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The Political Speeches of Kamala Harris: a Linguistic Analysis

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*Ai miei genitori Luisa e Pietro,
fonte di ispirazione di vita e di fierezza*

Table of contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>1 The language of political speeches</i>	3
1.1 Persuasion and rhetorical devices	3
1.2 Structure and register	4
1.2.1 Authority	5
1.2.2 Contrast	5
1.2.3 Three-part lists and parallelism	5
1.2.4 Presupposition.....	6
1.2.5 Metaphor and intertextuality	7
1.2.6 Problem-solution.....	7
1.3 Pronoun use.....	8
1.4 Vocabulary use.....	10
1.5 Denotation and connotation.....	11
1.6 Hooray words and boo words.....	12
<i>2 Kamala Harris: some background and methodology</i>	13
2.1 Childhood	13
2.2 School education	13
2.3 Harris' achievements.....	14
2.4 Kamala Harris' touchstones and guideposts.....	17
2.5 Methodology.....	19
2.5.1 The corpus	19
2.5.2 Quantitative analysis	19
2.5.3 Qualitative analysis.....	20
<i>3 Analysis of Kamala Harris' speeches</i>	23
3.1 Quantitative analysis	23
3.2 Qualitative analysis.....	28
3.2.1 Structure and register analysis.....	29
3.2.1.1 Authority	30

3.2.1.2	Contrast.....	31
3.2.1.3	Three-part list.....	31
3.2.1.4	Presupposition	32
3.2.1.5	Metaphor.....	33
3.2.1.6	Problem-solution	33
3.2.2	Pronoun use.....	34
3.2.2.1	Reference to self: “I” and “we”.....	35
3.2.2.2	Reference to others: “you”	37
3.2.3	Appraisal Theory.....	38
3.2.3.1	Affect	38
3.2.3.2	Judgement.....	40
3.2.3.3	Appreciation	40
3.3	Results.....	42
	<i>Conclusions</i>	45
	<i>References</i>	47
	<i>Riassunto in Italiano</i>	53
	<i>Appendix</i>	57
	The contributions of immigrants to society.....	57
	Vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech	61
	The status of women	67

Introduction

Words have the ability to empower and to deceive, the power to soothe and to hurt. They can spread important ideas and wrongheaded ones. They can spur people to action, for good or ill. Words are incredibly powerful, and people in power, whose words can carry furthest and fastest, have an obligation, a duty, to speak them with precision and wisdom (Harris 2019)

The words above were uttered by US Vice-President Kamala Harris. They provide an excellent example of the relationship between language, power and politics (Partington and Taylor 2018). This dissertation focuses on the political speeches of Kamala Harris by means of a linguistic analysis. The primary aim is to consider in what way discursive practice underpins, reflects or is appropriated in terms of Harris' political progress and achievements within politics. The chapters will adopt a set of theoretical approaches all bound in terms of their contribution to understanding the role of language in the construction of her political speeches (Wilson and Boxer 2015). My interest arose initially from the "symbolic" representation of women in politics, that is the increasing numerical representation of women within formal politics and in particular their increasing visibility as holders of senior political offices such as Prime Minister, President, and Cabinet Minister (Wilson and Boxer 2015).

I will be mainly concerned with language as a principal means of achieving and exercising power in politics (Partington and Taylor 2018), with a focus on the political speeches of Kamala Harris. The principal use of language in politics is for persuasion. As Schaffner (1996: 1) points out, language is vital to the process of transforming political will into social action: "in fact, any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language". Politics is not just conducted through language, but much of politics is language: "politics partly consists in the disputes which occur in language and over language" (Fairclough 1989: 23).

With this introduction, I offer the reader information about the research motivations and goals. I also provide outlines for individual chapters, pointing to the key focus of each.

What features of political discourse can be found in the speeches of Kamala Harris? How do these features relate to the ideas that Kamala Harris tries to convey to her audience? Chapter 1 presents the features of a political speech. It begins with a brief discussion of language and politics. It illustrates the political speech genre, rhetorical devices, vocabulary use and pronoun use, accompanied by examples that help to understand their features. Chapter 2 provides an overview of Kamala Harris' political life. Here, I seek not only to exemplify a variety of causes that motivate Harris to be "for the people", but also to illustrate a wide range of reasons why she became US Vice-President. In the same chapter I present the methodology in which I describe in detail how I collected the data to answer my research questions. Furthermore, Chapter 3 describes the actual analysis. By analyzing three speeches given by Kamala Harris, I identify and explore features of political speeches that she uses in order to persuade her audience.

1 The language of political speeches

In this chapter I will begin to discuss the effects that language can have in relation to power, representations and control. I consider the connection between language and politics. To further understand it, I will be defining language and politics and I will explore linguistic features that are deployed in order to persuade audiences (Mooney & Evans 2019). I will touch on aspects of structure and register, vocabulary use, rhetorical devices and pronoun use. These aspects will help us see how we can be persuaded to accept particular points of views (Mooney & Evans 2019). Language is vital to the process of transforming political will into social action, “in fact, any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language” (Schaffner 1994:1). It is possible to define politics narrowly as the working of institutions of governance (Partington and Taylor 2018). However, in this chapter, politics is considered a little more broadly. I consider how language is used to persuade people in a variety of political speeches (Mooney & Evans 2019). It is possible to define the language of politics narrowly as the language used by institutions of governance to conduct their business, to communicate with other institutions and with the rest of society, or, more largely, as all the discourses produced by groups within a society which relate to issues of the management of power of social governance (Mooney & Evans 2019).

1.1 Persuasion and rhetorical devices

In this section I will look, first of all, at the many ways in which politicians use language as the tool of their trade. The topics I will look at include: persuasion and rhetoric (Partington and Taylor 2018). The principal use of language in politics is for persuasion. In fact, the art of persuasion was born with the first democracy in ancient Greek (Partington and Taylor 2018). The Greeks developed what they termed the art of rhetoric, which is none other than the skill of persuasion. According to Aristotle (2012), there are three basic appeals of rhetoric. The first, *ethos*, is the attempt to establish the credentials to justify why you should be listened to. The second basic appeal is *logo*, the attempt to present a plausible argument in a logical or at least apparently logical way. Finally, the third is *pathos*, the attempt to appeal to the audience’s emotions. Political persuasion relies on all three tactics (Partington and Taylor 2018). Authors on rhetoric have categorized the many and varied methods of persuasion in different ways. One frequently

cited general level of division is between “persuasion by appeal to reason” and “persuasion by appeal to the emotions” (Partington and Taylor 2018). Partington (2006) has shown that politicians have two separate kinds of face, namely *competence* face and *affective* face. Competence face is one’s image as well informed, an expert, in control and authoritative. Affective face is one’s image as likeable, good humored, normal. Another distinction similar to that between persuasion by appeal to reason and by appeal to emotion is between *ideational* or conceptual persuasion, in which a speaker projects primarily their competence face and *interpersonal* persuasion in which the speaker projects primarily their affective face (Partington and Taylor 2018). In *ideational* persuasion, as Partington and Taylor (2018) write, a politician attempts primarily to persuade an audience with veracity, logic or usefulness and effectiveness of their actions. For example, as in the following: “In every presidential election for the last 56 years, in the United States, more women have voted than men. More women than ever before serve in the United States Congress. More Women than ever before are their family’s breadwinner. And just last week, the President nominated two women to take the helm of two of our 11 combatant commands” (Harris 2021).

