister, 2007). However, personalization does not only occur in the presidential position but on other levels of politics as well. For example, candidates compete individually for Congress seats and state legislatures, thus they are less dependent on their party as compared to proportional systems²⁰ (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013). The fact that personalization is widely present in American politics does not mean that the system never evolved to be more personalized than it was in earlier decades. The personalization of politics was not always unequivocal in the sense that presidential candidates had to convince the party (and not the voters of primary elections) about their suitability to the office prior to the spread of primary elections (see section 2.2.3.). In fact, presidential primaries were adopted by fewer than 20

²⁰ In proportional systems (e.g., in Norway), the representation of political parties is in accordance with the electoral support; thus, minor parties are also represented.

states until the 1970s, after which most states introduced presidential primaries (Britannica, 2020). Thus, the personalization of politics (as understood in my definition, cf. section 1.1.) was not a state in the United States of America, but a progress as in parliamentary systems. It cannot be denied that the presidential system draws more attention to the individual; however, it does not mean that all conditions of personalized politics (i.e., the politicization of the private self) were always fulfilled in the United States (see section 1.1.).

1.4.2. Americanization

What made personalized politics – which allegedly originated in the United States (Adam & Maier, 2010; cf. Moy et al., 2012) – spread to other political systems where party identification was stronger as compared to the United States? The way politics and communication are conducted in the United States has a notable effect on these industries worldwide (Moy et al., 2012); this impact can be observed through the term “Americanization.”²¹ Americanization refers to the adaptation of the way certain “things” are or done in the United States; examples include culture, media systems, and political communication in general (Holtz-Bacha, 2008a, p. 32; Negrine, 2016, p. 1; Perloff, 2014, pp. 41–42). In terms of political communication, Americanization is often used to refer to political campaigning in particular (Holtz-Bacha, 2008a). Thus, Americanization is an umbrella term which encompasses features of political campaigning, such as the employment of political consultants (Polsby et al., 2016, pp. 156–174), campaigning based on polls (also known as “marketingization”; Weimann, 2008), negative campaigning (e.g., challenging the opponent’s issue position; Pinkleton, 2008; cf. Polsby et al., 2016), and personalized campaigns (Holtz-Bacha, 2008a; Mancini & Swanson, 1996; Ohr, 2015). These American-developed campaign techniques were already borrowed in other countries (Plasser, 2008, p. 27; cf. Blumler et al., 1996). By way of illustration, in the course of the 2005 general election campaign in the United Kingdom, the Labour Party hired experts who had worked for the Democratic Party during the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections (Plasser, 2008). A pattern of Americanization was also detected in Venezuelan election campaigns in terms of the appeal to voters and party reforms (Mayobre, 1996) and similar processes occurred in Israeli electoral politics as well (Caspi, 1996).

In summary, American political methods influenced the way of conducting politics (especially political campaigns) in countries such as Israel, the United Kingdom and Venezuela. Therefore,

²¹ It must be added that numerous researchers of political communication abandoned the term “Americanization” and changed it to “modernization” or “professionalization” (Holtz-Bacha, 2008b; Mancini & Swanson, 1996).

the analysis of language use in American politics can serve as a basis for observations of the language use of politicians in other languages and nations as well.

1.5. Political speeches²²

As section 1.2. already stated, the corpus of the analysis is comprised of the presidential nomination acceptance speeches of Democratic and Republican politicians between 1932 and 2020.

A broad definition of a political speech is “a coherent stream of spoken language that is usually prepared for delivery by a speaker to an audience for a specific purpose on a political occasion” (Charteris-Black, 2018, p. xiii). Speeches vary along numerous elements, including their length, the time, place, and occasion they were prepared for, their topic and function, the speaker and the addressees, the form of presentation, the degree to which they were prepared, and stylistic and structural attributes (Reisigl, 2008, p. 243). The election speech (a category to which nomination acceptance speeches belong) is among the numerous subgenres of political speeches (e.g., inaugural address, debate speech, commemorative speech) Reisigl (2008, p. 251) distinguished.

In the sections that follow (sections 1.5.1. – 1.5.3.), some characteristics of political speeches in the United States and presidential nomination acceptance speeches are outlined.

1.5.1. Political speeches in the United States

The reason why political speeches constitute the corpus in this thesis is that the presidential role nominees prepare for is heavily based on oral communication. In fact, addressing the public can be considered as *the* central function of presidency (Coe, 2017, p. 121). Speeches among presidential duties have a pivotal role because the entire citizenry of the United States is involved in the election of the president and therefore, the incumbent president “assumes the rule of voice of the people” (Coe, 2017, p. 121). The growing importance of speeches is also grasped by the fact that between 1945 and 1985 the amount of them tripled (Perloff, 1998, p. 105; cf. Hart, 1999). Finally, and on a more general level, political speeches have a significant

²² Note that in English the metalinguistic words *speech* and *address* sometimes do not have the same meaning, as the latter can refer to more formality than the former (Reisigl, 2008, p. 251). Additionally, nomination acceptance speeches are also entitled as *remarks*. Since the study does not compare the differences between these labels, *address*, *remarks*, and *speech* are used interchangeably.

role in American history: the American fight for independence in the 18th century through the civil rights movement in the 1960s were all inspired by oratory (Golway, 2012).

1.5.2. Presidential speeches: the rhetorical presidency

As noted in section 1.4.1., it is not only presidential communication which is personalized in American politics but other levels of representation (e.g., congressional politics) are also person-centered. However, this study focused on *presidential* speeches because the presidency is a predominantly rhetorical institution from a communicative perspective (Louden, 2008, p. 631); in other words, “Speeches are the core of the modern presidency” (Gelderman, 1997, p. 9). The importance of presidential rhetoric is captured by the concept of the rhetorical presidency which claimed that modern presidency (namely Woodrow Wilson’s administration between 1913 and 1921 and the subsequent governments) is “based on words, not power” (Ceaser et al., 1981, p. 168). The notion of the rhetorical presidency was further developed by Tulis (2017) who also argued that presidential rhetoric (as we know it today) was deeply altered by President Woodrow Wilson (cf. Ceaser et al., 1981). There were two principles of presidential communication in the 19th century which Wilson transformed. Firstly, policy rhetoric was delivered in a *written* form addressed to the *Congress*; under the presidential rhetoric, policy issues are *spoken* now to the *public* (Tulis, 2017, p. 133).²³ This is exemplified by the annual State of the Union Address (SOTU) which (in accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution) is delivered by the incumbent president to inform the Congress about the policies the president holds “necessary and expedient.”²⁴ The first SOTU address was delivered by George Washington in 1790 (Teten, 2003, p. 337; cf. Howard, 2008). Subsequently, Thomas Jefferson abandoned the oral delivery of the SOTU and chose to send a letter to the Congress until Woodrow Wilson reintroduced the spoken delivery of the SOTU message in 1913 (Howard, 2008; Teten, 2003; Tulis, 2017).²⁵ Secondly, Wilson altered the style of presidential addresses in the sense that the tone and character of presidential speeches was influenced by the written texts to the Congress (Tulis, 2017, p. 135). Wilson reversed the situation and the communication towards the Congress started to resemble the standards of popular speech

²³ This strategy is referred to as “going public”: the president can reach their goals by directly appealing to the public instead of convincing the legislature (Kernell, 2007; Teten, 2003).

²⁴ https://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm#a2 Accessed: 25 February 2022.

²⁵ Finally, it was Franklin D. Roosevelt who made the SOTU as a permanent and annual presidential duty (as the congress had not specified how and in what manner the SOTU should be delivered; Teten, 2003; Howard, 2008).

(Tulis, 2017, p. 135).²⁶ Thus, the rhetorical presidency can be considered as a “form of executive power” (Tulis, 2017, p. 236) which appeals to the people (by addressing them directly) and identifies with the people (by adopting the tone of popular speech; Teten, 2003, p. 339).²⁷

To conclude this section, it was shown that political speeches and especially presidential speeches are of great importance in the United States of America – to such a degree that research argued that being the “voice of the people” is the primary role of the incumbent president (Coe, 2017; Loudon, 2008). Moreover, the style of political communication was greatly influenced by presidential reform: under the view of the rhetorical presidency, speeches were altered by presidents such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. As research showed, presidential addresses are true impressions of the evolution of American political communication and therefore, the longitudinal analysis of presidential nomination acceptance speeches have the potential to show if there is indeed a personalizing pattern in political communication.

1.5.3. Presidential nomination acceptance speeches

Thus far, presidential speeches in American political communication in general were presented and it was showed that they are significant because presidential rhetoric is a form of the executive power (Tulis, 2017), and it is essential that the president communicates with the public (Coe, 2017; Loudon, 2008). However, this thesis analyzes the presidential candidates’ speeches and not presidential addresses. Nomination acceptance speeches can be considered as a “legitimation ritual” (Ritter, 1980, p. 153) in the sense that following the selection of the candidate (often as a result of a vicious campaign within the party), unity needs to be established within the party and the nominee is positioned as leader (Hahn, 1970, p. 7; Trent et al., 2016, p. 171). Regarded as their most important presidential campaign speech (Ritter, 1980), candidates also need to generate a positive response from the audience in order to gain votes (Trent et al., 2016, p. 171).

²⁶ Kövecses (2000, pp. 106–108) detected an earlier shift from a more elevated to a more popular style of addressing the public in Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address which was “short, simple, down-to-earth, and to the point.”

²⁷ It must be added that the concept of the rhetorical presidency was widely criticized. For example, Loudon (2008, pp. 631–632) said that presidential communication with the public did happen earlier as well; for example, George Washington steered public opinion with newspaper articles. For an overview of the criticism of the rhetorical presidency, see Bimes (2009).

The role of presidential elections in the United States is so substantial that they “are arguably the single most important event in American democratic life” (Thurber, 2000, p. 1; cf. Perloff, 2014, 2017) and thus, the word “democracy” in the United States became synonymous with election campaigns and voting (Tuman, 2008, p. 2).

To further narrow down the corpus, it consists of nomination acceptance speeches which were delivered since 1932 at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) and since 1944 at the Republican National Convention (RNC) by presidential candidates (cf. section 1.2.). The rationale behind selecting the candidates’ DNC and RNC speeches was that this is the event which initiates the presidential campaign and consequently, provides an opportunity to the presidential candidate to introduce themselves and their platform (Ellis, 1998, p. 128; Holloway, 2008, p. 137; Polsby et al., 2016, pp. 122–126). (This is in contrast with SOTU addresses, given by the incumbent president, who speaks on behalf of the administration, rather than the party.) Thus, the presidential candidate is in the center of the whole campaign strategy of the elections as compared to the whole party (Stanyer, 2008). This does not mean that the party platform is abandoned altogether; the DNC and RNC are also important from the perspective of the popularization and unification of the party (not only the candidate) as the conventions are “a weeklong advertisement” (Perloff, 2017, p. 339; cf. Holloway, 2008). Finally, nominating conventions symbolically reach out to voters in general: the convention speakers aim to reach out to faithful party members and independent voters to convince them to support the party’s nominee (Holloway, 2008, pp. 136–137; cf. Perloff, 2017). The pursuit towards identification became apparent at the convention of both parties in 2004, as they paid tribute to the heroes of the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, invited a diverse range of speakers in terms of ethnicity, gender, and immigrant heritage and alluded to their political traditions by reminiscing the work of former presidents (Holloway, 2008, pp. 136–137). Therefore, the DNC and the RNC have a strong communicative and symbolic role in relation to the whole presidential campaign.

This section began by justifying the selection of political speeches as the corpus of this study on the basis of their vital importance in American politics: addressing the public is believed to be one of the key roles and a form of executive power (section 1.5.1. and 1.5.2.). Subsequently, reasons for analyzing presidential nomination acceptance speeches were given. These included the essential role of presidential elections in American democracy and the unifying power of the national conventions in each election cycle (section 1.5.3.).

1.6. Hypotheses

As formulated in section 1.2., the aim of this work is to contribute to the study of political personalization and to provide a *linguistic* means of analyzing the phenomenon. To explore political personalization, the focus will be on person deixis and more specifically, the prototypical indicators of person deixis: first-person singular (1PS) and first-person plural (1PP) pronouns in the subjective case, namely *I* and *we* (Tátrai, 2010, 2011, 2017b). What is the rationale behind selecting these specific personal pronouns? Political personalization assumes that while the weight of parties decreased, the importance of individual politicians increased in the political process. According to Rahat and Kenig (2018), this tendency has consequences in terms of politicians' way of portraying themselves and their parties: there is an increasing tendency towards using the *I* (the politician) and a decrease in *we* (the party). Consequently, there needs to be a point in time when 1PS references outnumber 1PP references. The following hypotheses can be formulated on the basis of these statements:

- H1: There is an increase in the number of 1PS *I* references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.
- H2: There is a decrease in the number of 1PP *we* references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.
- H3: At some point, 1PS *I* references outnumber 1PP *we* references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.

However, the 1PP is also known for its ambiguity in political communication: when politicians utter “we,” they can refer to various groups (Jobst, 2007, 2010; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990). For example, in an analysis of the article “U.S. Defense Strategy,”²⁸ written by Caspar Weinberger, the United States Secretary of Defense between 1981 and 1987, Urban (1986, pp. 8–9) identified six different categories of the 1PP. These included the “President

²⁸ The article appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in the spring of 1986 (Urban, 1986, p. 1).

and I *we*,”²⁹ the “Department of Defense *we*”³⁰, “Reagan Administration *we*,”³¹ “the US government *we*,”³² “the United States *we*,”³³ and “the US and Soviet Union *we*.”³⁴

The present research also makes a distinction between different categories of *we*. On the basis of previous studies (Beard, 2000; Fetzer & Bull, 2008; Íñigo-Mora, 2004; Szabó, 2020, 2021; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990; Zupnik, 1994), three main categories of *we* are distinguished: *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, and *we*_{Nation}. Based on the features of political personalization, namely that it foregrounds the individual at the expense of the collective, and the subsequent “humanization” of politicians (cf. Langer, 2007, 2010), the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H4: There is an increase in the number of *we*_{Family} references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.
- H5: There is a decrease in the number of *we*_{Party} references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.

Finally, I assume that instead of identifying with their own party, politicians crossed party-lines and aimed to address the whole nation: as a consequence, a growth in *we*_{Nation} is expected.

- H6: There is an increase in the number of *we*_{Nation} references in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020.

In summary the expectations with regards to personal pronouns is that the 1PS references grew, and globally, the 1PP references decreased. With regards to the 1PP references the decrease of party-identification (*we*_{Party}) and the increase of family (*we*_{Family}) and national (*we*_{Nation}) identification is hypothesized.

The thesis aims to provide corpus-based evidence with regards to the personalization of politics. In order to achieve its goal, a qualitative and quantitative analysis of first-person pronouns is

²⁹ “The President and I believe that the answer lies in the Strategic Defense Initiative. We hope that strategic defense will eventually render nuclear missiles obsolete” (Weinberger, 1986, p. 681 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 8).

³⁰ “I want to describe U.S. defense strategies and to summarize the major changes we have made in our thinking at the Department of Defense over the past five years” (Weinberger, 1986, p. 675 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 9).

³¹ „... the Reagan Administration has made a number of revisions and additions. We have added four pillars of defense policy for the 1990s...” (Weinberger, 1986, p. 679 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 9).

³² “Even with the SALT II restraints the Soviet Union has built more warheads capable of destroying our missile silos than we had initially predicted...” (Weinberger, 1986, p. 691 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 9).

³³ “Should the United States decide that it is necessary to commit its forces to combat, we must commit them in sufficient numbers...” (Weinberger, 1986 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 9).

³⁴ “In November in Geneva, President Reagan and President Gorbachev agreed that both governments will examine the possibility of creating risk-reduction centers [...] We also have conducted a series of policy-level discussions on regional issues. (Weinberger, 1986 cited in Urban, 1986, p. 9).

conducted. The method is qualitative to the end that aims to interpret who first-person pronouns referred to in the texts, namely what kind of pronominal categories can be established. The data-driven analysis aims to show that there is a tendency of increasing personalization in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches by collecting the occurrences of pronoun categories in the speeches.

1.7. Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of two main sections and seven chapters. The first part outlines the theoretical background of the research. Accordingly, chapter 2 explores the social, media, and political contexts within which political personalization occurred. Chapter 2 also sheds light on how personalization brought politicians and the public closer by creating a sense of “intimacy.” Finally, chapter 2 presents the literature about political personalization on three levels: the institutional, the media, and the behavioral levels. In chapter 3, the cognitive linguistic interpretation of personal pronouns is provided. First, the overview of deixis and person deixis is presented, which is in the focus of this thesis. This is followed by the exploration of image schemas in general, and specifically, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema, which provide the conceptual background to the interpretation personal pronouns in the context of political personalization. Chapter 4 overviews the pragmatic categorization of first-person personal pronouns within the realm of political communication.

The second, empirical part of the dissertation starts with chapter 5, which presents the corpus and methodology of this study. Chapter 6 presents the results of the research and provides the discussion of the results. The final chapter, chapter 7 concludes and discusses further lines of the linguistic research of political personalization.

2. Personalized politics: causes and effects

Political personalization – as any fundamental changes in politics – has not happened in isolation. Innovations in the media, society and politics have contributed to the personalization of politics (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Thus, this chapter discusses the timeline along which personalization can be interpreted (section 2.1.). Subsequently, the causes (section 2.2.) and effects (section 2.3.) of personalized politics is explored. Finally, the key research areas of political personalization are presented (section 2.4.).

2.1. *The Ages of political communication*

Society's novel outlook upon life, namely the propagation of diversified lifestyle choices (e.g., personal and sexual behaviors), the foregrounding of personal aspirations instead of group identification (with political parties, for example) and the media's increasing role in people's everyday life are all elements – among the numerous other factors – listed by Blumler and Kavanagh (1999, pp. 210–211) which brought about changes in political communication (cf. Bene & Nábelek, 2019).³⁵ Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) argued that these transformations (for example from group identification to individualism) also required innovating the way political communication “was done.” For example, the media's increasing role meant that political actors needed to adopt the way they conducted communication to the needs of the media. In order to understand these changes, we need to know what the original state of political communication was. In other words, as compared to what situation novel strategies of political communication were developed.

Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) argued that we can differentiate between three “ages” of political communication.³⁶ Age 1³⁷ (the first two decades following World War II) was dominated by political parties: citizens connected to politics via political parties with which they identified permanently. From the perspective of communication, Age 1 was characterized by the discussion of policies and principles (rather than private matters). Starting in the 1960s, Age 2 was marked by the spread of television in households and the loosening of party ties (as compared to the stronger identification in Age 1). As television became available in an increasing number of households, citizens were exposed to more political ideas from all sides

³⁵ The transformations in society and political communication listed by Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) were primarily based on Anglo-American data.

³⁶ Periodizing political communication can be criticized on the grounds of its arbitrariness and the emphasis on changes rather than continuity (Bene & Nábelek, 2019, p. 20).

³⁷ Following Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) and Blumler (2016), the Ages they determined are capitalized.

of the political spectrum and hence, became politically more mobile. Instead of the political principles communicated in Age 1, citizens became more occupied with short-term issues, such as the incumbent government's performance. This meant that political actors had to adopt to the new situation: they needed to ensure that they are present in the news and affect the media agenda. The influence of the media further expanded, and the number of outlets grew in Age 3. According to Blumler and Kavanagh (1999), this had numerous consequences, only some of which will be listed here. Age 3 was held as the most complex one, as political actors needed to react to the emerging number of media outlets, the ubiquity of the media and the accelerated flow of information.³⁸ However, the increase of the media empire did not necessarily mean that politicians gained more chances to connect with the public: many new shows – sports, entertainment, movies – were included in television programs which meant that politics needed to compete with them by putting more emphasis on politicians' personalities and power tactics, which conformed more to news and entertainment values (cf. Blumler, 2001). Additionally, political communication became more populist in the sense that the top-down approach of the previous ages (i.e., when politicians, journalists, experts, etc. determined what was on the agenda) transformed within the competitive environment of numerous media outlets into more accessible programs. What "accessibility" meant here was that the language of political reporting was made more available to non-experts and it became more intimate. Moreover, the opinions of ordinary citizens were integrated into the coverage of political elections in the United States and in the United Kingdom. However, the extent of the involvement of the public in political communication was almost incomparably low this time to the level of engagement what the spreading of the internet brought.

In fact, Blumler (2016) argued that if there is indeed an Age 4, it must have been triggered by the dispersion and constant evolution of the internet. What it means from the perspective of politicians is that "they are involved to a considerable extent in multidimensional impression management" (Blumler, 2016, p. 27). Thus, in the new era politicians face the novel channels through which they need to connect to citizens who, at the same time, became "a communicating force" instead of being "receivers" (Blumler, 2016, p. 27). This means that the public now has widely available platforms to react to politicians' (social) media appearances and discuss political issues.

³⁸ Since a detailed discussion of the Ages is beyond the scope of this study, they are only briefly addressed here. For a detailed description, see Blumler and Kavanagh (1999).

In sum, the different Ages of political communication showed the many ways in which politicians' image management and means of connecting with people changed over time, leading us to the causes of personalization in the next section.

2.2. The causes of political personalization

2.2.1. Individualization

Individualization affects political choice on two levels. Firstly, people increasingly perceive themselves as individuals rather than members of groups (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999; Karvonen, 2010; Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Secondly, society's individualization also means that people become detached from groups which were influential on their political behavior (Rahat & Kenig, 2018). These groups include their social class and religious groups, for example. Thus, citizens no longer vote in line with the preference of the groups they were attached to. Moreover, the weakening ties to groups and the decrease of the importance of a collective identity led voters to view political actors as individuals rather than as members of political groups, e.g., political parties (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 130; Vile, 2008, p. 37).

These tendencies have also prompted people to vote for politicians who campaign with specific issues instead of identifying with a party and their program (Vile, 2008; cf. Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999; Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). The preference towards individual politicians and issues can be demonstrated with the growth of the so-called "split-ticket" voting in the United States of America (Vile, 2008, pp. 38–39). A "split-ticket" can occur when a single election appoints multiple officeholders from different parties. If voters choose to appoint members of the same party for all the offices in question, they cast a "straight ticket." However, party lines may be crossed when voters split their ticket and vote for candidates of different parties (Campbell & Miller, 1957; Vile, 2008). This can be illustrated briefly by the 1996 election results in the United States. In 1996, the presidential seat was given to the Democrat William "Bill" Clinton; however, both the House of Representatives and the Senate – the two chambers of the bicameral legislature of the American Federal Government – were filled with Republicans (Burden & Kimball, 2009). This meant that in numerous cases, the Democratic candidate was elected for one office (in this case, the presidency), whereas Republican candidates received the votes for other offices on the same ballot.

In summary, individualization has affected the way voters view themselves and politicians. On the one hand, voters became detached from social groups which influenced their political decisions. On the other hand, they no longer thought about politicians as members of a party but focused on politicians as individuals.

2.2.2. Mediatization

Apart from the transformation of how members of society view themselves (as being more independent from social groups) and politicians (as individuals, rather than party members), the media – the main source of political information – also underwent changes. According to Rahat and Kenig (2018, pp. 127–128), one such innovation in the media, “mediatization,” was one of the initiators of personalization. The mediatization of politics means that “politics [...] has lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and is continuously shaped by interactions with mass media” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 250).³⁹ This tendency is manifested on numerous levels of political communication, such as the sensational reporting of events or the prevalence of newsworthy information. It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss mediatization in detail; therefore, I briefly present the features of mediatization which have a direct connection to personalization. The role of the media in political personalization can be grasped from two central perspectives: on the one hand, the mass media as a mediator of politics changed political communication. On the other hand, the nature of novel mediums – particularly television broadcasting and social media – favored more person-centered ways of communication (The role of television and social media in personalization is discussed in detail in section 2.3.2, and section 2.3.3., respectively).

Firstly, weakening ties to parties meant that politicians – especially in the United States – did not need to rely so heavily on the support of their parties; in turn, their mass media presence was of key importance for their political success (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 256). Moreover, the media framed political personalities according to the “logic” of the media; this involved the sensationalistic coverage of political events and leaders, as this type of portrayal is more marketable for the general audience (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). The expansion of mass media and the subsequent appearance of political broadcasting (by competing channels) further drove

³⁹ Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999, p. 250) also added that there is a neutral term, “mediation” which does not entail that the mass media control political processes; rather, it refers to the communication towards the public via mass media. They also noted that since mass media mediates political information to the public, modern politics is mediated by nature.

political correspondence towards news values, namely, “conflict,” “negativism,” and “personalization” (Ohr, 2015, p. 13).

Secondly, in parallel with the expansion of mass media, television rose to become the primary source of political information consumption, surpassing the printed press (Ohr, 2015, p. 13).⁴⁰ Consequently, political communication needed to adapt to television broadcasting as its primary “mediator.” This was manifested in President Lyndon B. Johnson’s moving of the State of the Union Address from midday to evening (to attract television viewers) in 1965 (Teten, 2003, p. 338).

The rise of social media was the most recent media innovation which affected politics. Numerous politicians are present on different social media platforms and are followed by millions of users. For example, as of June 2020, Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States was followed by 81.1 million accounts on Twitter.⁴¹ Since politicians can create and maintain their own personal accounts on social media, Metz et al. (2020) proposed the term “self-personalization” for personalization on the internet. This means that social media has created a channel which is personalized by nature. Significantly, the advent of social media also meant a new avenue for interactivity, as actors of political communication need to take into consideration the users’ engagement and interaction with the content they share (Bene & Nábelek, 2019).

This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the way the technological advancement of public communication transformed the means of connecting to the public. The growth of television as a main source of political information and the proliferation of television channels helped personalization by favoring individuals over collectives and abstract political ideas. Moreover, as social media platforms started to gain grounds, politicians needed to adopt to platforms which provide even more opportunities for personal communication.

⁴⁰ In fact, the television and the press retained their influence as the main sources of information for a long time. In the course of the 2007 Finnish parliamentary election, 65% of the respondents of the Finnish Election Study did not follow election reporting on the internet (in contrast, 6% did not follow election news on the television at all; Karvonen 2010: 86–86). More recent data obtained by the Pew Research Center (2020) from more than 12,000 American participants showed that local (16%), cable (16%), and national network television (13%) were the preferred political news source of 45% of the respondents. Participants identified news websites and applications as the second most popular source (25%), while 18% of the respondents mentioned social media, 8% the radio, while only 3% the printed press (1% of the participants did not answer).

⁴¹ <https://twiplomacy.com/blog/twiplomacy-study-2020/#> Accessed: 25 February 2022.

2.2.3. *Party politics*

The transition of society to a more individualistic stance and novel media technologies encouraged parties to turn towards more personalized politics. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by Wattenberg (1991, 2004, 2015), who observed a sharp distinction between the 1960 and the 1988 presidential elections in the USA. The “setting” of two races was similar in the sense that the successor of a two-term Republican incumbent was sought both in 1960 and 1988. However, the nomination process of the presidential candidates changed significantly. In the 1960s, the selection of the presidential candidate depended on party leaders’ preference. This meant that presidential nominees needed to convince the party elite that they should be chosen to run (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). The process was considerably different in the 1980s, as presidential candidates had to earn primary and caucus votes in order to be nominated (Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). By way of illustration, Wattenberg (1991, pp. 157–158) compared the Democratic John F. Kennedy’s and Michael Dukakis’ nomination for the presidential candidacy in 1960 and 1988, respectively. In Kennedy’s case the primaries were important to convince the leadership of the Democratic Party that he was an electable candidate, whereas Dukakis faced a “primary marathon” (Wattenberg, 1991, p. 157).⁴² The spread of primaries meant that it was no longer the party leadership that nominated the presidential candidate: the decision depended on voters. Subsequently, the party’s role in the process diminished, as it was the candidate who campaigned for primary votes and thus was placed in the spotlight.

This section has reviewed the three key aspects (individualization, mediatization, and party politics) which created a context for the personalization of politics (based on Rahat and Kenig, 2018). It was showed that political parties needed to respond to changes in the structure of society and to the expansion of mass media. As society became more individualistic, citizens detached themselves from groups (e.g., social classes, religious groups) which influenced their political attitude. This shift in society was accompanied by the concurrent improvement of technology. The spread of television made it one of the main sources of political information. Consequently, politicians and political parties needed to adjust their communication strategies to the logic of television: individual politicians came to the forefront with whom the audience could identify.

⁴² For more details on publicly campaigning see Polsby et al. (2016, pp. 136–140).

2.3. *Personalization effects: getting “closer” to the public*

The personalization of politics indicates that the individual politician’s self (including their personal lives) is placed in the center at the expense of collectives, such as governments or parties (cf. Karvonen, 2010; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). What does being in the heart of politics imply for politicians? As the central figures of politics, political actors are given more authority and need to take an increased amount of responsibility (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). Furthermore, politicians receive a large amount of exposure: after all, as the “faces” of their parties and policies, it is their task to promote the party’s ideology and to connect to the people. The broadening public appearance can be traced in Hart’s (1999, p. 25) data regarding the evolution of presidential communication: he reported that between 1945 and 1985, the amount of presidential oratory *tripled*, providing a greater visibility to the president (cf. Perloff, 1998). The distribution of these speeches became levelled up, as presidents gave almost as many speeches in non-election years as in election years. These were accompanied by a rise in the number of public ceremonies. However, Hart (1999, p. 25) also reported that there were fewer press conferences which he attributed to the fact that press conferences give less control to politicians (because journalists can ask questions). Thus, the data showed that politicians’ efforts to reach out to the people directly by delivering speeches and attending public events multiplied between 1945 and 1985.

This is exactly the aspect of personalization which is considered as a positive outcome of the personalization of politics by scholars such as Kruikemeier et al. (2013) and Pakulski and Körösiényi (2012). Their argument is that a more individualistic society’s weakened ties to political parties can be renewed by individual political actors. As voters’ loyalty towards parties declined, new strategies had to be employed to attract the increasingly volatile voters. The phenomenon was grasped by Wattenberg (1991, p. 2) as follows: “Like nature, politics abhors a vacuum, and candidates are the most logical force to take the place of parties in this respect.” What strategies could political communicators pursue in order to “get close” to voters? A considerable proportion of the literature refers to the decrease of the figurative “distance” between voters and politicians as “intimization,” assuming that the chief way to build a bond between voters and politics (in the broad sense, including politicians, parties and political processes) is to reach out to voters directly (by avoiding the media) and to talk about politicians’ non-political, private lives (in Hart’s [1999, p. 25] words, their “informal selves”) not only policy.

In the section that follows I delineate the notion of “false intimacy” between citizens and politicians, which was brought about by the increasing presence of individual politicians. Next, a discussion of the way direct access to voters was reached by means of the mass media – more precisely, the proliferation of the television – and social media is presented.

2.3.1. False intimacy

Political personalization implies that politicians are placed in the forefront of political communication. This is manifested for example in televised debates between party leaders or candidates running for different offices (McAllister, 2007, 2015a; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Wattenberg, 1991, 2004, 2015). By way of illustration, as part of the presidential primaries in the course of the 2020 presidential elections, the Democratic National Committee announced twelve presidential primary debates to “showcase” their candidates and to put their “nominee in the strongest position possible to defeat Donald Trump.”⁴³ As the Democratic National Committee’s announcement displayed, it was the explicit goal of the party to “introduce” the candidates as individuals.⁴⁴ This attempt rhymes with the logic behind the growing level of personal information politicians share with the public: “Know the person, know the vote” (Hart, 1999, 34). Under this observation, voters tend to trust the politicians who they know intimately (i.e., closely) as a “person,” rather than as an “official.” However, is this type of “intimacy” genuine? In what follows, I discuss some aspects of how politicians have more direct access to the public via television and social media platforms.

As politics has become more personalized, individual politicians themselves evolved into the role of the “central communicator,” who “promotes a more personalized agenda, sharing a more intimate, private, and less party-centered perspective” (Metz et al., 2020, p. 2). This communication strategy, i.e., the popularization of a more personal, more intimate political communication is consonant with the logic of mass and social media. As already mentioned in section 2.2.2., television, the primary medium of political information consumption prefers the individual over parties and personal stories over abstract ideas. Furthermore, a substantial amount of scholarship argued that the media has the capability of creating a feeling of “false intimacy” in citizens towards politicians (Garzia, 2014, p. 8). Why can the intimacy between politicians and the public be labelled as “false”? Stanyer (2007, pp. 79–81) explained that

⁴³ <https://democrats.org/news/dnc-announces-framework-for-the-2020-democratic-presidential-primary-debates/>
Accessed: 24 February 2022.

⁴⁴ In sharp contrast to the recent primary races, Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic presidential candidate in 1968 won the nomination without entering a single primary (Wattenberg, 2004, p. 150).

intimacy between social actors entails that these actors know each other: their relationship is reciprocal. However, in the case of politicians and the public a “new kind of intimacy” (Thompson, 1995, p. 207) emerged, which is non-reciprocal, i.e., people possess a large amount of information about politicians’ personal affairs, but this is not true the other way round. A consequence of the lack of reciprocity is that citizens may form a “parasocial” relationship with politicians. A notion typically under scrutiny in media research, parasocial interaction refers to consumers’ response to media figures as if they were real acquaintances (Giles, 2002, p. 289). A parasocial relationship between viewers and public figures is perceived by consumers as their everyday social relationships, e.g., they may greet a character appearing on the television screen out loud (Giles, 2002). The non-reciprocal intimate connection, and citizens’ formation of a parasocial relationship with politicians is fostered by the personalized content and form of political communication. From the perspective of the content of political communication, research suggests that politicians readily share details of their personal lives in exchange for political gain (Farkas & Bene, 2020; Langer, 2010; Metz et al., 2020). In terms of the form of political communication, the development of media technology left its mark on the way politicians connect with citizens: we can hear their voice on the radio, “welcome” them in our living rooms via television and follow them on politicians’ social media platforms.

However, according to Stanyer (2007, pp. 79–81), we need to distinguish “familiarity” from “intimacy” in terms of political communication. Familiarity means that people are able to recognize politicians, for example because they saw their image published in a newspaper. Intimacy presumes a deeper level of knowledge: citizens have information about the private and non-political matters of politicians’ lives (their “informal selves”; Hart, 1999, p. 25). As mentioned before, politicians themselves may choose to open up about their non-political experiences (see section 1.1. and section 2.3.). However, the media (in accordance with the “media logic”) was also increasingly interested in politicians’ private lives. Indeed, as media technology improved, new doors opened for media outlets to provide personal information; in turn, politicians themselves gained new platforms through which they could “get closer” to people. This can be demonstrated with the early example of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s “fireside chats” which ran between 1933 and 1944.⁴⁵ The fireside chats were a series of radio broadcasts, through which the President could keep in touch with the nation. In these broadcasts, he informed about political and economic issues, such as the banking crisis or the New Deal

⁴⁵ There is no consensus with regards to the exact number of the fireside chats; most scholars count between 27 and 31 broadcasts (Sterling, 2002).

program (Goodwin, 1994, p. 57). Roosevelt's broadcasts were revolutionary in political communication. As the name suggests, the fireside chats did not conform to contemporary political oratory: they were "planned as conversations" (Sterling, 2002). In fact, the name "fireside chats" originates from President Roosevelt's imagination: while broadcasting, he envisaged the audience as if there were a few people sitting around him⁴⁶ (Goodwin, 1994, p. 57).

The discussion of false intimacy leads us to two crucial instruments which were formative in the transformation of political communication and more specifically, in the way politicians reached out to people: television and social media.⁴⁷

2.3.2. Political personalization and false intimacy on television

One step towards a more personalized and intimate way of communication was the spread of television, which did not only enable politicians to be heard as in the case of the radio: political actors could also be seen. What features of television made political communication more intimate? What features made the television a possible means of getting closer to the electorate? Finally, what were the most influential aspects of television broadcasting which steered political communication towards personalization?

These questions can be approached from a range of perspectives. From a practical one, Langer (1981) noted that the television, as an equipment in numerous households occupies a space in the intimate setting of our everyday lives (cf. Hart, 1999). On a different level, television as a medium – in comparison with the movie stars of the cinema, for example – preferred intimacy and immediacy in the sense that many television personalities (e.g., news anchors or talk show hosts) did not play parts (as actors do) but presented themselves (Langer, 1981, p. 355; cf. Keeter, 1987; Lang & Lang, 1957). The display of the true self also applies to politicians: for example, when they are invited to talk shows, they frequently set policy aside and present the person they really are (Langer, 1981, p. 361). Television also provides politicians with the opportunity to address the nation directly: citing Danziger (1976, p. 65), Langer (1981, p. 362) also added that high "levels of intimacy" are reached by eye contact and physical proximity

⁴⁶ The literature credits multiple people with giving the coining of fireside chats, e.g., Washington broadcast executive Harry Butcher (Sterling, 2002).

⁴⁷ There were earlier innovations in presidential communication as well. With the invention of the phonograph in the late 19th century, presidents had the opportunity to record their voices which – due to the initial possibility of recording very short, 30-60-second-long messages – gave way to the evolution of the modern sound bite (Metcalf, 2004, pp. 39–40).