According to Partington (2018), in *interpersonal* persuasion a politician attempts to convince others that he or she is honest, interesting and worthy of attention, respect, friendship or some other desired interpersonal service or product; or alternatively, the projection of affective face also often takes form of expressing positively evaluated shared values such as compassion, patriotism and faith: “ It's about you. It's about us. People of all ages and colors and creeds who are, yes, taking to the streets, and also persuading our family members, rallying our friends, organizing our neighbors, and getting out the vote. I'm inspired by a new generation of leadership. You are pushing us to realize the ideals of our nation, pushing us to live the values we share: decency and fairness, justice and love. You are the patriots who remind us that to love our country is to fight for the ideals of our country” (Harris 2020).

1.2 Structure and register

In order to better understand the distinction between ideational and interpersonal persuasion, in this part I will examine the structure and use of six major models of persuasion in political speeches (Partington and Taylor 2018 & Mooney and Evans 2019).

- 1) The appeal of authority
- 2) Contrast
- 3) Three-part lists
- 4) Presupposition
- 5) Metaphor and intertextuality
- 6) Problem-solution

1.2.1 Authority

In persuasion by authority, the ‘persuader’, that is, the person responsible for the persuasive message, appeals to some sort of higher authority to convey and strengthen their message (Partington and Taylor 2018). The authority chosen will also depend on the context; for example, in 2020 the U.S. Vice-President Kamala Harris included this in a political speech: “And these women inspired us to pick up the torch, and fight on. Women like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McCleod Bethune. Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash. Constance Baker Motley and Shirley Chisholm” (Harris 2020). The choice of the appeal to those women as a persuasive authority to support her argument was no doubt influenced by the fact that she was speaking about the 19th Amendment, which guarantees American women the right to vote.

1.2.2 Contrast

In its simplest terms, a contrast involves comparing two things. The persuader invites us to compare and contrast an argument with one or more others. This model is used since there is usually the assumption or implication that one is better than others (Mooney and Evans 2019). The following was a slogan used in the 2016 election campaign on the U.S.: “When they go low, we go high” (Michelle Obama/ Hilary Clinton 2016). The contrast is between ‘they’ and ‘we’. By highlighting the difference between, in this case, Democrats and Republicans, the speaker sets up a clear contrast.

1.2.3 Three-part lists and parallelism

This triple structure is very common in political speeches: the tricolon employs parallelism. As the name implies, it consists of three parallel items. The simplest kind of three-part list is the repetition of three words or phrases (Partington and Taylor 2018). The following is an example of the use of the structure by the U.S. Vice-President Harris,

in which she attempts to persuade her audience in trusting the new U.S. President: “Joe will bring us together to build an economy that doesn't leave anyone behind. Where a good-paying job is the floor, not the ceiling. Joe will bring us together to end this pandemic and make sure that we are prepared for the next one. Joe will bring us together to squarely face and dismantle racial injustice, furthering the work of generations” (Harris, 2020). Sometimes one finds longer parallel structures, a kind of elegant variation on the tricolon, for example: “By fiat, we have seen the President stick taxpayers [...]. By fiat, we've seen a president mandate the detention of immigrants, [...]. By fiat, the President has ordered the creation of what essentially will be a 15,000-member deportation force. By fiat, he wants to take away state and local authority, by making local police officers act as federal immigration officials. By fiat, the president wants to slam the gates of freedom by instituting a Muslim ban [...]” (Harris 2017).

1.2.4 Presupposition

The use of presupposition is useful to consider. This feature consists in “presume” that something exists and that it has “outcomes”. For example, the U.S. Vice-President, Kamala Harris (2021) delivered a speech to the Commission on the Status of Women and she reported: “The status of democracy also depends fundamentally on the empowerment of women. Not only because the exclusion of women in decision-making is a marker of a flawed democracy, but because the participation of women strengthens democracy”. Notice in the example that it is true that a flawed democracy with outcomes exists. One result of the strategy of presupposition, and one of the reasons they can be so effective in political discourse, is that when information is treated as given, we tend not to pay much attention to it (Mooney and Evans 2019). New information in a text can be presented as though it is given information. New information is something that has not been mentioned in the text before. In the case of nouns, this means they usually take the indefinite article (Mooney and Evans 2019). Therefore, the semantic presupposition is information embedded in the sentence that is taken for granted in the composition and meaning of the text.

1.2.5 Metaphor and intertextuality

The following dictionary definition of metaphor highlight the “non-literalness” of metaphor:

A figure of speech in which a name or quality is attributed to something to which it is not literally applicable, e.g. an *icy glance* or *nerves of steel* (Yerkes 1989).

They are, first of all, a pretense, a kind of play on words. It is common to use metaphors when there is a gap in the language. The creation of new metaphors is also common when complex political news are being communicated to the public (Mooney and Evans 2019). For example, Barack Obama (2013) echoed statements by the State Department when he addressed the military action in Syria and said: “Let me make something clear: The United States military doesn’t do pinpricks”. In this metaphor, he issued a direct warning to the country about what the United States military would not do: “give them a slap on the wrist and walk away” (Mooney and Evans 2019). Metaphors create and assert an equivalence between two things. Because they assert and create an equivalence, metaphors do not need verbs; a noun phrase can express the metaphor all by itself (Mooney and Evans 2019). Very frequently metaphors involve “understanding and experiencing” something abstract in terms of something more concrete. Metaphor is a basic part of the way we both see the world and explain it to others (Partington and Taylor 2018). The power of metaphor is that the grounds are implicit, not stated openly. This has two consequences. First, different people can interpret the same metaphor in different ways. Second, it makes the supposed resemblance more difficult to challenge or deny (Mooney and Evans 2019).

1.2.6 Problem-solution

In the problem-solution method of persuasion, the persuader first proposes and outlines a supposed problem and suggests that he or she has the solution to the problem (Partington & Taylor 20189). First, you need to clearly state the attitude, value, belief, or action you want your audience to accept. The purpose of this statement is to clearly tell your audience what the problem is. Second, you want to make sure that you clearly explain to your audience why they should accept the attitude, value, belief, or action you proposed. Just telling your audience they should do something isn’t strong enough to actually get them

to change. Instead, you really need to provide a solid argument for why they should accept your proposed solution. Third, you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem. Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience. In its form, as found in the following example, the problem is explicit and the solution is clearly given: “Donald Trump's failure of leadership has cost lives and livelihoods. And while this virus touches us all, let's be honest, it is not an equal opportunity offender. Black, Latino and Indigenous people are suffering and dying disproportionately. This is not a coincidence. It is the effect of structural racism. Of inequities in education and technology, health care and housing, job security and transportation. The injustice in reproductive and maternal health care. In the excessive use of force by police. And in our broader criminal justice system. The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone. And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more. We must elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want. We must elect Joe Biden. I knew Joe as Vice President. I knew Joe on the campaign trail. But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend. Joe's son, Beau, and I served as Attorneys General of our states, Delaware and California. During the Great Recession, we spoke on the phone nearly every day, working together to win back billions of dollars for homeowners from the big banks that foreclosed on people's homes” (Harris 2017).