(cf. Hart, 1999). In the case of a televised address, intimacy is reached by television's accessibility and presence in people's everyday life on the one hand, while on the other hand, eye contact is by definition present in the case of direct address (Langer, 1981). Do these factors of the nature of television have a real effect on citizens? Relying on the data of eight presidential elections in the United States (between 1952 and 1980), Keeter (1987) observed whether voters' opinion about candidates was influenced by their televised appearances. His results suggested that television indeed played a personalizing role in American politics: voter reactions to candidates became more important as compared to party identification.

With respect to the question of political personalization, one of the most significant factors is that television is a *visual* medium: it favors the presentation of individuals over institutions and abstract ideas (McAllister, 2015b; Ohr, 2015; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). Moreover, viewers found it easier to identify with one individual as compared to parties and their ideologies; in turn, a single politician could be held accountable with relative ease, especially in comparison with parties or governments (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, pp. 127–128). Apart from citizens' wider access to television,⁴⁸ the number of available television channels also increased. In this competitive media landscape, it became increasingly important to keep issues simple and make them lively in order to engage the audience (Ohr, 2015, p. 13).

With the spread of television sets in households, political strategists had no alternative but to adjust to the novel media environment. This manifested in the pressure to adopt to the preferred timing, formats, language, and contents of media if political communicators wanted publicity (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 249).

In sum, it cannot be stated that it was *only* the television which brought politicians closer to the people (Keeter, 1987). However, television broadcast became a major player in politics (in fact, most Americans gained political information from the television; Keeter, 1987) and by being an audiovisual channel with the capability of presenting politicians as ordinary people and giving them the opportunity of direct address, it did have a role in making political communication more intimate, and consequently, more personalized.

⁴⁸ By way of illustration, McAllister (2015b) noted that the proportion of population with access to television almost quadrupled in Australia between the mid-1960s and 2005.

2.3.3. *Political personalization and false intimacy on social media*

The feeling of closeness and intimacy did not stop with the appearance of television sets in living rooms; the advent of the internet and social media opened up new horizons for the personalization of politics. Firstly, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter enabled politicians to reach citizens directly rather than via a media outlet (Graham et al., 2018; McGregor, 2018). These direct means of communication created such an “intimacy at a distance” (Horton & Wohl, 1956, p. 215; cf. Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Graham et al., 2018) that – despite the fact that the actual communication is mediated – people can feel close to the public figure to the extent that they have the sensation of “knowing” the given political actor who communicates directly with them (McGregor, 2018, p. 1142). These claims are underpinned by empirical data. For example, McGregor (2018) tested social presence (a feeling of connection and physical presence of the politician) and parasocial interaction (the relationship between the audience and the mediated figure, which is unidirectional and nonreciprocal). Her online survey of US adults showed that a personalized Twitter presence of politicians led to a marginally higher rating on social presence and parasocial interaction; moreover, some respondents reported a sense of physical presence and a “real” interpersonal relationship with the candidate (McGregor, 2018, p. 1152; cf. Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Graham et al., 2018). Personalized communication can also make citizens feel more involved in politics: Kruikemeier et al. (2013) tested whether personalized and interactive websites (i.e., websites which assume two-way communication) increased respondents’ political involvement. The data extracted from their scenario experiment of a representative sample of the Dutch population and an examination of undergraduates in a laboratory setting suggested that personalized or interactive websites increased involvement as compared to non-personalized or non-interactive websites.

Politicians do exploit the possibility to personalize their social media presence, which was witnessed by their behavior on Twitter, for example. In an analysis of 10,556 tweets shared by 20 British and Dutch politicians in 2010, Graham et al. (2018) identified different types of tweets which showed the way politicians exploited the social media platform to create a sense of intimacy. For example, they tweeted about their family life (e.g., “Back home. Visited my parents because my grandma and aunt are visiting from Canada. Grandma will turn 85 here,” cited by Graham et al., 2018, p. 150) and their personal likes and dislikes (“When it comes to tea, Earl Grey with mint leaves is my favourite,” cited by Graham et al., 2018, p. 150). Interaction with voters is further enhanced by *off-the-cuff tweets* (live, spontaneous

commenting) and politicians even engage in “small talk” or *chit-chat tweets* with followers on Twitter (Graham et al., 2018). Thus, the “false” intimacy and closeness once created by television was further improved by social media where politicians can directly address the public.

This section revealed that politicians had an increasing number of chances to address the public directly: initially, they could “look into” people’s eyes via the television screens and then, communicate with them directly in the form of social media posts. Yet does this closeness in political communication also mean that politicians “got closer” to people in the way they use language? This is exactly the question this research attempts to answer by means of the linguistic theory of deixis and image schemas in chapter 3.

2.4. *Exploring the personalization of politics*

Political personalization is a widely researched area of political science and political communication (Pedersen & Rahat, 2019) and, presumably, the topic will occupy a central position in the democratic politics of the 21st century (McAllister, 2007). Nevertheless, the recent interest in personalization does not mean that the concept is entirely new; in fact, the “personalization of politics is as old as politics itself” (Radunski, 1980, p. 15 cited in Adam & Maier, 2010, p. 215; cf. Balmas & Sheafer, 2016) at least to the effect that political ideas were always presented by political actors (Adam & Maier, 2010). This section reviews the research on the personalization of politics in the past decades instead of observing whether political personalization was present from beginnings of politics.

The personalization of politics was observed on three different levels in the corresponding literature: the institutional, the media and the behavioral levels (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007; cf. Balmas & Sheafer, 2016; Karvonen, 2010; McAllister, 2007; Rahat & Kenig, 2018).⁴⁹ These different categories of personalization are depicted in Figure 2, based on Rahat and Sheafer (2007, p. 67) and Rahat and Kenig (2018, p. 118).

⁴⁹ The literature made two further distinctions between the types of personalization: centralized and decentralized personalization (Balmas et al., 2014). Centralized personalization means that a single leader is granted power by the collective (that is, power flows in an upward direction: from the political party to the leader). Decentralized personalization implies the opposite direction: power is handed by the group to individuals (who are not leaders, e.g., candidates). The democratization of candidate selection (e.g., primary elections) exemplifies decentralized personalization (Balmas et al., 2014, p. 37).

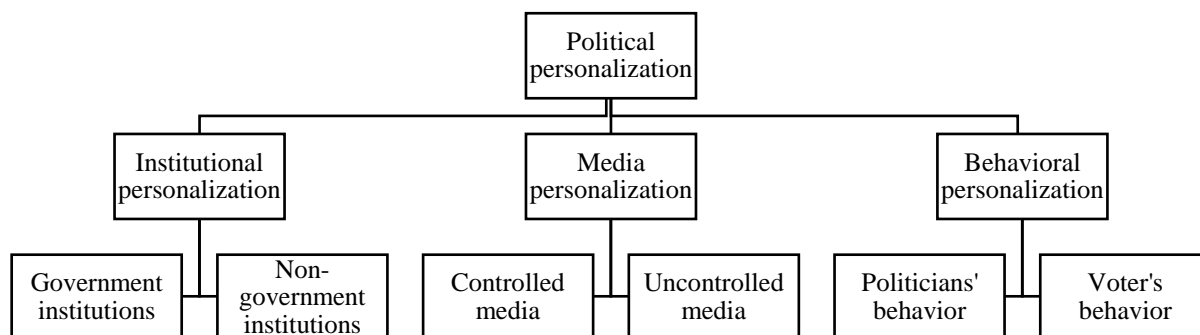


Figure 2. The types and subtypes of political personalization (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Rahat & Sheafer, 2007).

In the view of Rahat and Sheafer (2007), the three main types of political personalization, namely institutional, media, and behavioral personalization on Figure 2 are interrelated in the sense that it is the personalization of political institutions – such as the introduction of primaries into elections – which leads to more personalized media coverage.⁵⁰ Subsequently, the more politician-focused reporting encourages politicians to behave in a more personalized manner, which involves directing attention to themselves and revealing private details of their life. Additionally, the behavioral level also has an effect on citizens, as they view politics as a phenomenon involving individuals and not parties, governments, or cabinets. The occurrence of political personalization in the order of the *politics-media-politics* model (proposed by Wolfsfeld, 2004) was supported by the case study of Israeli politics between 1948 (the establishment of the State of Israel) and 2003 (Rahat & Sheafer, 2007). Rahat and Sheafer (2007) supported their claim with empirical data which revealed that the 1977 reforms towards more democratized candidate selection methods of Israeli parties led to more personalized media coverage in the 1981 elections. Finally, an upsurge in the number of legislations originating in private member bills took place in the Knesset (the parliament of Israel) between 1984 and 1988.

However, as discussed in sections 2.2.1. and 2.2.2., the societal context (individualization) and the media context (mediatization) also contributed to personalized politics. For example, personalization in politics can be connected to the emergence of television broadcasting in political correspondence (McAllister, 2007). Section 2.3.2. observed that television is a medium which favors individuals over institutions; thus, political parties may have been

⁵⁰ Changes in leadership do not necessarily mean institutional transformation which especially applies to countries which have unwritten and evolving constitutions, such as Great Britain (McAllister, 2007, p. 577).

“forced” to personalize their political communication because of the emergence of the new medium (and the transition was not unidirectional, that is, from institutional towards media changes). Therefore, determining on which level political personalization started is not without complications and is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the threefold categorization – the institutional, the media and the behavioral level – is retained to present the research that was carried out in connection with the personalization of politics. In what follows, the methodologies and the results of the corresponding literature are outlined.

2.4.1. The institutional level

In this section, I discuss research about political personalization on the institutional level, that is, when an institution is reformed in a way that the individual political actor gains prominence at the expense of the political group (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 119; cf. Balmas et al., 2014; Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007). What is meant in the literature under the rather vague term of “institutions” in terms of political personalization? According to the typology of Rahat and Kenig (2018, p. 138), there are two subtypes of institutional personalization: governmental and non-governmental personalization. The former subtype includes changes such as the reform of the electoral system and the increase of prime-ministerial power, while the non-governmental form involves candidate and leadership selection reforms (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 138).

With reference to the electoral mechanisms, there is a wide variety of personalization in different countries and different (presidential and parliamentary) systems: individual candidates may be invisible, or they may act as the “faces” of political parties (Karvonen, 2010, p. 35). What can lead to more personalized elections? For example, the introduction of primary elections is a significant step towards political personalization (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007). In the course of primary elections, voters can elect the preferred candidate for a specific position from a party (e.g., the presidential candidate of the Democratic or Republican party in the United States) before the presidential or parliamentary elections take place. This candidate-centered election method can be detected in the presidential elections of the United States (Ware, 2002) and some Israeli parties also hold primaries (Rahat & Hazan, 2001).

Naturally, in various democracies, different personalizing practices prevailed. For example, Karvonen’s (2010, p. 3) analysis of Western countries, which have been liberal democracies since the mid-1970s (e.g., Belgium, Italy, Japan, etc.) showed that in the decades after the 1970s, there is mixed empirical evidence as to the presence of political personalization (cf. Olsson, 2017). By way of illustration, an electoral reform in Sweden replaced the closed-list

system (where the order of elected candidates on the list is fixed by the party) to a flexible-list system (where the order of elected candidates can be reordered by voters if the votes for the individual candidate exceed a quota; Crisp et al., 2013) in 1998; despite the electoral reform of 1998, the system remained party-centered (Karvonen, 2010, p. 39). Evidence on a local (and not a national) level also point to the importance of parties: McAllister's (2015b) analysis of the Australian elections showed that on the local constituency level party activity was more important than individual activity.

On the contrary, Rahat and Kenig's (2018, p. 5) cross-national comparative research of 26 democracies (e.g., Austria, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand, etc.) showed a general decline of parties. The drop of parties' significance was obtained by way of measuring 12 indicators which included party-membership density, party identification, and party continuity (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 29). The decline of parties was related to personalization on three different stages. First, the decline of offline partyiness was tied to the increase of personalization (this correlation was weakened by online indicators). Second, in numerous cases party decline was higher than personalization (e.g., Canada, Japan, Iceland; although they did find examples of a higher level of personalization than party decline, e.g., in Australia and Denmark). Third, Rahat and Kenig's (2018) analysis suggested that party decline occurred first, and it was followed by personalization (and when personalization appeared the two processes fed each other).

In summary, the literature showed mixed results in terms of the personalization of politics and the role of parties: party reforms towards the possibility of more person-centered politics did not always directly lead to actual personalization (Karvonen, 2010), yet a general trend of the decline of parties and political personalization can be observed in numerous democracies (Rahat & Kenig, 2018).

Political personalization was also examined with reference to the role of leaders. In this connection, Karvonen (2010) found that the influence of the prime minister grew in a large number of parliamentary democracies with the proviso that there is no linear and pervasive trend in this matter. The indicators of a more powerful prime minister rested on formal power, staff, and available funding (Karvonen, 2010, p. 30). The results indicated that the prime ministerial power increased the most significantly in Finland, where the constitution implemented in 2000 abandoned the former semi-presidential system and granted more power to the prime minister (Karvonen, 2010, p. 32). Furthermore, apart from prime ministerial

authority, the position of the prime minister within the party was also a subject of change. Observing the prime ministerial power in Australia, Britain, and Canada, McAllister (2015a) argued that post-war prime ministers (in certain cases) became so dominant that executive power was associated with them. The influence which the prime minister exerted in these countries also depended on the leader; for example, in Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher exhibited more “presidential” characteristics as compared to John Major, her successor. Thus, the results with respect to the impact of the prime minister were mixed both in Karvonen’s (2010) and McAllister’s (2015a) accounts.

Finally, the literature also touches on leaders of supranational organizations. Research revealed that personalizing tendencies can be detected in the reforms of the European Commission (EC)⁵¹ since the early 1990s (Hamřík, 2020). A more person-centered attitude to lawmaking was present in the internal organization, mandate-related issues, and the agenda-setting of the Commission the most markedly (Hamřík, 2020). The consequence of this tendency is the EC Presidents’ enhanced role and power at the expense of to the College of Commissioners.⁵² Hamřík (2020) concludes that the increasingly personalized nature of the EC and the foregrounding of the President means that EU citizens can hold a person – the President – responsible for the performance of the Commission.

2.4.2. The media level

The second (and, according to Rahat and Sheafer, 2007, the most widely studied) layer leading to personalization relates to the media and more specifically, the presentation (controlled media personalization) and the coverage (uncontrolled media personalization) of individual political actors as compared to parties in media products (Rahat & Kenig, 2018, p. 120).⁵³

An example of controlled media personalization is the increased focus on individual political actors in campaign management. By way of illustration, Farkas (2019, pp. 200–203) observed that in the campaign of the 2006 parliamentary elections, the Hungarian Socialist Party put the prime ministerial candidate, Ferenc Gyurcsány on the stage. This manifested in Gyurcsány’s

⁵¹ The executive branch of the EU, shaping its strategy, proposing and implementing EU laws and policies and managing the EU budget. https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/what-european-commission-does_en Accessed: 25 February 2022.

⁵² Coming from 27 EU countries, the College of Commissioners are the Commission’s political leadership for a 5-year term. The President assigns the Members for a specific policy area. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024_en Accessed: 25 February 2022.

⁵³ Rahat and Sheafer (2007) proposed the “paid” and “unpaid” media personalization dichotomy; however, this distinction is problematic because – especially on social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter – payment is difficult to track (Rahat & Kenig, 2018).

appearance on the party's billboards and numerous promotional video advertisements focused on him (Farkas, 2019).

Uncontrolled media personalization is connected to media outlets' coverage of individual politicians as opposed to parties. For example, in the course of the 2004 presidential campaign period in the United States, reports about candidates were aired on television ten times more frequently than coverages on parties (Plasser & Lengauer, 2008, p. 257).

These two types of personalization are connected to each other in the sense that controlled media personalization can stimulate more uncontrolled media personalization (Langer, 2007; Rahat & Kenig, 2018). For example, if parties increase the visibility of their candidates in the hope of a successful election, the media also covers these individual candidates more extensively. However, the media's increased interest in individual politicians can also motivate political parties to focus more on their candidates in order to gain more media attention (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; cf. Langer, 2007).

In what follows, the results empirical research has produced about controlled (section 2.4.2.1.) and uncontrolled media personalization (section 2.4.2.2.) are summarized.

2.4.2.1. Controlled media personalization

Firstly, the extent of controlled media personalization depends on parties and politicians themselves, as it relates to political actors' presence on different platforms managed by the parties or their own choice.

One of the most conspicuous cases of controlled media personalization is the personalization of campaign advertisements. Through a case study of the Finnish elections, Karvonen (2010) found evidence supporting the trend of political personalization. The Finnish electoral system for parliamentary elections makes it possible to pursue relatively personalized campaigns because the individual votes candidates receive is decisive in the shaping of each party's list (Karvonen, 2010, p. 96).⁵⁴ In light of this political environment, Karvonen (2010) observed the distribution of party, individual, and collective advertisements (in which several candidates appeared but not the whole party) in Finland's largest daily newspaper (*Helsingin Sanomat*) in the course of the 1962, 1975, 1991, and 2007 parliamentary elections. The advertisements

⁵⁴ The incentive for a personalized campaign does not mean that negative campaigning (at the expense of fellow party members) is encouraged in Finland: despite the individual aspirations, it is also in candidates' interest that their party receives the most votes (which boosts their chances of being elected).

appeared during the final week before the election when campaign advertisements peaked. The results indicated that party advertisements declined linearly in the corpus, namely the party was less dominant each year (49% in 1962, 40.5% in 1975, 39.1% in 1991, and 33.7% in 2007). Individual advertisements occurred more frequently; however, the same linear trend was not present, as there were slightly fewer individual advertisements in 2007 than in 1991 (44% in 1962, 56.8% in 1975, 59.3% 1991, and 58% in 2007). Collective advertisements accounted for a considerably lower proportion of advertisements. They were virtually obsolete in 1975 (2.7%) and 1991 (1.6%) but they appeared in 2007 in a similar amount (8.3%) as in 1962 (7%). Overall, the Finnish case study showed a tendency towards personalization in Finnish campaign advertisements.

However, it is not only campaign advertising where controlled personalization can be observed. The spread of social media enabled politicians to communicate directly with the public (bypassing traditional media outlets) and to create their own image (Olsson, 2017, p. 100). What types of contents are shared on social media? Yaniv and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2016) compared the personalization of news coverage and politicians' Facebook posts within the frame of "politically relevant intimacy." The notion of politically based intimacy means that the private lives of politicians are discussed in relation to the "conditions, norms, values, issues, and structures that shape public life" (Yaniv & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2016, p. 5189).⁵⁵ They conducted a content analysis of news articles and Facebook posts of 1112 items. The corpus consisted of the news coverage and the Facebook pages of 12 American (6 female and 6 male) and 12 Israeli (6 female and 6 male) politicians. The results showed that 60% of the corpus exhibited politically relevant intimacy (40% of the articles lacked politically relevant intimacy).⁵⁶ The results justified that the presence of private details in political communication does not mean that the given content – in the analyzed news articles and Facebook posts – is apolitical. On the contrary, the personal was related to the political in more than half of the corpus.

⁵⁵ The notion can be exemplified with NBC's report (<https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/politics/biden-administration/jill-biden-promotes-2-passions-military-and-cancer-research/2690847/>. Accessed: 10 November 2020) on the current First Lady, Dr Jill Biden's plans to promote two issues during her term: cancer research and military families. Both can be related to her stepson (Joseph "Beau" Biden), who served in the military in Iraq and later died of brain cancer. Thus, the personal tragedies Dr Biden experienced became politically relevant in the sense that these causes would be on her agenda in her position as First Lady.

⁵⁶ Yaniv and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2016) further broke down the category of "politically relevant intimacy" into the category of "conduct based" (which ties politicians' public conduct to their personal traits) intimacy and "issue based" (which is used to justify political issues) intimacy; for a detailed account, see Yaniv and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2016).

2.4.2.2. Uncontrolled media personalization

With regards to uncontrolled media (e.g., television, newspaper, radio coverage), there are mixed results with reference to the personalization of politics. This can be chiefly attributed to the different conceptualizations of political personalization which scholars adopted (Van Aelst et al., 2012).⁵⁷ In this section, I briefly summarize the political communication research of news media in national and international contexts.

Firstly, Langer's (2007) historical exploration of political personalization in *The Times* magazine between 1945 and 1999 showed that leaders' overall visibility and the prominence of Britain's Prime Ministers' leadership qualities (non-consistently) grew in the observed period. The number of articles which referred to the Prime Ministers were the indicators of visibility which showed an increase from 21 articles per week to 74 articles per week (Langer, 2007, p. 375). It needs to be added that Langer's (2007) results did not reveal an evenly growing trend; for example, Winston Churchill's (whose second premiership between 1951 and 1955 was included in the data) visibility was higher as compared to Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963. Leadership qualities were indicated by explicit references to Prime Ministers' leadership qualities, such as integrity, communication skills, and intelligence. The results indicated that *The Times* moved from the presentation of politicians' leadership qualities (as understood by the journalists) towards personal qualities (e.g., lifestyle, family, personal appearance, etc.). The reference to politicians' private lives showed a growing trend in the observed period (1945–1999) with Tony Blair (who was in office between 1997 and 2007) being the first Prime Minister whose personal life received more references than his leadership qualities (Langer, 2007). In fact, the “Blair effect” which can be defined as the relatively high level of the politicization of the private at the time of Blair's premiership had long-term consequences on the role of the personal in British politics (Langer, 2010). This was proved by the analysis of the reporting of British national newspapers on the first year of Blair's successors: Gordon Brown and following him, David Cameron. The results showed that 45% of the articles addressed Brown's personal qualities (e.g., “dourness”) and 58% assessed Cameron's personal traits (as his image of a “young family-man”); Langer, 2010). Clearly, these

⁵⁷ For example, within the confines of the news media, Van Aelst et al. (2016) distinguished two categories for the sake of conceptual clarity: *individualization* (the increased focus on political actors at the expense of parties) and *privatization* (the growing interest in politicians' personal characteristics and private lives; cf. Holtz-Bacha 2004). Nevertheless, these two phenomena are not mutually exclusive: the increased focus can result in the presentation of personal details about politicians' life, while the reporting of private information on politicians highlights the individual politician.

changes can also be attributed to the processes described in section 2.2., such as the individualization of society or the mediatization of politics; nonetheless, Langer's (2007, 2010) results showed that even one leader whose media presence is personalized can set the political tone towards more personalized standards of political reporting.

The personalization of politics from the perspective of the media did not occur to the same extent and at the same time. Comparative research identified striking similarities between German and British (domestic) media personalization in the broadsheet, mid-market, and tabloid newspaper articles at the time of general elections (in 2009 in Germany and in 2010 in the United Kingdom), which manifested in the overall visibility of top candidates (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014). However, the results showed differences which point to the very heart of media personalization: in Germany, parties were mentioned more often as compared to their leaders in the article headlines; in the United Kingdom party leaders were featured in the headlines slightly more often as compared to political parties. Furthermore, the British press neglected smaller parties: the focus was on the leaders of the main parties. In Germany, smaller parties received more attention than in the United Kingdom (although a strong incumbent effect of German Chancellor Angela Merkel was identified). Holtz-Bacha et al. (2014) treated the dimension of privatization as a separate category (from the emphasis on the individual candidate rather than political parties) and found that newspapers in the United Kingdom were more likely to write about candidates' personal lives than the German press. They attributed these differences to the different market environments (the British press is more competitive, openly partisan and has a stronger tabloid culture than the German one) and to the distinct personalities of the candidates themselves. For example, David Cameron, the nominee of the Conservative Party relied on his personal life to build a public persona; in contrast, none of the German candidates "went personal" (in other words, exposed their private lives) in 2009 (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014, p. 167). Thus, the comparison of the German (2009) and British (2010) general elections showed that media personalization is tied to the different practices of the media market and that idiosyncratic features of candidates also matter. However, the analysis of a single general election in each country can only give a limited idea about the proposed indexes of personalization.

A longer time period and more countries were covered by Kriesi's (2011) account on political personalization. The data came from the coverage of national elections in six countries (Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) in newspapers and

television news of three main periods: the 1970s (as this decade was important from the development of the political system in these countries), 1990s, and 2000s. The corpus was based on the headlines, leads and first paragraphs of the most popular “quality press” (e.g., *Le Monde*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *The Times*), tabloids (e.g., *Le Parisien*, *Bild*, *The Sun*) throughout the whole period of the study and (with the exception of Great Britain) the main television evening news programs were taken into account in one election cycle. The overall results suggested that quality papers did not move to more personalized reporting; tabloids exhibited a slow progress towards personalization. The examination of television news returned similar results. Generally, research showed no increased personalization with reference to the reporting of candidates’ private life. (Except for the Netherlands where both trends were identified.) In sum, although there are mixed results as to the extent of political personalization in the media, in most cases there were tendencies which pointed towards personalization in national reporting.

Van Aelst et al. (2016) also set out to observe personalization in a multinational context by analyzing personalized newspaper articles, television news, and online news sites in 16 Western countries (e.g., Denmark, Greece, Sweden, etc.). Personalization was measured along the lines of two main dependent variables: the mentions of individual politicians versus parties and the relative focus on the head of state. Their main findings indicated that generally, political news are personalized (political actors are more visible than political institutions) but political groups are still present: most notably, parties and government institutions (Van Aelst et al., 2016, p. 119). The results also suggested that political reporting was the most personalized in Italy and the United Kingdom, while it was the least personalized in Spain and Switzerland. They explained the relatively low level of personalization in Switzerland with the political system, in which the government works as a unity. In Spain, the ministries were often mentioned instead of their respective ministers in the news. The data showed that political news in the United States were not more personalized generally, as compared to the European reporting, despite the American presidential system which is believed to be more personalized than parliamentary systems. The key difference between European and American personalization manifested in “concentrated visibility,” i.e., the visibility of the leader of the country: the president of the United States (who was Barack Obama in the observed period) was clearly more in the forefront of media attention as compared to other politicians in the United States. Therefore, the results suggested that the distinction between “general visibility” (when all the political actors are compared to groups and institutions) and “concentrated

visibility” (when prime ministers or presidents are compared to all domestic political actors) yield different results.

Finally, it is not only national news coverage which signaled political personalization; Balmas and Sheaffer’s (2013) study revealed that country leaders are also personalized at the expense of their own countries in international news reporting. Their research involved six countries’ (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, United States) international news coverage on each other during the time span of 17–33 years. The results showed that the relative proximity of countries was an influential factor. Accordingly, those countries which were closer to each other focused more on political issues rather than leaders and, conversely, those countries which were farther from each other highlighted the leaders more often. This was explained with the help of the “lighthouse metaphor”: once we approach a lighthouse from the sea, we only see the lighthouse (the leader) and not the details of the land (the political issues; Balmas & Sheaffer, 2013, pp. 457–459). Thus, the press in those countries which are farther from each other tends to report on the leader, as the most tangible “element” of the distant country. However, the press in countries which are in each other’s proximity can afford to focus on political issues (as their cultures and interests lie closer to each other as well).

In summary, this section revealed that there are no unequivocal results with regards to media personalization. However, it needs to be added that the methodologies personalization scholarship employed are also rather varied. In terms of general and global tendencies, the articles reviewed here analyzed political personalization in West European and North American countries and the “bigger picture” of the global arena is incomplete.

2.4.3. The behavioral level

Finally, Rahat and Sheaffer (2007) identified behavioral personalization as a dimension of political personalization, which can be traced in the behavior of politicians and voters as well (cf. Rahat & Kenig, 2018). In this section, I review these two components, namely the behavioral personalization of politicians (section 2.4.3.1.) and voters (section 2.4.3.2.).

2.4.3.1. Politicians

A segment of scholarship believed that (certain) politicians’ behavior considerably changed as an outcome of the personalization of politics: politicians hired a team of experts to help them build their public image, they started to use the singular *I* instead of the plural *we* (with reference to the party), and they shared intimate details of their personal lives (Rahat & Kenig,

2018). Personalization was not only traceable in politicians' public communication, but in their work as well; for example, the number of private bill submissions in the Knesset – the parliament of Israel – showed a general growing tendency (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007).⁵⁸ What did empirical findings reveal about personalizing tendencies in politicians' behavior? There are three areas of research in this regard: campaign behavior, behavior in the media and social media behavior.

Firstly, campaign personalization was observed with reference to different candidate-selection processes in the course of the 2010 and 2014 general elections in Hungary⁵⁹ (Papp & Zorigt, 2016; cf. Papp, 2013). Relying on data obtained from the *Comparative Candidate Survey* (a multinational survey of candidates running for national parliamentary elections),⁶⁰ the main finding of the study was that local politicians and national party leaders were affected differently by the process of candidate selection. In the case of local officeholders, it was observed that local politicians preferred to run a personalized campaign unless they perceived that their nomination was centralized (i.e., the candidates' selection depended on the national or regional level rather than the local level) and exclusive (i.e., it depended on party leaders rather than voters). In the latter case, candidates chose more party-centered strategies. The data also indicated a preference towards personalization in the case of party leaders if they felt that they had "the freedom to decide about their own candidacies" (Papp & Zorigt, 2016, p. 480). However, backbench candidates (those who have less political power) followed the party line irrespective of their selection process. Finally, Papp & Zorigt (2016) found that the personalization of candidates running in single member districts were likely to have been approved by the parties themselves which means that candidate- and party-centeredness are not always mutually exclusive in Hungarian politics. In sum, this piece of research showed that politicians' personalized behavior depended on external, political factors as well.

The second line of research reviewed here is related to politicians' media appearance. Similarly to the previous campaign research (cf. Papp, 2013; Papp & Zorigt, 2016), it was found by Van Zoonen and Holtz-Bacha (2000) that the context in which individual politicians performed was essential with regards to political personalization. They analyzed two Dutch and one German

⁵⁸ Note that this aspect of personalization may differ on national and local levels. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by McAllister (2015b), whose analyses found that party-related activities are in the foreground as compared to individual actions on a local level in Australia.

⁵⁹ In Hungary, a part of representatives is elected in single member districts (where there is one officeholder in the legislative body), whereas others are elected on closed party lists (Papp & Zorigt, 2016, p. 467). Thus, the system supports personalization and the following of the party line as well (Papp & Zorigt, 2016).

⁶⁰ <http://www.comparativecandidates.org/> Accessed: 25 February 2022.

talk shows and found that the main difference was not between the countries but between the different types of talk shows. They determined four types of discourses based on politicians' language use (private versus public language) and the (personal or political) position they spoke from. Accordingly, "political discourse" meant that the politician spoke from a political position and used the language of the public domain (the "language of political institutions and processes" Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000, p. 48). "Personalized political discourse" was spoken from a political position but used private language, e.g., when a politician described a piece of legislation as their own achievement (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000). "Personal discourse" meant that the politician spoke as a private person using the language of the private sphere (e.g., they talked about their family), while "objectified discourse" occurred in situations when the politician spoke from a private position (e.g., as a spouse) but spoke about themselves in abstraction (in line with public language), for instance when politicians talked about themselves in the third person. The results suggested that the different types of discourses appeared in line with the style of the talk show hosts; for example, a more ironic German talk show invited politicians to speak within the political realm. However, one Dutch evening show was more focused on personal aspects. The results suggested that in numerous cases, politicians failed to provide personal anecdotes when hosts asked about personal stories, which suggested that – at the time when the data was obtained – certain politicians found it difficult to incorporate their personal lives into their political persona (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000).

The development of technology brought new means of personalizing political communication, including novel ways of sharing political messages (e.g., Twitter), images, and videos (e.g., Instagram). What effect did the new internet age of political communication (cf. Blumler, 2016) mean for politicians' personalization? As noted above, personalization on social media enabled politicians to avoid traditional media outlets and communicate with citizens directly (Olsson, 2017, p. 100). Besides, politicians were able to set up their own social media accounts which meant that they (and their communication team) had control over the content which the individual politician shared. For this reason, political communication scholarship argued that we should talk about "self-personalization" in the context of social media (McGregor, 2018; Metz et al., 2020). "Self-personalization" meant that social media gave politicians the opportunity to promote themselves independently from their parties (Metz et al., 2020). As we could see above, in the case of campaigns and talk shows, personalization was not entirely dependent on politicians. In Hungarian political campaigns, the nature of candidate selection (i.e., whether the candidate was mandated by the party or voters; Papp & Zorigt, 2016) and in

German and Dutch talk shows, the style of the host and show (Van Zoonen & Holtz-Bacha, 2000) heavily influenced personalization. However, on social media sites the only limit of personalization is dependent on what the given person is willing to share.

How can politicians personalize themselves on social media? According to Metz et al. (2020), there are three main categories we can distinguish within the umbrella term of self-personalization: professional, emotional, and private self-personalization. Professional self-personalization means that politicians' social media presence is focused on them in their professional capacity, highlighting their professional qualities (e.g., a picture depicting the politician working in their office). Emotional personalization on social media means that the politicians' feelings are in the forefront of their communication: they express their emotions via language use (e.g., by posting about their joy or sadness) and use emojis or memes. Finally, private self-personalization involves sharing intimate information about the candidate. These aspects of self-personalization were studied by Metz et al. (2020) within the framework of a content analysis of German politicians' Facebook posts during the last two weeks of November 2016 (which significantly, was not a campaign period; hence, the study observed politicians' social media presence in an "average" period). They sampled 435 Facebook posts from 38 German *Spitzenkandidaten* – the main party contenders in German parliamentary elections. Their results suggested that professional and emotional self-personalization were present in the highest number (approximately 33% in each case), outnumbering private self-personalization (16%). The results are in line with Parmelee et al.'s (2022) findings, who claim that successful personalization involves a "backstage pass aesthetic," meaning that politicians show details about their job and their feelings about it. The study also adverted to citizens' reaction to the observed Facebook posts (textual and visual elements alike), revealing that emotional and private self-personalization yielded positive audience engagement which manifested in sentiments (e.g., likes, dislikes, etc.), shares, and comments. This was in line with Bene's (2016) findings about the Hungarian national campaign in 2014, suggesting that private Facebook posts – especially the ones which featured politicians' family – were very popular among their followers which manifested in likes and comments.

Finally, a rising line of political communication research on social media is exemplified by Farkas and Bene's (2020, p. 120) study on the role of images (namely, still images rather than GIFs or videos) as "objects of interest on their own" in the personalization of political

communication via social media. Their research of 51 Hungarian politicians’⁶¹ social media activity on Facebook and Instagram in the course of the 2018 general election campaign in Hungary indicated that visual communication is exceptionally well-suited for political personalization: politicians frequently uploaded photographs of themselves, generating their followers’ increased attention. Comparing the two platforms, Farkas and Bene (2020) found that Instagram attracted more private personalization in the sense that more spontaneous and intimate images were shared on this platform. On the contrary, Facebook images were more formal rather than intimate (however, images which were posted on both Facebook and Instagram accounts were more personal).

In summary, the advent of social media provided novel research paths to scholars of political communication to observe personalization. As the essence of social media accounts provide the opportunity to personalize, the quality of personalization needs to be revisited (cf. Metz et al., 2020). Furthermore, the visual-centered nature of social media platforms such as Instagram calls for the “visual turn” in personalization research (cf. Farkas & Bene, 2020).

The second prospect of behavioral personalization is related to the way citizens perceive and contribute to political personalization. This aspect of personalization can be captured in the way citizens conceptualize politics as a competition between individuals (Rahat & Sheaffer, 2007, p. 68).⁶² The concept of politics as a competition appears in several pieces of linguistic evidence. This is certainly true in the case of elections which are frequently conceptualized as a competition between candidates in the English language. The competition is manifested in expressions such as “running for presidency,” “frontrunner,” or “presidential race.” Yet is the prevalence of individual politicians – and more specifically, political leaders – supported by empirical evidence?

Research showed rather conflicting results in this connection. Firstly, according to Garzia (2014), the change in the “political supply” (namely, the increasingly candidate-centered strategies of political parties) had effects on individuals’ partisan attachment and vote preferences in the national election studies of the three Western countries he observed: Great

⁶¹ Farkas and Bene (2020, p. 126) observed those politicians who owned a Facebook and an Instagram account in 2018 and either reached at least 1 percent of the votes in single-member districts or “were named in any of the first thirty places of a party list that received at least 0.5 percent of votes (eight party lists).”

⁶² Cognitive linguistic research has addressed the conceptualization of politics in terms of “competition” and “sports” metaphors extensively. See for example, Charteris-Black (2011, 2017), Kövecses (2010), and Semino (2008).

Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands between 1961 and 2010. Thus, one of the consequences of personalization in voters' behavior was that partisanship became dependent on individual attitudes (cf. Caprara, 2007) rather than the societal aspects (e.g., social class, see section 2.2.1.). This was manifested in the results of Garzia's statistical analyses which suggested that although citizens still vote on the basis of their sense of closeness to parties, but it is dependent on the party leader (Garzia, 2014; cf. Garzia, 2017). In fact, leaders' personalities were so influential according to the results that the leader's persona turned out to be decisive in 10 out of the 20 analyzed elections.