1.3 Pronoun use

This paragraph addresses two closely related functions of personal pronouns. First, I will study the ways in which personal pronoun meanings change given particular contexts. This function makes personal pronouns a perfect tool for political rhetoric. Secondly, I will study how ideology influences politicians’ application of personal pronouns (Proctor and Su 2011). I will then explore the most commonly analyzed pronouns in political speeches and I will move on to their word class.

Pronouns are very important when it comes to political discourse. We address others on a daily basis. In doing so, we reveal a great deal of information about ourselves (e.g., formality, status, solidarity, power, class, and sex). People continually make pronominal

choices in their conversations. These choices also provide information about the interlocutors. Nevertheless, the meaning of personal pronoun choice can only be derived from its context and the usage of pronouns can thus be easily manipulated (Proctor and Su 2011). The context, and the way personal pronouns are utilized, creates decisive turning points for any politician (Billig 1995). Given that the meaning of the personal pronoun is closely bound to its context, the usage of pronouns can thus be easily manipulated. Experimental research has shown that the manipulation of personal pronouns influences the way we interpret our relationships with others (see for example Fitzsimons and Kay 2004).

Personal pronouns are also used to show the speaker's solidarity with a particular ideology, and secondarily (if necessary) to show the speaker's difference with another group (Tabakowska 2002). In their research on political interviews, Bull and Fetzer (2008) emphasize that:

politicians use personal pronouns to good effect: for example, to accept, deny, or distance themselves from responsibility for politician action; to encourage solidarity; to designate and identify both supporters and enemies. Their choice of pronouns may also reflect their own personal and political ideologies.

The most commonly analyzed pronouns in persuasive speeches, such as political ones, are the plural pronouns in the first person ('we') and the second person ('you' plural) respectively (Mooney and Evans 2019). In English, 'we' does not specify who 'we' are in that it may include the audience (inclusive we) or exclude the audience (exclusive we). 'You' is also useful, because in English, 'you' does not distinguish between the singular and plural second person. Both pronouns allow the author to use pronouns strategically (Mooney and Evans 2019). For example, the pronoun 'we' can convey empathy because of its structural property of encoding the meaning: [Speaker-addressee] (De Fina 1995). Similarly, the pronoun 'you' can convey a meaning of deresponsabilization of the speaker because of its structural ability to encode indefinite reference.

Furthermore, in linguistics, pronouns belong to a closed word class and are conceived of as representatives of determinate meaning; their domains of reference are seen as a noun or a noun phrase to which they express reference in an anaphoric or cataphoric manner

(Fetzer and Bull 2008). “The pronouns do not carry their own concept meaning, they get their meaning from the nouns, in whose stead they are used. This makes it easy to hide behind the pronouns and to use ‘we’ as a central political force of influence” (Fetzer and Bull 2008: 271-289).

In light of the above, we cannot ascertain a personal pronoun’s meaning within a single sentence; the meaning of a pronoun is established above the syntactical level. It becomes important to know the topic and venue of the conversation because both variables influence personal pronoun choice. The pronominal choice in part reveals with whom a politician is identifying himself/herself. Many crucial decisions are made based on this information (Proctor and Su 2011).

1.4 Vocabulary use

In the following, I will explore some examples of how word choices can both reflect ideology and have persuasive effects (Partington and Taylor 2018). Language which expresses the opinion, attitude and point of view of a speaker or a writer is called evaluative language. Evaluation is intended, in simple terms, as “the indication of whether the speaker thinks that something is good or bad” (Partington and Taylor 2018). Evaluation is clearly the very basis of persuasion in politics. The persuader uses evaluative language to try to convince his or her audience that their own opinions are good, the alternative ones are not good and that their proposals are worthy and logical (Partington and Taylor 2018). Probably the most obvious signs of evaluation are contained in the lexis, that is, the words and phrases a speaker or writer uses. As Falinski (2011) mentions: “we divide all the words in the language into two types: grammar words, which include determiners (e.g. the, a, one, some), linkers (e.g. and, because, since) and prepositions (e.g. in, at, from, by, across); and content words, which include nouns, verbs, adjective and adverbs”. Thanks to the Appraisal framework, I find that an enormous variety of the latter type, content words, have evaluation as part, often most, of their meaning (Partington and Taylor 2018). As a matter of fact, there are many ways of saying the ‘same’ thing and political speakers and writers can, indeed must in practice, choose one among these many potential ways. The choice of vocabulary that a political speaker and writer makes can tell us a great deal about how they evaluate the topic in question,

and so a great deal about their opinions and/ or intentions (Partington and Taylor 2018). The Appraisal theory elaborated by James Martin of the Linguistics Department AT University of Sydney in the 1900s (1996, 1997) provides the analytical tools for investigating how writers or speakers express emotions, judgments and evaluations (The Appraisal Website 2020). Appraisal theory divides evaluative resources into three sub-systems: *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation*. *Affect* is “the resource deployed for constructing emotional responses”, for example happiness, sadness, fear” (Martin 2000:145). *Judgment* sub-system, which has to do with ethics, are assessments of human behavior, typically making reference to rules or conventions of behavior. Finally, *Appreciation* is concerned with the evaluation of products and processes, natural phenomena and manufactured objects, rather than human behavior. *Appreciation* has a positive and a negative dimension, corresponding to positive and negative evaluations of objects or entities.

1.5 Denotation and connotation

To better understand the way politicians choose their words it is important to highlight the difference between denotation and connotation: the denotation of an item is the definition we might find in a dictionary; the connotations of an item are the associations it has for us, especially the evaluative ones (Partington and Taylor 2018). In addition, as Chandler (1995) states: “Beyond its literal meaning, a particular word may have connotations. In semiotics, denotation and connotation are terms describing the relationship between the signifier and its signified, and an analytic distinction made between two types of signifieds: a denotive signified and a connotative signified. Meaning includes both denotation and connotation”. Partington and Taylor (2018) compare, for instance, the following set of descriptions applied to old items for sale: *used*, *second-hand*, *pre-loved*, *vintage*, *antique*. In addition, they applied the same example to a politician: *stubborn*, *firm*, *decisive*, *resolute* (Partington and Taylor 2018). In both cases, the basic meaning of the words, that is, their denotational meaning, is roughly the same, but they differ radically in the evaluation or the connotational meaning they express (Partington and Taylor 2018). A seller is unlikely to label their items as *used*, but *vintage* is often used in shop names because these are definitely more favorable and complimentary (Partington and Taylor 2018).