In a similar timeframe to Garzia's (2014) research (1961–2001), Karvonen (2010) conducted different statistical analyses of six countries' (Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden) data in the *European Voter Database*⁶³ of national election studies. This analysis showed no increasing importance of party leader evaluations in terms of party choice. Strong preferences towards party leaders were only showed with reference to party loyalists. In turn, those voters who either did not identify with a party or weakly identified with a party showed less intense positive or negative feelings towards party leaders. In sum, Karvonen's (2010) analysis yielded radically different results as compared to Garzia (2014). It needs to be added the two pieces of research were not identical in terms of the dataset or the research design which – as they are beyond the scope of this study – are not discussed in detail here.

Those researchers whose point of departure is that a leader's personality does have an effect on voter's behavior explored which factors are weighed in by citizens when making their choice at the polling booth. In what follows, I briefly discuss some of the empirical results which show which personal traits matter to voters.

Firstly, national election studies – where they are available – provide insight into voting behavior prior to the elections and post-elections. By way of illustration the American National Election Studies⁶⁴ (cf. section 1.1.1.) provide data about political participation, public opinion, and voting; similarly, the Australian Election Study's⁶⁵ mission is to observe voters' attitude towards politics in Australia. Ohr and Oscarsson's (2015) research relied on a similar dataset: they analyzed the content of political leaders' overall images in American presidential elections,

⁶³ For a description of the database, see Mochmann and Zenk-Möltgen (2005, pp. 309–312).

⁶⁴ <https://electionstudies.org/> Accessed: 25 February 2022.

⁶⁵ <https://australianelectionstudy.org/> Accessed: 25 February 2022.

Australian elections to the House of Representatives, and Swedish national elections between 1988 and 2008. One question of their research was whether performance related traits (e.g., cognitive competence, leadership, trustworthiness) were similarly perceived. The choice of these specific countries enabled the comparison of a presidential system (United States of America), and two parliamentary systems (Australia and Sweden). Their results suggested that regardless the political system (i.e., presidential, or parliamentary), politically relevant and performance-based leader traits were essential criteria for political judgements and decisions (Ohr & Oscarsson, 2015, p. 212). The difference between the three countries lay on the weight of these traits: in Australia political traits gained approximately equal importance. In the United States, leadership and empathy were the most crucial angles, whereas in Sweden, reliability was the most essential. Moreover, non-political leader characteristics (e.g., physical attractiveness, family life) were also tested in this study in the context of Germany; the findings showed that non-political traits did not have a significant impact on leader evaluations and on the vote (Ohr & Oscarsson, 2015, pp. 209–211). Overall, the data obtained from the election studies of three democracies showed that political leadership traits, such as trustworthiness and reliability are fundamental in terms of political decisions.

2.4.3.2. Voters

In this section I shed light to some of the literature which addressed how voter behavior was influenced by mediated political communication and the way personalization influences voters' behavior in parliamentary politics.

In an experimental study, Otto and Maier (2016) tested whether personalization influenced political trust based on textual stimuli. They created three types of texts which discussed reforms in the German retirement system and presented them to undergraduate students of social sciences, education, and psychology. Three types of texts were created: in an “unpersonalized condition,” the actors were political parties or institutions (“the Christian Social Union has no say on how to solve the problems...” Otto & Maier, 2016, p. 30). The “individualized condition” meant that the actors were politicians in their professional capacity (“Horst Seehofer, the Bavarian Prime Minister, has no say on how to solve the problems...” Otto & Maier, 2016, p. 30), while the “privatized condition” included non-political, personal characteristics (i.e., the politician was presented as an “ordinary person”; “Horst Seehofer, puts his jovial smile upon his lips and has no say on how to solve the problems ...” Otto & Maier, 2016, p. 31). The results showed that privatized media coverage caused negative effects on

trust; privatized content had more influence on those respondents who had a high level of general trust, and they lost trust after being exposed to the privatized condition. The loss of trust due to privatized media content was attributed to participants' disappointment in "quality standards" (Otto & Maier, 2016, p. 39). However, it needs to be added that political personalization by means of sharing private information does not equal low-quality reporting or gossip. The example of the privatized condition ("Horst Seehofer, puts his jovial smile upon his lips and has no say on how to solve the problems ..." Otto & Maier, 2016, p. 31) is rather ironic which is not a condition of sharing intimate information (cf. private self-personalization in section 2.4.3.1.). Thus, respondents' assessment of the text could have been influenced by the mocking tone which we can see in the example.

Kruikemeier et al.'s (2013) experiment confirmed that personalized websites (which focus on individual politicians rather than parties) created a feeling of involvement in participants (see section 2.3.). Additionally, McGregor's (2018) results also confirmed that personalized tweets induced more support from respondents (see section 2.3.3.).

Apart from the effects of mediatized political communication on citizens' perception of political actors, it is vital to learn how personalizing tendencies are translated into voting behavior and consequently, affect democracy. A study filling this gap observed 96,080 voters in 86 elections held in 31 polities between 1996 and 2019 aimed to measure the influence of party leaders as opposed to political parties on people's voting decision (Quinlan & McAllister, 2022). The results showed that 1/5 of the voters aligned their vote for their favorite leader more than their favorite party and 1/3 aligned more with their favorite party, while 1/3 did not distinguish between the leader and their party. Although the results do not support the sole importance of the political leader unequivocally, the research revealed that voters lacking party attachment rely more on the leader and they are also more likely to change their vote between elections.

In summary, this section reviewed the three levels of personalization which were under scrutiny in political research: the institutional (section 2.4.1.), the media (section 2.4.2.) and the behavioral (2.4.3.) levels. It was shown that political personalization was approached from numerous different perspectives on each level which is possibly responsible for the different – or even conflicting – views on the extent to which politics has become personalized. To position this study in the milieu of scholarly literature about personalization, it addresses politicians' language use, or, in other words, their *linguistic* behavior. It was shown that

previous scholarship also took politicians' language into consideration or even focused on the use of the 1PS or 1PP pronouns (Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014, for example). However, political personalization – to the best of my knowledge – was not observed from the perspective of linguistic theory.

Chapter 2 discussed Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) distinction of the different eras which can be determined in political communication (section 2.1.). The causes (section 2.2.) and effects (section 2.3.) of political personalization were also revealed. Finally, a detailed account on the different areas of research with regards to the personalization of politics was presented in section 2.4. Thus, the aim of Chapter 2 was to provide the theoretical background of the thesis with regards to political personalization and political communication. In the chapter that follows (Chapter 3) the path towards a linguistic understanding of personalized political communication is shown.

3. Deixis and image schemas

This chapter develops the theoretical background for the deictic observation of the personalization of politics. In particular, the first two parts of the chapter (section 3.1. and 3.2.) focus on two areas of linguistic inquiry. First, deixis (more precisely, person deixis) is discussed, which is generally considered as a field of interest in pragmatics. Then, image schemas follow as proposed by Johnson (1987) and Lakoff (1987). In the third section, section 3.3. the connection between person deixis and one specific type of image schema, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema is established, accompanied by the presentation of the relevance of these notions from the perspective of political personalization.

3.1. *Deixis*⁶⁶

This section discusses deixis, a means of language which allows speakers to “point out” entities within the context of the speech event. A general description of deixis (section 3.1.1.) is followed by a brief description of what constitutes the so-called “deictic center,” the central point from which an utterance is to be interpreted (section 3.1.2.). Next, an account is given of one specific types of deixis which is used to indicate people within the discourse: person deixis (3.1.3.). Finally, section 3.1.4. explores the connection between deixis and anaphora.

3.1.1. *The pragmatic study of deixis*

The study of deixis is generally attributed to pragmatics, which is traditionally viewed as the study of language in context. However, there is no unified theory proposed to research deixis (Crystal, 2008; Levinson, 2004; Marmaridou, 2000). Therefore, in this section I summarize the most widely cited features of deixis.

The linguistic term *deixis*, translated as “pointing” or “indicating” originates from the Greek *δείξις*, which means “reference.” According to Levinson’s influential monograph on pragmatics, “The single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structures of languages themselves, is through the phenomenon of deixis” (Levinson, 1983, p. 54). Deixis involves the speakers’ physical and social environment in the interpretation of the ongoing discourse; thus, deixis relies on contextual knowledge with regards to space, time, and sociocultural relations (Tátrai, 2017b, p. 953; cf. Laczkó & Tátrai, 2012; Tátrai, 2010). In other words, deixis links language and the situational context by

⁶⁶ In the philosophical tradition, the term *indexicality* is used to refer to the notion of pointing within a context; *deixis* is restricted to the linguistic context of indexicality (Levinson, 1983, 2004).

“pointing to” the referent with the help of the context rather than the semantic conditions (Levinson, 2004, p. 101; Lyons, 1977). For example, in Michael Dukakis’ (the 1988 Democratic presidential candidate) nomination acceptance speech, when Dukakis uttered that “when we leave here tonight,” the addressees could determine from the immediate context that Dukakis was referring to those who attended the convention (“we”), in Atlanta (“here”) on the night of the convention on 21 July 1998 (“tonight”). These references could only be drawn on the basis of the context of the speech and not the meaning of the individual words, namely, *we*, *here*, and *tonight*. Deixis can be found in interactions involving a single speaker and one or multiple hearers who engage in one-one or one-many interactions (Lyons, 1977, p. 637). The grammatical items which mark deixis are referred to as deictics and include adverbs of time (*now*, *then*), adverbs of space (*here*, *there*), personal pronouns (*I*, *we*), motion verbs (*come*, *go*) and other grammatical features, including tense markers (O’Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 36).

Deictic expressions can be grouped into two different categories, as we distinguish their *deictic use* and *non-deictic use* (O’Keeffe et al., 2011, pp. 37–42). The non-deictic use of deictic expressions can be exemplified by the English second-person pronoun *you*, which is multifunctional to the end that it is “exceedingly popular” as a generic pronoun (Wales, 1996, p. 78). By way of illustration, in his 2008 presidential nomination acceptance speech, Barack Obama employed *you* to talk about politicians (and their tactics) in general:

- (2) “Because if *you* don’t have any fresh ideas, then *you* use stale tactics to scare the voters. If *you* don’t have a record to run on, then *you* paint your opponent as someone people should run from.”⁶⁷ (Obama, 2008)

As example (2) shows, the second-person pronoun here does not serve to “point” to somebody within the discourse context but refers to politicians (or even people) in general. In turn, deictic expressions help discourse participants’ orientation by way of pointing to someone or something in the context. For example, in the same speech, Obama addressed his audience:

- (3) “Four years ago, I stood before *you* and told *you* my story [...]” (Obama, 2008)

In this case the second-person pronoun points to the audience, rather than people in general (even if the actual audience was not the same in 2008 as in 2004).

Within the deictic use of language, a further distinction is maintained: gestural and symbolic deixis (Fillmore, 1971, pp. 223–224). Gestural deixis – as the name suggests – is related to the

⁶⁷ The emphasis is mine in each citation, unless otherwise indicated.

physical environment of the communicative event, namely, it can be interpreted through the “audio-visual-tactile” monitoring of the speech event (Levinson, 1983, p. 65; see also Fillmore, 1971). Levinson (1983, p. 65) provided the following illustration of gestural deixis: “*This* one’s genuine, but *this* one is fake” (emphasis in original); in this situation the demonstrative pronoun *this* is expected to be accompanied by a “selecting gesture.” However, deixis cannot only be interpreted in terms of the immediate physical context. In comparison to gestural deixis, symbolic deixis requires knowledge about the basic spatio-temporal parameters of the speech event, occasionally participant roles, along with discourse and social parameters (Levinson, 1983, p. 65). This is demonstrated by example (4):

- (4) “In the heart of *this* great city, we saw tragedy arrive on a quiet morning”
(Bush, 2004)

To understand this excerpt cited from George W. Bush’s 2004 presidential nomination acceptance speech, one needs to be familiar with the fact that the speech was delivered in New York.

The different types of deictic expressions can be illustrated as follows (Huang, 2014, p. 173; O’Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 42).

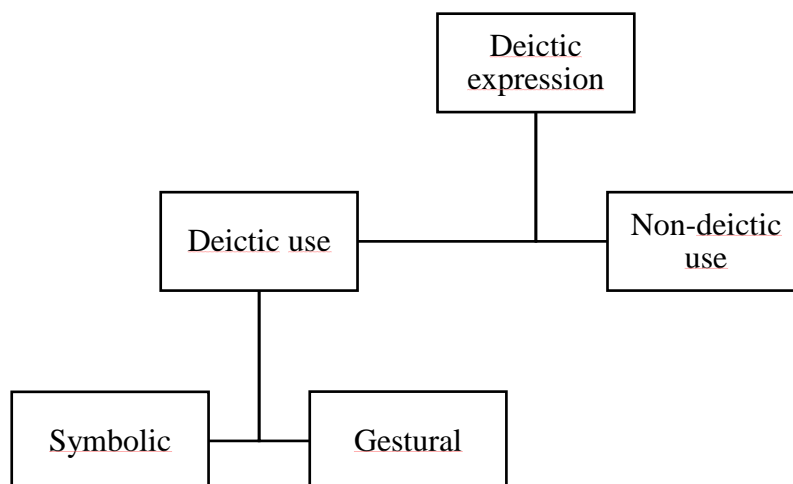


Figure 3. Uses of deictic expressions (based on Huang, 2014; O’Keeffe et al., 2011).

The difference between gestural and symbolic deixis depicted in Figure 3 lies in the fact that the former is based on physical experience, while the latter, symbolic deixis is embedded in

situational and real-world knowledge. In this research of political speeches, I am concerned with symbolic deixis, as it is not the videorecording of these speeches which is analyzed.

3.1.2. *Deictic center*

As noted in the definition of deixis, we derive deictic information from the discourse context. However, in order to be able to infer the referent of the deictic expression, we need a point of reference. Thus, when George W. Bush (2004) in the above cited speech (example 4) said, “In the heart of *this* great city,” we know that with the use of *this* (which identifies a nearby person or thing), he referred to New York City, where he was at the time of the utterance. Linguistic research holds that the center of deictic expressions is typically (but not exclusively)⁶⁸ the speaker themselves, i.e., the deictic center is generally *egocentric* (Levinson, 1983, p. 63–64; Lyons, 1977, p. 638; cf. Bühler’s (1934, cited in Levinson, 1983, 2004) notion of *origo*). The reason for this is that as speakers interpret deictic expressions, they prototypically rely on the physical world of the speech event; thus, the speaker can only relate to the spatial, temporal, and social relations of the given situations on the basis of their own body (Tátrai 2011, 2017b). The egocentricity of deictic expressions has five consequences (Levinson, 1983, p. 64):

1. The central person is the speaker.
2. The central time is the time at which the speaker produces the utterance.
3. The central place is the speaker’s location at utterance time.
4. The discourse center is the point which the speaker is currently at in the production of his [sic.] utterance.
5. The social center is the speaker’s social status and rank, to which the status or rank of the addressees or reference is relative.⁶⁹

Apart from its egocentricity, deixis can be considered as sociocentric as well to the end that deictic expressions need to be analyzed within the socially constructed world in which they operate (Sidnell, 2009; cf. Tátrai, 2017b). This means that the speaker does not only take into consideration their own perspective in a communicative event but considers both their own position and the addressees’ perspective at the same time (Sidnell, 2009; cf. Tátrai, 2017b).

⁶⁸ For example, deixis is not egocentric when the speaker imagines themselves somewhere else, which Bühler (1934, cited by Levinson, 2004, p. 103) referred to as *Deixis am Phantasma*, i.e., “deixis in the imagination.” Fillmore (1975) exemplified the shift of the deictic center with the lines of Hemingway’s short story: “The door of Henry’s lunchroom opened and two men came in,” where he noted that the deictic *origo* was the inside of the lunchroom.

⁶⁹ The deictic center may shift not only in literary texts, but in everyday circumstances as well, e.g., in “parentese,” when the parent asks the child “Are you going with daddy/mommy?” they refer to themselves in the third-person singular (O’Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 43). This is believed to be done to make it easier for children to shift speaker and hearer roles (Wales, 1996, p. 56).

3.1.3. *Person deixis*

Traditionally, the literature distinguishes three types of deixis: person, spatial, and time deixis.⁷⁰ Person deixis refers to the interpersonal relations in the speech event, as it evokes participant roles (e.g., *I, you*; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). Spatial deixis interprets the discourse via connecting its spatial relations to the participants' physical space (e.g., *here, there*), while time deixis connects the times of the events discussed by participants to the time of the actual discourse (e.g., *here, now*; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). Spatial deixis is frequently considered as an underlying category of time deixis, as there are numerous deictic expressions of time which correspond to spatial relations, e.g., “we need to move the meeting *forward*,” where forward is frequently interpreted either as moving a meeting to an earlier or a later time. The category of deixis which identifies the individual(s) the speaker refers to is person deixis.

Person deixis is concerned with role of the participants in a speech event (Levinson, 1983, p. 62; cf. Fillmore, 1997, p. 61). The notion of deixis is originally based on direct interaction (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b; cf. Lyons, 1977), therefore, we traditionally distinguish the speaker, the addressee, and less prototypically, other persons or entities (which are neither the speaker, nor the addressee; Levinson, 1983, p. 112). The most prototypical manifestations of person deixis are first- and second- person personal pronouns (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b; cf. Laczko, 2001). By way of illustration, in his 2016 nomination acceptance speech, Donald J. Trump declared: “I’m With *You*”. In this example we can find the most characteristic markers of person deixis: the first person *I* and the second person *you*. In order to interpret this statement from Trump, the audience needed to infer from the context that the person who uttered “I’m With *You*” was Donald Trump and – given that the speech was delivered at the Republican National Convention – the hearers could also conclude that *you* presumably referred to the American people. Thus, in order to interpret the intended referents in “I’m With *You*,” the addressees needed to be aware of the context in which it was uttered. Third-person pronouns are not considered as the prototypical representatives of person deixis, because they refer to a person who is *outside* the speech event (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). In order to interpret third-person pronouns successfully, the speaker needs to use gesture (e.g., point to the referent) or turn to anaphora or cataphora; thus, generally they are not used in a symbolic way (Tátrai, 2011,

⁷⁰ There other types of deixis discussed in the literature, such as discourse deixis (which involves deictic references to a part of the discourse, such as “*this* is a great chapter”; cf. Fillmore, 1971, 1997; Levinson, 1983; Lyons, 1977; Tátrai, 2017b) and empathetic deixis (namely, the use of *this* rather than *that* to show emotional proximity and conversely, the use of *that* instead of *this* to show distance; Lakoff, 1974; Levinson, 1983; Lyons, 1977).

2017b). For example, in the same speech, Trump enumerated the items of his opponent, Hillary Clinton's program:

- (5) "Yet *Hillary Clinton* is proposing mass amnesty, mass immigration, and mass lawlessness. *Her* plan will overwhelm your schools and hospitals..."
(Trump, 2016)

In this case, the referent of *her* becomes obvious by way of anaphora, i.e., by referring back the subject of the previous sentence, *Hillary Clinton*. Hence, the addressee(s) do not need to rely on the context of the speech situation in order to identify the referent of *her*, which is the central situation in the case of deixis. Yet it is possible to use the third person deictically without gestures or an anaphoric reference. For example, Hillary Clinton's 2016 slogan "I'm With Her," can be interpreted in a given speech situation without an anaphoric reference or gestures if the speech participants can derive the referent on the basis of their background knowledge about the phrase (namely, that "her" refers to Hillary Clinton in this slogan).

3.1.3.1. Person deixis in the social world

The examples above demonstrated deictic reference relative to the deictic center on the one hand (example 4), and on the other hand, showed the role of contextual knowledge in the identification of the referent (example 5). However, there is one further element of reference which is often encoded in person deixis: the positioning of the referent(s) in the social world (see section 1.3.). Accordingly, Verschueren (1999) and Tátrai (2011, 2017b) made a distinction between person deixis and attitudinal deixis,⁷¹ which they considered as lower-level categories of the umbrella term of social deixis. Attitudinal deixis includes deictic expressions which signify social status and forms of respect (Verschueren, 1999, p. 21; cf. Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). The social status of interlocutors is often manifested in the T-V distinction⁷² in certain languages. By way of illustration, speakers of Hungarian express formality with different forms: *ön* and *maga* (formal "you") which are used with third-person verbs. (*Ön* is often considered as more respectful as compared to *maga*.) Example (6) and (7) demonstrate this distinction:

⁷¹ Attitudinal deixis is often named in the literature "social deixis"; social deixis is often contrasted with person deixis (Verschueren, 1999, pp. 20–21).

⁷² *T-V forms* originate from the alternative versions of the French "you," namely *tu* and *vous*. *T forms* signal familiarity, while *V forms* refer to formality in many languages (apart from French), for example in German (*du/Sie*) or Russian (*ty/vy*). The opposition between familiarity and formality is manifested in personal pronouns and verb forms (Crystal, 2008, p. 482, 512; also see Brown & Gilman, 1960).

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|------|-----------|-----|-----------------|
| (6) | Te | hogy | vélekedsz | a | politikáról? |
| | you.2SG | how | think.2SG | the | politics.about? |
| | “What is your opinion of politics?” | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| (7) | Ön/maga | hogy | vélekedik | a | politikáról? |
| | you.3SG | how | think.3SG | the | politics.about? |
| | “What is your opinion of politics?” | | | | |

Example (6) and (7) show that the social status of the referent of *ön/maga* is marked in Hungarian by both the choice of pronoun and the verb form. According to Marmaridou (2000, pp. 74–81), expressions such as the Hungarian *ön/maga* reveal that social deixis is grounded in person deixis to the extent that it is difficult to draw a line between the two. This point is proven by uses of the 1PP *we* in English, as (at least in certain uses) *we* can be viewed as socially motivated (Marmaridou, 2000). Marmaridou (2000, p. 76) illustrated this point with the example of a staff representative addressing the Board of Directors of a company:

- (8) We would like to set up a nursery school within the premises.

Firstly, it is essential to note that in English it is not explicitly marked whether *we* refers to 1) participant plus addressee (and others) or 2) participant and others (excluding the addressee). Therefore, as example (8) illustrates, the referent needs to be singled out with the help of contextual parameters, as the social setting in example (8), where a staff representative can speak on behalf of the staff but not on behalf of the Board of Directors.

Consequently, when researching person deixis, the social setting of the speech event needs to be taken into consideration, as it provides pieces of information which are essential in identifying the referent and the relations between speaker, addressee, and possible other parties. Thus, the social context of the specific discourse is inseparable from the interpretation of person deixis. In accordance with this view, the present study always takes into consideration sociocultural and discursive contextual factors when referring to person deixis (and does not retain person and attitude deixis as two separate phenomena; cf. Verschueren, 1999; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).

What is the relevance of viewing person deixis in light of the social context? Tátrai and Ballagó (2020) argued that depending on the context, the speaker’s *socio-cultural situatedness* influences humans’ expectations with regards to the stylistic features (for example, the use of standard language or slang) in discourse. Socio-cultural situatedness refers to the ways the joint experiences of individual minds and cognitive processes are shaped; more precisely, how they interact with “social and cultural structures” which includes other agents, conventions and

language (Frank, 2008, p. 1). Within the present thesis, the speaker's socio-cultural situatedness means that politicians speak to the nation as presidential nominees about themselves, their campaign and vision for the USA at the nominating convention (cf. Tátrai & Ballagó, 2020). Socio-cultural situatedness as a context-dependent factor can provide reference points to person deixis and attitude deixis as well. In terms of person deixis, the referents are determined within the confines of the social world. Consequently, the weakening group ties brought about by individualization (section 2.2.1.) have a possible influence on the way speakers construe person deictic references. Tátrai and Ballagó (2020) also discuss the socio-cultural attitude which means speakers have certain expectations with regards to the style (the "distinctive manner of expression in writing or speaking, just as there is a perceived manner of doing things" Wales, 2014, p. 397)⁷³ of specific types of discourse based on social and cultural grounds. Accordingly, recipients' expectations have possibly adapted to the personalization of politics in this sense as well: whereas the politicization of the private (namely, the inclusion of personal matters) was not widespread in political nomination acceptance speeches by means of personal pronouns, the personalization of politics brought it about in political addresses.

To summarize section 3.1.3., person deixis was defined as the category of deixis which enables the speaker to determine the addressees and other (non-addressee) people.

The most prototypical manifestations of deixis are the first- and second-person pronouns. First-person pronouns – which are in the focus of this research – determine the speaker as the deictic center of the utterances they produce and thus compare other speech participants relative to the speaker. However, in order to interpret deictic reference in the case of person deixis, we need to take into consideration the social context in which the given utterance is embedded (Marmaridou, 2000; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b; Verschueren, 1999).

3.1.4. *Deixis and anaphora*

Traditionally, pragmatic studies differentiate between deictic and anaphoric reference. As discussed so far, in its most prototypical interpretation, deixis draws on the interlocutors' physical and social world to refer to an entity (Levinson, 1983; Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). This is sometimes contrasted with anaphoric usage, "where some term picks out as referent the same entity (or class of objects) that some prior term in the discourse picked out" (Levinson, 1983,

⁷³ This study does not detail the notion of style and for that reason, the rather general definition provided by Wales (2014) is applied. For a detailed account on the cognitive-oriented interpretation of style, see Tátrai (2013).

p. 67).^{74,75} Anaphoric reference can be exemplified by the Democratic Bill Clinton's 1992 nomination acceptance speech:

- (9) "But, *my fellow Democrats*, its [sic.] time for *us* to realize *we've* got some changing to do too" (Clinton, 1992)

In this excerpt, the referent of "us" and "we" can be found within the given discourse; in this case, the referent ("my fellow Democrats") can be found prior to the pronouns "us" and "we." However, it must be added that it is possible to use a deictic expressions anaphorically (Lyons 1977, p. 676; cf. Levinson, 1983, p. 67). This is illustrated by an excerpt from the Republican George Bush's 1988 nomination acceptance speech:

- (10) "The tremors in the *Soviet world* continue. The hard earth *there* has not yet settled" (Bush, 1988)

In this case "there" refers to the area what Bush meant by the "Soviet world." However, "there" (i.e., the "Soviet world") is also in contrast the location of the speech "here" (i.e., New Orleans), which can be considered as deictic (cf. Lyons, 1977; Levinson, 1983). As the excerpt shows, contextual knowledge (of the physical and the social world of the speech event) is not sufficient to pick out the referent. To successfully identify what "there" refers to in example (10), the referent can only be identified with the help of an explicit linguistic expression⁷⁶ (Tátrai, 2017b, p. 957). Thus, as example (10) shows, the difference between deictic and anaphoric reference is not always a straightforward matter (Levinson, 2004, p. 103). According to Tátrai (2011, 2017b), the fact that deictic expressions can be used anaphorically while retaining their deictic nature (as in example 10) is a piece of evidence that the phenomenon of deixis itself is heterogenous and prototype-based i.e., deictic reference is the prototypical case of deixis, while anaphoric reference is less-prototypical.

Traditionally, linguistics distinguishes deictic reference (i.e., referring to an entity outside the discourse) and anaphoric reference (i.e., referring to an element of the given discourse). The

⁷⁴ Some of the literature refers to anaphora and cataphora separately. Anaphora designates a "backward-looking reference," while cataphora a "forward-looking reference" (Lyons, 1977, p. 659). In the case of an anaphoric reference, the pronoun follows the co-referring expression (see example 9), while in cataphoric reference the pronoun precedes the co-referring expression (Lyons, 1977). Thus, in the first sentence of the US constitution, "We the People of the United States [...]," the pronoun *we* precedes the expression it is correlated with (the People), hence it is cataphoric. In the following, I only use anaphora and anaphoric reference for both phenomena, in line with Lyons (1977).

⁷⁵ Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish between *endophoric* and *exophoric* reference. Endophoric reference points to someone or something within the text (cf. anaphoric reference), whereas exophoric reference points out something outside the text (cf. deictic expressions).

⁷⁶ The literature refers to the backward-looking reference point of anaphora as *antecedent* and the forward-looking reference point of cataphora as *postcedent* (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b).

more traditional accounts of deixis and anaphora consider the two phenomena as incompatible (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 72). These linguistic descriptions often categorize deictic and non-deictic language use (e.g., uses of demonstratives or personal pronouns) in line with rigid rules. An alternative conceptualization of deixis is offered by Marmaridou (2000, p. 97) who claimed that deixis is built upon “experiential realism.” However, before discussing this interpretation of deixis, the notion of *idealized cognitive models* (ICM) as proposed by Lakoff (1987) must be introduced.

Lakoff (1987) argued that theories about the world are represented by relatively stable mental representations which he termed idealized cognitive models (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 270). ICMs are complex, structured wholes (*gestalts*⁷⁷; Lakoff, 1987, p. 68); they are “idealized” because they are not based on specific instances of an experience but abstract across a number of experiences (Evans & Green, 2006). The notion of ICM is exemplified by Lakoff (1987, pp. 68–69) with the English word *Tuesday*. Defining *Tuesday* is only possible relative to an ICM which includes the following elements: the natural cycle determined by the movement of the sun, the means of defining the beginning and the end of a day, and the seven-day calendric cycle (Lakoff, 1987, pp. 68–69). Thus, the ICM structures the week as a linear sequence of days, the third of which is *Tuesday* in the Anglo-American culture.

Based on this account of ICMs, Marmaridou (2000) proposed that deixis is also built on an ICM. The ICM from which deixis derived is referred to as “pointing out,” and “involves the linguistic act of pointing to an entity in space, performed by an authorized speaker and directed to an unfocused addressee” (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 100). The agent (speaker), patient (addressee), and the entity to which the agent draws the patient’s attention relative to the (spatial position of the) agent can be considered as the *propositional structure* of the ICM of deixis (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 100). The propositional structure of ICMs involves the elements of the ICM and the relations between these elements (Lakoff, 1987; cf. Evans & Green, 2006). The linguistic act of pointing is based on the physical act of pointing which is performed by a human being in the presence of another human being (Marmaridou, 2000). Marmaridou (2000) also explained that the deictic center (see also section 3.1.2.) derives from the physical act which is initiated from the center. A significant merit of the view of deixis in terms of an ICM is that it is possible to account for deictic terms and the deictic use of – otherwise – non-deictic terms. The feature of ICMs which makes it possible to interpret deictic reference is that of

⁷⁷ A gestalt is a structured unit which is perceived as more than the sum of its parts.

prototypicality (Marmaridou, 2000; cf. section 3.3.2.). Accordingly, Lakoff (1987, p. 70) claimed that an ICM can fit an individual's understanding of the world "perfectly" or "not at all"; however, an ICM may also suit "somewhat well" or "pretty badly." The consequence is that the member of the category which fits the ICM of the category "perfectly" is the prototypical member of that category. In the case of the ICM of deixis, Marmaridou (2000, p. 105) proposed that the most prototypical type of deixis is symbolic deixis, in accordance with the definition of the ICM of deixis (as it incorporates that an authorized speaker points to an entity in space via a linguistic act, drawing the unfocused addressee's attention to the entity). Thus, the *I* in one of the most frequently uttered clauses in presidential nomination acceptance speeches, "*I* accept your nomination" is a deictic reference as the candidate (the deictic center) symbolically (via language) points to themselves. Under this view, gestural deixis is a less prototypical member of deixis because it presupposes a non-symbolic identification of an entity (by physically pointing to the entity). In consequence, if a gestural deictic reference is accompanied by symbolic deixis (for example by saying "*I* accept your nomination," as the speaker points to themselves), then it is a more prototypical example of the ICM of deixis than the mere gestural reference (i.e., by the speaker simply pointing towards themselves). Lastly, the anaphoric identification of an entity is an even more marginal example of deictic reference because the entity to which the speaker points is not defined with respect to the speaker (i.e., the deictic center) but it is defined regardless of the speaker (and with reference to the linguistic context within which the reference occurred). Thus, when uttering "we, Democrats/Republicans," the referent is not singled out relative to the deictic center; the referent is the postcedent of *we* and in this sense, the speaker (the deictic center) is not relevant. Therefore, the difference between deictic and anaphoric reference is that deixis occurs speech externally (relative to the speaker), whereas anaphoric reference is located speech internally (irrespective of the speaker; Talmy, 2017).

In sum, whereas more traditional accounts of linguistics sharply distinguished deictic and anaphoric reference, the cognitive linguistic framework enables us to interpret them as members of the deixis ICM (in which symbolic deixis is the most prototypical member, whereas anaphoric deixis is the least prototypical one). Additionally, Talmy (2017, 2020) argued that the same cognitive process serves as the basis of both deixis and anaphora: targeting, i.e., directing the addressee's attention to something (place, time, person, etc.) they were unaware of. Thus, the real difference is whether targeting occurs speech externally (deixis) or

speech internally (anaphora), making the difference between deixis and anaphora more of a question of theoretical categorization than of experiential reality.⁷⁸

What follows from the prototypicality of deictic reference is that in this research, both symbolic deictic reference and anaphoric reference is taken into consideration when analyzing the empirical data which is indicative of the personalization of politics.

3.2. Image schemas

3.2.1. Image schemas: definition and characteristics

- (11) In order to mobilize young voters, politicians need to *put* a lot of *effort into* their social media presence to attract their attention. A politician can only *fill* the venues of their rallies with younger people if they can identify with the politician on a more personal level. Once the personal connection is reached, the young can be *pushed into* voting for the given politician.

The above made-up text consists of relatively common expressions in English, such as *putting something into something*, *filling something* and *pushing someone into something*. Apart from their relative commonness in the English language, there is another feature which connects these expressions: they are all based on bodily experiences. Just as we put an object into a container, we metaphorically “put” our effort “into” something we want to achieve which becomes the “container” of our endeavor. Similarly, as we fill a glass with water, people arriving to a venue can “fill” a closed area. Finally, as we exert force on an object when we “push” it so that it changes its position, we can also encourage citizens who are not very interested in voting to cast their ballot by figuratively “pushing” them towards the voting booth. These examples show that certain expressions are based on our bodily experiences; in other words, they are embodied. These bodily experiences (e.g., putting an object into a box) serve as the core of our conceptualization and serve as the embodied anchors of our conceptual system (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 178; Gibbs, 2005; Hampe, 2005; Littlemore, 2019).

The idea that the human body is the basis of certain concepts is captured with the notion of “image schemas” (Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987). An image schema is defined as “a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience” (Johnson, 1987, p. xiv).⁷⁹ In other words, humans’ perceptual

⁷⁸ For a detailed account on targeting, see Talmy (2017, 2020).

⁷⁹ Needless to say, Johnson’s (1987) and Lakoff’s (1987) coining of the term image schema called for further clarification of image schemas and how they can be researched. Questions have been raised regarding the relationship between image schemas, experience, brain/body, and objective reality (Clausner, 2005), how they can be both presupposed and acquired (Clausner, 2005), and whether they are pre-stored entities in long-term

experience of the spatial structure is mapped onto the conceptual structure (Oakley, 2010, p. 215). In this sense, “image” does not only refer to our visual experience, but more broadly, to our imagistic or sensory experience, which includes vision, touch, movement/balance and hearing; in other words, image schemas are multimodal (Evans & Green, 2006, pp. 178–179; Johnson, 2017, p. 22). The imagistic nature of image schemas also entails that they are not propositional, i.e., image schemas do not refer to the meaning of assertions and expressions (Kövecses, 2006, p. 207; Kövecses & Benczes, 2010, p. 133).⁸⁰ “Schema” means that the concepts under discussion are highly schematic or abstract, such as a CONTAINER or FORCE⁸¹ (Evans & Green, 2006, pp. 178–179; Kövecses, 2006, p. 207). Experimental research suggests that image schemas are not merely theoretical constructs and that they have consequences to human behavior (Gibbs, 2005; Gibbs & Colston, 1995; Gibbs et al., 1994).⁸²

The inclusion of human bodily experiences in making sense of the world is in stark contrast with traditional Western philosophy and culture, termed as “Objectivism” by Johnson (1987). He claimed that according to the Objectivist perspective, things in the world with their own distinct properties stand in a relationship with each other without relying on human understanding. However, image schemas stem from the nature of our existence: because of the fact that on the one hand, “we have bodies with certain specific perceptual and motor capacities,” and, on the other hand, we use our bodies to interact with our environment (Johnson, 2017, p. 153; cf. Johnson, 1987). An illustrative example Johnson (1987, p. xiv) provided is the so-called VERTICALITY schema which derives from human physical experience: in structuring everyday occurrences, we frequently rely on our UP-DOWN orientation. This is manifested in such ordinary activities, as climbing a ladder, the rising level of water we pour in a glass or standing up. As the example of VERTICALITY/ UP-DOWN reveals, image schemas are so elemental for our thinking that we tend not to be consciously aware of them (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 180).

memory or emergent parts of people’s simulations of actions (Gibbs, 2005), for example. While these are important points, it is not the aim of the thesis to contribute to the debates surrounding the status of image schemas and therefore, are not pursued here.

⁸⁰ Imagistic/sensory experience can be contrasted to introspective experience, such as emotions (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 179).

⁸¹ Image schemas are conventionally marked with small capital letters (Cienki, 1997, p. 4).

⁸² In one of the earliest psycholinguistic experiments related to image schemas, Gibbs et al. (1994) confirmed that people have a tacit understanding of the image schematic motivation behind the senses of the polysemous word *stand*. However, there is a lack of systematic experiential research of image schemas, and it is not always clear whether the conclusions drawn based on experiments are purely the results of image schemas (Lukács & Szamarasz, 2014). A more detailed overview of experimental research on image schemas can be found in Gibbs (2005); Gibbs and Colston (1995) and Lukács and Szamarasz (2014).

The basic features of image schemas as formulated by Johnson (1987, 2017) and Lakoff (1987) was summarized by Hampe (2005, pp. 1–2; cf. Cienki, 1997; Evans & Green, 2006) as follows:

- a. Image schemas are considered as directly meaningful structures which we gain from our bodily movements, perceptions, and interactions with objects.
- b. Image schemas are preconceptual, i.e., they precede conceptual thinking in infants. Consequently, they are emergent (and not innate): they develop in parallel with our physical and psychological development from infancy (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 178).
- c. As shown through the example of VERTICALITY above, image schemas are continuous and analogue patterns beyond our conscious awareness: they precede and are independent of other concepts. Thus, “analogue” in this relation means that image schemas “take a form in the conceptual system that mirrors the sensory experience being represented” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 184), which means that it is the perceptual states derived from sensory experience which we record rather than the verbal representation of the experience (Evans & Green, 2006).
- d. Image schemas are internally structured in the sense that they are made up of few related parts. For example, the CONTAINER schema consists of exterior, boundary, and interior elements (Johnson, 1987, 2017; Lakoff, 1987). Depending on the experiential context, image schemas can undergo transformations, thus they are considered as highly flexible (see section 3.2.3.).
- e. Finally, the majority of image schemas can be viewed as static and dynamic, i.e., they can represent states and processes (Cienki, 1997, p. 6). For example, the PATH image schema can be considered as static with regards to the route that we can take and dynamic when we think about the actual moving along this journey (Cienki, 1997).

One element of criticism in connection with image schemas (and embodied cognition in general) is that it is “universalistic” in the sense that the socio-cultural aspects of cognition are omitted, and individual cognition is foregrounded at the cost of collective socio-cultural cognition (Hampe, 2005, p. 5). Johnson (2005, 2017) also reflected on the prevalence of structure in image schema theory by noting that image schemas lack “embeddedness within affect-laden and value-laden” (Johnson, 2005, p. 27, 2017, p. 136) aspects. However, Johnson also added that the main merit of image schemas is that they contribute to the analysis of cognition based on the body. However, Kimmel (2005, p. 286) argues that cognitive forms are necessarily situated in human interaction and therefore, image schemas can be fully interpreted in context. Although this thesis does not wish to further discuss the socio-cultural situatedness of image schemas and its implications, it relies on the concept of image schemas within the context of American political communication. Therefore, the functioning of image schemas (more precisely, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema; see section 3.2.4.) is shown within a specific socio-cultural context, namely the presidential nomination acceptance speeches

This section has reviewed the key features of image schemas, which are abstract conceptual representations arising from our everyday bodily experiences with the world around us (Johnson, 1987, 2017; Lakoff, 1987). What follows is a concise summary of the different types of image schemas which were discussed in the literature.

3.2.2. Types of image schemas⁸³

Image schemas are the conceptual representations of the vast number of experiences which we gain in the outside world. Therefore, numerous different types of image schemas can be distinguished. The quest for identifying and describing image schemas was accompanied by research in linguistics, psychology, and neuroscience (Johnson, 2017, p. 129). Although these interdisciplinary efforts have revealed plentiful different image schemas, there is no closed set of them (Hampe, 2005, p. 2). Image schemas were identified introspectively, by taking into consideration the concepts related to human perception, the manipulation of objects and bodily movements (Johnson, 2017, p. 128; Johnson, 1987). Image schemas can be inferred on the basis of the relationship between these concepts (perception, object manipulation, movements) and the way human bodies (due to their construction) function in their environment (Johnson, 1987, 2017). In turn, the role of the body's constitution also means that if humans were not symmetric and their living habitat would be a liquid medium with no directions (i.e., up or down or left or right would not exist) our bodily experience would also be different as compared to the one in the present world (Turner, 1991).

As mentioned above, there is no definite list of image schemas; however, in his pioneering work on image schemas, Johnson (1987, p. 126) listed 27 of them as shown by Figure 4.

⁸³ The image schemas discussed here constitute perceptual image schemas (e.g., CONTAINER, CENTER-PERIPHERY) rather than kinaesthetic image schemas (e.g., FORCE; Kövecses, 2006, p. 208). For the study kinaesthetic image schemas see Talmy (1988).

CONTAINER	BALANCE	COMPULSION
BLOCKAGE	COUNTERFORCE	RESTRAINT REMOVAL
ENABLEMENT	ATTRACTION	MASS-COUNT
PATH	LINK	CENTER-PERIPHERY
CYCLE	NEAR-FAR	SCALE
PART-WHOLE	MERGING	SPLITTING
FULL-EMPTY	MATCHING	SUPERIMPOSITION
ITERATION	CONTACT	PROCESS
SURFACE	OBJECT	COLLECTION

Figure 4. Johnson’s (1987, p. 126) list of image schemas.

It must be added that Figure 4 does not capture an exhaustive list of all the image schemas which have been identified so far; for an extended collection of image schemas see Cienki (1997). It is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss the attributes of each image schema listed here. Thus, I will merely focus on the one(s) which are relevant from the perspective of political personalization. Before moving on to the discussion of how and why an understanding of image schemas can help us understand the linguistic mechanism of the personalization of politics, there is one further feature that needs to be clarified in connection with image schemas, namely how they can be “transformed.” Therefore, the next section is dedicated to the discussion of the transformation of image schemas.

3.2.3. Transformations of image schemas⁸⁴

Image schemas are not experienced in isolation, but they arise from humans’ ongoing embodied experience which means that they can undergo what Johnson (1987, p. 26) and Lakoff (1987) referred to as “transformation” (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 186). The following image-schema transformations were discussed by Lakoff (1987; cf. Oakley, 2010, p. 26):

- a. Path-focus to end-point-focus: the focus from the path of a moving object is directed to the point where the object stops. The path-focus to end-point-focus transformation is exemplified by “Parents deserve the simple security of knowing that their children are safe, whether they’re walking *down* the street...” (Gore, 2000). In this case *down* refers to the path someone takes. However, *down* can occur in a sentence in which it refers to a static point as well, e.g., “we live *down* the street.”

⁸⁴ For the purposes of this study, image-schema transformations were considerably simplified. A detailed account of image-schema transformations can be found in Lakoff (1987).

- b. Multiplex to mass: as we move away from a group of objects, it becomes a homogenous mass and the other way round: as we move closer to a homogenous mass consisting of individual entities, we realize them as individual objects. For example, Al Gore said in his 2000 speech that “a family in Hardeman County, Tennessee, wrote a letter and told how worried they were that toxic waste, *a lot of* it, had been dumped near their home.” In this example, *waste* is seen as a homogeneous mass. However, if the sentence was rewritten and *waste* was substituted with *batteries* (namely “a family in Hardeman County, Tennessee, wrote a letter and told how worried they were that toxic batteries, a lot of them, had been dumped near their home”), *batteries* would be seen as individual objects. Thus, *a lot of* can be interpreted as an expression which has a mass schema (*waste*) and a multiplex schema (*batteries*) as well.
- c. Following a trajectory: we are capable of mentally tracing the path of a continuously moving object, e.g., “And as my voice [...] *travels* above farmland and suburb, deep into the heart of cities that, from space, look tonight like strings of sparkling diamonds...” (Dole, 1996). In this case, we are able to follow the path of Dole’s voice mentally.
- d. Superimposition: if we imagine a large sphere and a small cube, we can increase the size of the cube so that the sphere can fit inside it. Conversely, the size of this enlarged cube can be reduced to fit inside the sphere. The meaning of *into* involves the superimposition of the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema onto the CONTAINER schema (Lakoff & Núñez, 2000) in “Massive numbers [of immigrants] will pour *into* our country in order to get all of the goodies that they want to get, education, healthcare, everything” (Trump, 2020). In this case the USA can be considered as the CONTAINER. The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema captures how the motion of the “object” (in this case immigrants) starts from a point which is outside the container and ends with a point within the container (Johnson, 2005, 2017; Lakoff & Núñez, 2000)

As summarized here, image schemas do not exist completely independently of each other: certain transformations of image schemas are possible. In what follows, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema is described in more detail in section 3.2.4.

3.2.4. The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema

Having discussed image schemas in general, this section focuses on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema which I hold to be relevant from the perspective of the research of the personalization of politics. The CENTER-PERIPHERY schema is depicted by Johnson (1987, p. 124) in the following manner.

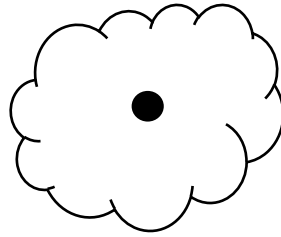


Figure 5. The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema (Johnson, 1987, p. 124).

In Figure 5, the center point corresponds to humans' perceptual and experiential center; this center determines individuals' experiential space. However, the experiential space is limited – it fades off into the individuals' horizon – which is demonstrated by the wavy lines (Johnson, 1987, p. 124). Thus, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema is highly subjective: it shows the individual's experiential space and includes those elements (things, people, events, etc.) which are relevant to the individual in question (Johnson, 1987).

The CENTER-PERIPHERY schema is ubiquitous: not only does it structure human perception, but it also structures individuals' social, cultural, and political world (Johnson, 1987, p. 125). Thus, one's political views and the social and cultural environment one exists in designate the center and other political views and social and cultural contexts are towards the periphery from the individual's center.

The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema is considered as a typical example of an image schema which occurs in superimposition with other schemata (cf. section 3.2.3.). Johnson (1987, p. 125) highlighted five of these transformations. Firstly, the NEAR-FAR schema is relevant both to the perceptual and the conceptual perspective, i.e., we can perceive objects close to us in a literal sense and metaphorically as well. For example, we can talk about political ideologies which are “close to us,” which means that we can identify with them. Naturally, the concepts of near and far are relative ones; therefore, we tend to rely on the SCALE schema to determine the extent to which concrete things or abstract ideas are actually close to or far from us (Johnson, 1987). The second superimposition which occurs is the CONTAINER schema, which we create in line with our perception, conceptual system, and values. Third, the CONTAINER schema is closely related to INNER-OUTER orientation, as we consider the center as inner and determine the outer (periphery) relative to the center. Fourthly, the SUBJECTIVE-OBJECTIVE orientation is supported by the INNER-OUTER orientation in the sense that our subjective ideas and opinions are related to our inner self. Finally, the SELF-OTHER / MINE-THINE distinctions are also

maintained by way of relying on the inner dimension: an individual makes a distinction between their own SELF and determines the OTHER relative to the SELF.

In addition, a relative importance can be ascribed to the CENTER in comparison with the PERIPHERY; just as the central parts of the human body (the internal organs, for example) are more vital to survival in contrast with the peripheral parts (fingers, hair), the CENTER is viewed as more important than the PERIPHERY (Lakoff, 1987, p. 273). Within the same line of reasoning, the PERIPHERY can be regarded as dependent on the CENTER, but the CENTER is not dependent on the PERIPHERY which is exemplified by the loss of one's hair by Lakoff (1987, p. 274): bad circulation may lead to hair loss, but hair loss does not damage the circulatory system. An additional feature which often surfaces in connection with the CENTER-PERIPHERY schema is a the "plus-minus" or "axiological" parameter proposed by Krzeszowski (2011) which refers to the frequent positive connotations with reference to the CENTER and negative ones connected to the PERIPHERY.⁸⁵ The positive and negative judgements are present not only in our physical but our abstract conceptualizations as well. Generally, such value judgements are made relative to the so-called "me-first" orientation discussed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003, p. 132). The "me-first" orientation means that the conceptual system of Western culture is determined by what a prototypical member of the culture is like: they are positioned upright, see and move forward, perform actions, consider themselves as good and are present here and now. Accordingly, the canonical person is oriented UP, FRONT, ACTIVE, GOOD, HERE and NOW; conversely, DOWN, BACKWARD, PASSIVE, BAD, THERE and THEN are away from the canonical person.⁸⁶

In sum, Johnson (1987, pp. 124–125) showed that the CENTER-PERIPHERY encapsulates the human egocentric interpretation of ourselves: we constitute the – literal and figurative – center of our own universe and determine our distance from concrete things (objects, people, events) and abstract (political, social, cultural, etc.) ideas relative to our own center. The CENTER-PERIPHERY schema is superimposed by a number of other schemas: the NEAR-FAR schema determines our relative distance to concrete/abstract things by way of establishing a SCALE and the container schema enables us to draw boundaries around our physical and mental identities, i.e., "bodies" and "minds." The CONTAINER schema is routinely accompanied by the INNER-

⁸⁵ For a more detailed list of the axiological parameters of image schemas see Cienki (1997, pp. 4–6).

⁸⁶ It must be added that the plus-minus values of schemas are not universal; for example, LINK can be considered as a positive schema (e.g., the connection with other people), but a LINK can also be limiting (for example, by tying someone down; Cienki, 1997, p. 6).

OUTER orientation: we decide what is within the container and what is outside of it. The SUBJECT-OBJECT orientation is brought about by the INNER-OUTER orientation, along with the SELF-OTHER and MINE-THINE distinction which are related to the innermost dimension of our self. From a cultural perspective, these schemas can be considered as value-laden in the sense that as compared to a prototypical person of the Western culture (cf. me-first orientation), given elements of the schemas are deemed more positive as compared to others; for example, the CENTER is generally more positive than the PERIPHERY, NEAR is more positive than FAR and the inner elements of a CONTAINER are more positive than those which fall outside of a container.

In summary, it has been shown from this review that our embodied experience in the “outside” environment is highly influential on the way we conceptualize the world. These embodied experiences are captured by image schemas which are core elements of our conceptual system: image schemas motivate the way we think, reason, and imagine (Gibbs & Colston, 1995).

Following the discussion of image schemas, the question may arise what exactly is at stake when considering such a concept. The consequence of the research on image schemas is the realization that a part of our conceptual system – structured by image schemas – is motivated by humans’ everyday experiences in the physical world (Kövecses, 2006, p. 212; cf. Johnson, 1987, 2017; Lakoff, 1987). One tangible manifestation of image schemas – in terms of conceptual metaphors – is discussed in section 3.2.5.

3.2.5. *Image schemas and metaphors*

The fact that our conceptualization of the world involves image schemas means that abstract thinking also has a bodily basis (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 190).⁸⁷ This idea has already been touched upon in section 3.2.4.; it was established that within the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema, we can consider our own body as the CENTER to which we compare the position of people, objects, and ideas. Yet how is this positioning present in our conceptual system? Under Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), it is believed that metaphors constitute a part of the conceptual structure (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). Conceptual metaphors are made up of two domains, i.e., coherent organizations of experience (Kövecses, 2010, p. 4): the more

⁸⁷ Experimental data underpins the relevance of embodiedness in metaphorical conceptualization, as humans subconsciously “experience” the expressions such as the ones italicized in example (11) (Littlemore, 2019, p. 2). More precisely, when we encounter metaphorical expressions grounded in our bodily experiences, we subconsciously activate sensorimotor responses similar to the ones which are triggered when we actually experience the actions or emotions described by the expressions (Gibbs, 2005; Littlemore, 2019). According to Littlemore (2019, p. 22) there are over one hundred studies reporting statistically significant results about the embodied nature of metaphors. For an overview of these data, see Littlemore (2019, pp. 21–53).

abstract target domain and the more concrete source domain, between which the relations are established via mappings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980/2003). This relationship is captured by the CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B⁸⁸ “formula,” which means that CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A is understood in terms of CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B (Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). What is meant by “relatively abstract” and “relatively concrete” domains? For example, “emotions” are generally considered as abstract fields of experience as they are not always easy (or even possible) to verbalize. While different emotions can quickly change, we refer to an emotionally stable person as *level-headed*, *steady*, or *balanced*. These linguistic expressions rest on metaphorical conceptualization: EMOTIONAL STABILITY IS BALANCE.⁸⁹ Thus, the EMOTIONAL STABILITY IS BALANCE conceptual metaphor shows that the more abstract notion of EMOTIONAL STABILITY is interpreted in terms of the more concrete BALANCE image schema. In turn, the BALANCE image schema is abstracted from our experience of bodily and visual balance which provides “one basic scheme consisting of a point or axis around which forces, and weights must be distributed so that they counteract or balance off one another” (Gibbs & Colston, 1995, p. 350). The domain of EMOTION (along with other domains, such as LEGAL RELATIONSHIPS) is metaphorically elaborated from the balance image schema; more specifically, the understanding of an “emotionally stable” or “balanced” person is based on our experience of bodily balance in this example (Gibbs & Colston, 1995, pp. 241–242).

As we saw, image schemas are derived from such mundane experiences as having an upright bodily constitution. What makes it possible to talk about such abstract concepts as emotions in terms of image schemas? According to Johnson (2017, p. 109), it is feasible to extend our most basic bodily experiences to higher levels of abstraction and talk about philosophy, logic, mathematics, etc. in terms of image schemas.⁹⁰ It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the steps of this abstraction. Nevertheless, there is one distinction in this connection which needs to be maintained, namely primary metaphors and complex metaphors (Grady, 1997). According to Grady (1997), complex metaphors are built up from more primitive primary metaphors which are based on bodily experiences, e.g., KNOWING IS SEEING or MORE IS UP (cf. Johnson, 2017; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).⁹¹ In the case of primary metaphors, there is an

⁸⁸ Conceptual metaphors are conventionally marked with small capitals (Kövecses, 2010).

⁸⁹ http://www.lang.osaka-u.ac.jp/~sugimoto/MasterMetaphorList/metaphors/Emotional_Stability_Is_Balance.html Accessed: 26 February 2022.

⁹⁰ Speaking metaphorically about our physical experiences is widespread in languages; in fact, the phenomenon can be found in all languages (Littlemore, 2019, p. 1).

⁹¹ However, it is not always unequivocal which metaphors can be labelled as primary; according to Johnson (2017, p. 114), the CATEGORIES ARE CONTAINERS metaphor can be considered as primary (if viewed as the

embodied correlation between the domains: if we see something, we can say that we know it; if we put more building blocks on one another, the construction will be higher (cf. Winter & Matlock, 2017). However, this type of embodied correlation is not present in the case of complex metaphors. Grady (1997) exemplified this drawing on the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor which is present in expressions such as “the foundation of a theory” or “the framework of a theory.” In the case of the THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor there is no such correlation between “theories” and “buildings,” as in the case of the primary metaphors, e.g., KNOWING IS SEEING, and MORE IS UP (cf. Winter & Matlock, 2017, p. 100). Contrary to CMT, Grady (1997) held that the difference between the two (source and target) domains is not to be found in their level of abstractness. Whereas CMT maintained that we interpret more abstract domains in terms of more concrete ones (e.g., emotional steadiness in terms of physical balance), primary metaphor theory claimed that it is the level of subjectivity which differentiates the two domains. Therefore, under Grady’s (1997) view, primary source domains are related to our perceptual experience and primary target domains are the subjective responses to these perceptual experiences (cf. Evans & Green, 2006, p. 305). By way of illustration, in the case of the SIMILARITY IS NEARNESS primary metaphor, we can perceive whether two things are (relatively) near to each other but determining “similarity” is a more subjective matter (Evans & Green, 2006, pp. 306–307).

This brief review of primary metaphors has not yet addressed a final important aspect related to them. Research showed that primary metaphors are not merely rooted in our embodied experience but are shaped by culture and language (Kövecses, 2015; Littlemore, 2019; Winter & Matlock, 2017); what is more, the linguistic and cultural reflections can shape primary metaphors by “feeding back” into the conceptual structure (Winter & Matlock, 2017, p. 100). Winter and Matlock (2017) argued that this is manifested in the multimodal realizations of primary metaphors, as they are not only present in language but in culture and gestures as well. For example, the MORE IS UP PRIMARY metaphor is reflected in the fact that in the case of tall buildings, the numbering of floors starts at the bottom (hence, as we move upward, the numbers will be higher). They also add that on the gestural level, when people are asked to generate a random sequence of number, they generate higher numbers following the upward movement of their head (Winter & Matlock, 2017, p. 102). Therefore, the embodied experience has an effect on and is motivated by linguistic, cultural, and gestural factors.

conceptualization of containers with objects in them) or as the specification of the ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE primary metaphor (if the “container” is regarded as a type of “physical structure”).

What can the possible relation be between image schemas, primary metaphors and the personalization of politics? As discussed in section 2.3., it is held that political personalization involves a sense of “intimacy” between the individual politician and citizens by means of their presence as individuals in the media. The reason why image schemas and the primary metaphors which rest upon them are crucial from this perspective is that they can help us understand why the non-literal reduction of the “distance” between politicians and voters can feel very real to voters. Thus, the primary metaphor subjected to scrutiny here, is the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS metaphor. The INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS metaphor is referred to as SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE by Winter and Matlock (2017). In this study, both labels are maintained.

The INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS/SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphor is built on the subjective experience of intimacy and the sensorimotor experience of being physically close (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 55; cf. Grady, 1997). In other words, the amount of space between people reflects their relationship in the sense that the smaller space means a closer relationship, and in turn, a larger space indicates a looser relationship or alienation (Winter & Matlock, 2017, p. 103).

Winter and Matlock (2017, p. 104) drew on two concepts from social sciences to explain the cultural and gestural aspects of the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS/SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphor. They discussed that the notion of “segregation effects” shows that people tend to move closer to those individuals who they perceive as similar to themselves, while “peer effects” are activated when people move physically close to each other. Once they get physically near, people acquire certain behaviors from each other. Furthermore, Matthews and Matlock (2011) showed through their experiments that social and physical distance are conceptually linked. Relying on the concept of “friend” and “stranger” (i.e., two degrees of social distance) and spatial distance, they conducted three experiments in which they asked participants to imagine that they were delivering a package (as they were walking through a park, driving a car, and riding a taxi, respectively) and draw the route of their journey. Their data showed that participants drew their routes of delivery closer to their friends as compared to strangers, even if direct interaction between friends was made impossible by driving or sitting in a taxi. The results indicate that when humans think about intimacy, they immediately access the domain of physical distance.

The relationship between intimacy and physical closeness is also reflected in language use. In an analysis of American English speakers' linguistic data (interviews and a task of writing any number of sentences which include the word *friend* and/or *friendship*) on the concept of "friendship," Kövecses (1995) found that intimacy appeared in the participants' account of friendship. The CLOSENESS metaphor occurred very frequently in the data in expressions such as "close friends," "He was a *sidekick* of mine," and "They are *inseparable*" (emphasis in original; Kövecses, 1995, p. 321). The results lend themselves to the conclusion that INTIMACY (conceptualized via CLOSENESS) is an essential part of the conceptualization of "friendship" in American culture. Thus, in metaphorical terms the FRIENDSHIP IS CLOSENESS metaphor can be established, which is a more specific realization of INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS. In turn, INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS can be categorized under the metaphor: AN EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES (Kövecses, 1995).

In this section, it has been explained that embodied perception of space has a role in structuring our conceptual system; thus, the way we experience space with our own bodies has an effect on our thinking. These recurring experiences lead to the emergence of image schemas, which are the conceptual representations of our everyday interaction with the outside world. Image schemas are also present in abstract thinking, as they were found to serve as the source domains of abstract metaphorical thinking. In terms of proximity and intimacy, the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS metaphor (which is based on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema) was found as a means of expressing that humans tend to move closer (both in the literal and the abstract sense) to those people with whom they are familiar and have a closer emotional bond.

3.3. Person deixis and image schemas

The current research adopts an "experiential view" of deixis, which was discussed in terms of the unification of deictic and anaphoric reference (Marmaridou, 2000). What does an experiential account mean for the analysis of person deixis which is in the focus of this research? This section outlines a general account of the experiential view of person deixis, as discussed by Marmaridou (2000). This is followed by a description of the use of the most prototypical manifestations of person deixis – personal pronouns – in political communication.

In section 3.1.4. it was explained that deixis is conceptualized on the basis of the "pointing out" idealized cognitive model (ICM) and maps the physical act of the speaker's pointing something out into the linguistic (symbolic) act of pointing. An ICM (a structured system of knowledge)

depends on different structuring principles including propositional structure, image-schematic structure, metaphoric mappings, and metonymic mappings (Lakoff, 1987, p. 68). In order to interpret person deixis from the perspective of political personalization, two of these structuring principles are addressed here: the image-schematic and the metaphoric structure (Marmaridou 2000).⁹²

According to Marmaridou, the image-schematic structure on which the ICM of deixis depends is the CENTER-PERIPHERY schema (Marmaridou, 2000; see section 3.2.4.). The CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema structures the deictic ICM in a way that the speaker is viewed as the center (i.e., the most important element upon which the periphery depends, cf. section 3.2.4.) and the periphery, namely the entities to which the speaker points, are determined relative to the center/speaker. Levinson (1983, p. 64) visualized the various distances from the speaker as concentric circles the center of which is the speaker:

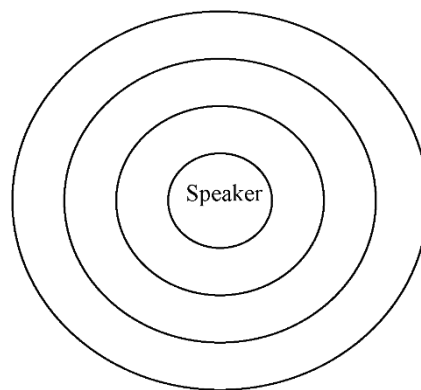


Figure 6. Spatial proximity in deixis relative to the speaker, based on Levinson, 1983, p. 64.

As Figure 6 demonstrates, the different distances can be marked in relation to the speaker; thus, as speakers we can point to entities which are closer to us (e.g., “this pen”) or entities which are further from us (e.g., “that pen”).

The deictic schema is not only structured by humans’ embodied experiences via image schemas but by means of metaphorical mappings as well (Marmaridou, 2000). The metaphorical mapping which holds within the deictic ICM maps the physical space onto the social space. The mapping of the physical space onto the social space means that we conceptualize social

⁹² For the propositional structure of the ICM of deixis see section 3.3.2.

distances in terms of physical distances relying on the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS/ SOCIAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE conceptual metaphors. Thus, social deixis can be interpreted in terms of spatial deixis. The conceptualization of SOCIAL DISTANCE as PHYSICAL DISTANCE also means that a difference in social rank between interlocutors is translated into the physical space between them; in turn, “Social solidarity is understood as spatial proximity” (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 101).

This is in line with Lakoff’s (1987, p. 283) *Spatialization of Form Hypothesis* which holds that radial structures in categories are understood in terms of the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema. A requirement of the Spatialization of Form Hypothesis is the presence of image schemas (which structure our understanding of space) and a metaphorical mapping (which structure our conceptual understanding). In the case of social deixis, the image schema is CENTER-PERIPHERY, while the metaphorical mapping is the understanding of “social distance” in terms of “physical distance” (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 101).

3.3.1. Personal pronouns and DISTANCE

Section 3.3. showed that within an experiential framework, it is possible to conceptualize person deixis in terms of spatial relations. Thus, the ICM which structures our deictic understanding is based on the one hand on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema (which allows to designate the speaker as the conceptual CENTER and determine entities in terms of their relative distance from the speaker) and, on the other hand, deixis is structured by the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS and the SOCIAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE conceptual metaphors. What this shows is that (apart from temporal and discourse deixis) person and social deixis (or “socio-person” deixis in Marmaridou, 2000) can also be interpreted in terms of spatial deixis. Marmaridou (2000) exemplified this with the hierarchical differences between interlocutors (i.e., their social rank; cf. section 3.2.3.1.). However, I would like to suggest that personal pronouns can be conceptualized in terms of physical distance even if they do not indicate a difference in social rank. This claim is based on Rees’ (1983, cited by Jobst, 2007, 2010; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990) model of pronouns which indicates how an individual speaker can distance themselves from an issue or other individuals by using different pronouns. The linear model proposed by Rees (1983) as cited by Maitland and Wilson (1987, p. 498) is replicated in Figure 7.

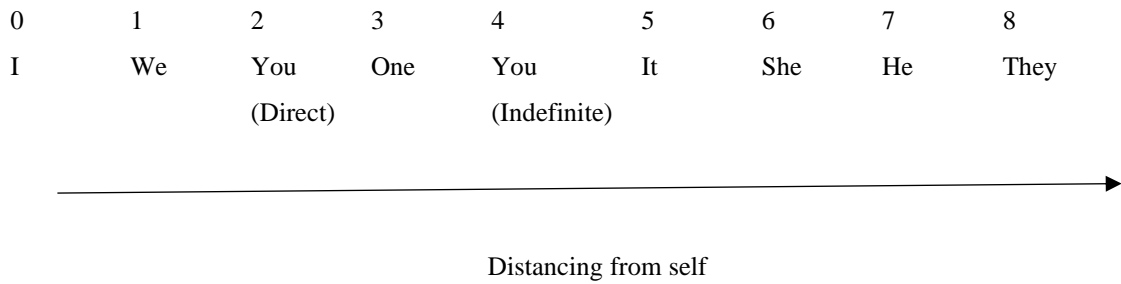


Figure 7. Distancing from the self via personal pronouns as devised by Rees (1983, cited by Maitland & Wilson, 1987, p. 498).

The fundamental principle behind the scale presented in Figure 7 is that as speakers select the personal pronouns to use in their messages, their reference point is the first-person singular *I* (i.e., the deictic center)⁹³ and move further away from the most subjective *I* (Wilson, 1990, p. 58). Rees considered Figure 7 as a generic position for all speakers (Wilson, 1990, p. 58).⁹⁴ By way of illustration, in his 1984 speech, Walter F. Mondale contrasted the Democratic Party (under whose colors he ran) and the Republican Party in the following way:

- (12) “I do not envy the drowsy harmony of the Republican Party. *They* squelch debate; *we* welcome it. *They* deny differences; *we* bridge them. *They* are uniform; *we* are united. *They* are a portrait of privilege; *we* are a mirror of America.” (Mondale, 1984)

Example (12) shows how Mondale positioned himself as a member of the Democratic Party, referring to it with the pronoun *we* (marked by number 1), which is relatively close the deictic center (*I* in 0 position). This is in opposition with the most distant pronoun *they* (8), which refers to the Republican Party in this case. *They* is positioned at the distal end of Rees’ (1983, cited by Maitland & Wilson, 1987) model of pronouns.

Thus, the model presented by Rees (1983, cited by Jobst, 2007, 2010; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990) provided a possibility of positioning the relative distance of pronominal reference compared to the deictic center (the speaker).

⁹³ Objective (*me, her, us, etc.*), possessive (*mine, hers, ours, etc.*) pronouns and possessive adjectives (*my, her, our, etc.*) can also be positioned in the same way on Rees’s scale, along with the subjective pronouns (*I, she, we, etc.*; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990).

⁹⁴ It must be added that Maitland and Wilson (1987) and Wilson (1990) believed that the scale presented in Figure 12 has no normative value. This claim was based their preliminary results of political speeches delivered by three British politicians (Margaret Thatcher, Neil Kinnock, and Michael Foot).

3.3.2. *Deictic ICM in discourse*

In section 3.3., it was established that deixis can be interpreted with the aid of Lakoff's (1987) theory of ICMs and that it is based on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema and a metaphorical mapping which conceptualizes SOCIAL SPACE in terms of PHYSICAL SPACE. Yet how can an experiential view of deixis account for the meaning-making in actual discourse? In order to explain the process, the concept of mental spaces must be introduced. Mental spaces are defined as "very partial assemblies constructed as we think and talk for purposes of local understanding and action" (Fauconnier, 2010).⁹⁵ A mental space can be demonstrated with example (13), adopted from Evans and Green (2006, p. 372):

- (13) "Four years ago, I stood before you and told you my story – of the brief union between a young man from Kenya and a young woman from Kansas who weren't well-off or well-known, but shared a belief that in America, their son could achieve whatever he put his mind to." (Obama, 2008)

In this case the STORY mental space is prompted by "my story," which represents the "world" of the story; within this world, a "man from Kenya" and a "woman from Kansas" are elements and "young" is a property of the elements (as opposed to "well-off" and "well-known"; Evans & Green, 2006, p. 372). The relationship between mental spaces and ICMs is that an ICM structures a mental space (Lakoff, 1987); thus, ICMs provide background knowledge which is utilized to structure mental spaces (Evans & Green, 2006, pp. 279–280).

Turning back to the discussion of person deixis, Marmaridou (2000, p. 105) suggested that specific linguistic expressions (such as the first-person singular *I*) built in the ongoing discourse evoke a mental space which is structured by the deictic ICM. In terms of person deixis (including social deixis) it was observed that the most prototypical elements are personal pronouns. The first-person singular *I* designates the speaker, whereas the second-person *you* refers to the addressee(s). Additionally, "inclusive *we*" can refer to a group which includes the speaker and the addressee. "Exclusive *we*" can also refer to the speaker and other participants (excluding the addressee). In what follows, I only focus on the first-person singular *I* and plural *we* which are observed in this study as discussed by Marmaridou (2000, pp. 107–112) in the framework of experiential deixis.

Firstly, the first-person singular *I* can be considered as prototypical when it encodes the speaker who points to themselves when at least one addressee is present. Such use of *I* (and *you*)

⁹⁵ For a detailed account of mental spaces, see Fauconnier (1994).

construes the speaker and the addressee as entities in both the physical and the social space (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 107).

As mentioned above, the first-person plural *we* presents a more complicated matter, as it can be used inclusively (including the addressee) and exclusively (excluding the addressee). Marmaridou (2000, p. 108) characterized *we* as follows: similarly to *I*, *we* encodes the speaker and the addressee(s) as entities in space. However, the speaker identifies themselves as a member of a group, rather than a single entity. The prototypical occurrence of *we* under this view is its inclusive sense, i.e., when it includes the speaker, the addressee and possibly others. This is exemplified by Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential nomination acceptance speech:

(14) "Thank you all for the great convention that *we*'ve had." (H. Clinton, 2016)

In this case, Clinton directly addressed the audience who followed the convention; hence, she included herself among the referents along with the addressees who were participating in the convention.

Exclusive *we* is considered as less prototypical because the exclusive use of *we* excludes the addressee(s) from the reference. However, the mental space still contains a specific group to which the speaker belongs (but not the addressee(s)). It is this group which creates a set of entities in the mental space. In the case of the exclusive *we*, the speaker creates the mental space in terms of themselves and the group they represent; thus, the exclusive *we* has a "representative function" (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 108). Exclusive *we* can be demonstrated with and excerpt from George Bush's 1992 nomination acceptance speech:

(15) "Eight years ago, I stood here with Ronald Reagan and *we* promised, together, to break with the past and return America to her greatness" (Bush, 1992)

In this speech, which was delivered to the voters in 1992, it is clear that *we* did not refer to the addressees but "represented" Bush Sr. and Ronald Reagan. Thus, this is a less prototypical case of deictic reference.

This chapter has described the theoretical framework, within which political personalization is interpreted through personal pronouns. Section 3.1. reviewed the linguistic interpretation of deixis, focusing on person deixis which is under scrutiny in this study. Section 3.2. discussed image schemas, and more specifically, the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema, which aids the

interpretation of pronominal “distance” from the speaker. Finally, section 3.3. revealed the intersection between image schemas and person deixis.

4. Pronominal references and political communication

Chapter 3 established the way this research interprets deixis on an experiential basis and showed how personal pronouns can express relative distance to the speaker. Yet how do personal pronouns – the 1PS *I* and 1PP *we*, more specifically – appear in political communication? Chapter 4 addresses this question: Section 4.1. presents the 1PS, while section 4.2. discusses the uses of the 1PP in language use and in political communication.

Scholarly interest in pronouns started in the second part of the 20th century (Wales, 1996). One of the pioneering works was Brown and Gilman's (1960) exploration of the pronouns of "power" and "solidarity," which claimed that there was a shift towards the more empathic T pronouns instead of the more hierarchical V pronouns in some European languages (French, German, and Italian).⁹⁶ The study constitutes one strand of research investigating pronominal usage: sociolinguistics. In the view of Wilson (1990) sociolinguistic studies concern issues such as pronouns and gender, class, power, etc. The other line of pronoun-scholarship is pragmatics, which addresses the "manipulation" of messages. Manipulation means that the use of certain personal pronouns in various contexts can carry different meanings (Wilson, 1990). The effect of the choice of pronouns can reach is illustrated by Winston Churchill's speech at the time of World War II (Wilson, 1990).

- (16) "We shall go on to the end, *we* shall fight in France, *we* shall fight on the seas and oceans, *we* shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, *we* shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, *we* shall fight on the beaches, *we* shall fight on the landing grounds, *we* shall fight in the fields and in the streets, *we* shall fight in the hills; *we* shall never surrender..."⁹⁷

Despite the fact that the British premier used the 1PP *we* in each case, it is highly unlikely that Churchill himself would have fought on the front in this war (Wilson, 1990). Why did he still use *we*? In this case, the 1PP expressed a sense of unity and encouragement towards the nation at a time when the German invasion of the United Kingdom was a possibility. Consequently, the meaning of *we* was manipulated to the end that it did not literally mean the prime minister and the nation.