1.6 Hooray words and boo words

Closely related to the question of good or bad evaluative connotation is the question of the difference between the labels a political party chooses to describe itself and those used by another political party to describe it (Partington and Taylor 2018). The use of a word or expression or a certain type of language tells us as much about the politician speaking as about the topic of the discourse itself (Partington and Taylor 2018). The New Zealand philosopher Jamie Whyte coined the term ‘hooray’ word for a term which has a socially positive connotation and almost automatically arouses a sense of approval in an audience, and the term ‘boo’ word for one which, instead, has a negative connotation and automatically arouses a sense of disapproval in the hearer (Partington and Taylor 2018). ‘Hooray’ words in English-language politics are too many to list but include items such as: *communities, nation, people, freedom, actions, dreams, immigration country, government, family, patriotism, children, health, values, society, generations, opportunity* (Partington and Taylor 2018). It is hard to imagine any politician and party declaring themselves to be against any of the above. When a politician is against one of these, she or he will choose a different term to describe it. For instance, if a politician is critical of, say, certain *values* brought about by multiracial couples, they might talk positively instead about a new *opportunity* for the country (Partington and Taylor 2018). Furthermore, politics is centrally concerned with making people feel a certain way, rather than actually telling them anything specific; as a result, understanding and effectively using “hooray” word and avoiding “boo” words is a crucial part of political speeches (Kerr 2010). When ‘hooray’ words are used, everyone in an audience can be expected to be in favor, at least until further investigation into what the politician might actually mean (Partington and Taylor 2018).

2 Kamala Harris: some background and methodology

In the previous chapter I explained the effects that language has in persuasive discourses such as the political ones. The aim of this chapter is to give some background of the Vice-President Kamala Harris in order to better understand how language can lead to such a high position. I will explore the path that led Kamala Harris from San Francisco to Sacramento to Washington, DC. Further, it will focus on her childhood, school education, her mainstays and political achievements accomplished with the help of her team.

2.1 Childhood

Kamala Harris was born in Oakland, California, in 1964 and spent the formative years of her childhood living on the boundary between Oakland and Berkeley. Her father, Donald Harris, was born in Jamaica in 1983 (Harris 2019). He was a brilliant student who immigrated to the United States after being admitted to the University of California at Berkeley. Kamala Harris' mother was born in southern India. Shyamala Gopalan was a gifted student with a passion for science (Harris 2019). She graduated from the University of Delhi at nineteen, she left home for Berkeley in 1958 to pursue a doctorate in nutrition and endocrinology and become a breast cancer researcher. Kamala Harris (2019) said, "My mother was the one most responsible for shaping us into the women my sister and I would become. She pushed hard and with high expectations. She made us feel special, like we could do anything we wanted [...] and that being a good person meant standing for something larger than yourself; that success is measured in part by what you help others achieve and accomplish" (Harris 2019).

2.2 School education

Harris became a student at Howard University, an institution with an extraordinary legacy that endured when the doors of higher education were largely closed to black students and when few recognized the potential and capacity of young black women to be leaders. During her freshman year, she ran for her first elected office: freshman class representative of the Liberal Arts Student Council (The Guardian 2021). She chaired the economics society and competed on the debate team. After Howard, she enrolled at UC Hastings College of the Law in Oakland. She was elected president of the Black Law Students Association (The Bar association of San Francisco 2020). She finished law

school in the spring of 1989 and took the bar exam in July. She had failed. She passed on her second attempt.

2.3 Harris' achievements

The reason America has public offices of prosecution is that a crime against any of American citizens is considered a crime against all of them. That's why prosecutors don't represent the victim; they represent "the people", which became her compass (Harris 2019).

In 1998, after nine years in the Alameda County District Attorney's office, she was recruited across the bay to the San Francisco District Attorney's Office (Harris 2019). She was hired to run the career criminal unit, which focused on violent and serial offenders. After eighteen months, the San Francisco city attorney, Louise Renne, the first woman to hold that office, called her with a job offer: there was an opening to lead the division in her office that handled child and family services (Harris 2019). She started by confounding a task force to study the issues of sexually exploited youth. Renne and Harris put together a group of experts, creating a program designed to rescue women from prostitution.

Kamala Harris (2019) turned her sight to elected office because she wanted to empower the DA's office as a whole. She headquartered her campaign right in the heart of Bayview. It was a community disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system and also plagued by unsolved crimes. But it was places like Bayview that had inspired her to run in the first place. She was running for the chance to represent people whose voices weren't being heard (Harris 2019).

At the beginning of her career as district attorney she visited the county jail where there were young men because of addiction and desperation and poverty: they had become drops in the sea of those swept up in a wave of mass incarceration (Harris 2019). She wanted to tear that down, so she brought a small group of trusted advisers together and she develop a program called: Back on Track (Harris 2019). It would include job training, GED (General Educational Development) courses, community service, parenting and financial literacy classes, as well as drug testing and therapy. Harris promised that if

participants completed the program successfully, she would have their charges expunged. It was about transformation (Harris 2019). It represents smart, effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars, too: the program cost about \$5,000 per participant (Bja 2009). For comparison, it costs \$10,000 to prosecute a felony case and another \$40,000 dollars or more to house someone for a year in the county jail (Harris 2019). Today, reentry programs like Back on Track are part of the mainstream conversation. The Obama Justice Department adopted Back on Track as a model program (Harris 2019).

One of the key issues Harris focused on during her first year in the Senate was the country's bail system, the process by which you can be released from jail while you await trial (Harris 2019). The median bail in The United States is \$10,000. But in American households with an income of \$45,000, the median saving account is \$2,530 (The New York Times 2015). The disparity is so high that at any given time, roughly none out of the people who are detained can't afford to pay to get out (Harris 2019). The criminal justice system punishes people for their poverty (Harris 2019). In 2017, Harris introduced a bill in the Senate to encourage states to replace their bail system, moving away from arbitrarily assigning cash bail and toward systems where a person's actual risk of danger or flight is evaluated (OnTheIssues 2019).

In the wake of 9/11, central banks around the world slashed their interest rates. The economy went into freefall. By 2009, homes in the Fresno area, Harris' city, had lost more than half their value, the largest decline in the nation (Harris 2019). At the same time, people living in Fresno were losing their jobs in droves, by November 2010, the unemployment rate had soared to 17 percent (Harris 2019). Roughly 5 million homeowners were at least two months behind on their mortgage. And 2.5 million foreclosures had been initiated (The Week 2011). Harris learned that to speed up the foreclosure process, financial institutions and their mortgage servicers hired people with no formal financial training, from supermarket floor workers to hair stylists, and placed them in "foreclosure expert" positions with one responsibility: sign off on foreclosures by the thousands (Huffpost 2011). In 2009, as DA, Kamala Harris created a mortgage fraud unit to fill in the areas of chronic under-enforcement by the federal government (Harris 2019). On Election Night 2010 she won the race for attorney general (Harris 2019) and on her first day in office, she gathered her senior team and told them that she needed

to get involved right away in the multistate investigation into the banks (Harris 2019). Her first opportunity to get personally involved in the multistate talks arrived in early March. The National Association of Attorneys General was holding its annual multi day meeting at the Fairmont hotel, in Washington, DC. California was going to get somewhere between \$2 billion and \$4 billion in the settlement (Harris 2019). She was convinced that the banks' illegal scheme had caused a lot more than \$2 billion and \$4 billion in damage (Harris 2019). So, she hired some experts such as economists and data scientists. In May, she announced the California Attorney General's Mortgage Fraud Strike Force (Rob Bonta 2011). When all was said and done, instead of the \$ 2 billion to \$ 4 billion that was originally on the table, she secured an \$ 18 billion deal, which ultimately grew to \$20 billion in relief to homeowners (Harris 2019). The settlement was just the beginning. In addition to money, she wanted individual homeowners to have the right to sue when banks broke the rules. She put this idea together into what she named the California Homeowner Bill of Rights. The bill passed the state senate and was signed into law by the governor (Rob Bonta 2013).

A few months after the fight for multistate investigation into the banks, Harris was ready to talk about elementary school truancy, and to initiate a discussion about solutions and she wanted to make that topic a top priority for her office (Harris 2019). She wanted to identify key moments in a child's life when her office could make a difference. When she studied her data, she learned that more than 80 percent of prisoners were high school dropouts (Harris 2019). Harris and her team's effort were designed to connect parents to resources that could help them get their kids back into school. They were trying to support parents and not punish them and in the vast majority of cases, they succeeded. Her office joined with the city and the school district, and they developed a truancy initiative (Harris 2019). By 2009, they had reduced truancy among San Francisco's elementary school children by 23 percent (SFGATE 2009).

Kamala Harris years before had seen the newly elected U.S. senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein (Jewish Women's archive 1992). They were the first female senators from California, and the first two women to represent any state at the same time. Twenty-two years later Boxer wouldn't be running for re-election. Harris started thinking that she should run to replace her, becoming a U.S. senator would be a natural extension of the

work she was already doing. She announced her candidacy on January 13, 2015 (Harris 2019). She was sworn in on January 3, 2017 by Vice President Joe Biden and she was pointed to four based on her expertise and background: Intelligence, Homeland Security, Budget, and Environment and Public Works (Harris 2019). The first place she spoke officially as senator-elect was the headquarters of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) (Harris 2019). CHIRLA is one of Los Angeles's oldest immigrant rights advocacy organizations.

Work itself was something to value, hard work especially. Kamala Harris wanted to value all work, not just her own. The cost-of-living crisis is especially hard on women. Women are still paid, on average, eighty cents on the dollar compared with men, a gap that is even more punishing for black American women, who are paid only sixty-three cents for every dollar earned by white men (The Atlantic 2020). She has introduced the LIFT, the Middle-Class Tax Act in the U.S. Senate, a bill that creates a major new middle-class tax credit that would provide eligible families up to \$ 6,000 a year, the equivalent of \$ 500 a month (crfb 2019).

2.4 Kamala Harris' touchstones and guideposts

Kamala Harris is not only for the minority and for the people, she is not only working. She is a person who loved her mother, a person with family values and a woman with her personal life (Harris 2019). Things moved very quickly for Harris once she became a new senator and she started feeling the pressure to split her life as woman, career woman, wife and stepmother. At the same point of her career she had to face her mother's death. She has been diagnosed with colon cancer (Harris 2019). Kamala Harris had many lessons in her life she has absorbed along the way, fundamental wisdom from her mother, encouragement and guidance from family members, friends, and trusted mentors, and the powerful examples she has witnessed, both good and bad, that have shaped the understanding of what it takes to lead effectively, what it takes to achieve one's objectives, and what she own to one another in the process (Harris 2019). These lessons have been informed by her own life experience and leavened by their application over the course of her career. Her team and Harris (2019) rely on mantras as touchstones and guideposts that say a lot about her personal philosophy and style. Let me share two of them with you:

1) NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE

Struggles against racism and sexism, against discrimination based on religion, national origin, and sexual orientation are unique. Each deserves its own attention and effort. These struggles have in common the pursuit of freedom, of basic human dignity (Harris 2019). Victories by one group can lead to victories for others. None of them should have to fight alone. Harris (2019) said “It is my job to stand up for those who are not at the table where life-altering decisions are made [...] my duty is to improve the human condition, for everyone who needs it [...] my challenge to you is to join the effort. To stand up for our ideals and our values. Let’s not throw up our hands when it’s time to roll up our sleeves. Not now. Not tomorrow. Not ever”. Kamala Harris’ daily challenge to herself is to be part of the solution, to be a joyful warrior in the battle to come (Harris 2019).

2) WORDS MATTER

Harris (2019) explains “words have the ability to empower and to deceive, the power to soothe and to hurt. They can spread important ideas and wrongheaded ones. They can spur people to action, for good or ill. Words are incredibly powerful, and people in power, whose words can carry furthest and fastest, have an obligation, a duty, to speak them with precision and wisdom” (Harris 2019). She is keenly aware of the potential power that lives in her words, as someone who represents nearly forty million people, who seeks to give voice to the voiceless. And so, when she speaks, she does so with the knowledge that the words she chooses matter (Harris 2019). First, what they call things, and how she defines them, shapes how people think about them. Too often, words are used to degrade our impressions of issues, or of one another. Words matter. Second, she chooses to speak the truth. Even when it’s uncomfortable. Even when it leaves people feeling uneasy (Harris 2019). When you speak the truth, people won’t always walk away feeling good, and sometimes you won’t feel so great about the reaction you receive. But at least all parties will walk away knowing it was an honest conversation (Harris 2019).

2.5 Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between language and politics. For the study, I use a method that combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative content analysis and political discourse analysis (Wilson and Boxer 2015). This analysis choice is a useful means not only to explore the rhetorical organization of a political speech, but also to identify “how a politician uses his/her language in order to persuade”. To do so, I compare three political speeches of Kamala Harris according to what pronoun use she makes, what rhetorical devices and form of appraisal she chooses and how frequently she evaluates people and things.

2.5.1 The corpus

The three speeches which make up the corpus were delivered between 2017 and 2021. They are only a very small selection of the hundreds of speeches of Kamala Harris. The first speech is California’s New Senator, Kamala Harris’ maiden speech on the Senate floor, addressing the contributions of immigrants to society in 2017. The second is Kamala Harris’ speech delivered in 2020 at the Democratic National Convention as Vice-President nominee. The third is the speech that Kamala Harris delivered to the Commission on the Status of Women in 2021. The reason why I chose these speeches as my corpus is due to the fact that they represent a change for Kamala Harris: every speech was delivered in a moment of professional growth for her, which means that the way she chooses to use language is more and more interesting in performances and competences.