⁹⁶ The T-V distinction means that the different levels of familiarity, politeness, and social distance are expressed with the less formal "T" pronoun (originating from the Latin *tu*) or the more formal "V" pronoun (originating from the Latin *vos*).

⁹⁷ <https://winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/we-shall-fight-on-the-beaches/>
Accessed: 26 February 2022.

This study is embedded in the latter stream of research, namely it scrutinizes the different meanings of personal pronouns and the possible referents of the 1PP *we* in the context of campaign politics. To move closer to this goal, I provide a further review of the political “stake” of using two sets of personal pronouns: the 1PS and the 1PP in this section.

4.1. *The first-person singular*

As discussed in section 3.1.2., the 1PS *I* of the speaker in a communicative situation can be interpreted as the deictic center under the experiential view of deixis which holds that deictic reference is partly structured by the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema (Marmaridou, 2000). Thus, the speaker designates themselves as the center and determines the relative distance of other people and things relative to themselves in a communicative situation; in other words, the 1PS is the most “prototypical index of subjectivity” (Fludernik, 2003, p. 424). The CENTER-PERIPHERY schema also holds that the most important element is the CENTER, as the PERIPHERY depends on the CENTER, but the CENTER does not depend on the PERIPHERY (Lakoff, 1987). How does the prevalence of CENTER as a main reference point manifest in political communication?

According to political communication and pragmatic research, the use of the 1PS entails that the politician is personally involved in the message they communicate (Beard, 2000; De Fina, 1995; Karapetjana, 2011; Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1990). Therefore, politicians tend to refer to themselves with the 1PS if they talk about success or about their plans for the future (Wilson, 1990). The reason for this is that using the 1PS is double-edged sword in politics. For example, if a given measure about which the politician speaks in the 1PS is successful, the politician can take credit for it (“*I* passed the bill”). However, in the case of the failure of a measure, the politician must take personal responsibility (Allen, 2007; Beard, 2000; Wilson, 1990).⁹⁸ Additionally, the use of the 1PS indicates that the speaker places themselves outside of the political collective they belong to (Beard, 2000, p. 45). The sense of personal involvement and split from the collective can be exemplified with an excerpt from the 2012 Democratic candidate Barack Obama’s speech.

- (17) “I will not let oil companies write this country’s energy plan or endanger our coastlines” (Obama, 2012)

⁹⁸ As noted in section 1.1.3., personal responsibility is one of the reasons citizens turned towards more personalized politics. Whereas in a more party-centered system it was difficult to know who was accountable from the leadership, personalization enables citizens to see the individual behind political decisions.

As the quote shows, the former president emphasized his role in the regulation of oil companies' power as he stated that he personally will be the one who would not let them interfere with the energy plan of the United States. Hence, it is neither the Democratic Party, nor the Obama administration who would limit the role of oil companies but Obama himself. Selecting the proper pronoun is an essential question, which politicians (and their speechwriters) need to face, as it reflects how much responsibility they would personally take (Beard, 2000, p. 46).

To summarize, the 1PS pronoun directs the attention of the politician's audience to the politician themselves: with the use of *I* (or its variants), the politician speaks from the deictic center and construes the world the way they see it. Thereby, they designate themselves as the central (most important) element in the utterance. *I* also assigns moral responsibility for the utterance of the speaker (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990, p. 92). Moreover, as example (17) showed, the 1PP enables politicians to speak on their own behalf and not as a member of a party. Hence, these characteristics of the 1PS show that this pronoun lends itself to be a designator of political personalization: it directs the attention to the individual and assigns political accountability to them. For this reason, the 1PS pronoun (*I*) is taken as a direct indicator of the personalization of politics in this research (cf. Domonkosi & Ludányi, 2018).

4.2. The first-person plural pronoun

In the previous section, we saw that the 1PS personal pronoun can be regarded as the clearest indicator of the speaker's perspective (Suleiman et al., 2002, p. 282). However, identifying the referent of the 1PP personal pronoun is a considerably more complicated matter, as the speaker can refer to different groups of people with the 1PP (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990, p. 169). Accordingly, President Nixon's question in his 1968 speech can lead to ambiguity.

(18) "Did *we* come all this way for this?" (Nixon, 1968)

Without contextual cues, *we* in the president's question may be interpreted as the whole country, the Republican Party to which he belonged or even his administration. Naturally, actors of political communication are aware of the possible ambiguity of the 1PP personal pronoun, and they usually exploit the space it leaves for interpretation (Jobst, 2007, 2010; Zupnik, 1994). In order to reveal the different understandings of the 1PP pronoun, I explore the pragmatic and political interpretations in the literature. First, I discuss the pragmatic categorizations which will be followed by the findings of political communication studies.

4.2.1. The pragmatics of the first-person plural

Pragmatics consider the 1PP pronoun as a prototypical deictic expression which can take different meanings (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b).⁹⁹ As discussed in section 3.3.2., pragmatics distinguishes two types of uses of the 1PP pronoun: the inclusive use and the exclusive use¹⁰⁰ (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b). The inclusive use of the 1PP means that the speaker and the addressee (and other third referent(s)) are understood under the reference (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b). In the context of political speeches, the inclusive use can be exemplified with the speaker's address towards the audience, as in Michael Dukakis's 1988 remarks upon accepting the Democratic nomination.

- (19) "And when *we* leave *here tonight*, *we* will leave to build that future together."
(Dukakis, 1988)

In this example, Dukakis included himself and the audience of the 1988 Democratic Convention in the inclusive reference. The exclusive use of the 1PP indicates that the speaker and another, third party is included in the reference, but the addressee is excluded (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b). An instance of the exclusive use of the 1PP can be found in Bill Clinton's 1996 DNC speech.

- (20) "*we* have, all of us in our administration, worked hard to support families in raising their children and succeeding at work." (Clinton, 1996)

In this excerpt, we can identify an anaphoric reference: both *we* and *us* refers to "our administration," namely the Clinton-government. Therefore, the 42nd President of the USA pointed solely his own administration out with the 1PP, excluding the addressees: the attendees of the 1996 DNC and the television viewers. The examples show what the 1PP forms generally designate a heterogeneous collective (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2017b). However, the exact identity of this collective (namely, who the pronoun refers to) can be blurred because of the multiple possible interpretations of the 1PP. Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) proposed that apart from the referential meaning of the 1PP, it can also be used as an "impersonal" and as a "vague" pronoun.¹⁰¹ Impersonal pronouns apply for "anyone and everyone" (Kitagawa &

⁹⁹ Petersoo (2007) refers to this shifting reference as the „wandering *we*.”

¹⁰⁰ Goffman (1976) made a distinction between ratified and unratified participants. Ratified participants include the speaker, the addressee/intended audience. Unratified participants are present at the speech event, but they are not recognized as participants (cf. „overhearers” in Levinson, 1983, p. 72).

¹⁰¹ Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990, pp. 741–741) also determined the IPS as a pronoun which can be impersonal. They exemplified the impersonal *I* with Descartes's "*I think, therefore I am*" (italics by Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990),

Lehrer, 1990, p. 742), whereas the referent(s) of vague pronouns are not identified or identifiable by the speaker (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 742).¹⁰² Impersonal use can be determined in two steps: the pronoun can be replaced by *one* and the lack of person shift in indirect speech (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990). The 1PP *we* in example (21) from Hillary Clinton’s 2016 speech is a good candidate for the impersonal group:

(21) “That’s why *we*’re here, not just in this hall, but on this earth.” (H. Clinton, 2016)

In this case, *we* can be replaced with the non-deictic *one* (“that’s why *one* is here”) and the indirect paraphrase of the sentence would not change *we*, i.e., “Hillary Clinton said that was why *we* were here.” The vague use of *we* can be exemplified by example (22) from the same speech from Clinton in 2016.

(22) “And the president *we* elect is going to be their president, too.”
(H. Clinton, 2016)

Kitagawa and Lehrer (1990) argued that the difference between impersonal and vague applications is that only a US citizen could utter example (22) without the change of the 1PP *we*: “She said the president *we* elect is going to be their president, too.” However, a Hungarian person would report this sentence as “She said the president *they* elect is going to be their president, too.” The distinction is not always tenable as inclusive *we* can refer to an unspecified collective (plus the speaker and the addressee; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990, p. 745).

Nevertheless, Kitagawa and Lehrer’s (1990) classification further demonstrates the numerous possible pragmatic interpretations of the 1PP in English. Yet, these are not the only possible uses of the 1PP in English. In the following, I briefly summarize some further applications of the pronoun.

First-person plural pronouns do not always refer to a collective. They can also be employed for “virtual” reference which reflects the speaker’s social attitude (and not only functions to identify the participants in the speech event; Tátrai, 2017b, pp. 969–970; cf. Tátrai, 2010). By way of illustration, I translated Tátrai’s (2017b, p. 969; cf. Tátrai 2010, 2011) examples from Hungarian:

(23) How are we, my dear, how are we?

in which *I* does not refer to a specific person but has a general reference. However, they also add that the impersonal *I* tends to occur in hypothetical context.

¹⁰² Impersonal pronouns can be found in the literature as “generic pronouns” as well (Quirk et al., 1985, pp. 350–351).

(24) We got an injection.

Example (23) can be imagined as a question uttered by a doctor as talking to their patient, while example (24) as a statement from a parent about their child (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). The real referent of these utterances are the patient and the child, respectively. However, *we* enables the speaker to express solidarity with the real referent (Kuna, 2016; Tátrai, 2017b; cf. Tátrai, 2010).

Two further uses of *we* can be differentiated: *pluralis majestatis* or royal *we* and *pluralis modestiae* or author's *we* (H. Varga, 2017).¹⁰³ Both royal *we* and author's *we* are special in the sense that they do not refer to a group of people but a single person. Royal *we* was used by monarchs in most cases, presumably for two main reasons: on the one hand, the monarch wanted to make their statements more general (namely a statement everyone must accept); on the other hand monarchs spoke also on behalf of their subjects (H. Varga, 2017, p. 136). Numerous grammarians claimed that royal *we* is “virtually obsolete” (Algeo, 2006, p. 107; Quirk et al., 1985, 6.18 note [a]); however, Wales (1996, pp. 64–65) argued that it is still present in politicians' speech (for this reason she relabeled it as presidential/premier *we*). One controversial example of the use of the royal *we* came from Margaret Thatcher who said “We are a grandmother” as she announced the birth of her grandchild (Beard, 2000, p. 44). Thatcher's statement led to mockery at the time because it made her sound too self-important; furthermore, she announced a family matter which also meant that she could not speak on behalf of her nation (Beard, 2000, p. 44). Algeo (2006, p. 107) noted that royal *we* characterizes British English to a greater extent than American English. Finally, author's *we* is used to express modesty on the author's part (H. Varga, 2017, p. 137). Since both royal and author's *we* are archaic and normally used under specific circumstances (i.e., if somebody is a monarch or in scientific writing), these forms of the 1PP are not addressed further.¹⁰⁴

4.2.2. The politics of the first-person plural

Following the linguistic characterization of the 1PP personal pronoun in the English language in section 4.2.1., this section contextualizes pronominal reference and turns to the language of politics.

¹⁰³ Quirk et al. (1985, pp. 350–351) distinguish “inclusive authorial” and “editorial” uses of *we*. The inclusive authorial sense can be found in serious writing and its aim is to involve the reader in the text. Editorial *we* is confined to scientific writing and its purpose is to avoid the 1PS which is sometimes viewed as egoistical.

¹⁰⁴ Quirk et al., (1985, pp. 350–351) also add the “nonstandard” 1PP to the list of its different uses in examples as *lend us a fiver*, where its reference is singular.

Traditional grammar was confined to the denotational function of personal pronouns, generally ignoring their pragmatic and sociolinguistic behavior (Wales, 1996, p. 50; cf. Suleiman et al., 2002). However, the study of personal pronouns in a political context is all the more relevant, given that all personal pronouns are political, “as they are always involved in struggles over representation” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 175). This was already exemplified in section 4.2.1., where the exclusive and inclusive uses of *we* was presented: apparently, the 1PP in English can be considered as a pronoun of solidarity in its inclusive use (“*we*, the humankind”) but in its exclusive use, it can also marginalize groups (“*we*, the New Yorkers” which excludes those who are not the natives or inhabitants of the city/state of New York). This section further details the use of the 1PP pronoun in the context of politics.

Section 4.1. discussed that the 1PS pronoun – the deictic center – expresses personal involvement, responsibility, and the speaker’s own viewpoint to the greatest extent among pronouns (Beard, 2000; Wilson, 1990). Thus, the application of this pronoun is definitely a political choice which highlights the individual politician. However, matters are more complicated in the case of the 1PP pronoun, as picking out its referent is more ambiguous as compared to the 1PS. Whereas the referent of the 1PS is routinely the speaker (see section 4.1.), the referent is more ambiguous in the case of the plural pronoun. As pointed out in section 4.2., ambiguity is a feature of the 1PP which is often exploited by politicians (Jobst, 2007, 2010). In what sense can the denotations of *we* alternate with each other? Beard (2000, p. 45) determined the basic range of reference that can occur with the 1PP.

Group	Referent	Example ¹⁰⁵
I + one other	we = president + vice president	“ <i>Senator Barkley and I</i> will win this election and make these Republicans like it—don’t you forget that! <i>We</i> will do that because they are wrong and <i>we</i> are right, and I will prove it to you in just a few minutes.” (Truman, 1948)
I + a group	we = president + political party	“Now, <i>we Republicans</i> see all this as more, much more, than the rest: of mere political differences or mere political mistakes” (Goldwater, 1964)
I + the whole country	we = president + people of the USA	“It’s time for us, for <i>We the People</i> , to come together.” (Biden, 2020)
I + the rest of humanity	we = president + people everywhere	“ <i>We</i> have found the means to blow this world of ours apart, physically.” (Dewey, 1948)

Table 1. The referents of the 1PP pronoun in politics based on Beard, 2000, p. 45.

¹⁰⁵ The presidential candidates’ names and the year of the speech are marked in parentheses. All the italics in the examples are mine.

As Table 1 shows, the reference of the 1PP can range from “I plus one other” to the whole of humanity. According to Beard (2000) and Wilson (1990), there is an invert proportionality between the number of people the 1PP refers to and the degree of the politicians’ personal involvement. Accordingly, in the case of “I plus one,” President Truman only “shared” the role of the denotatum with one person (*Senator Barkley*) and therefore, he was more involved and more visible. However, Thomas E. Dewey talked about humanity in a generic sense which – apparently – made him less committed to the utterance (cf. Beard, 2000; Wilson, 1990). Table 1 also reveals that the 1PP can also designate groups of people based on their party affiliation (“*we Republicans*”) and their nation (“*We the People*”). How are these main categories exploited in practice? In what follows, I briefly review research on the analyses of the 1PP.

So far, it was highlighted that the 1PP implies that – in contrast with the 1PS – it is not only the speaker who bears the responsibility for the utterance but all those who are included in the denotatum of the 1PP (Beard, 2000; Wilson, 1990). Thus, the difference between *I will cut taxes* and *we will cut taxes* is that in the former case, the politician talks about tax cuts as if cutting taxes depended merely on the politician. However, in the latter scenario (*we will cut taxes*), tax measures are related to a group, e.g., the government.

Yet research shows that it is not only the “distribution” of accountability, which is at stake when applying the 1PP, as it also refers to communities (e.g., political parties) and expresses identification and solidarity with a group of people, e.g., an ethnic group or the whole nation (De Fina, 1995; Íñigo-Mora, 2004; Zupnik, 1994).¹⁰⁶ For example, Íñigo-Mora (2004) showed the way the 1PP *we* can be used to build personal identity via indicating inclusion or exclusion from a group. In her analysis of five Question Time Sessions (when members of the parliament can ask questions from the ministers) at the House of Commons in the British Parliament, she found that politicians use the 1PP to indicate four different referents: 1) “exclusive” (speaker + political group); 2) “inclusive” (speaker + addressee); 3) “parliamentary community” (speaker + parliamentary community); and 4) “generic” (speaker + all British people). Íñigo-Mora (2004, pp. 44–48) concluded that the four different referents she identified have relevance on two different levels: on the one hand, they express “power and distance,” on the other hand

¹⁰⁶ De Fina (1995, pp. 384–385) made a distinction between „identification” and „solidarity.” She defined identification as a graded phenomenon (i.e., the size of the group of people the politician identifies with differs) and a tactical device (cf. Íñigo-Mora, 2004; Zupnik, 1994), which can be indicated with the use of the 1PP. However, solidarity is not a tactical but an “organic” involvement with an individual or a group, which is indicated by a continuous reference through pronouns, i.e., the speaker repeatedly refers to themselves and the individual/group with the 1PP.

they signify “identity, community and persuasion.” By way of illustration, power and distance were dominantly expressed by means of the exclusive *we*, when the members of the government talked to members of the opposition (this meant that opposition members were excluded from the referent of *we*). The reason for this was that government members asserted their higher position by talking from the position of “power,” i.e., they spoke in the name of the government. The construction of “identity, community, and persuasion” was visible in the case of those MPs who belonged to the opposition. They avoided referring to themselves and the addressee by means of the 1PP (“inclusive *we*”) so that they distanced themselves from the government. Additionally, opposition members preferred the “parliamentary community *we*” and the “generic *we*,” in order to include in the reference and connect with those people whose “ideological-political categories are loosely defined” (Íñigo-Mora, 2004, p. 47). This communicative strategy has a positive effect on (at least a part of) the audience: they may feel flattered that the speaker considers them as part of the speaker’s group and, conversely, the speaker includes themselves in the group of the audience (Halmari, 2008, p. 259; cf. Karapetjana, 2011). Furthermore, the politician who uses the 1PP with reference to a collective also assumes that those who are included in the reference share the politician’s views (Jobst, 2007, 2010; Wales, 1996).¹⁰⁷

In summary, Íñigo-Mora’s (2004) research showed that politicians can use the 1PP to position themselves within a category – namely, parliamentary community, political party, the nation – and also to talk from a position of “power.” Inclusive uses of the 1PP can be emotionally loaded in the sense that they bring the speaker and the hearers together; on the contrary, the exclusive application of the 1PP expresses authority and power (Lakoff, 1990, p. 190). These features of the inclusive and exclusive sense of the 1PP can be exploited by shifting between different categories designated by the 1PP (e.g., “*we*, the party,” “*we*, the administration,” “*we*, the nation”) is a strategic device politicians can – and do – exploit (Fetzer & Bull, 2008; Íñigo-Mora, 2004; Jobst, 2007, 2010; Zupnik, 1994).

There is one further aspect of politicians’ identification with specific groups of people. By means of the 1PP, political actors not only associate with these groups but designate themselves as “spokespersons” of the respective groups (Pennycook, 1994, p. 176; Wales, 1996, p. 58). Speaking on behalf of a group of people has two sides: it expresses “authority” and

¹⁰⁷ Needless to say, it is the addressees’ decision whether they accept the inclusion or not (Wales, 1996; Zupnik, 1994).

“communality” which means that the speaker assumes that apart from positioning themselves as part of the group, the speaker also has the “right to speak for a larger group” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 176). This type of communicative strategy is referred to as over-inclusion by Bull and Fetzer (2006) and Fetzer and Bull (2008; cf. Janney, 2002). Over-inclusion implies that the speaker extends “the referential domain of their arguments from the self’s beliefs and ideologies to that of a larger and more relevant social group” (Fetzer & Bull, 2008, p. 281).¹⁰⁸ In terms of deixis, over-inclusion means that the deictic center of the politician who speaks for the group coincides with the deictic center of the group. This is evident in the following sentence from Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1952 presidential nomination acceptance speech:

- (25) “Before every attack it has always been my practice to seek out our men in their camps and on the roads and talk with them face to face about their concerns and discuss with them the great mission to which *we* were *all* committed.”
(Eisenhower, 1952)

In this statement, Eisenhower, who was a decorated war veteran of World War II, spoke for the soldiers who had been under his command when he said, “we were all committed” to their “great mission.” Therefore, he did not only identify with the group of soldiers but took the role of the spokesperson in expressing their commitment to the mission.

To conclude this section, the literature identified various motives behind pronominal selection in political communication. The 1PS pronoun has the role of assigning personal and moral accountability to the speaker (Beard, 2000; Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Wilson, 1990). The 1PP presents a more complicated question, as it can have multiple referents. Therefore, the 1PP can be regarded as a strategic device in political communication (Zupnik, 1994). The 1PP has the power of inclusion and exclusion (e.g., “we, Americans” includes the nation but excludes everyone else) and it can lift the responsibility from the shoulder of a single politician and assign it to a wider group (e.g., “we allowed the new pipeline” means that the pipeline did not depend on a single politician). Importantly, the 1PP designates the speaker as a “spokesperson” who speaks for the group which is referred to be the 1PP. Thus, when a politician says “we, the Democratic/Republican Party,” they assume the role of a representative of the group and equates the politician’s position with the position of the group (in this example, the Democratic/Republican Party). Therefore, the politician synthesizes their deictic center with the deictic center of the group.

¹⁰⁸ The opposite of over-inclusion, i.e., “under-inclusion” can also occur when politicians speak metonymically. Politicians rely on the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy to foreground a part of an entity, e.g., the right to vote can stand for democracy (Bull & Fetzer, 2006; Fetzer & Bull, 2008).

This chapter explored research related to pronominal reference and political communication. Section 4.1. established that 1PS references entail that politicians take full responsibility for their statements and designate themselves as representatives of the groups they speak for (e.g., the nation). Section 4.2. addressed 1PP pronouns and argued that they can refer to various groups of people depending on the intention of the speaker and the context. The different uses of the 1PP were presented in section 4.2.1., while a basic categorization of possible referents was outlined in section 4.2.2.

5. Corpus and methodology

The previous chapters demonstrated that a possibility to interpret the deictic distance between pronominal referents is based on our embodied experiences captured by the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema (chapter 3). Chapter 4 showed the stake that the use of particular pronouns has in political communication: they can create a sense of unity with people the speaker identifies with and at the same time, they can alienate other groups of people, as well as designate the politician as a spokesperson of a given group of people (section 4.2.). In the following, a data-driven analysis based on the theoretical principles established so far aims to reveal whether political personalization can be detected in the observed American political speeches. To reach this goal, this chapter introduces the corpus first (section 5.1.). Section 5.2. details the pronoun categories which are analyzed in this research. In the next section, section 5.3., the radial model discussed in section 3.3. is contextualized in terms of the personalization of political communication. Finally, section 5.4. connects the radial model and the pronominal categories of this research and shows the way they can be regarded as indicators of political personalization.

5.1. Corpus data

As stated in section 1.2. and section 1.5., the corpus comprised Democratic and Republican presidential nominees' presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020. The year of 1932 was selected because it marked the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who was a pioneer in presidential communication generally (cf. fireside chats in section 2.3.1.), and in the history of nomination acceptance speeches particularly, as he was the first nominee who addressed the convention in person in 1932 (Holloway, 2008, p. 137). Roosevelt established a precedent which was followed by Democratic and (from 1944) Republican presidential nominees in almost each presidential race (Holloway, 2008; cf. Ellis, 1998).¹⁰⁹ The last presidential election analyzed was in 2020 which was the year of the latest presidential election at the time of the writing of this thesis. Thus, 23 election years (between 1932 and 2020) were under scrutiny. Altogether, the corpus consisted of 46 speeches (23 Democratic and 23 Republican nomination acceptance speeches) and included 184,621 words. I did not

¹⁰⁹ Not every speech was delivered at the DNC and RNC. Famously, Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first candidate to address the DNC in person; however, his 1940 speech was broadcasted on the radio. Wendell Willkie's 1940 address was not delivered in Philadelphia, where the RNC took place, but in Elwood, Indiana (where he attended high school; Barret, 2008). Finally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Donald J. Trump gave his address from the White House.

analyze the voice or video recording of the nomination acceptance speeches but relied on transcriptions. The texts were retrieved from the website of the *American Presidency Project* (APP)¹¹⁰ which is a non-partisan source of presidential documents available to the public. All the presidential speeches included in this research were collected from the APP. In some instances, two versions of the presidential nomination acceptance speeches were available on the APP website: the one which was prepared for delivery and the one which was actually delivered. If there was a choice, I analyzed the speech which was delivered (e.g., George W. Bush’s 2000 address). However, in certain cases the only available texts were the ones which were prepared for delivery, and consequently, these were examined. As of 3 January 2022, this category included the speeches delivered by Al Gore (2000), George W. Bush (2000), John McCain (2008), and Joseph R. “Joe” Biden (2020).

5.2. *First-person plural categories*

Section 4.1. established that 1PS references are considered as direct manifestations of political personalization. However, the meaning of 1PP pronouns can be ambivalent in the sense that the addressees may need to consider contextual factors to decipher their referents. Consequently, this section proposes a categorization which is applicable for the purposes of the study. In what follows, I describe the conditions and examples which determined the groups in which the 1PP references were included.

The categorization was based on Beard (2000), Urban (1986), Proctor & Su (2011), and Szabó (2020, 2021). Some of the subcategories listed by Beard (2000), Urban (1986), Proctor & Su (2011), and Szabó (2020, 2021) were merged due to analytical purposes (Jobst, 2007, 2010). For example, *we*_{Party} included both “*we* as the Democratic/Republican party” and “*we* as the administration” because the focus of this study is not on the distribution of these relatively smaller groups (which are in a hyponymic relation with the “Party” category) but to explore whether group identification – in line with the personalization hypothesis – globally decreased in presidential nomination acceptance speeches. Thus, the four analytical categories were *We*_{Family}, *We*_{Party}, *We*_{Nation}, and *We*_{Humanity}. *We*_{Family} designated the most intimate group, which was the closest to the deictic center and *We*_{Humanity} represented the most peripheral group which was the farthest from the deictic center.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/> Accessed: 26 February 2022.

In creating the categories, two key terms related to 1PP pronouns were considered: inclusivity and exclusivity (see section 3.3.2.). Inclusivity (which means that the reference involves the speaker, the addressee, and potentially others) is most apparent in the case of *we*_{Humanity}, as this type of reference includes the highest number of potential referents, namely the whole of humanity. Exclusivity (the 1PP reference includes the speaker and a third party, but not the addressee) can be demonstrated with the most private group, namely, *we*_{Family}. In this case it does not matter whether the politician’s viewership includes the nation or (non-family) party members, or the audience at the convention, the referents are the family members (a comparatively small category as compared to the other ones).¹¹¹

The sections that follow (section 5.2.1. – section 5.2.4.) detail these categories.

5.2.1. *We*_{Family}

*We*_{Family} is designated as the most intimate category in the sense that it refers to those people who are the closest to the speaker. *We*_{Family} is realized as the “I + one another” or the “I + group” categorization of Beard (2000; cf. section 4.2.2.) and generally involves references to the candidate’s spouse or family. *We*_{Family} – although with the exceptions of actual family members exclusive with respect to the addressees by nature – is the closest to the deictic center (the politician), as it has the potential to make the audience feel more familiar with the candidate.

The distinction of this group is also justified by the nature of American campaigning: apart from the presentation of the candidate’s self as a “trustworthy, reliable, knowledgeable, mature, empathetic, pious, even-tempered, kind but firm” person, their devotion to their family is also a key point (Polsby et al., 2016, p. 146).¹¹² Excerpts of Hillary R. Clinton’s speech in which she referred to Bill Clinton (her husband) and herself (example 26) and her family as well (example 27) demonstrate *we*_{Family}:

- (26) “And Bill, that conversation *we* started in the law library 45 years ago... it is still going strong.” (H. Clinton, 2016)
- (27) “*We* lost our mother a few years ago, but I miss her every day.” (H. Clinton, 2016)

¹¹¹ Virtual references (e.g., when a 1PP pronoun is used in caretaker speech [speech style used by adults to talk to younger children and babies to express solidarity with the referent]; see section 4.2.1.) are not accounted for in this research separately (cf. example 23 and example 24).

¹¹² The importance of family from an historical perspective can be seen in the case of the Democratic presidential candidate in 1952 and in 1956, Adlai Stevenson whose status as a divorcee drew some comments (Polsby et al., 2016). Three decades later, senator Gary Hart of Colorado withdrew from the race for presidential candidacy because the press reported on his adultery in 1987 (Polsby et al., 2016).

In the first case, the reference included Hillary and Bill Clinton and excluded everyone else, while in the second case *we* referred to Hillary Clinton and her two siblings who lost their mother and excluded everybody else. Nevertheless, the sharing of these personal events (Clinton meeting her husband in a library and the passing of her mother) enabled the addressees to get more familiar with the candidate and thus, a potential sense of “false intimacy” was created (cf. section 2.3.).

5.2.2. *WeParty*

WeParty involves the groups to which candidates belong, including their party and – if applicable – the government they had formed. From the perspective of Beard’s (2000) model, *weParty* includes *I* + one other¹¹³ and *I* + a group. As mentioned above, the political personalization hypothesis is concerned with the decrease of political groups, which include political parties and other entities as well. In line with the findings of Szabó (2020, 2021), presidential nomination acceptance speeches typically included the (political) referents of the “presidential candidate and vice-presidential candidate,” the “administration,” and the “party.” The presidential and the vice presidential candidate were referred to in the 1956 Democratic nomination acceptance speech delivered by Adlai Stevenson:

- (28) “If *we* are elected and it is God’s will that I do not serve my full four years, the people will have a new President whom they can trust.” (Stevenson, 1956)

The administration was referred to in the Democratic Lyndon B. Johnson’s 1964 speech:

- (29) “I report tonight that we have spent \$30 billion more on preparing this Nation in the 4 years of the Kennedy administration than would have been spent if *we* had followed the appropriations of the last year of the previous administration.” (Johnson, 1964)

Finally, the reference to the political party is exemplified by the Republican Alf Landon’s speech in 1936:

- (30) “*We* of our Party pledge that this obligation will never be neglected.” (Landon, 1936)

Additionally, those references were also included among the category of *weParty* in which the politician explicitly referred to the attendees of the convention. This occurred by means of

¹¹³ In English, *we* co-lexicalize two semantically distinct meanings: “we all,” identifying a group (which includes the speaker) and “we two” which has two referents (*me* and *you*, as in *the Vice President and I* in presidential communication; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2021). In this study, I do not make a distinction between the number of referents (two versus all) in this sense but focus on the relative closeness to the *I*.

place deixis (e.g., *here*) and time deixis (e.g., *now*). One instance can be found in Ronald Reagan’s 1980 speech:

- (31) “*We* have come together *here* because the American people deserve better from those to whom they entrust our nation’s highest offices [...]” (Reagan, 1980)

To sum up, there were four cases which belonged to the category of *we*_{Party}: the president and the vice president, the administration, those who attended the convention, and the party.

5.2.3. *We*_{Nation}

*We*_{Nation} overlaps with the pragmatic definition of the inclusive use of the 1PP, as it includes the speaker (politician), the addressee (the citizens), and others who are non-addressees (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b). In the setting of this research, namely presidential nomination acceptance speeches, the addressee overlaps with Beard’s (2000) “*I + the whole country*” category, as the presidential candidates’ main goal is to convince the American people to support them and their agenda. In other words, in the case of *we*_{Nation}, presidential candidates aim to be seen as an American speaking to Americans (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2021, p. 7). It needs to be added that political communication always has multiple audiences; hence, political messages are not only addressed to the immediate hearers (for example people who attend the convention and listen to the nomination acceptance speech) but to those who follow the events in a mediated way (on television or on the radio; Tracy, 2017, pp. 742–743). Therefore, politicians address not only the audiences who do want to listen to their address but they deliberately “aim to be overheard by a wider audience, whom they simultaneously address” (Billig, 1995, p. 105). Consequently, *we*_{Nation} is understood here in a broader sense, i.e., including the non-present (American) audience as well.

Furthermore, *we*_{Nation} also involves the so-called “historical *we*” which refers not only to the addressees but the whole American nation – present and past (Wodak et al., 2009). Therefore, referents of the historical *we* can be people who passed away centuries ago. “Historical *we*” can be detected in Richard Nixon’s 1968 speech:

- (32) “It is ironic to note when *we* were a small nation—weak militarily and poor economically—America was respected.” (Nixon, 1968)

As shown by example (32), the referent here was not the American nation at the time of the speech but the nation at an earlier time: America was still a “small nation.” Thus, the category

of *weNation* included hits which referred to the American nation at the time of the delivery of the nomination acceptance speech and in the past.

In fact, *weNation* (as understood here) also coincides with Billig's (1995) term of "banal nationalism" which means that established nations continually remind their citizens of nationhood through discursive practices (Billig, 1995, p. 8; cf. Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2021). In terms of political rhetoric, this means that politicians construct themselves in their speeches "as standing in the eye of the nation," designating the whole nation as the referent of their use of *weNation* (Billig, 1995, p. 106). In an excerpt from the Republican Mitt Romney's 2012 nomination acceptance speech it can be seen that he spoke on behalf of the whole nation within the context of the United States (example 33):

- (33) "We Americans have always felt a special kinship with the future"
(Romney, 2012)

Therefore, the most apparent case of the 1PP reference with regards to political personalization is *weNation* which designates that the speaker addresses the whole nation directly and identifies with (and "gets closer" to) each American (not only with or via their political party). At the same time, the candidate takes the role of the spokesperson and speaks for the people of the United States.

5.2.4. *WeHumanity*

WeNation is followed by humanity (*weHumanity*) which is the farthest to the deictic center (the speaker) in this typology. Consequently, *weHumanity* includes those references which involve the speaker and the whole of humanity, namely, "I + the rest of humanity" in Beard's (2000) categories. The category of *weHumanity* also designates those examples which overlap with Kitagawa and Lehrer's (1990) "impersonal" pronouns (which are applicable to everyone) and "vague" pronouns (which are not identified or identifiable by the speaker). *WeHumanity* was found in Thomas Dewey's 1948 acceptance speech:

- (34) "We have found the means to blow this world of ours apart, physically."
(Dewey, 1948)

As the excerpt shows, the candidate referred to the inhabitants of the whole world ("world of ours") and not specifically to one nation, which had the capacity to destroy the world.

In summary, a four-way categorization of the 1PP in political speeches was proposed, in order to capture the personalizing potential of personal pronouns: *weFamily*, *weParty*, *weNation* and

*we*_{Humanity}. In this distribution, *we*_{Family} includes the speaker's most intimate relations: their family. *We*_{Party} incorporates the use of the 1PP with reference to political parties and other political groups (e.g., administrations). *We*_{Nation} involves the whole nation (i.e., the group of people whose support the candidate needs at the polling-booths) and makes the speaker identify with the whole nation and designate themselves as the spokesperson of Americans. Finally, *we*_{Humanity} is the largest mass of people to whom the presidential candidate is possibly the farthest from in a physical, emotional, ideological, and cultural sense.

5.3. *First-person pronouns in political speeches: a radial model*

To reiterate the aim of this study, its objective lies in identifying the relative distance of the referents of the 1PP pronoun *we* to the deictic center which is the speaker (*I*) in all cases from the perspective of the speaker (which means that no example of virtual reference is observed here).

In section 4.2.2. we saw that the 1PP can be used to politicians' advantage as it presents the opportunity to speak ambiguously: *we* in a sentence can refer to more groups of people (Jobst, 2007, 2010). Section 4.2.2. presented the general typology of the 1PP introduced by Beard (2000) which is applicable for the use the 1PP in political communication. This distinction included four main groups: *I* + one other, *I* + a group, *I* + the whole country and *I* + the rest of humanity. The applicability of this categorization was proved by empirical analyses conducted by Fetzer and Bull (2008), Íñigo-Mora (2004), Szabó (2020, 2021) and Zupnik (1994), for example. Based on empirical evidence, the quadruple division summarized by Beard (2000) is also adopted here.

However, this research aims to reveal the *personalizing* potential of the 1PP *we* by means of the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema and therefore, Beard's (2000) typology needs to be adjusted for the purposes of this study. As discussed in section 2.3., personalization involves a more immediate and "intimate" relationship between politicians and citizens. In this research I rely on the politician's perspective with regards to personalization which means that intimacy will be determined relative to the deictic center. Yet which references of *we* can bring the politician closer to the citizen? In what follows, I delineate the categories of *we* (see section 5.4.3.) which are utilized for the purposes of investigating political personalization in political speeches.

Based on the typology of Beard (2000) and empirical research (Fetzer & Bull, 2008; Íñigo-Mora, 2004; Szabó, 2020, 2021; Zupnik, 1994), four categories of the use of *we* were proposed in section 5.2. for the analysis of political personalization: *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}. The relative distance of these categories to the speaker is interpreted on a radial model which is based on Rees's (1983 cited by Maitland & Wilson, 1987, p. 498) linear model (cf. section 3.3.1.). The radial model encapsulates the distance of the different categories of the first-person plural *we* relative to the speaker, namely, *I*. The reason why pronominal distance is depicted with the help of concentric circles is that deixis can be conceptualized in terms of an ICM structured by the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema (Marmaridou, 2000). Additionally, as depicted in Figure 6, Lakoff (1987, p. 283) noted that the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema can generally be applied to radial categories. Therefore, in this research I rely on the radial model of deixis (Figure 8) instead of the linear model presented by Rees (1983 cited by Maitland & Wilson, 1987, p. 498; see Figure 7). The relative position of the different categories of *we* to the speaker are illustrated by Figure 8 which is based on the radial model of the relative distance of personal pronouns from the deictic center (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).