2.5.2 Quantitative analysis

Kamala Harris’ background shows that she has a unique position as a reformer (Wilson and Boxer 2015). Because of her extraordinary childhood, Harris uses metaphor and “hooray words” in order to persuade her audience. In addition, Harris’ strong experience in the field of justice makes the analysis even more interesting. For this reason, I look at her choices by means of the word frequency, keywords and concordances. Thus, I do not analyze Kamala Harris “as a woman” in politics, but “as a person”, who persuades her audience using language and her personal experiences in politics (Wilson and Boxer 2015). Here I draw on a selection of material, comparing three of her political speeches that focus on minority groups such as immigrants, and on women. The speeches examined

are selected from those given by her since she became U.S. Senator. In the first step the whole texts are read; in the second step, the texts are uploaded onto corpus linguistics analysis tools which are AntConc, CoCa – Corpus of Contemporary American English and Skell. Once the texts are uploaded onto the Skell linguistic tool, a list of keywords is created and relevant items are concordanced by feeding the list onto the AntConc linguistic tool. CoCa linguistic tool is used in order to create a frequency lexical words' list as research for my paragraph on vocabulary use in the first chapter.

2.5.3 Qualitative analysis

For my research regarding qualitative content analysis and political discourse analysis I use a particular approach in order to explore, describe and explain the way language persuades the audience during Kamala Harris' speeches. It explores how her attitudes, judgements and emotive responses are explicitly presented in her political texts and how they may be more indirectly implied, presupposed or assumed. As well, it explores how the expression of such attitudes and judgements is, in many instances, carefully managed so as to take into account the ever-present possibility of challenge or contradiction from those who hold differing views (The Appraisal Website 2020).

During my analysis I asked myself the following questions:

- What is the linguistic basis of the differences in Kamala Harris' style by which she may present herself as, for example, "more or less deferential, dominating, authoritative, inexpert, cautious, conciliatory, aloof, engaged, emotional, and so on" (The Appraisal Website 2020).
- how different speeches may employ different evaluative and rhetorical strategies (The Appraisal Website 2020).
- how different the modes of story-telling that she uses can be characterized by their different uses of the resources of evaluation (The Appraisal Website 2020).
- the use of the pronoun in her speeches.

For the analysis of Harris' pronominal system, it was necessary to take into account the method that Proctor and Su (2010) use: analyzing self-identifications that politicians develop through their choice of pronouns. I compared how the 1st person plural pronoun

was used during Harris' speeches. In addition, in order to analyze the structure and register of her speeches I consulted Partington and Taylor's method (2018) and Mooney and Evans' (2019). Finally, part of the analysis is conducted applying the Appraisal Theory elaborated by James Martin of the Linguistics Department AT University of Sydney in the 1900s (1996, 1997). Appraisal Theory provides the analytical tools for investigating how writers or speakers express emotions, judgments and evaluations (The Appraisal Website 2020). I will use this method in order to analyze how Harris expresses emotions through her speeches. In particular, I will consider those utterances which construe *attitude*, that is, which can be interpreted as indicating that some person, thing, situation, action, event or state of affairs is to be viewed either positively or negatively (White 2001).

Appraisal theory divides evaluative resources into three sub-systems: *affect*, *judgment* and *appreciation*. I listen to the speeches and divide them into three parts as the White method suggests (Brombin 2004). The first part is part of the speeches which concern the subsystem of *Affect*. *Affect* is "the resource deployed for constructing emotional responses", for example happiness, sadness, fear" (Martin 2000:145) and so I looked among the texts for values of *affect* which occur as either positive or negative categories, for example love versus hate, please versus irritate (Martin 2000). I then move on the *Judgment* sub-system which has to do with ethics. Judgments are assessments of human behavior, typically making reference to rules or conventions of behavior. I look for the judgments Harris makes and so, how she uses her evaluation of people's morality, truthfulness or veracity. Finally, the third part is *Appreciation*, which is concerned with the evaluation of products and processes, natural phenomena and manufactured objects, rather than human behavior. *Appreciation* has a positive and a negative dimension, corresponding to positive and negative evaluations of objects or entities and so, I try to find them among the three political speeches of Kamala Harris.

3 Analysis of Kamala Harris' speeches

In this chapter I will combine elements of both qualitative and quantitative content analysis and political discourse analysis. The three speeches of Kamala Harris under investigations are: California's New Senator, Kamala Harris' maiden speech on the Senate floor, addressing the contributions of immigrants to society in 2017. The second is Kamala Harris' speech delivered in 2020 at the Democratic National Convention as Vice-President nominee. The third is the speech that Kamala Harris delivered to the Commission on the Status of Women in 2021.

3.1 Quantitative analysis

I will first analyze the three speeches with the so-called *quantitative* approach, that is, providing statistical overviews of large amounts of the speeches in question: number of words, frequent lexical words, concordances and keywords. As shown in Table 1, how long a political speech should be depends on the context, on the topic and on the politician. During the speech "The contributions of immigrants to society" delivered in 2017 on the Senate floor Kamala Harris talks about the great United States of America, a nation built by immigrants, threatened by the incumbent President. The "Vice-Presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech" given in 2020 addresses her audience in order to persuade them to vote for Joe Biden. "The status of women" is a speech delivered on behalf of democracy and women.

Table 1. *Quantitative approach of the three speeches*

Date	Name	Topic	N. of types	N. of tokens
2017	The contributions of immigrants to society	Immigration	545	1364
2020	Vice-Presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech	Nominee speech	721	2035
2021	The status of women	Women	339	704
			1065	4103

As shown in Table 2, the most frequent lexical words, which link all three speeches, are *women, united, immigrants, states, family, president, democracy, Joe, country* and *people*.

Table 2. The most frequent lexical words

Lexical word	Frequency
women	33
united	19
immigrants	18
states	18
family	18
president	17
democracy	15
Joe	15
country	14
people	14

In addition, as shown in table 3, Harris uses the word *women* two time with the word *empowerment* and with *participation*. Furthermore, she tends to bring together men and women in the same sentence a couple of times.

Table 3. Concordances with lexical word *women*

1	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 I know having spent now a few weeks in this chamber, that we have good men and women on both sides of the aisle, men and women who believe deeply in our immigrant cor
2	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#0 s chamber, that we have good men and women on both sides of the aisle, men and women who believe deeply in our immigrant communities and who understand that nationa
3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> doc#1 r, in considering the status of women, especially as it pertains to the participation of women in decision-making, we must also consider the status of democracy. </s><s> At its t
4	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#1 <s> The status of democracy also depends fundamentally on the empowerment of women . </s><s> Not only because the exclusion of women in decision-making is a marker
5	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#1 lecision-making is a marker of a flawed democracy, but because the participation of women strengthens democracy. </s><s> And that's true everywhere. </s><s> Looking arou
6	<input type="checkbox"/> doc#1 </s><s> And we are revitalizing our partnership with UN Women, to help empower women worldwide. </s><s> Here's the truth: When women face obstacles to obtaining quali

In addition, another frequent word is *immigrants* and analysis of the collocates shows how Harris is well aware of how America was made, in fact as shown in table 4, there are words as *children, nation, undocumented, contribution* that pair with the word *immigrants*.