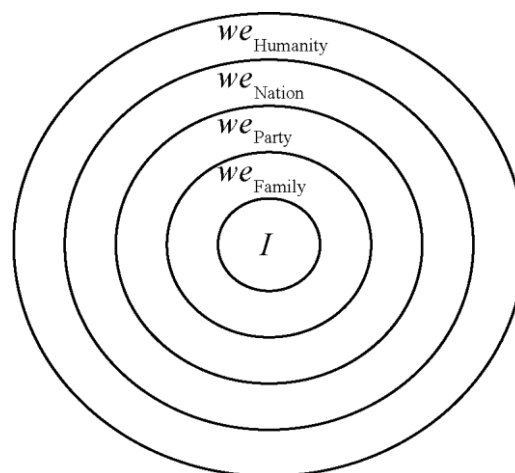


Figure 8. The relative distance of the referents of first-person plural pronouns to the deictic center.

Figure 8 encapsulates the image schematic representation of the first-person pronominal categories. As shown by Figure 8, the advantage of the radial model of personal pronouns with reference to the distance from the speaker's self over the linear model is that it makes the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema perceptible: it shows that the speaker (*I*) stands in the center and that the referents of the 1PP categories (*we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}) are

positioned relative to the speaker (i.e., the deictic center). The categories presented by Figure 8 do not designate inclusivity in the sense that politicians' family members are not necessarily members of their political parties, for example. Thus, the concentric circles merely indicate the relative distance from the nominees.

In line with the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphor, the closest to deictic center (namely, the speaker's *I*) is *weFamily*. From the perspective of the speaker (in this case, the politician), *weFamily* includes the group of people the individual can be "close to" (physically), "intimate with" (emotionally), and "identify with" (ideologically),¹¹⁴ and share the same cultural background with, which is grasped by the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphor. In the case of *weParty*, the distance grows between the individual politician and the people in *weParty*: we cannot speak of such physical and emotional closeness to party members as compared to the family, while (in general) there is no fundamental ideological difference between party members. This is depicted in Figure 8 by the positioning of *weParty*, the second closest to the deictic center. *WeNation* is even farther from the speaker, as it comprises the whole of the American nation. When it comes to the nation, we can hardly speak of physical, emotional, or ideological closeness to each member of the category. This is reflected in the image schematic interpretation of the first-person pronominal system by positioning *WeNation* further than the categories of *weFamily* and *weParty*. Finally, *weHumanity* is depicted as the outermost category relative to the speaker, as *weHumanity* – designating the whole of humankind – is the largest and the most diverse group of people with whom the politician cannot share the same cultural background as in the case of the nation. Besides, the candidate can only share an ideological conviction with a segment of the group (as in the case of *WeNation*) and it is not possible for the speaker to be physically close to or cultivate a close relationship with the whole of humanity. Hence, this distance is what is reflected in the position of *weHumanity* as the farthest category from the speaker.

Thus, the radial model of first-person pronouns in American political speeches presents an image-schematic depiction of the analyzed categories (*weFamily*, *weParty*, *WeNation*, *weHumanity*) relative to the deictic center (*I*). By means of the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS

¹¹⁴ As mentioned above, it cannot be claimed that each family member supports a candidate's political views or that they are members of the candidate's party. For example, Ronald Reagan's daughter, Patti Davis protested against her father's administration (Tanabe, 2011). Whereas it is not always the case that a candidate's whole family agrees with their policies, when it comes to the campaign trail, family unity needs to be highlighted. Moreover, the linguistic references need to be interpreted within the discourse world (namely, the political speech; see section 1.3.), meaning that within the political speech itself, the nominee's family references are part of the speech, regardless their political stance outside of the discourse world.

SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphor, Figure 8 positions *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity} according to their metaphorical distance to the speaker-politician, who is in the deictic center of the speech event. The distribution of the categories draws on the segregation effects, which declare that humans move closer to those who are similar to themselves (Winter & Matlock 2017). In consequence, the innermost category includes the group of people who are the most intimate to the speaker (*we*_{Family}), followed by those who possibly share the most political convictions with the candidate as compared to the whole nation (*we*_{Party}). *We*_{Party} is followed by circle designating the whole American nation (*we*_{Nation}) who share a national-cultural background with the candidate, while this aspect is not present in the case of the majority of the people who belong to the category placed in the outermost layer of the model, *we*_{Humanity}.

5.4. The operationalization of the radial model of first-person pronouns in political speeches

The four categories of *we* (*we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}) depicted in Figure 8 were delineated on the ground of the following questions.

- a. In what discourse world (Tátrai, 2011, 2017b) can the utterance be interpreted?

Determining the discourse world in which the utterance occurs makes it possible to identify the potential addressees of the utterance, and more specifically, the referents of the 1PP. In the case of the nomination acceptance addresses, the speaker (*I*) is the politician giving the speech whereas the addressee is the nation, to whom the candidate wants to appeal to. Consequently, the “setting” is the “deixis of the homeland” which means that the broader context of the political speech is the whole country (Billig, 1995, p. 11). While they wish to identify with Americans, candidates (who wish to take the role of “the voice of the people”) designate themselves as the spokesperson of the whole nation.

- b. Whose perspective is taken into consideration?

In the case of this research there are two possibilities: the perspective of the speaker (who is the deictic center) and the perspective of the addressees. Political speeches are delivered to an audience at a political event to reach a goal (Charteris-Black, 2018, p. xiii; cf. section 1.5.). Since this research addresses presidential nomination acceptance speeches in the United States of America, the audience is considered to be the prevailing nation of the United States of America (cf. Schröter, 2014; Wodak et al., 2009). (Needless

to say, the political occasion is the acceptance of the presidential candidacy and the promotion of the given candidate.)

- c. Who are the referents of the first-person plural *we*? In other words, who does the speaker identify with and (at the same time) represent in the utterance?

Once the discourse world in which the speaker's utterance occurred is determined, it is possible to delineate the potential referents of the 1PP which means that we can define who the different uses of the 1PP involve. This study assigns these referents to four different groups (*we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}). The identification of the members of these groups relied on either anaphora (see section 3.1.4.) or contextual cues (see below). In certain cases, the referent appeared metonymically in the given context and hence, the identification of the referent was complemented by the identification of the metonymic mapping.¹¹⁵ By metonymy, I refer to conceptual metonymies as understood by Kövecses (2010, p. 173): "Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or idealized cognitive mode (ICM)." Kövecses and Radden (1998) laid out numerous metonymic mappings.¹¹⁶ The COUNTRY FOR PEOPLE¹¹⁷ metonymy is relevant in political communication as demonstrated by example (35):

- (35) "America, *we* are better than these last eight years. *We* are a better country than this." (Obama, 2008)

In this case, the country¹¹⁸ (*America*) stands for the people of the United States and for this reason, the 1PP *we* is categorized as *we*_{Nation}.¹¹⁹

- d. Who does the reference exclude? In other words, who does the speakers *not* identify with?

The exclusive use of the 1PP generally means that the addressee is not understood in the utterance (Laczkó & Tátrai, 2015; Tátrai, 2010, 2017b). For example, if the speaker refers

¹¹⁵ It is beyond the aims of this research to set forth a theoretical explanation of anaphora and metonymy; such an account can be found in Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez and Díez Velasco (2004).

¹¹⁶ Metonymy is a common persuasive device of political discourse (Chantrill & Mio, 1996). For example, in the following excerpt from Roosevelt's 1932 acceptance speech, *Washington* stands for the government: "Why, the Nation asks, has Washington failed to understand that all of these groups, each and every one, the top of the pyramid and the bottom of the pyramid, must be considered together [...]?" In this instance, metonymy is used to simplify and personify the more complex concept of the government (Chantrill & Mio, 1996, pp. 173–174).

¹¹⁷ Conceptual metonymy (as conceptual metaphors) is also marked with small capitals (Kövecses, 2010).

¹¹⁸ More precisely, there is another metonymy here, as by means of the WHOLE FOR PART metonymy the whole continent, America stands for the USA (Kövecses & Radden, 1998, p. 50).

¹¹⁹ For a detailed account on the metonymic conceptualization of NATION, see Salamurović (2020).

to their party, (*we, Democrats* or *we, Republicans*), they automatically exclude those people who do not identify with the party.

Finally, I suggest that the possibility of the *generic reference* be included in the analysis which – although rather vague in reference, creates “complicity” between interlocutors (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2021, p. 7).

In what follows, the categories distinguished for the objectives of identifying the personalizing force of the 1PP in campaign addresses in the context of the United States of America are described, starting from the category which is the closest to the deictic center (*we_{Family}*), and moving towards the category which is the farthest to the deictic center (*we_{Humanity}*).

5.4.1. *The I and we of this research*

Traditionally, grammarians make a distinction between the *subjective* (*I, you, she/he/it, we, you, they* in English) and *objective* (*me, you, her/him/it, us, you, them* in English) cases of personal pronouns (Quirk et al., 1985, pp. 336–339; Wales, 1996, p. 85).¹²⁰ The labels of the different cases of personal pronouns indicate their function: the subjective case indicates the grammatical subject of the clause (e.g., *I* voted for her), while the objective case indicates the grammatical object (e.g., I voted for *him*; Wales, 1996, p. 86). This research focuses on the subjective case of the first-person singular (*I*) and plural (*we*) pronouns in political language use.

It must be added that speakers of English often hesitate between the use of the subjective and objective cases of pronouns in sentences such as *It was I* versus *It was me* (Wales, 1996).¹²¹ However, I selected the subjective as the case under scrutiny because generally, it is considered as the unmarked, more formal, and more standard pronoun as compared to the objective case (Wales, 1996, p. 101; cf. Crystal, 2008, p. 328).

Additionally, the subjective position of pronouns is also the default scenario of in terms of human conceptualization. In Langacker’s (2007, p. 173) view, we cannot “escape” our own identity as the subject of conception: the I-here-now is always our immediate experience of the

¹²⁰ Grammarians also refer to the subjective case as *nominative case*, and to the objective case as *accusative case*. However, according to Wales (1996, p. 85) this terminology is the remnant of the “classical influence” on English grammatical terminology and the nominative/accusative distinction is sufficient to discuss Old English, namely “English used in Britain from circa 450 to circa 1150” (Aarts et al., 2014, p. 281) only.

¹²¹ Crystal (1989) conducted a survey in which he asked the British Radio 4’s listeners about their “likes and dislikes” about English usage in 1988. His results suggested that the question of the subjective (*I*) and objective (*me*) distinction of pronouns in sentences such as *It’s no use my/me asking him* were amongst the top concerns identified by the respondents.

world (from which we can move through our memories and imagination, for example). On the contrary, the position of the object needs to be expressed explicitly in contrast with the implicit presence of the position of the subject.

Finally, data-driven evidence also underpin that the subjective case is more comparable in quantitative terms as compared to the other cases in the English language. In the pilot analyses leading up to this thesis, the extraction of personal pronouns in DNC and RNC acceptance speeches revealed that the cases other than the subjective are not comparable in the dataset. By way of illustration, merely 12 IPS independent genitive pronouns (*mine*) was identified in the 46 addresses altogether.

In summary, the subjective position appears to be more basic in terms of traditional grammatical descriptions and in our conceptualization as well. Therefore, in the data-driven research of political speeches where speakers' conceptualization of the different uses of personal pronouns is examined, subjective pronouns can serve as an appropriate point of departure. (However, section 6.6. presents two case studies of political personalization which includes the whole range of English pronominal cases.)

5.4.2. *The analysis of the IPS*

The IPS pronoun was considered as the direct indication of taking personal responsibility in earlier research (Beard, 2000; Urban, 1986; Wilson, 1990). Additionally, from the perspective of the speaker (the deictic center), the IPS *I*, the speaker's "self" can be considered as the utterance which is the closest to the speaker themselves. The following steps were taken in order to identify the IPS in the observed corpus:

1. The whole presidential nomination acceptance speech was read (cf. Proctor & Su, 2011).
2. Each presidential nomination acceptance speech was uploaded separately to the AntConc (Anthony, 2020) corpus linguistics analysis tool and the IPS *I* was searched for (cf. Proctor & Su, 2011).
3. The returned hits were normalized to 1,000 words, in line with corpus linguistic conventions (Gries, 2010).

In this research, the identification of the IPS references in the corpus is expected to show whether politicians referred to themselves more frequently as we move forward along the

designated timeline of 1932 and 2020. In line with political personalization, I expected that the number of politicians' self-references grew (cf. section 1.1. and section 1.6.).

5.4.3. *The analysis of the 1PP*

The analysis of the 1PS pronouns was followed by the 1PP pronouns. The 1PP pronouns found in the presidential acceptance speeches were categorized in the four groups identified in section 5.2.: *weFamily*, *weParty*, *weNation*, and *weHumanity*. In order to identify the referent of the 1PP, I followed the subsequent analytical steps:

1. The whole presidential nomination acceptance speech was read (cf. Proctor & Su, 2011).
2. Each presidential nomination acceptance speech was uploaded separately to the AntConc (Anthony, 2020) corpus linguistics analysis tool and the 1PP *we* was searched for (cf. Proctor & Su, 2011).
3. A separate Microsoft Excel file for each speech was created and the sentences which included the 1PP *we* were listed.
4. The 1PP pronouns were categorized as *weFamily*, *weParty*, *weNation*, and *weHumanity*. The categories were determined in the following manner:
 - 4.1. First, it was checked whether there was an anaphoric reference within the sentence and the hit was categorized accordingly (cf. Bazzanella, 2002; Jobst, 2007, 2010). If relevant, the referent was interpreted in terms of conceptual metonymy.
 - 4.2. If there was no anaphoric reference in the sentence, the larger context was observed in which the sentence occurred and identified the closest anaphoric reference. If relevant, the referent was interpreted in terms of conceptual metonymy in each subsequent step.
 - 4.2.1. If the 1PP reference was compatible with the referent of the closest (non-pronominal) subject, the 1PP was marked as a co-referent.
 - 4.2.2. If the 1PP was not compatible with the closest (non-pronominal) subject, I selected the category on the basis of the larger context, "shared knowledge" and "the ongoing interaction" (Bazzanella, 2002, p. 248).
5. The returned hits were normalized to 1,000 words, in line with corpus linguistic conventions (Gries, 2010).

By way of illustration, the following excerpt from Nixon's 1968 speech was not possible to categorize without the knowledge of the larger context:

(36) "As *we* look at America, *we* see cities enveloped in smoke and flame." (Nixon, 1968)

In the case of this sentence, the referent of the two 1PP pronouns cannot be identified on the bases of the sentence alone, and thus, it could belong to any of the proposed categories. However, the larger context enables us to select the category of *we*_{Nation}:

(37) "For a few moments, let us look at America, let us listen to America to find the answer to that question. As *we* look at America, *we* see cities enveloped in smoke and flame." (Nixon, 1968)

The context indicates that Nixon addressed the audience and invited them to "look at America." Since this study considers the audience as a category including not only those people who were present at the convention but those who followed the convention through the media, these hits were marked as *we*_{Nation}.

5.4.4. Excluded categories

A number of hits from the corpus were excluded from the analysis. These are as follows:

5.4.4.1. Direct quotes

Those hits which included a direct quotation from anyone who was not the speaker (for example, quotes from other politicians) were eliminated. This is evident in the case of, the following excerpt from James "Jimmy" Carter's 1980 speech was not taken into consideration:

(38) "Three weeks after Pearl Harbor, Winston Churchill came to North America and he said, '*We* have not journeyed all this way across the centuries, across the oceans, across the mountains, across the prairies, because *we* are made of sugar candy.'" (Carter, 1980)

In this excerpt, there were two instances of *we*; however, they were in a quote from Winston Churchill. For this reason, these were excluded from the analysis.

5.4.4.2. Reference to two countries (United States and one other country)

References to the United States and one other country were discarded from the analysis because of the low number of occurrence (n=1) and because these examples do not fit any of the observed categories. This is illustrated by the Democratic Mondale's 1984 speech:

- (39) “But the truth is that between us, *we* [the United States and the Soviet Union] have the capacity to destroy the planet.” (Mondale, 1984)

In this case, Mondale referred to two countries: the United States and Soviet Union.

5.4.4.3. Reference to individual states

In certain cases, the candidates made note of their work in the states they were from or the states where they had an official position (e.g., Bill Clinton was the governor of Arkansas). By way of illustration, the Republican George W. Bush talked about his achievements as the governor of Texas in his 2000 nomination acceptance speech:

- (40) “The largest lesson I learned in Midland still guides me as governor of Texas [...]. So *we* improved our schools dramatically for children of every accent, of every background. *We* moved people from welfare to work. *We* strengthened our juvenile justice laws.” (W. Bush, 2000)

In the excerpt, W. Bush referred to his governorship and local administration with the use of *we*, and not to the whole country.

5.4.4.4. Reference to military groups

Some of those candidates who served in the military referred to the army or the veterans with the 1PP pronoun. However, this applied to Eisenhower (1952), Bush (1988) and Kerry (2004) and thus, these occurrences were discarded from the sample. Military references are illustrated by the Democratic John Kerry’s speech delivered in 2004:

- (41) “Our band of brothers doesn’t march together because of who *we* are as veterans, but because of what *we* learned as soldiers.” (Kerry, 2004)

Kerry in this instance spoke in the name of his fellow veterans.

5.4.4.5. Reference to groups of personal interest

Finally, I also excluded examples which referred to the candidate’s other individual interests, such as religious groups or references to business-related activities. These manifested in the Republican Mitt Romney’s 2012 acceptance speech:

- (42) “So *we* started a new business called Bain Capital” (Romney, 2012)

This example shows that Mitt Romney referred to himself and his business partners at Bain Capital with the help of *we*.

To summarize this chapter, following the presentation of the corpus (section 5.1.), it introduced the first-person categories which are analyzed in this research (section 5.2.). Subsequently, the radial model (based on the CENTER-PERIPHERY image schema) was applied to the pronominal categories of *weFamily*, *weParty*, *weNation*, and *weHumanity* analyzed in this research (section 5.3.). Finally, section 5.4. detailed the analytical steps which were undertaken in the corpus analysis.

6. Results and discussion

In this chapter, the results of the analysis are presented. Section 4.1. noted that the 1PS pronoun is taken as a direct manifestation of political personalization, which foregrounds the individual politician as compared to political collectives. It was also indicated that the 1PS constitutes the deictic center, and therefore, stands directly for the speaker themselves (section 3.1.2.). In line with the linguistic features of the 1PS and Rahat and Kenig's (2018) account, it was hypothesized that the usage of the 1PS pronoun *I* exhibited a growing tendency from the first observed year, 1932 (section 1.6.; H1). At the same time, it was also hypothesized that the number of 1PS references became higher as compared to the 1PP *we*, due to the increased focus on individual politicians instead of collectives (Rahat & Kenig, 2018; section 1.6.; H3). In order to gather the relevant data, the 1PS and 1PP subject pronouns were extracted with the help of the AntConc corpus analysis tool (Anthony, 2020). The observed hits included all the 1PS *I* references and all the 1PP *we* references, with the exception of direct quotes.

With reference to the interpretation of the results, it must be pointed out that this research does not draw conclusions regarding statistical significance: section 6.1.–6.3. describe the corpus-based data but do not test statistical hypotheses.

First, section 6.1. dissects the occurrence of the 1PS and 1PP categories for each candidate according to their party affiliation. However, this research does not address the ideological background of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Therefore, a more detailed comparison between the occurrence of the 1PS pronoun *I* and the 1PP pronoun *we* with regards to the party affiliation of each candidate is not made. Instead, section 6.2. adds up the results yielded from the analyzed speeches each year (namely, the results are derived from the Democratic *and* the Republican speeches together). Accordingly, the data is broken down into yearly categories in order to grasp the communication of American presidential candidates in general. Therefore, the 1PS pronoun is detailed and contrasted with the 1PP pronoun in section 6.2. Sections 6.3.1.–6.3.2. discuss the different categories of the 1PP. Section 6.4. summarizes the results and section 6.5. aids the contextualization of the occurrences by showing some of the typical scenarios in which 1PP pronoun categories surfaced.

The data-driven presentation of the results is followed by two case studies in section 6.6. in order to provide a more detailed, qualitative study of the way subjective first-person pronouns can be interpreted as devices of political personalization in nominating speeches. Accordingly,

in section 6.6.3. Barack Obama's 2008 DNC address and in section 6.6.4. Ronald Reagan's 1984 RNC address is analyzed.

The presentation of the results is followed by a brief account on contextual factors in section 6.7. which need to be taken into consideration with reference to the linguistic interpretation of personalized political communication. The last section, section 6.8. revisits the Ages of Political Communication and connects them to the results.

6.1. The first-person singular I and the first-person plural we according to party affiliation

Corresponding to all the analyzed 1PS and 1PP pronouns identified in the corpus, Figure 9 and Figure 10 demonstrate the personalizing tendencies in Democratic and Republican speeches, respectively. Furthermore, they provide an insight into the appearance of personalized pronominal tendencies in individual politicians' addresses.

Before describing the data, two important points must be made. Firstly, it is not the scope of this thesis to study the different political ideologies or political communication strategies between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. For this reason, the interpretation of the pronouns is merely based on the data and the tendencies they reveal and does not touch upon the possible political background behind them. Secondly, conclusions cannot be drawn concerning personalization in individual politicians' campaign strategies and broader communication strategies either. Even if a candidate ran more than once for presidency, this research only examined their DNC/RNC speeches and did not provide a larger account of the whole range of political speeches they gave. Therefore, the section does not allow for broad generalizations about the communicative strategies of the parties or politicians. A comparison of personalized pronominal language use can reveal the tendencies that occur in candidates' DNC and RNC speeches in the observed election years. Moreover, the increase or decrease of personalizing tendencies in the speeches of those presidents who reran can also be shown.

6.1.1. Personalization in Democratic speeches

The personalization of politics is first presented in Democratic politicians' use of 1PS and 1PP subjective pronouns with the help of Figure 9.

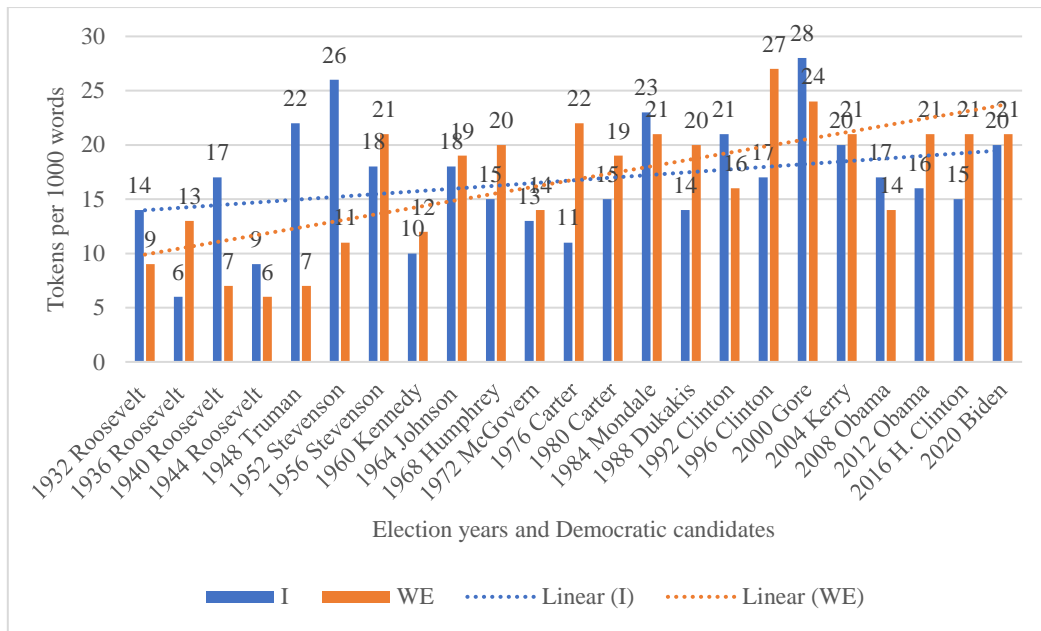


Figure 9. 1PS and 1PP pronouns in Democratic candidates’ nomination acceptance speeches, 1932–2020.

With regards to the use of 1PS *I*, Figure 9 shows a growing tendency in Democratic politicians’ addresses. A similar growth is shown in the case of the 1PP pronoun *we*. If the two pronouns are compared, it can be seen that until 1972, the average number of 1PS pronouns was higher as compared to 1PP pronouns. However, by the 1980s this ratio changed: as the trendline shows, 1PP references grew more dynamically as compared to 1PS singular references. Although the thesis does not investigate the reason for this change, it appears that the communicative strategy regarding DNC acceptance speeches took a novel turn following the early 1970s, as Democratic nominees focused more on groups (more precisely the 1PP *we*) as compared to the 1PS even though both pronouns grew in the observed period overall.

Concerning the candidates themselves, it was noted above that on the basis of the data presented by Figure 9 (and Figure 10 in the case of Republicans) no generalization can be made about individual politicians’ strategy. In a piece of research with a different orientation, it may be possible to find correlations between nominees’ characteristics (for example, their sociocultural background) and the level of personalization in their speeches. In this thesis, only those candidates’ addresses can be compared who ran for presidency on more occasions. In the case of the Democrats these include Roosevelt (1932, 1936, 1940, 1944), Stevenson (1952, 1956), Carter (1976, 1980), Clinton (1992, 1996), and Obama (2008, 2012). The data show that there are no general regularities regarding the increase or decrease in the number of 1PS

and 1PP pronouns in light of the first or second run. Stevenson, Clinton, and Obama used more 1PS in their first address than in their second. Conversely, they used less 1PP pronouns in their first speech as compared to the second one. The reason may be that as first-time candidates, politicians need to introduce themselves and their future plans with the aid of the 1PS pronoun. However, when a president reruns, they have the possibility of referring to what the administration achieved during their presidency with the 1PP. The opposite tendency can be detected in Jimmy Carter's speeches: he used the 1PS more times and the 1PP less times in his second DNC acceptance speech as compared to the first one.

Mention has to be made about Franklin D. Roosevelt's special position, as he ran four times for presidency. Traditionally, presidents in the USA do not seek a third term. However, Roosevelt decided to break this tradition due to explosion of World War II in 1939 (Roberts & Hammond, 2004, pp. 86–87). The next campaign in 1944 took place amidst World War II and by this time the USA also entered the war (Roberts & Hammond, 2004). Under those circumstances, Roosevelt sought a fourth term. The most 1PS pronouns can be found in the President's first (1932) and third (1940) speeches. As mentioned above, the first nomination speech gives an opportunity for the candidate to present themselves. In the case of the third speech, Roosevelt possibly wanted to depict himself as the leader of the USA in the crisis presented by the war. Concerning the 1PP pronouns, most appeared in his second speech (in 1936), while there was a decrease in 1PP references in the consecutive election addresses.

6.1.2. Personalization in Republican speeches

This section discusses Republican 1PS and 1PP subjective pronouns in Republican politicians' addresses. The results are presented with the help of Figure 10.

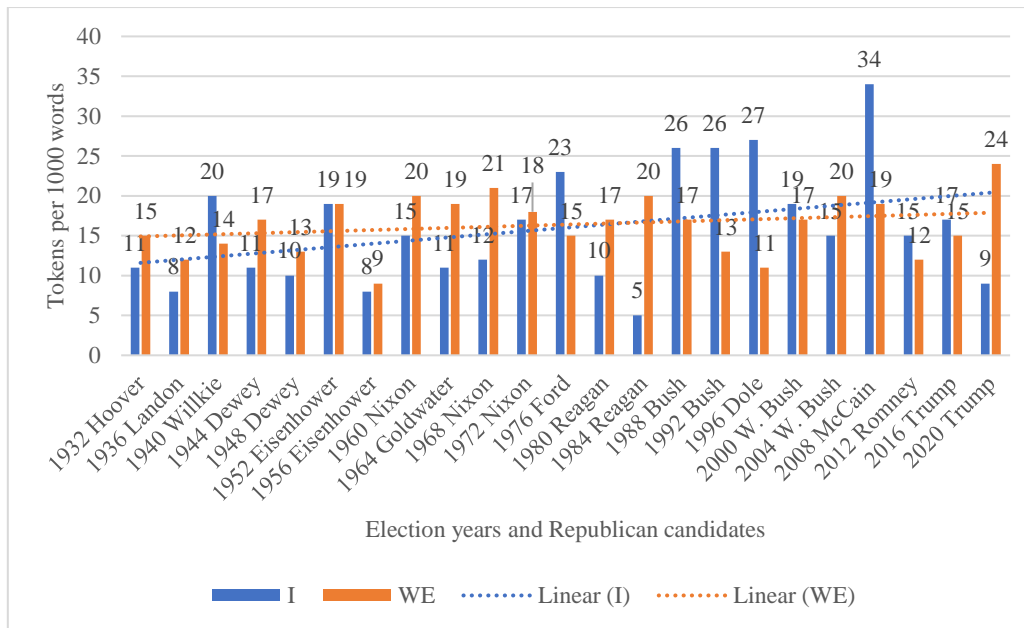


Figure 10. 1PS and 1PP pronouns in Republican candidates’ nomination acceptance speeches, 1932–2020.

A shift in pronominal reference can also be observed in Republican nominees’ speeches. In comparison with Democrats, who applied more 1PP pronouns, Republicans chose a different strategy towards more 1PS pronouns. As shown by Figure 10, both the 1PS and 1PP exhibit a growing tendency between 1932 and 2020. Following Reagan’s 1980 and 1984 campaigns, the growth of the 1PS pronoun became more dominant as compared to the 1PP. This shows that Republicans’ and Democrats’ strategies were different in the sense that the increase of 1PS pronominal references became more significant in Republican politicians’ speeches following the 1980s, while 1PP references were more dominant in Democratic speeches after the early 1970s.

Regarding individual candidates, Dewey (1944, 1948), Eisenhower (1952, 1956), Reagan (1980, 1984), Bush (1988, 1992), W. Bush (2000, 2004), and Trump (2016, 2020) competed twice for the presidential seat. Nixon ran three times (in 1960, 1968, 1972). Comparing the nominees who ran on two occasions, it can be stated that the 1PS *I* was more prevalent in their first speech in comparison with their second one in most campaigns. The only exception is the Bush campaign, as the (normalized) number of 1PS references were the same in 1988 and 1992. Such tendency cannot be observed in the case of the 1PP. Dewey, Eisenhower, and Bush employed more 1PP pronouns in their first RNC acceptance speech as compared to the second one, while Reagan, W. Bush, and Trump used more 1PP pronouns in their second nomination

speech as compared to the second one. Although the results do not allow for a generalization, they show that following Reagan's campaigns, candidates tended to apply more 1PP pronouns in their rerun speeches as compared to their first campaign (similarly to Democratic politicians).

Nixon ran three times for the presidential seat: he lost the race in 1960 (to John F. Kennedy), won in 1968 and reran in 1972. Curiously, the most 1PS references do not appear in his first speech (when he had the chance to introduce himself as a presidential candidate for the first time), but in his third one. The most 1PP pronoun use can be identified in his second speech. However, there is no striking difference concerning the normalized number of 1PP references in the three addresses (20 in 1960, 21 in 1968, 18 in 1972).

With respect to party affiliation, the results correspond to the hypotheses outlined in section 1.6. in the following manner. H1 is confirmed in the case of both the Democratic and Republican parties, as there is an increase in the number of 1PS references in the corpus. The results do not support H2 in the case of either party, as 1PP references did not decrease over time. The increase in 1PP references is less considerable in the case of Republicans as compared to Democrats. Lastly, 1PS references did outnumber 1PP references after the 1980 election in the case of Republicans, in line with H3. However, the opposite trend can be detected in Democratic speeches: the 1PS outnumbered 1PP references until Jimmy Carter's speech in 1976. In the subsequent years, 1PP references grew more dynamically in comparison with the 1PS, which contradicts H3. Based on the results returned from the two parties, it can be concluded that H1 is verified by the results (as the number 1PS references grew in the corpus) and H2 is refuted (as the number of 1PP references did not decrease in the corpus), while H3 is partially confirmed (as in the case of Republicans 1PS references outnumbered 1PP references as personalization progressed).

In summary, the data in Figure 9 and Figure 10 show that there was a shift in the strategy of the Democratic and Republican Party as well in the observed period. A common tendency was that 1PS and 1PP references grew between 1932 and 2020. The difference between the parties lies in the ratio of these pronouns: whereas 1PP references became more dominant as compared to 1PS references in the case of Democratic politicians from the 1970s, 1PS references prevailed in Republican speeches in comparison with 1PP references from the 1980s. However, the present thesis cannot reveal the reasons for these differences – it can only shed light to their existence.

6.2. The yearly occurrence of the first-person singular *I* and the first-person plural *we*

While section 6.1. addressed 1PS and 1PP pronouns broken down to the party affiliation of Democratic and Republican candidates, a more general stance is taken in the sections that follow in order to grasp the general tendencies of political personalization in the corpus. Accordingly, the 1PS and 1PP occurrences in both the Democratic and Republican candidates' speeches were added up. Figure 11 summarizes the results of the annual occurrence of 1PS and 1PP pronouns.

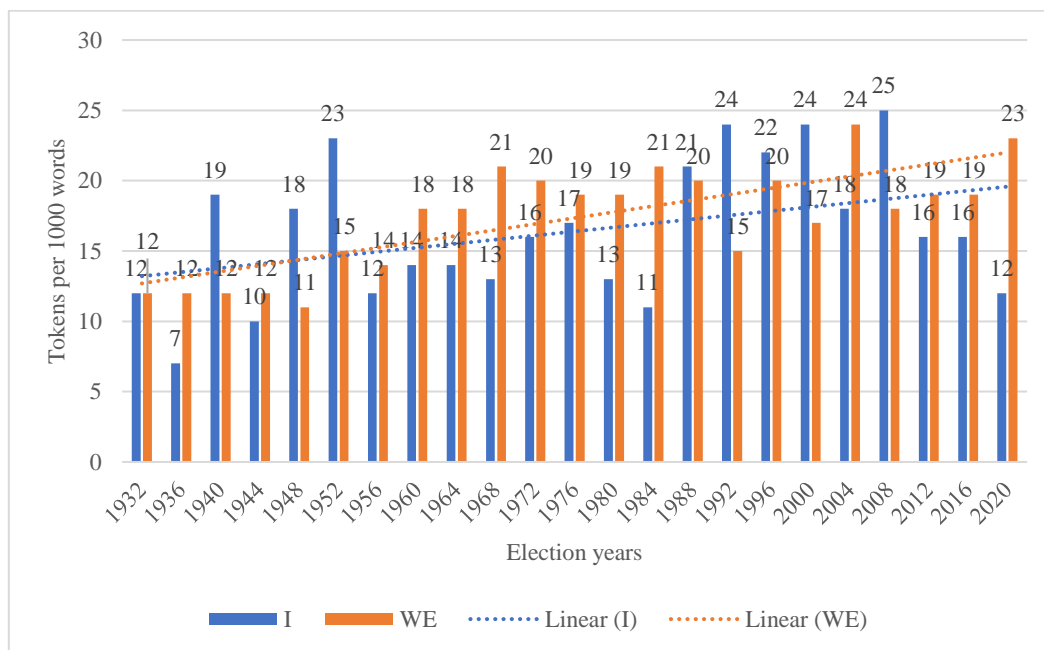


Figure 11. The 1PS *I* and the 1PP *we* in the presidential nomination acceptance speeches, 1932–2020.

The data shown in Figure 11 confirms the hypothesis according to which the number of 1PS references show a general growing tendency as depicted by the trendline (“Linear I”), supporting H1. On a yearly basis, the data are rather varied with regards to the 1PS: the highest ratio of *I* (51 words)¹²² can be found in 2008, when Barack Obama and John McCain participated in the presidential race. In comparison, the lowest number of the 1PS was in the speeches of Alf Landon and Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 (14 words). Furthermore, a steady increase in the number of the 1PS can be detected between 1984 and 2016, during which period

¹²² As indicated in section 5.4., the number of words is normalized to 1,000 words.

there was no lower value than 31. However, the 2020 presidential election possibly brought a paradigm shift as compared to the previous decades, as the relatively low number of 29 1PS references can be seen.