Table 4. Concordances with lexical word immigrants

1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#0 her maiden speech on the Senate floor Thursday, addressing the contributions of immigrants to society. This is a transcript of her remarks. I rise today humble
2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#0 r Maya and myself. And it made us Americans, like millions of children of immigrants before and since. And I know she's looking down on us today. A
3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#0 technologists, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and the largest number of immigrants -- documented and undocumented -- of any state in the nation. I rise bec
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#0 I know what a crime looks like. I will tell you: an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal. But that's what these actions do. They suggest
5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#0 for United States senator from the great state of Arizona who said undocumented immigrants should not be "condemned forever to a twilight status." So yes, we have

Furthermore, I provided table 5 in order to take into consideration another lexical word, which is *family* that is frequently transformed into an anecdote of her personal life, precisely 10 times.

Table 5. Concordances with lexical word family

1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 ised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage. She taught us to put family first -- the family you're born into and the family you choose. Family, is my
2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 to put family first -- the family you're born into and the family you choose. Family, is my husband Doug, who I met on a blind date set up by my best friend.
3	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 is my husband Doug, who I met on a blind date set up by my best friend. Family is our beautiful children, Cole and Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala.
4	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 beautiful children, Cole and Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala. Family is my sister. Family is my best friend, my nieces and my godchildren.
5	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala. Family is my sister. Family is my best friend, my nieces and my godchildren. Family is my uncles, my
6	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 y sister. Family is my best friend, my nieces and my godchildren. Family is my uncles, my aunts -- my chitthis. Family is Mrs. Shelton -- my second
7	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 and my godchildren. Family is my uncles, my aunts -- my chitthis. Family is Mrs. Shelton -- my second mother who lived two doors down and helped raise m
8	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 lton -- my second mother who lived two doors down and helped raise me. Family is my beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha...our Divine 9...and my HBCU brothers and siste
9	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 ad Alpha Kappa Alpha...our Divine 9...and my HBCU brothers and sisters. Family is the friends I turned to when my mother -- the most important person in my life --
10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="radio"/> doc#2 y life -- passed away from cancer. And even as she taught us to keep our family at the center of our world, she also pushed us to see a world beyond ourselves.

I fed the corpus onto the Skell linguistic tool in order to create a list of keywords which are relatively more frequent in the target corpus. I studied the list for interesting items, especially those which seemed to group together into semantic sets (Torsello, Ackerley, Castello 2008). Here, the existence of a single unified response to her personal experience is emphasized: *family*.

Table 6. Keywords

Keywords	
Kamala	Gopalan
Shyamala	gochild
Beau	Breonna
MOMala	Co-equal
Chitthi	hardword

In order to better understand the speeches in question, I provided an analysis of each political speech. First, I study California's New Senator, Kamala Harris' maiden speech on the Senate floor, addressing the contributions of immigrants to society in 2017. As is shown in 7, the most frequent lexical words are *immigrants*, *state*, *action*, *California*,










president, united, states, fiat, country and *people*, which are used to describe the topic of the speech on the part of Kamala Harris, who is herself an immigrant.

Table 7. Frequent lexical words in “The contributions of immigrants to society” speech

	Lemma	Frequency ? ↓
1	immigrant	18 ...
2	state	10 ...
3	action	9 ...
4	california	8 ...
5	president	8 ...
6	united	7 ...
7	states	7 ...
8	fiat	6 ...
9	country	6 ...
10	people	6 ...

As shown in table 8, the concordances I found with the lexical word *immigrant* are *child, undocumented, criminals, refugee* and *poor*. As explained in the first chapter, there are ways of persuasion and the vocabulary use is one of them. Harris chooses her words in order to persuade and empathize with her audience.

Table 8. Concordances of the lexical word immigrants

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 icans, like millions of children of immigrants before and since. </s><s> And I
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 sident mandate the detention of immigrants , both documented and undocum
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 jents, and the largest number of immigrants -- documented and undocumente
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 nty and pain for our refugee and immigrant communities. </s><s> I rise on br
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 I will tell you: an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal. </s><s> But tha
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 immigrants are criminals and treat immigrants like criminals. </s><s> And there'
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 year history as a nation built by immigrants . </s><s> So this brings me to my
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 s of all Americans-rich and poor, immigrant and native, black and white." </s>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 rizona who said undocumented immigrants should not be "condemned forev

Second, I studied Kamala Harris’ speech delivered in 2020 at the Democratic National Convention as Vice-President nominee. As before, word lists were prepared using the Skell linguistic tool and relevant items were concordenced: the most frequent words, as I

reported in table 9, for this political speech are *family*, *Joe*, *woman*, *life*, *country*, *president*, *mother*, *people*, *loss* and *justice*.

Table 9. Frequent lexical words in “Vice-presidential nominee” speech

	Lemma	Frequency? ↓
1	joe	15 ...
2	family	15 ...
3	woman	10 ...
4	life	9 ...
5	country	8 ...
6	president	7 ...
7	mother	7 ...
8	people	7 ...
9	loss	6 ...
10	justice	6 ...

Once again, Kamala Harris uses a word that for her, at this point, we understand, is a “hurray word”: *family*. In addition, as shown in table 10, she uses the word *country* with the possessive pronoun *our* four times out of eight. Politicians, such as Harris, identify themselves with social groups through the distribution of the personal pronoun “we” and the possessive pronoun “our” (Proctor and Su 2010).

Table 10. Concordances of the lexical word *country*

1	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 e from, or who we love. </s><s> A country where we may not agree on every	
2	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 on, dignity and respect. </s><s> A country where we look out for one another,	
3	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 s -- together. </s><s> Today... that country feels distant. </s><s> Donald Trum	
4	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 ə Recovery Act, which brought our country back from The Great Recession. </s><s>	
5	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 in us. </s><s> We believe that our country -- all of us, will stand together for a	
6	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 ı something happening, all across the country . </s><s> It's not about Joe or me.	
7	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 ots who remind us that to love our country is to fight for the ideals of our coun	
8	<input type="checkbox"/>		doc#0 ntry is to fight for the ideals of our country . </s><s> In this election, we have	

Last but not least, I analyzed the speech that Kamala Harris delivered to the Commission on the Status of Women in 2021. Kamala Harris has always been a fighter for human civil

rights especially for women’s rights. Because of the speech’s topic the most frequent lexical word is *women*.

Table 11. *Frequent lexical word in “the status of women” speech.*

	Lemma	Frequency ? ↓
1	woman	21 ...
2	democracy	14 ...
3	united	9 ...
4	states	8 ...
5	status	7 ...
6	year	5 ...
7	commission	4 ...
8	progress	4 ...
9	decision-making	3 ...
10	declaration	3 ...

The second most frequent lexical word is *democracy*, used with words like *defend* and *strengthens* (see table 12).