Figure 11 also contains data regarding the occurrence of the 1PP *we* in the corpus. To compare the tendencies of first-person singular and plural pronoun usage, I calculated the number of all *we* pronouns with the exception of direct quotes from other public figures (see example 38) in the case of each presidential candidate. Similarly to the 1PS *I*, the hits were normalized to 1,000 words and the candidates' results were added up for each year, e.g., Roosevelt's and Hoover's pronoun use provided the data for 1932. As shown in the case of the 1PS pronoun, the 1PP also shows a general growing tendency, as demonstrated by the trendline ("Linear WE"). The hits showed that the lowest number of the 1PP was 20 in 1948, when the Democratic Harry S. Truman and the Republican Thomas Dewey ran for presidency. The latest, 2020 presidential elections exhibited the highest number of *we* references: 45 occurrences were found in the speeches of Joe Biden and Donald Trump. (Note that at the same time, the number of 1PS references was relatively low in 2020).

The comparison of all the 1PS and 1PP pronouns shows that contrary to H3, the 1PS did not outnumber the 1PP (cf. section 1.6.). There were 9 election years out of the 23, when a higher number of 1PS pronouns occurred: 1932, 1940, 1948, 1952, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2008. The biggest difference between the 1PS and 1PP was in 2008, when 51 1PS and 34 1PP references were identified per 1,000 words. Therefore, the consolidated data of Democratic and Republican results refute H3, as the 1PS *I* references did not outnumber the 1PP *we* references as time moved forward. On the contrary, as the trendlines reveal, in 1932 and 1936 the 1PS even outnumbered the 1PP and showed equal growth until 1948. Following 1948, the 1PP exhibited a more dynamic general growth as compared to the 1PS.

In summary, the comparison of the 1PS *I* and 1PP *we* revealed that both pronouns showed a general growing tendency between 1932 and 2020. The increasing trendline of 1PS references confirm the presence and growth of political personalization: generally, American presidential candidates used the 1PS more frequently as the election years went by. 1PP references also increased in the observed period. Contrary to H3, the 1PS references did not outnumber 1PP references as political personalization progressed. However, as discussed in section 4.2., speakers can rely on more meanings of *we*. Accordingly, in section 6.3., the extent to which the types of 1PP references were present in the corpus is examined.

6.3. The first-person plural: different meanings

In this section, the findings with regards to the different meanings of *we* in the corpus are presented. Four particular instances of the 1PP are distinguished here (see section 5.2.): *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}. The analysis of the candidates' addresses revealed a single reference which was categorized as *we*_{Humanity}. The possible reason for the lack of *we*_{Humanity} is that in general, campaign speeches address the nation (and include those voters who are faithful to the candidate's party and swing voters as well). Candidates' immediate political gain (that they win the presidential seat) derives from *we*_{Nation}, whereas identifying with humankind (through *we*_{Humanity}) cannot produce such a result in a national election. Due to the lack of *we*_{Humanity} hits in the corpus, the category is not addressed in the following. Therefore, the next section only focuses on the remaining three categories: *we*_{Family} (section 6.3.1.), *we*_{Party} (section 6.3.2.) and *we*_{Nation} (section 6.3.3.).

6.3.1. Results: *we*_{Family}

The category of *we*_{Family} is the one which can be found closest to the deictic center, as it involves the candidate and their spouse along with the candidate and their family. In line with the definition of political personalization, it was expected that the number of *we*_{Family} references increased over time: as political communication became more personalized, politicians shared more intimate details of their personal lives. The occurrence of *we*_{Family} is summarized in Figure 12 for each election year.

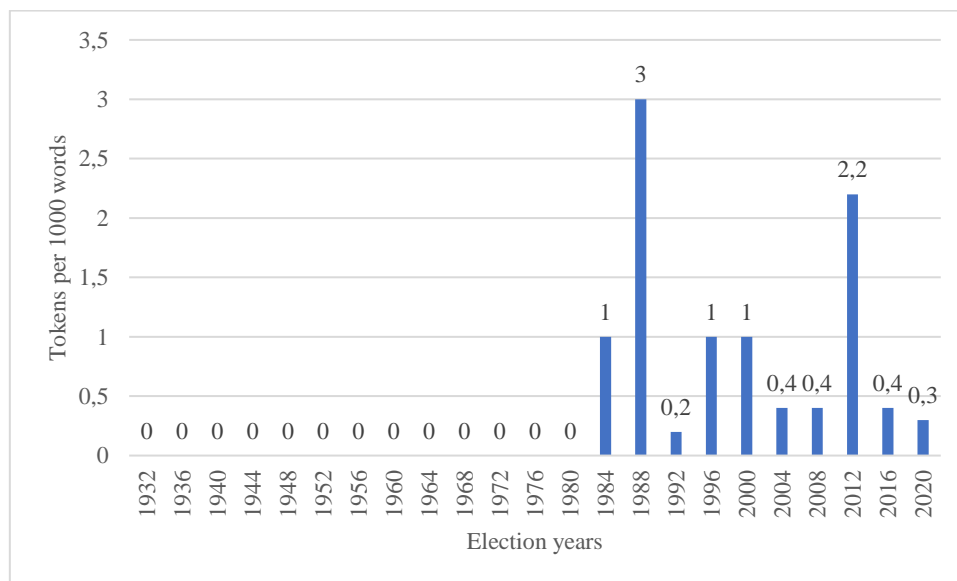


Figure 12. *we*_{Family} in presidential nomination acceptance speeches, 1923–2020.

The data shows that *weFamily* appeared in the corpus in 1984 for the first time (in the Democratic candidate, Walter F. Mondale’s speech), and it was present in the subsequent years as well. Therefore, H4 is partially confirmed: there was a point in time at which *weFamily* appeared in the speeches, but a gradual trend of growth from 1932 lacks on the basis of the results. It needs to be added that the fact that a candidate’s family is referred to by means of a pronoun in a speech does not mean that no mention was made of any of the candidate’s family members earlier. For example, Wendell Willkie talked about his parents and childhood in his speech in 1940. Thus, the data only reveals pronominal reference, and it cannot be claimed that candidates’ families were not included in the speeches at all.

6.3.2. Results: *weParty*

WeParty was considered as the second closest layer to the presidential candidate and included references to the candidate and the vice-presidential nominee, the candidate and their administration, and the candidate and the whole party. *WeParty* contains those people who worked closely with the candidate (the vice-presidential candidate and the administration) and who (presumably) shared the same ideologies with them (party members). As formulated in H5, it was expected that group-identification decreased, because a consequence of political personalization is that political collectives do not fulfill a key role anymore. This was tested with the extraction of *weParty* from the texts. The number of occurrences of *weParty* for each election year is captured by Figure 13:

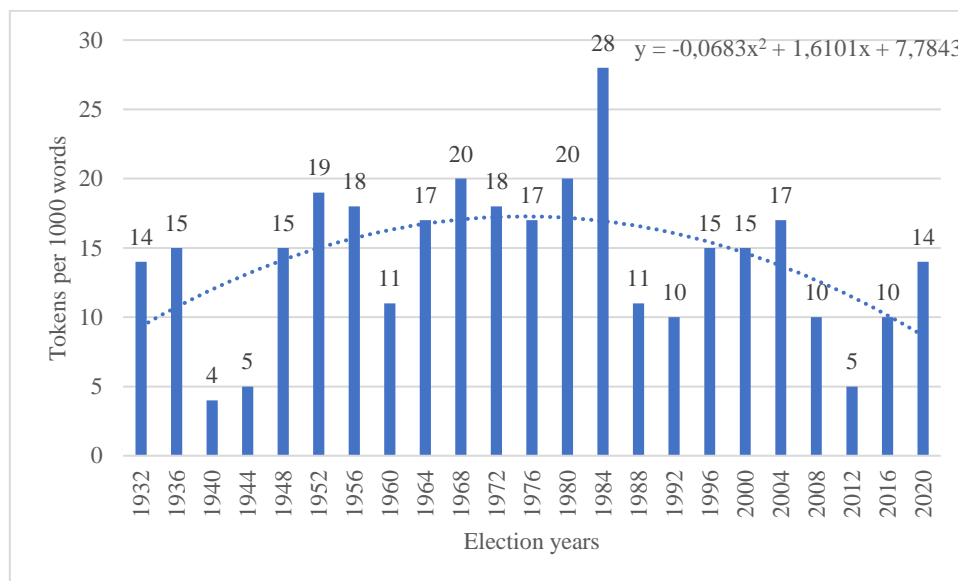


Figure 13. *WeParty* in presidential nomination acceptance speeches, 1932–2020.

Figure 13 demonstrates that there was no general decrease in terms of *weParty* references between 1932 and 2020; the data reveal a different trend, however. As the trendline shows, there was a growth in the number of *weParty* occurrences from 1932 until the 1970s. However, following the elections in the 1980s, *weParty* references started to gradually decrease. Therefore, on the basis of *weParty*, political personalization did occur in this respect; however, it did not take place from 1932, in line with the initial expectations, but rather from 1984, when *weParty* references peaked at 28 words and then *weParty* references started to decrease. These results partially confirm H5, as a lower number of *weParty* can be found in the examined speeches; however, this tendency can be detected from 1984, rather than 1932.

6.3.3. Results: *weNation*

The final category examined was *weNation*, which included the largest number of potential referents in the data. This meant that the “segregation effects” (moving closer to people who one perceives as more similar to oneself; Winter & Matlock, 2017) cannot prevail to the extent as in the case of *weParty*, for example. Therefore, *weNation* was the farthest from the deictic center in this typology. The expectation with regards to this category was a gradual increase, because due to the supposed decrease of group-identification, it was presumed that politicians would identify with the nation. For this reason, references to the candidate and the nation were included in *weNation*. The results of the analysis are captured by Figure 14.

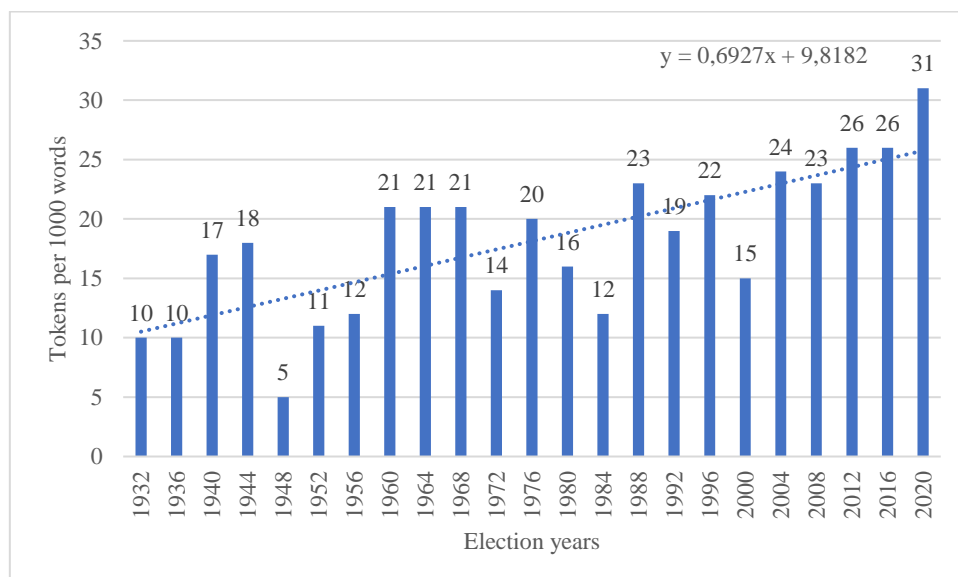


Figure 14. *WeNation* in presidential nomination acceptance speeches, 1932–2020.

Figure 14 outlines a general growing tendency of we_{Nation} and thus, justifies H6. The data shows that the lowest number of we_{Nation} references (5) were in 1948, whereas the highest number (31) can be detected in the course of the latest, 2020 presidential elections.

In comparison with Figure 13, it needs to be noted that in 1984, when party-identification peaked with 28 words, the number of we_{Nation} was relatively low, in contrast with the preceding two (20 in 1976 and 16 in 1980), and the following three elections (23 in 1988, 19 in 1992, and 22 in 1996). Finally, the same is not true for the highest number of we_{Nation} references (31) in 2020 in the dataset, as we_{Party} was relatively high (14) as compared to the previous three elections (10 in 2008, 5 in 2012, and 10 in 2016).

6.4. Summary of the results

To summarize the results, the following observations can be made:

- 1) The number of occurrences of the 1PS *I* grew between 1932 and 2020, which confirms H1.
- 2) The number of 1PP references did not decrease between 1932 and 2020, which refutes H2.
- 3) The number of 1PS *I* occurrences outnumbered the 1PP *we* only in the case of Republican candidates' speeches. The same did not happen in Democratic addresses and the overall data also does not confirm this trend. Therefore, H3 is only partially justified.
- 4) We_{Family} references manifested a growth; however, not from 1932 – as initially expected – but from 1984, which partially justifies H4.
- 5) We_{Party} references partially justified H5, as they did not decrease exponentially: in fact, we_{Party} increased from 1932 to the beginning of the 1980s. However, subsequently to a peak in the number of we_{Party} references in 1984, a decreasing tendency can be observed.
- 6) We_{Nation} references justified H6, as they exhibited a generally increasing tendency from 1932.
- 7) The hits in the corpus only returned a negligible number (n=1) of we_{Humanity} references, possibly due to the nature of the speeches, as they were written for national campaigns.

6.4.1. *The results and the radial model of first-person pronouns in political speeches*

In general, the results show that based on the use of 1PS and 1PP pronouns in presidential nomination acceptance speeches, there was a tendency towards political personalization. However, not all aspects of personalization via personal pronoun use appeared from the initially expected year of 1932. Two general trends can be observed on the basis of the data from 1932: the increase in the number of the 1PS *I* and the increase in the use of *we*_{Nation}. The 1PS pronoun directs the attention to the individual candidate – the deictic center of the utterance – and therefore shows a greater personal involvement of the speaker (cf. Maitland & Wilson, 1987; Rahat & Kenig, 2018; Wilson, 1990). *We*_{Nation} was expected to exhibit a gradual growth, as it was assumed that instead of identifying only with the members of their own party, politicians wished to extend the reference of *we* to the whole nation. This was enabled by technological development, as voters had more varied options to tune in to DNC and RNC events via the radio, television broadcasts, and eventually, the internet.

Two hypotheses were partially justified by the data: the growth of *we*_{Family} references (H4) and the decrease of *we*_{Party} references (H5). In line with my expectation, *we*_{Family} references increased and *we*_{Party} decreased; however, not from 1932, but from 1984. More precisely, *we*_{Family} appeared in 1984 for the first time in the corpus data, and following a peak in 1984, *we*_{Party} started to decrease in the subsequent years. Therefore, 1984 can be considered as a turning point in personalized pronominal references in the corpus. Figure 15, based on the image-schematic interpretation of subjective first-person pronouns, illustrates the 1PP pronominal structure of acceptance addresses before 1984, while Figure 15 shows the novel distribution of first-person pronouns, which emerged after 1984.

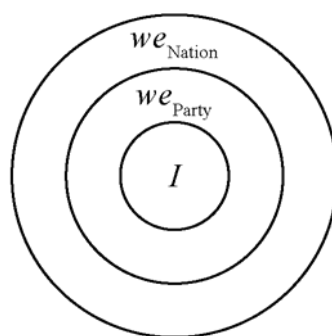


Figure 15. First-person pronouns in presidential nomination acceptance speeches before 1984.

In Figure 15, the state before 1984 shows that from the analyzed categories two were present in the corpus: *we*_{Party} and *we*_{Nation}. With regards to the ratio of *we*_{Party} and *we*_{Nation}, the data shows that they occurred in roughly the same amount between 1932 and 1980 (50% *we*_{Party} and 50% *we*_{Nation}). This is also reflected in the proportion of the radius of the circles designating *we*_{Party} and *we*_{Nation}. Under the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphors, *we*_{Party} is positioned closer to the deictic center, whereas *we*_{Nation} falls further from the speaker. This is because a more intimate relationship can be maintained with members of a party, administration, or vice president (which were all included in *we*_{Party}) as compared to the whole nation (*we*_{Nation}).

Figure 16 demonstrates the changes regarding nominees' pronoun use in the post-1984 era.

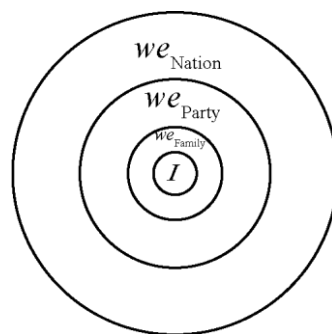


Figure 16. First-person pronouns in presidential nomination acceptance speeches after 1984.

In Figure 16, we can see how the distribution of first-person pronominal references changed in nomination acceptance addresses following the 1984 presidential elections (including 1984, as *we*_{Family} appeared then for the first time). The ratio of the different categories of *we* as compared to all *we* occurrences between 1984 and 2020 are as follows: 3% *we*_{Family}; 37% *we*_{Party}; and 60% *we*_{Nation}. Thus, apart from the appearance of *we*_{Family} (3%), *we*_{Party} references dropped by 13% (from 50% to 37%) and *we*_{Nation} references increased by 10% (from 50% to 60%) of all *we* references in the designated period. (Note that these are rough estimates since the pre-1984 period includes 13, while the post-1984 period includes 10 presidential elections.) The ratio of *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, and *we*_{Nation} in the period between 1984 and 2020 is also reflected in Figure 16: the radius of the circles designating *we*_{Family} and *we*_{Party} are proportionately smaller as compared to the radius of *we*_{Nation}.

On the basis of the corpus, 1984 is a turning point: it was the year when family references appeared (*we*_{Family}) first and were present in subsequent speeches, which is shown in Figure 16.

The appearance of we_{Family} results in a new layer on the image schematic depiction of first-person pronouns (as compared to Figure 15): since we_{Family} consists of people who are the closest to the speaker, this category is positioned as the innermost layer relative to the center. The post-1984 era also brought changes with regards to the category of we_{Party} : the results suggest that following a relatively high number of party references in 1984, a decline can be observed. Accordingly, the we_{Party} layer on Figure 16 after 1984 is narrower (as compared to Figure 15) in line with the decline of we_{Party} . With the appearance of we_{Family} , the position of the party also changed: whereas in the pre-1984 period we_{Party} references are placed the closest to the speaker, the position of the most intimate category is taken over by we_{Family} . We_{Nation} is positioned the farthest from the deictic center because relative to the categories of we_{Family} and we_{Party} , it is the least intimate category in line with the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphors. Finally, due to the lack of a substantial amount of references, we_{Humanity} is not placed in Figure 15 and Figure 16.

In summary, the process of political personalization can be grasped by means of the pronominal analysis of presidential nomination acceptance speeches, as there are general tendencies which can be observed within the time frame of 1932 and 2020. Figure 15 and Figure 16, the image-schematic model of pronominal distance based on the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS / SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE metaphors demonstrate the way the distribution and the weight of first-person pronominal references changed over time.

6.5. *Personal pronouns in context: scenarios*

As noted in section 5.4., the anaphoric references of the 1PP pronoun *we* were considered as automatic indicators of the category to which they belonged, namely, we_{Family} , we_{Party} and we_{Nation} . However, there were cases in which grouping the occurrences was not as straightforward as in the case of anaphora. In these situations, a set of contextual cues enabled the identification of the meaning behind *we* (cf. Tátrai, 2011, 2017b). Due to the nature of campaign speeches, the whole American nation was taken as the addressee and each case was examined from the speaker's perspective (see section 1.5.). This implies that I did not attempt to identify the reference which may have been understood by the audience, but what may have been meant by the speaker. In what follows the scenarios in which we_{Family} , we_{Party} and we_{Nation} occurred in the corpus are presented. The scenarios were determined on the basis of a bottom-up approach, meaning that no predetermined category was set. Each occurrence (n=3322) of *we* was categorized; however, the next sections (section 6.5.1.–6.5.3.) do not provide a

quantitative comparison of these categories for two reasons. On the one hand, the focus of this thesis is not on the context of pronoun use but their referents. On the other hand, the categories are not mutually exclusive; consequently, a more nuanced approach would be necessary to quantify them, which is beyond the aims of the thesis. Additionally, further and more detailed categorizations are also plausible in research on the context in which personalized pronominal references are investigated. Thus, the sections that follow merely serve the purpose of contextualizing the occurrences of the subjective 1PP in the speeches.

6.5.1. *Scenarios: we_{Family}*

The reference to candidates' family involved the family they started, i.e., in which they were a parent and they also reflected on their childhood. The first example of *we_{Family}* occurred in the 1984 speech of the Democratic Walter F. Mondale:

- (43) “My dad was a preacher, and my mom was a music teacher. *We* never had a dime. But *we* were rich in the values that were important; and I’ve carried those values with me ever since.” (Mondale, 1984)

In the course of the next presidential elections, in 1988, the Republican George H. W. Bush shared some details of how he and his wife, Barbara Bush started their own family (which is the first *we_{Family}* occurrence in Republican speeches):

- (44) “Now, *we* moved to west Texas 40 years ago, 40 years ago this year. [...] *We* lived in a little shotgun house, one room for the three of us. [...] And in time, *we* had six children.” (Bush, 1988)

The excerpts demonstrate that while Mondale (example 43) talked about his recollection of his years as a child, Bush told the story of the family he and Barbara Bush started (example 44). By referring to these private issues with *we_{Family}*, candidates gave the audience a glance into their “inner circle.”

6.5.2. *Scenarios: we_{Party}*

First, candidates referred to their own party, characterizing them and their members and describing their most important values. Examples include Jimmy Carter’s 1976 speech in which he described the primary campaigns and the debates that formed the Democratic platform:

- (45) “This has been a time of tough debate on the important issues facing our country. This kind of debate is part of our tradition, and as Democrats *we* are heirs to a great tradition.” (Carter, 1976)

Apart from describing their own party, candidates also contrasted them with the opponent's party. This can be detected in the 1988 nomination acceptance address delivered by George Bush:

- (46) “And someone better take ‘a message to Michael.’ [The Democratic candidate, Michael Dukakis.] Tell him we have been creating good jobs at good wages. The fact is: *They* talk, and *we* deliver. *They* promise, and *we* perform.” (Bush, 1988)

The example reveals that Bush distinguished two groups: “we” and “they,” the former referring to the Republican Party, and the latter “they” denoting the Democratic Party, namely, the party to which Michael Dukakis, Bush's opponent in 1988 belonged.

Additionally, those candidates who ran for their second term or who had been vice presidents frequently alluded to their achievements, which was another scenario of *weParty*. In example (47), Richard Nixon's 1972 acceptance speech noted the achievements of his four years in the presidential position:

- (47) “As a result of what *we* have done, America today is a better place and the world is a safer place to live in than was the case 4 years ago. *We* can be proud of that record, but *we* shall never be satisfied.” (Nixon, 1972)

As shown in example (47), President Nixon enumerated the results of his administration in the four years of his presidency (as he won the 1968 presidential elections). The vice-presidential position was referred to by George Bush, who served as vice president under Ronald Reagan's administration between 1981 and 1989. Bush noted his work as vice president in his 1988 speech accepting the Republican presidential candidate nomination:

- (48) “But I am here tonight, and I am your candidate, because the most important work of my life is to complete the mission *we* started in 1980.” (Bush, 1988)

Thus, an occurrence of *weParty* was when the presidential candidates talked about their past achievements. Another frequent context of *weParty* was focused on another dimension of time: the future. Candidates spoke about the plans of their future administration, as shown by Bill Clinton's 1996 address:

- (49) “Tonight let us proclaim to the American people, *we* will balance the budget.” (Clinton, 1996)

In this example, President Clinton mentioned one of the future plans of his administration for their second term. The initiative – balancing the budget – can be undertaken by governmental

bodies rather than one's family or the whole nation and for this reason, it was marked as a member of *weParty*.

It needs to be noted that these are typical scenarios which does not mean that they were applicable in each hit of the corpus. By way of illustration, Donald Trump addressed the whole nation in his 2020 address accepting the Republican nomination:

- (50) "For America, nothing is impossible. Over the next four years, *we* will prove worthy of this magnificent legacy." (Trump, 2020)

Without taking the context and anaphora into consideration, it may appear that Donald Trump talked about his administration, because it is his next government with which he could make plans for the next four years. However, he referred to the whole nation here, as manifested in the sentence "For America, nothing is impossible." In example (50), America stands for the American people by means of the COUNTRY FOR PEOPLE metonymy (see section 5.4.).

In summary, the scenarios which involved the IPP *we* with reference to the political parties included the description and contrast between Democrats and the Republicans and the candidate's vision for the future with regards to the work their administration was going to do. Furthermore, if the candidate was the incumbent president or vice president, they frequently discussed their past achievements in government.

6.5.3. Scenarios: *weNation*

The analysis of the IPP *we* also revealed scenarios in which the candidates routinely referred to the nation. One of these involved the characterization of the American nation (including the nation in the past; cf. "historic *we*," Wodak et al., 2009). The American people were portrayed by Ronald Reagan in his 1980 speech as follows:

- (51) "*We* are not a warlike people. Quite the opposite. *We* always seek to live in peace."
(Reagan, 1980)

As example (51) shows, Reagan described the whole American nation, namely, the people as peaceful rather than "warlike."

As in the case of *weParty* (section 6.5.2.), the future was also a recurring topic in the case of the nation, as exemplified by Nixon's 1960 address:

- (52) “And I say tonight that *we* Americans shall rise to our greatest heights in this decade of the sixties as we mount the offensive to meet those forces which threaten the peace and the rights of free men everywhere...” (Nixon, 1960)

As the excerpt in example (52) shows, Nixon predicted that the nation as a whole would “rise” to their “greatest heights” in the 1960s at the beginning of which he delivered his speech.

The other context in which *we*_{Nation} was detected can be connected to the needs of the United States at the time of the speech. This is exemplified in the Democratic Joe Biden’s 2020 nomination acceptance speech:

- (53) “Because *we* don’t need a tax code that rewards wealth more than it rewards work.” (Biden, 2020)

As example (53) reveals, Biden talked about the need of the nation for a tax code which rewards working people rather than wealthy people.

Finally, candidates also assumed the role of the spokesperson (discussed in section 4.2.2.) in their speeches. As representatives of their nation, they relied on performative verbs – understood here as verbs which perform actions by being uttered (Austin, 1962) – as in the case of Barry Goldwater’s address in 1964:

- (54) “But *we* pledge – *we* pledge that human sympathy – what our neighbors to the South call that attitude of “*simpatico*” – no less than enlightened self-interest will be our guide.” (Goldwater, 1964)

Goldwater in example (54) talked on behalf of the whole nation when he said “*we* pledge” (whereas it was clearly him who made a pledge), thereby assuming a spokesperson’s role.

In summary of this section, the presidential nomination acceptance speeches between 1932 and 2020 presented a number of scenarios in which *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party} and *we*_{Nation} occurred. *We*_{Family} typically occurred in contexts where the candidate talked about their childhood, or the family they started. In the case of *we*_{Party}, candidates described and contrasted the two leading parties of the United States (example 46), detailed their vision with regards to the needs and future of the country (example 47), and enumerated their past achievements (example 48). With regards to *we*_{Nation}, two main scenarios occurred; on the one hand, candidates characterized the American people (example 51), on the other hand, they voiced their needs (example 53) and future (example 52). It needs to be added that these were not the only possible context in which the 1PP pronoun *we* occurred; moreover, as example (50) showed, presidential candidates did

not always make promises to the voters with reference to their respective party, but also attempted to mobilize the nation via involving Americans as well.

6.6. *Political personalization in detail – Two case studies*

The corpus-based study of political personalization considering the use of first-person pronouns revealed the personalizing tendencies in American presidential candidates' political speeches. However, a solely data-driven analysis is not suited to account for a more nuanced interpretation of first-person pronouns and their role in political personalization in political speeches. To fill this gap, the case studies of two selected speeches are presented to reveal the possibilities regarding the pronominal analysis of personalized political speeches. Subjecting a limited number of texts to scrutiny makes it possible to interpret several aspects of personalization in light of the use of personal pronouns, which were excluded in section 5.5.4.

Firstly, in this section each pronominal case is taken into consideration, not only the subjective case. As mentioned in Section 5.4.1., it was not feasible to include the whole range of pronominal forms of the English language in the corpus-driven analysis, since they were not comparable due to the varied number of tokens in the corpus. This section does not adopt a comparative approach and therefore, there is no reason for excluding the cases other than the subjective one. Moreover, section 5.5.4. noted that certain categories, such as references to individual states (Section 5.5.4.3.) or references to military groups (Section 5.5.4.4.) were not included in the data because there was a relatively low number of them. A more detailed qualitative analysis ensures that these can be elaborated on as well. Finally, the categories can be discussed more accurately, as no generalization is necessary. More specifically, it can be observed from which position the politician speaks, for example, whether they take the role of a spouse, a parent or a child within the category of *weFamily*. Such stance allows us to learn in more detail about how political personalization occurred via pronominal language use in the observed speeches.

Nonetheless, it needs to be pointed out that these case studies do not allow for broad conclusions with regards to the personalization of politics in American presidential nomination acceptance speeches. Importantly, acceptance speeches given by individual politicians are investigated. Clearly, nominees had different personalities and ran for presidency in a different cultural and political context. Therefore, broad conclusions cannot be drawn on the basis of this analysis regarding the language use of the candidates, Democratic and Republican

politicians, American politics, or political personalization in general. The case studies merely aim to show the further possibilities of textual analysis with regards to political personalization in light of pronominal language use. It also needs to be added that the following analysis aims to interpret pronominal references in their immediate context solely and does not follow discourse analytic or rhetorical conventions.

6.6.1. Selection criteria

The analysis of a Democratic and a Republican presidential nomination acceptance speech was undertaken to reveal the personalization of politics via pronominal language use. The selection criteria of the speeches are discussed in this section.

The results presented in Sections 6.1.–6.4. indicated that there was a growth in personalized pronominal language use in American presidential candidates' acceptance speeches following the early 1980s. For this reason, the choice was narrowed down to addresses which were delivered in 1984 or the subsequent years. The next step was the selection of the Democratic and Republican candidates whose speech was further investigated. The decision was based on the ratio of the popular votes the winning candidate received.¹²³ Accordingly, the addresses of those candidates were analyzed who were elected president and won their seat with the largest ratio of popular votes between 1984 and 2020. The reason the popular vote was set as the indicator to be taken into consideration was that it reflects the sympathy of voters, i.e., it shows who was able to mobilize the most citizens eligible to vote in each election year. The ratio of the popular votes was withdrawn from the *Statista* database.¹²⁴ According to the data, it was Barack Obama in 2008 (with 52.9%) from the Democratic Party and Ronald Reagan (with 58.8%) in 1984 from the Republican Party who received the largest ratio of popular votes¹²⁵ as

¹²³ The president in the United States is elected via popular votes and the votes of the Electoral College. The former is the number of votes casted by qualified citizens. The Electoral College consists of 538 electors who are appointed by each state based on number of their congressional delegation. Most states (except Main and Nebraska) adopted the “winner-take-all” system which means that the candidate winning the popular votes wins the electoral votes as well. 270 electoral votes are necessary for the election of the president. It can occur that the candidate who receives the most popular votes is not the president. Since 1984, this situation emerged on two occasions: Al Gore and Hillary Clinton both won the popular votes but not the electoral votes, and hence they were not elected as president.

¹²⁴ ProCon, & Encyclopædia Britannica, & National Archives and Records Administration, & 270towin.com. (December 16, 2020). Share of electoral college and popular votes from each winning candidate, in all United States presidential elections from 1789 to 2020 [Graph]. In *Statista*. Retrieved 18 December 2021, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1034688/share-electoral-popular-votes-each-president-since-1789/>

¹²⁵ According to *Statista*, the ratio of popular votes between 1984 and 2020 were as follows: Ronald Reagan (1984) 58.8%; George H. W. Bush (1988) 53.4%; Bill Clinton (1992) 43%; Bill Clinton (1996) 49.2%; George W. Bush (2000) 47.9%; George W. Bush (2004) 50.7%; Barack Obama (2008) 52.9%; Barack Obama (2012) 51.1%; Donald Trump (2016) 46%; Joe Biden (2020) 51.3%.

compared to their contenders (including the candidate of the Republican Party/Democratic Party and, if applicable, the candidate of third parties and independents).

6.6.2. Analysis

After a close reading of Obama's (2008) and Reagan's (1984) speeches, the subjective (*I* and *we*), objective (*me* and *us*), and genitive cases (the determinative *my* and *our* forms and the independent *mine* and *ours* forms) along with the reflexive forms (*myself* and *ourselves*) of the 1PS and 1PP pronouns were extracted with the help of AntConc (Anthony, 2020). Subsequently, the hits returned by the "concordances" function of AntConc (Anthony, 2020) were inspected in their immediate context. Similarly to Section 5.4., the referents of the pronouns were determined based on anaphoric reference. If the referent was not possible to determine on the basis of the anaphoric reference, the broader context was inspected (cf. section 5.4.). Whereas Chapter 5.2. marked the categories with the actual subjective pronoun they represented (e.g., the first-person plural reference to the candidate's family was indicated as *we*_{Family}), in this chapter 1PS_X (first-person singular) and 1PP_X (first-person plural) are used as the pronominal forms are not treated individually.

Since the aim of the analysis was to provide a more exhaustive account regarding the semantic categories embodied by the pronouns, the pronouns were listed in more detailed groups. In the case of the 1PS, it can be determined whether the candidate spoke as a politician or a private person (cf. Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014). Accordingly, when candidates used pronominal constructions related to their political activities they were considered as 1PS_{Professional} as in example (55).

- (55) "As Governor of California, *I* successfully made such vetos over 900 times."
(Reagan, 1984)

However, pronouns in candidates' speeches were categorized as 1PS_{Private} when their utterances were related to their private lives by means of pronouns as shown by example (56).

- (56) "She's [Obama's grandmother] the one who put off buying a new car or a new dress for herself so that *I* could have a better life." (Obama, 2008)

With regards to 1PP pronouns, the categories of 1PP_{Family} and 1PP_{Nation} were retained. Section 5.2.2. noted that the references to the Republican/Democratic Party and the to the candidate's (future) administration were grouped into the same category: 1PP_{Party}. This group was broken down to 1PP_{Democrats/Republicans} and 1PP_{Administration} for a more detailed image of political

references. Furthermore, categories which were excluded in Chapter 5 were inspected here (e.g., 1PP_{Humanity}). Depending on the observed speech, novel categories were introduced, such as 1PP_{Parties}, referring to *both* the Democratic Party and Republican Party. By creating groups of pronouns based on the texts themselves, it was possible to put each first-person pronoun into a category.

6.6.3. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential nomination acceptance speech

Barack Obama delivered his acceptance speech entitled “The American promise” at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado. The address marked Obama’s first run for presidency which he subsequently won. The speech contained 4652 words altogether. With the help of AntConc (Anthony, 2020), 267 first-person pronouns were identified in the address, 113 (42%) of which were 1PS and 154 (58%) 1PP pronouns.

6.6.4. The 1PS pronouns in Obama's speech

Obama’s speech contained 113 1PS pronouns (81 subjective, 12 objective, and 20 possessive pronouns). Two broader categories were established first, namely whether the politician spoke from a professional (1PS_{Professional}) or a private (1PS_{Private}) perspective.

6.6.4.1. Obama as private person

Obama spoke in a personal manner in 22% of 1PS references in the sense that the context of his utterances showed him as a private person. He took three main roles in these pronominal references: husband (example 57), father (example 58), and (grand)son (example 59).

- (57) “To the love of *my* life, our next First Lady, Michelle Obama, and to Sasha and Malia – *I* love you so much, and *I*’m so proud of all of you.” (Obama, 2008)
- (58) “And now is the time to keep the promise of equal pay for an equal day’s work, because I want *my* daughters to have exactly the same opportunities as your sons.” (Obama, 2008)
- (59) “She [Obama’s grandmother] poured everything she had into *me*.” (Obama, 2008)

Therefore, personal 1PS pronouns directed the attention to the nominee’s family, rather than other personal relationships or interests.

6.6.4.2. Obama as professional

The second group of 1PS pronouns were the ones which exhibit Obama as a politician and not a private person. 1PS_{Professional} utterances took up the majority, 78% of Obama’s first-person pronominal references. Naturally, as a first-time nominee Obama could not account for his

previous achievements as president. Consequently, the pronominal structures of his 2008 DNC speech were future-oriented: in laying out his plans for his prospective administration 30% of subjective 1PS statements contained *I will* or *I'll* in example (60).

(60) “*I will* cut taxes – cut taxes – for 95% of all working families.” (Obama, 2008)

Furthermore, he also talked about his ideas as “*my* plan” and “*my* call,” which correspond to the personal role he wished to undertake on the basis of these utterances.

A closer relationship between the candidate and the people was also initiated in the speech by means of directly addressing the audience. In 23% of his 1PS_{Professional} statements, Obama sought to establish a connection with his viewers in example (61).

(61) “So don’t tell *me* that Democrats won’t defend this country.” (Obama, 2008)

This imitation of an interaction between speaker and audience further reinforces a more familiar and essentially more personal connection.

6.6.5. 1PP pronouns in Obama’s speech

Altogether 154 1PP references (72 subjective, 22 objective, 58 genitive, 2 reflexive) were found in Obama’s speech. Three main levels of pronominal reference can be separated: the private level (1PP_{Family}), the group level (1PP_{Parties}, 1PP_{Democrats}, 1PP_{Administration}, 1PP_{Convention}) and the national level (1PP_{Nation}). There was a single reference to the whole of humanity (example 62):

(62) “And for the sake of our economy, our security, and the future of *our* planet, I will set a clear goal as President: in ten years, we will finally end our dependence on oil from the Middle East.” (Obama, 2008)

Additionally, Obama also referred to his work as Senator in Illinois¹²⁶ on one occasion (example 63).

(63) “I’ve seen it in Illinois, when *we* provided health care to more children and moved more families from welfare to work” (Obama, 2008)

Due to the lack of tokens, 1PP_{Humanity} and 1PP_{Illinois} are not discussed further.

¹²⁶ Obama was Illinois State Senator between 2005 and 2008.

6.6.5.1. The private level in Obama's 2008 DNC speech

The first level which was observed was the private one. The private level in the case of Obama's DNC address included two examples (1% of 1PP references). One of them was in reference to him and his sister (example 64).

- (64) "I think about my mom, who raised my sister and me on her own, [...] who once turned to food stamps but was still able to send *us* to the best schools in the country..." (Obama, 2008)

In the other instance, the nominee talked about his wife and himself (example 65).

- (65) "Michelle and I are only here tonight because *we* were given a chance at an education." (Obama, 2008)

The private aspect of personalization was more dominant in 1PS utterances (9% of 1PS pronouns) as compared to 1PP pronouns (0.7% of 1PP pronouns). Moreover, it appears that when using pronominal language related to the private sphere, Obama talked about his family, rather than other relations.

6.6.5.2. The group level in Obama's 2008 DNC speech

19% of 1PP pronouns were categorized as belonging to the group level. The group level in Obama's DNC address refers to political groups, namely 1PP_{Democrats} (8%), 1PP_{Administration} (5%), 1PP_{Parties} (4%), and 1PP_{Convention} (2%). Firstly, we find two types of party-reference in the address: on the one hand, Obama identified with his own political affiliation, the Democratic Party. Party references are illustrated by example (66).

- (66) "You see, *we* Democrats have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country." (Obama, 2008)

The DNC speech also highlighted a common "sense" and "purpose" of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party: Obama pointed to times when members of the two leading parties in the USA needed to work conjointly as seen in example (67).

- (67) "Democrats as well as Republicans will need to cast off the worn-out ideas and politics of the past. [...] What has also been lost is *our* sense of common purpose – *our* sense of higher purpose. And that's what *we* have to restore." (Obama, 2008)

This statement reinforces that party divides belong to the "past" and the shared ideas need to be brought forward. Emphasizing the shared objectives is further continued in the address, as seen in example (68).

- (68) “*We* may not agree on abortion, but surely *we* can agree on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country.” (Obama, 2008)

Thus, even though the text does bear references to political parties, diminishing the divide between them also appeared.

The speech also exhibits 1PP pronouns designating the prospective Obama administration, namely 1PP_{Administration}. When detailing his future policies, the candidate noted the following in example (69).

- (69) “*we* will keep *our* promise to every young American – if you commit to serving your community or your country, *we* will make sure you can afford a college education.” (Obama, 2008)

Clearly, as a first-time nominee, Obama could not speak about the achievements of his administration yet; therefore, the future ideas were described, and promises were made in these utterances.

Each reference which explicitly addressed the audience who were at the convention was marked as 1PP_{Convention}, as in example (70).

- (70) “And *we* are here because we love this country too much to let the next four years look like the last eight” (Obama, 2008).

From the perspective of personalization, it is of interest to compare Obama’s future oriented “I will,” “I’ll” and “my X” (specifically “my call” and “my plan”) statements relative to all the pronouns in his 2008 speech (n=268). The results show that relative to all pronominal language use, Obama used 1PS statements in 10% of the cases when he referred to his promises and future ideas, whereas only 3% of pronominal language pointed to his future administration. The predominance of 1PS regarding prospective measures further points to a person-centered political agenda.

6.6.5.3. The national level in Obama’s 2008 DNC speech

Finally, the national level includes pronouns which refer to the United States of America. The majority of 1PP references in Obama’s speech (80%) pointed to the United States, as in example (71).

- (71) “This country of *ours* has more wealth than any nation, but that’s not what makes *us* rich.” (Obama, 2008).

From the perspective of political personalization, the fact that the majority of Obama's 1PP references express a national group identification underpins the idea that it is no longer the members of the political party who the nominee wishes to address only. Rather, by utilizing 1PP_{Nation}, the former president wished to identify with the nation and speak as their voice (since 1PP pronouns assume group identification and the speaker's role as a spokesperson, see Section 4.2.2.). Thus, the lower number of party identification as compared to national references (see section 6.3.2. and section 6.3.3.) further reinforces the pattern of political personalization: namely, it is the nation that is highlighted in convention speeches rather than political parties.

In sum, numerous aspects of Obama's 2008 DNC speech point toward the personalization of political communication. Firstly, the analysis revealed that Obama appealed to the nation of the USA, rather than to members of the Democratic Party. Additionally, he put an emphasis on the "common purpose" of Democrats and Republicans, further downplaying the role of party identification and ideology. The data also reveals the personalized nature of the address by means of the ratio of references to a prospective administration and to the actions the nominee would carry out individually. The results showed that (as compared to all first-person pronouns), Obama referred to his future actions on more occasions in comparison with plans carried out together with his administration. Finally, 1PS and 1PP references to Obama's private self were relatively few (9.7% of all first-person pronouns). These belonged to the category of 1PP/1PS_{Family} and no further private aspect of the president's life was referred to pronominally.

6.6.6. Ronald Reagan's 1984 presidential nomination acceptance speech

Ronald Reagan ran for his reelection as President of the United States in 1984. He addressed the Republican National Convention in Dallas Texas on 23 August 1984, and he was subsequently reelected. His speech contained 5060 words. Using AntConc (Anthony, 2020), 237 first-person pronouns were identified in his remarks, 33 (14%) of which was 1PS pronouns and 204 (86%) were 1PP pronouns.

6.6.7. The 1PS pronouns in Reagan's speech

Similarly to Obama's speech, first I discuss the 1PS pronouns. Altogether 33 (24 subjective, 5 objective, and 4 genitive) 1PS pronouns were identified which were categorized as 1PS_{Professional} when the President spoke from a professional, and 1PS_{Private} when he addressed viewers from a personal perspective.

6.6.7.1. Reagan as private person

Reagan made his remarks from a personal angle in 21% of 1PS pronouns. In his speech, the President talked about his past using 1PS pronouns on the one hand in example (72).

- (72) “None of the four wars in *my* lifetime came about because we were too strong.”
(Reagan, 1984)

On the other hand, Reagan explicitly noted that he would speak as a private person in the following segment of his speech (example 73).

- (73) “Could *I* share a personal thought with you tonight, because tonight’s kind of special to *me*.” (Reagan, 1984)

As opposed to Obama’s 1PS_{Private} pronoun use, Reagan did not mention his family, but restricted his remarks to his own personal experiences.

6.6.7.2. Reagan as professional

The 1PS_{Professional} pronouns were used in 79% of 1PS pronominal references in Reagan’s address. As the incumbent president at the time, he talked from this perspective in a presidential capacity in example (74).

- (74) “Little Leah Kline was asked by her teacher to describe *my* duties. She said: ‘The President goes to meetings.’” (Reagan, 1984)

24% of Reagan’s 1PS references discussed what he achieved by the time of the 1984 RNC, (example 75) and 6% of his 1PS pronouns were related to the future (example 76).

- (75) “*I* have addressed parliaments, have spoken to parliaments in Europe and Asia during these last 3 1/2 years...” (Reagan, 1984)

- (76) “*I* will campaign on behalf of the principles of our party which lift America confidently into the future.” (Reagan, 1984)

This tendency is in contrast with Obama’s use of pronouns (section 6.6.4.2.) who was a first-time nominee at the time of his address. Whereas Obama was more outspoken about his subsequent plans, Reagan did not rely on the 1PS to talk about his intentions for his second term. Naturally, individual differences must be taken into account when contrasting the two candidates. Nevertheless, personal aspects and the political context possibly influenced the distinct tendencies in the two texts.

6.6.8. 1PP pronouns in Reagan's speech

Reagan's 1984 address contained 204 1PP pronouns (100 subjective, 23 objective, 81 genitive) altogether. As in the case of section 6.6.5., three main levels of 1PP references were examined here as well. The private level (1PP_{Family}), the group level (1PP_{Parties}, 1PP_{Republicans}, 1PP_{Administration}) and the national level (1PP_{Nation}).

In the sections that follow (section 6.6.8.1., 6.6.8.2., and 6.6.8.3.) a more detailed account is given of the pronominal references which can be listed in the broader levels, i.e., private, group, and national.

6.6.8.1. The private level in Reagan's 1984 RNC speech

The results in section indicate that in terms of the 1PP subjective pronoun *we*, no reference was made to candidates' family prior to 1984. In the case of Reagan's 1984 remarks (involving all the pronoun usage analyzed in this chapter) merely 1% of pronominal references point to him and his wife (example 77).

- (77) "Nancy and I will be forever grateful for the honor you've done us, for the opportunity to serve, and for your friendship and trust." (Reagan, 1984)

However, even in this case, the utterance in which 1PP_{Family} appears is related to presidential duties, namely the way Ronald and Nancy Reagan served their country, rather than their personal life. Thus, as compared to Obama's speech in which he appeared as a husband and (grand)child, Reagan only takes the role of a husband, but a more professional capacity is assumed. This is in line with the data-driven results in section 6.3.1., which reveal that family life (as part of political personalization) appeared more dominantly after the elections in the 1980s.

6.6.8.2. The group level in Reagan's 1984 RNC speech

Of all 1PP references in Reagan's speech, 55% designated the group level including 1PP_{Republicans} (34%), 1PP_{Administration} (14%), 1PP_{Convention} (1.5%), and 1PP_{Parties} (0.5%). Reference to the Reagan administration (1PP_{Administration}) is seen in example (78).

- (78) "In the first 2 years of *our* administration, that annual increase fell to 5.3 percent." (Reagan, 1984)

The pronoun use can be attributed to the fact that (as noted above) Reagan ran for his second term as president, thus he had the possibility to highlight the achievements his government

made. The ratio of party references ($1PP_{\text{Republicans}}$; 34%) is relatively high compared to the party identification in Obama's 2008 speech (10%) which may point to the increase in political personalization (with the proviso that the ratio can also be attributed to individual politicians' willingness to refer to their own party). Republicans were mentioned in utterances such as in example (79).

- (79) "I will campaign on behalf of the principles of *our* party which lift America confidently into the future." (Reagan, 1984)

Mention needs to be made of two categories which occurred in a relatively low number. Reagan (similarly to Obama, see section 6.6.5.2.) made one reference to the two parties (the Democratic Party and the Republican Party) in example (80).

- (80) "The distinction between *our* two parties and the different philosophy of our political opponents are at the heart of this campaign and America's future." (Reagan, 1984)

Finally, Reagan referred to the RNC ($1PP_{\text{Convention}}$) directly in his speech as showed in example (81).

- (81) "And now you really know why *we*'re here tonight." (Reagan, 1984)

In example (81), place (*here*) and time (*tonight*) deictic references reveal that the nominee pointed to the audience who was present at the RNC with the help of person deixis.

6.6.8.3. The national level in Reagan's 1984 RNC speech

The national level ($1PP_{\text{Nation}}$) appeared in 44% of all 1PP references in Reagan's speech.¹²⁷ In this instance as well, it needs to be noted that the differences may stem from the nominees' different persona. However, (in light of Obama's remarks) the comparatively low number of $1PP_{\text{Nation}}$ references in Reagan's speech and the relatively high number of party references ($1PP_{\text{Republicans}}$) verify the idea of political personalization being in motion over the years.

Additionally, a single reference (0.5% of all 1PP pronouns) was made to the United States of America and the Soviet Union which still existed at the time of Reagan's speech. Thus, $1PP_{\text{USA+Soviet Union}}$ was detected in example (82).

- (82) "For the sake of our children and the safety of this Earth, we ask the Soviets—who have walked out of *our* negotiations—to join us in reducing and, yes, ridding the Earth of this awful threat." (Reagan, 1984)

¹²⁷ $1PP_{\text{Nation}}$ can be detected in 38% of all first-person references in Reagan's 1984 speech. This ratio is considerably lower as compared to Obama's references to the nation (80% of all 1PP references; section 6.6.5.3.).

In sum, Reagan's 1984 RNC address contained references to his private persona (as a husband); however, this was made in a professional capacity to the end that he talked about the duties he and Nancy Reagan undertook in the course of his presidency, for example. Identifying with political groups (more specifically, with his administration and the Republican Party) both appeared in the remarks. On the one hand, as the incumbent president at the time, he spoke about the achievements of his administration and on the other hand, he made references to his party. Finally, the United States was also pronominally referred to in the speech; however, these usage events were less in ratio as compared to Obama's speech in section 6.6.5.3.

6.6.9. Two case studies of political personalization: summary

To conclude this section, two case studies were presented in order to provide a detailed insight into the qualitative assessment of political personalization in presidential nomination acceptance speeches. On the basis of the ratio of the popular vote, two nominees' speeches were selected who ran between 1980 and 2020 and who were subsequently elected presidents: the Democratic Barack Obama's DNC speech in 2008 and the Republican Ronald Reagan's RNC speeches in 1984. Although no broad generalizations can be drawn from the examination of two addresses, the fact that they are from two different periods and parties provides a ground for comparison. Furthermore, there is a contrast between the texts as Obama's address marks his first nomination as Democratic presidential candidate, while Reagan gave his speech when he ran for reelection.

Generally, 1PS pronouns were more dominant in Obama's speech, as they amounted to 42% of all first-person pronoun use. In comparison, only 14% of all pronominal language use was 1PS in the case of Reagan. It cannot be declared that the difference can only be attributed to political personalization. Nevertheless, the results correspond to the hypothesis that personalization – a process which increases over time – puts the candidates themselves in the center. The increasing number of 1PS references correspond to the idea that the attention from political collectives shifts to individual politicians. In terms of the 1PS pronouns, the use of 1PS_{Private} reflects the trend of political personalization if Obama's and Reagan's speeches are compared. Figure 17 summarizes the use of the 1PS pronouns in the politicians' speeches.

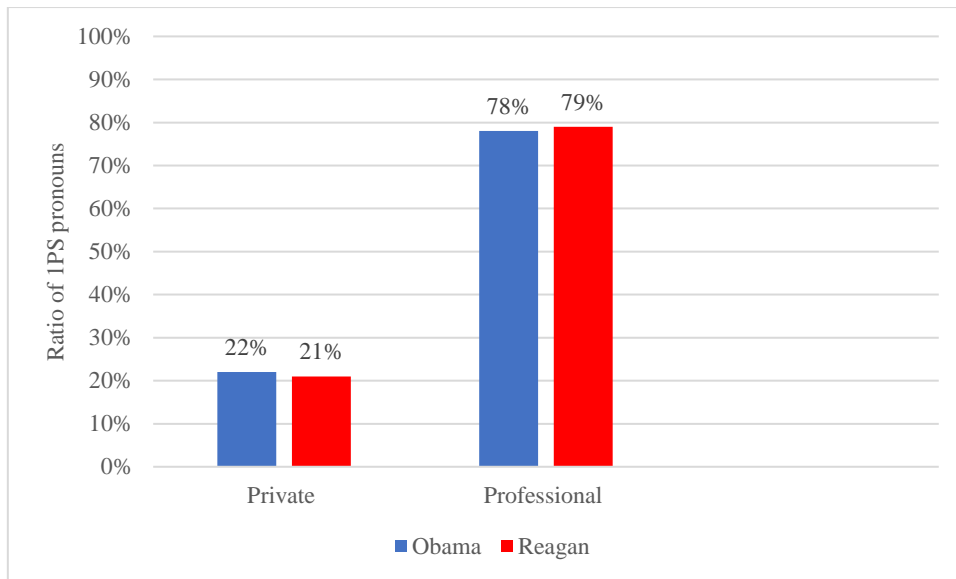


Figure 17. 1PS pronouns in Obama’s and Reagan’s presidential nomination acceptance speech.

As shown by Figure 17, there is no substantial difference with regards to ratio of $1PS_{Private}$ and $1PS_{Professional}$ pronouns in Obama’s and Reagan’s speeches. However, as the qualitative analysis showed, President Obama spoke about family issues and history using the 1PS, while President Reagan told stories about himself.

The analysis also included 1PP references in the addresses, the results of which is summarized in Figure 18.

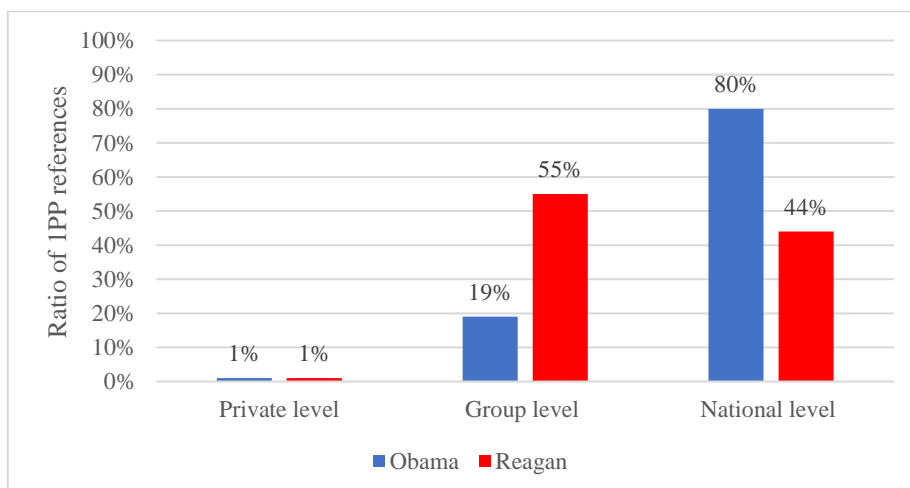


Figure 18. 1PP pronouns in Obama’s and Reagan’s presidential nomination acceptance speech.

The private level of 1PP references, namely 1PP_{Family} also point towards a more intimate and personalized way of political communication. Although there is no difference in terms of the percentage of the private level in the two speeches, the qualitative analysis highlights the contrast between the two candidates. In this regard, Obama referred to his family by professing his love, (see example 57), Reagan resorted to a more professional capacity even when mentioning his wife (see example 77). Party references identified in the corpus also exhibit the tendencies of political personalization. Namely, regarding all first-person references and 1PP pronouns, Reagan referred to his party on more occasions as compared to Obama. This is also in line with political personalization, which means a decreasing role of political parties. Naturally, more references to the administration were made by Reagan, who was an incumbent president at the time of his RNC remarks, as compared to Obama, a first-time presidential candidate in 2008. In turn, the nation (1PP_{Nation}) was mentioned on more occasions by Obama than Reagan, signaling that the former attempted to address a wider range of voters and not just his own political party, which is further in line with political personalization.

In summary, the results of the case studies show that qualitative analyses can provide a more complete picture of *how* political personalization happens and account for the subtleties of personalization which are easily overlooked in a data-driven approach. This is supported by the private 1PS and 1PP references in Obama's and Reagan's speeches: while there is no significant difference in terms of the ratio of references which were categorized as private in the two addresses, variation can still be detected. Whereas Obama used the private sense of the 1PS and 1PP to talk about his family, Reagan rather mentioned himself or his wife and himself but in a professional capacity. Although no broad conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the case studies presented here, the results support the ones presented in section 6.1. – section 6.4., as there are more elements of personalization in Obama's 2008 nomination acceptance speech as compared to Reagan's 1984 remarks.

6.7. Contextual factors

This research focuses on the *linguistic* manifestation of political personalization, and therefore, does not seek to find verifiable contextual explanations with regards to external factors which possibly influenced pronominal language use. However, certain elements can be taken into consideration for future research which are briefly outlined here. These external circumstances relate to the personality of the candidate, the candidate's relationship with the political party,

and the historical events around the time of the speeches. Finally, it should also be noted that language use can be a part of candidates' campaign strategy.

Firstly, it needs to be remembered that the corpus comprises speeches from individuals with their own personal rhetorical styles (cf. Maitland & Wilson, 1987) and a differing degree of willingness to share their private lives (see section 2.4.2.2. and 2.4.3.1.). The various levels of the politicization of the private in British politics was addressed by Langer (2007, 2010), who noted that Tony Blair, Britain's prime minister between 1997 and 2007, had an extremely personalized leadership. Blair's political personalization included appearances in talk shows, interviews with nonpolitical magazines, and political advertisements filled with details of his personal life (Langer, 2010, p. 63). In comparison, Clement Attlee, the United Kingdom's prime minister between 1945 and 1951 was generally considered as a "shy" leader and his media visibility was connected to the post-war era (Langer, 2007, p. 376). With reference to presidential elections in the United States, Mitt Romney, who ran in 2012, was generally seen as "uncaring" and "unsympathetic" to middle-class American issues (Perloff, 2014, p. 242). Therefore, he needed to change his perception and make his image more "soft," which he tried to achieve with his on-stage performance, for example by congratulating his opponent, Barack Obama, on the occasion of his wedding anniversary (Perloff, 2014, p. 242). Additionally, Mitt Romney's wife also contributed to making him look warmer, as she narrated a campaign video on his website in which they shared excerpts of private videos displaying Romney playing with their children (Perloff, 2014, p. 245). This image of the "family man" also appeared in Romney's use of personal pronouns, as he was one of the two candidates who used *we_{Family}* in the highest ratio in the corpus data (the other candidate was George Bush in 1988). Thus, Romney needed to share his own private life in order to appear more appealing to the voters.

Therefore, candidates' personality (i.e., whether they are willing to share intimate details of their lives) and the image they want to show has possible relevance to the degree of certain aspects of personalization (such as the use of *we_{Family}*).

Additionally, politicians' individual agenda may also influence their pronominal usage (just as in the case of Romney above). This also surfaced in Joe Biden's presidential campaign in 2020. Biden framed his campaign and his subsequent election in a way that he was willing to be every American's president, regardless of party sympathy. This is manifested in the message which can be read on his personal website: "I pledge to be a President who seeks not to divide, but to unify. Who doesn't see Red and Blue states, but a United States. And who will work with all

my heart to win the confidence of the whole people.”¹²⁸ The aim to unite “the People” also appeared in Biden’s use of personal pronouns, as his 2020 address was among the candidates with the most normalized *we_{Nation}* references (18, just as in the case of Barack Obama’s 2012 speech). Therefore, Biden’s explicit campaign goal of uniting the nation was reflected in his use of personal pronouns.

Secondly, individual candidates were not equally connected to their political party and did not always have the same position within the party. This is exemplified by Ronald Reagan’s role within the Republican Party. Reagan was widely supported by the Republican Party at the time of his first term in presidency in 1980 – he was even said to be the “embodiment” of the party (Wattenberg, 2015, p. 77). His popularity could be grasped in actual political achievements. For example, his campaign promises (such as tax cuts) were supported by the whole Republican Party; consequently, he fulfilled all his campaign promises in the first year of his presidency (Wattenberg, 2015). As demonstrated by Szabó’s (2021) results, within the 1960–2020 period Reagan was the candidate with the most party references in his 1PP use in his 1984 speech, which may be connected to Reagan’s position as the leader of the Republicans at the time. On the other hand, following his 1976 win of the presidential seat, Jimmy Carter frequently voiced that he did not make any promises to Democratic politicians in the course of his campaign; accordingly, Carter’s legislative work was not successful in many cases (Wattenberg, 2015). The loose relationship between Carter and the Democratic Party appeared in Carter’s use of personal pronouns referring to him and his party, which was relatively low as compared to the contemporary trend (Szabó, 2021).

Finally, the historical context in which the speeches were delivered may also be indicative as to the increase or decrease of pronominal categories. For example, the data in Figure 13 shows a relatively low number of *we_{Party}* references in 1940 and 1944, while a relatively high number of *we_{Nation}* references can be detected in the same years in Figure 14. The possible reason for these numbers may be that the elections in question fell at the time of World War II (1939–1945), in which the United States was involved. At the time of a war of such magnitude, it may be more beneficial to focus on national unity (with the help of *we_{Nation}*), rather than partisanship (with *we_{Party}*).

¹²⁸ <https://joebiden.com/presidency-for-all-americans/> Accessed 10 February 2022

In summary, to reach a more detailed image with regards of the motivation behind pronominal use in political speeches, a more detailed account of candidates' personality, their relationship with the party, their campaign goals, and the historical background also need to be explored. Nevertheless, this is beyond the scope of this study and these aspects are not further pursued.

6.8. *Revisiting the Ages of political communication*

Section 2.1. discussed the different ages of political communication determined by Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) and Blumler (2001, 2016). In the view of Blumler and Kavanagh (1999), it is possible to draw boundaries between the different phases of political communication (in the Anglo-American context) on the basis of changes in society and the media (for a detailed discussion see section 2.1.). Age 1, the period of strong party systems is the first two decades following World War II, which is roughly between the 1944 and 1960 presidential elections in the observed corpus. Age 2, when party loyalty started to loosen can be dated between the 1960 presidential elections and approximately the 2000 elections, since Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) reported that Age 3 was emerging at the time of the publication of their categorization of the ages: in 1999. Age 3 was marked by the ubiquity of the media, especially television channels, which meant a new challenge to politicians: they needed to rely on communication professionals, there was an increased competition, and the audience of the growing number of television channels was more diverse, among others (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Finally, Blumler (2016) mediated on the coming of Age 4, dominated by the internet and even more diverse channels of political communication. Although he did not determine an exact starting point, the year of 2008 is an acceptable candidate, as that was the first time when more than half the voting-age population connected to the political process in the course of an election cycle via the internet (Smith, 2009).

However, the results of this research indicate that a turning point in American presidential campaign communication occurred in 1984, which invites a rethinking of the ages. Thus, it is possible that instead of Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) original division of the ages (Age 1 1944–1960; Age 2 1960–2000; Age 3 2000 – 2008; Age 4 2008 –), new boundaries could be set on the basis of the deeper analysis of political communication. On the basis of the changes in candidates' communication after 1984 (the introduction of *weFamily* and the decline of *weParty*), an alternative is that Age 3 started earlier: following the 1984 elections.

Naturally, it must not be overlooked that Blumler and Kavanagh's (1999) original model was heavily based on social changes and the development of the media. However, a better understanding of the "output" of political communication – for example political speeches – may slightly modify the boundaries.

In closing, this chapter began by describing the results of the analysis of 1PS and 1PP references in the corpus in terms of party affiliation (section 6.1.) and yearly aggregated data (section 6.2.). This was followed by a discussion of the results in light of the radial model of first-person pronouns in political speeches (section 6.3. and 6.4.). Section 6.5. identified the prototypical contexts, in which 1PP pronouns functioned. Two case studies were appeared in section 6.6., which revealed the qualitative details of nominees' addresses. Section 6.7. outlined some of the external factors which may influence pronominal language use. Finally, section 6.8. proposed the rethinking of the ages of political communication.

7. Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the personalization of politics via person deixis. In particular, it observed whether a change in the use of the 1PS and 1PP pronouns reflected an increasing tendency towards personalization in Democratic and Republican presidential nomination acceptance speeches in the United States between 1932 and 2020. The rationale behind selecting pronominal language use as the heart of the linguistic discussion of political personalization was that by way of the image-schematic interpretation of personal pronouns, it was possible to determine radial categories positioned in a relative distance from the deictic center (namely, the speaker). The application of the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS/SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE image schematic metaphors enable us to view distinct pronominal references as “closer” or “farther” to the speaker’s self. Hence, a pronominal reference to the speaker’s family (“we, the family”) is relatively close to the speaker, as compared to a reference to the whole of humanity (“we, the whole of humanity”), for example. This approach was operationalized as an analysis of 1PS *I* references and a detailed account on the different meanings of the 1PP *we*. It was pointed out that the 1PP is open to numerous interpretations which can be – and are often – exploited by politicians. Therefore, four main categories of the 1PP *we* were distinguished: *we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, *we*_{Nation}, and *we*_{Humanity}. The corpus-based analysis of these categories was complemented with two case studies, which showed that differences can occur in candidates’ addresses regarding the realization of these categories, calling for more fine-tuned analyses for a more detailed picture of political personalization.

Firstly, differences with regards to the trends of pronoun use between Democratic and Republican candidates were detected. Considering all subjective 1PS and 1PP usage events in the speeches, 1PP references grew more dynamically in the case of Democratic speeches. In the case of Republicans, the growth of 1PS references was more dominant as compared to the 1PP. Nevertheless, both observed pronouns exhibited a general growing tendency. No general conclusions can be reached on the basis of these results; however, they point to distinct communicative strategies which may be addressed in more detail in future research.

Overall, the results reflected that personalization can indeed be detected in the usage of personal pronouns. However, change towards personalized politics was not present from 1932 in each category of pronouns. Accordingly, a general growth in 1PS references showed that candidates gradually referred to themselves more as individuals in the speeches, reinforcing their agency in the political process. However, these references did not increasingly outnumber

the 1PP *we*: group identification was still an important and expanding feature of candidates' rhetorical strategies. With regards to the different categories established within *we*, the results were in line with the expectations: the use *we_{Family}* and *we_{Nation}* increased, whereas *we_{Party}* decreased over time. However, *we_{Family}* only appeared in the course of the 1984 elections. The occurrence of *we_{Party}* references also did not conform the initial expectation of an exponentially growing trend. In fact, the number of *we_{Party}* mentions grew until the beginning of the 1980s and started to decline after the 1984 elections. Finally, *we_{Nation}* references exhibited a growing tendency from 1932. As a consequence, we can see how party identification faded over time, as references to the nation became more prominent. Moreover, the private sphere also became a factor to consider (see Figure 16).

The case study of Barack Obamas 2008 DNC and Ronald Reagan's 1984 RNC addresses revealed that in order to gain a more complete image of the way personalization occurs in political communication, more detailed comparisons are necessary. Apart from the number of occurrences, the types of pronominal references also differed in the case of the two politicians depending on factors such as family- or profession-focused personal references or whether they ran for the presidency for the first time (as in the case of Obama) or they were incumbents at the time of the speech (as in the case of Reagan).

In summary, the results do reflect a tendency towards political personalization in the United States in terms of the use of subjective first-person personal pronouns; however, certain trends in this connection did not appear until 1984.

7.1. The linguistic study of personalization

What can a linguistic account provide for the advancement of personalization research? As noted in the Introduction, the aim of this research was to provide a linguistic tool for the study of political personalization. This tool was realized as the analysis of the subjective case of the 1PS and 1PP pronouns (*I* and *we*) which was connected to the definition of personalization (the highlight of the individual at the expense of political collectives and, in parallel, the intimization of politics) with the help of the INTIMACY IS CLOSENESS/SOCIAL DISTANCE IS SPATIAL DISTANCE image schematic metaphors. Overall, the results reflected trends which are on a par with the personalization hypothesis (namely, political communication is increasingly personalized). The benefit of this analysis for the study of personalization is that it can provide an insight into both aspects of the process. While the increase in 1PS and *we_{Nation}* references on the one hand, and the decrease in *we_{Party}* references on the other hand point towards the rise of

the individual politician above the political collective, the growing number of *we*_{Family} references accounts for the inclusion of the politician's private life in political communication in the case of national campaigns. Additionally, the methodology (chapter 5) is flexible in the sense that it can be adjusted to other types of speeches (for example, the State of the Union in the United States) and to different languages as well, conforming to the pronominal system of the language.

7.2. *Limitations and recommendations for further research*

Needless to say, this work also faces limitations, with reference to the size of the corpus, for example. Furthermore, there are numerous directions towards which further research can be pursued, including the possible consideration of additional, linguistic, geographical, and political contexts, novel platforms of political communication (e.g., social media) and novel variables regarding individual politicians, such as their ideological background or sex. These possible directions are summarized in this section.

7.2.1. *Linguistic extension*

From the perspective of language, there are three main paths which can be followed for a deeper understanding of the language of political personalization. First, more cases of pronouns and more types of pronouns could be observed. Second, a wider range of languages could be studied. Finally, apart from the “ceremonial” language use of speeches, new channels should be explored. For example, social networking provided numerous novel platforms where politicians appear; the wide range of applications require different linguistic (and non-linguistic) strategies depending on the platform (for example, the image-based Instagram versus the text-based Twitter).

- a. The corpus-based analysis in this study was restricted to the subjective case: the quantitative measurement, interpretation and application of further cases (objective and possessive) would provide a deeper insight into personalization. Moreover, only first-person pronouns were studied. Additional research could also investigate how the “other” is designated with the help of personal pronouns, since the existence of a “we” presupposes that there is a group of people who are outside of this circle. The construction of the “we group” and the “they group” can be explored by means of analyzing third-person plural references in political speeches.

- b. Research based on Hungarian lyrical poetry shows that apart from pronouns, more complex structures are used to mark the person in texts (e.g., verbal constructions; Horváth et al., 2021). These results could be adopted to other languages and other fields of language use, such as political communication.
- c. Political personalization should also be observed in languages other than English with the means of personal pronouns. Given the fact that independent personal pronouns can be found in effectively all languages (Siewierska, 2013), the exploration and comparison of personalization is possible with the necessary adjustment of the research design to the pronominal systems of languages (for example Slovenian has a dual personal pronoun).
- d. As for the platform of political communication, apart from speeches and media appearances (cf. Holtz-Bacha et al., 2014; Karvonen, 2010; Langer, 2007, 2010), a deeper understanding of personalized language use on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter would provide access to the “everyday” communication of politicians and extend beyond official and ceremonial events (cf. Farkas & Bene, 2020; Jost & Sterling, 2021; Metz et al., 2020).
- e. Cognitive linguistic research has addressed the notion of genre (Busse, 2014; Simon, 2017; Steen, 1999; Tátrai, 2017a). Under this approach, genres can be interpreted as discursive categories and schemas (Tátrai, 2017a, p. 293; cf. Steen, 1999). A specific genre has members with different degrees of prototypicality as discursive categories, while they can also be considered as schemas with less detailed expectations with regards to their characteristics (Tátrai, 2017a). Genres are based on convention and in parallel, they are flexible: they need to be interpreted within a specific context and are subjects to change over time (Simon, 2017, Tátrai, 2017a; cf. Busse, 2014). From the perspective of political speeches, features of personalization can be interpreted as characteristics of the genre and accordingly, could be extended to sub-genres other than presidential nomination acceptance speeches.

7.2.2. Contextual extension

Apart from linguistic considerations, the exploration of a further range of contexts is also a possible direction in the future. Firstly, the research addressed presidential campaign speeches exclusively, however, other genres of speeches (the SOTU address and presidential

inauguration speeches, for example) would possibly yield different results. Contextual extension also includes the personal, political, and the geographical contexts, which should be further explored in the future.

- a. The results are only indicative of one genre of political speeches, namely campaign speeches. However, there are other significant speeches in the United States, such as presidential inauguration speeches, or the SOTU address, the study of which may give a further insight into the pronominal system in the speeches of American presidents. As noted in section 6.3., *we*_{Humanity} did not occur in the observed presidential campaign speeches, possibly because it addressed the nation. However, the inclusion of more international-oriented speeches, e.g., ones which are given at the United Nations may yield different results and an extended typology of pronominal use in political speeches.
- b. In terms of the personal context, it could be explored whether there is a correlation between the sex of politicians and personalization and pronoun use, as research shows that there are differences with regards to the language use of males and females in politics (Cameron & Shaw, 2016; Shaw, 2020). Furthermore, female politicians are routinely evaluated according to different standards than their male colleagues (Van Zoonen, 1998). A more extended research could highlight whether female or male politicians have a greater tendency towards personalizing politics and which categories (*we*_{Family}, *we*_{Party}, and *we*_{Nation}, for example) are affected.
- c. Focusing on the political context with regards to individual politicians, future research could also investigate whether the ideological background of politicians (for example, whether they are conservatives or progressives) has any significant effect on their pronominal use. In this connection, Jost and Sterling's (2021) research concerning American politicians' use of 1PS and 1PP pronouns on Twitter, Facebook and in Congress suggested that liberals were more likely to use *we* on Facebook and in Congress, while conservatives were more likely to use *I* on Twitter.
- d. In connection with the wider political scene, future inquiries should consider local politics (cf. McAllister, 2015b; Papp, 2013; Papp & Zorigt, 2016) and should expand to countries and political systems which have not been explored by studies about personalization yet. More specifically, the personalization of politics could also be

investigated in geographical areas apart from North America and Western Europe, which have been in the scrutiny of virtually all pieces of research so far.

- e. Finally, personalization (including individualization and intimization) can not only be interpreted in the context of political communication. Other possible areas of research are marketing, business communication, and crisis communication whereby it is of importance whether the individual is highlighted or whether a single person speaks on behalf of a group (a company, for example).

In conclusion, this research aimed to provide a linguistic means of investigating the personalization of politics. The study highlighted that political personalization can be grasped through the study of person deixis, more specifically, first-person singular and plural pronouns. At the same time, it provided a linguistic framework, which – with language-specific adjustments – is widely applicable for further linguistic inquiries into the personalization of politics.

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