Table 12. *Concordances of lexical word democracy*

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 ord for the global deterioration of democracy and freedom. </s><s> So, even ε 
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 ritical that we continue to defend democracy . </s><s> To that end, the United 
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 'ticipation of women strengthens democracy . </s><s> And that's true everywt 
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	 doc#0 . and that women strengthen our democracy everyday. </s><s> In every presik 

Words like *democracy*, *defend* and *strengthens* are words that she uses because they have a socially positive connotation and she knows they arouse a sense of approval in the audience (Partington and Taylor 2018).

3.2 Qualitative analysis

I will now proceed with the analysis of the structure, register, pronoun use and appraisal of the three political speeches. Central to this discourse analysis is the focus on “how Kamala Harris persuades her audience through language” (Wilson and Boxer 2015). My qualitative research is used to explore the how and why of Harris’ emotions, behaviors and perceptions.

3.2.1 Structure and register analysis

For this part of the chapter, I worked independently to code and analyze the use of the five major models of persuasion I talked about in my first chapter: the appeal of authority, contrast, three-part lists, presupposition and metaphors (Partington and Taylor 2018). The various texts in the corpus are compared according to what structure and register choices Kamala Harris makes. It is expected that the choices should be influenced by ideational and interpersonal persuasion (Brombin 2004). In Table 2 the speeches are ordered from left to right on the basis of the year in which they were delivered. Table 2 below indicates, for each text, the number of instances of each model of persuasion.

Table 2. Number of models of persuasion

Title of the speech	The contributions of immigrants to society	Vice-Presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech	The Status of Women
Tot. Words	1364	2035	704
Authority	5	4	1
Contrast	3	1	3
Three-part lists	4	7	2
Presupposition	3	9	3
Metaphors	3	5	1
Tot.	18	26	10

Political texts are generally said to be biased and subjective. Furthermore, depending on who makes the speech, and on the topic, they can be emotional, colorful and with value-laden words (Brombin 2004). Kamala Harris must rely on the audience to recognize the significance of her discourse, so she must be explicit in her claims about the topic of her speeches. Therefore, she has added to the significance of the subject by claiming its uniqueness. Consequently, as Partington and Taylor (2018) write: “one expects to find more frequent and more explicit models of persuasion in political speeches”. The data shown in Table 2 seem to validate this hypothesis. The three speeches display a high use of the models of persuasion we saw in chapter 1 from the study of Mooney and Evans (2019 and Partington and Taylor (2018)). Besides evaluating the topic and persuading the

audience, Kamala Harris also aims at sensationalism, hyperbole and exaggerations, which is why they sound subjective and biased. In order to better understand the frequency of the use of these models I set an average: the immigrants' speech displays, generally, the employment of one way of persuasion every 76 words. The nominee's speech uses one model every 78 words and the speech about women uses one way every 70 words.

3.2.1.1 Authority

The high frequency of authority in the first speech can be related to the topic of the speech, which deals with immigrants, society and the Great America made by immigrants. In this speech the target of most authority is history and so, it appeals to a sort of higher authority to convey and strengthen her message: Kamala Harris' family was a family of immigrants and this is why she includes her mother in her political speech more than once. I provide some examples:

For me, it starts with my mother, Shyamala Harris (Harris 2017).

And knowing my mother, she's probably saying, "Kamala, what on earth is going on down there? We have got to stand up for our values! (Harris 2017).

The choice of the appeal to women such as her mother as a persuasive authority is done to support her argument of a nation built by immigrants. Again, as with her Vice-President nominee speech, Kamala Harris talks about her personal experiences in order to emphasize with the audience:

There's another woman, whose name isn't known, whose story isn't shared. Another woman whose shoulders I stand on. And that's my mother— Shyamala Gopalan Harris (Harris 2020)

In addition, she persuades by citing other authorities:

Women like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McCleod Bethune. Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash. Constance Baker Motley and Shirley Chisholm (Harris 2020).

During her speech "the Status of Women" she appeals to Eleanor Roosevelt:

Eleanor Roosevelt, who shaped the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, once said, “Without equality, there can be no democracy (Harris 2021).

3.2.1.2 Contrast

The contrast structure is the least-used of the five ways and this is due to the topic of the three speeches. None of them was a debate or an election speech, consequently, Kamala Harris was not trying to persuade her audience in order to be elected but to raise awareness of minority groups. However, during her speech about immigrants, I notice that a contrast is made, in fact she tries to persuade her audience making a contrast between Republicans and Democrats:

“But that’s what these actions do. They suggest all immigrants are criminals and treat immigrants like criminals” (Harris 2017).

The contrast is in the pronoun “they”. Kamala Harris is trying to set an assumption or implication that the Democrat party, which is hers, is better than the Republican party.

3.2.1.3 Three-part list

Another structure to consider is the three-part list way of persuasion. In fact, it is how Kamala Harris chooses to open her speech about immigrants:

“I rise today humbled to offer my first official speech as the junior United States senator from the great state of California. I rise with a deep sense of reverence for this institution, for its history, and for its unique role as a defender of our nation’s ideals. Above all, I rise today with a sense of gratitude for all those upon whose shoulders we stand” (Harris 2017).

Furthermore, as Kamala Harris did for all of her three political speeches, she wants to emphasize the importance of her family and she decides to use the three-part list way of persuasion in her Vice-President nominee speech:

Family, is my husband Doug, who I met on a blind date set up by my best friend. Family is our beautiful children, Cole and Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala. Family is Mrs. Shelton—my second mother who lived two doors down and helped raise me (Harris 2020).

Another example of three-par list in the same speech:

Joe will bring us together to build an economy that doesn't leave anyone behind. Where a good-paying job is the floor, not the ceiling. Joe will bring us together to end this pandemic and make sure that we are prepared for the next one. Joe will bring us together to squarely face and dismantle racial injustice, furthering the work of generations (Harris 2020)

Most tricolons consist of a set of three phrases, each of which has a singular lexical and syntactic structure but accommodating a degree of variation (Partington and Taylor 2018). This is why each phrase begins with the noun *Joe*, followed by the auxiliary *will* and the verb *bring* along with the pronoun *us* and the adverb *together*.

As concerns her speech about the status of women, due to its topic she emphasizes the word *women*:

In every presidential election for the last 56 years, in the United States, more women have voted than men. More women than ever before serve in the United States Congress. More women than ever before are their family's breadwinner (Harris 2021).

3.2.1.4 Presupposition

The way of persuasion of presupposition is another structure to consider in Harris' speeches. One result of the strategy of presupposition, and one of the reasons they can be so effective in political discourses, is that when information is treated as given, we tend not to pay much attention to it (Mooney and Evans 2019). For example, in her immigrants' speech:

I rise with a deep sense of reverence for this institution, for its history, and for its unique role as a defender of our nation's ideals (Harris 2017).

We can notice the same structure in the following example:

And what also moved me about Joe is the work he did, as he went back and forth. This is the leader who wrote the Violence Against Women Act - and enacted the Assault Weapons Ban. Who, as Vice President, implemented The Recovery Act, which brought our country back from The Great Recession (Harris 2017).

Notice in the examples that for Kamala Harris history with outcomes exists, the same for the Violence Against Women Act and the Assault Weapons Ban.

3.2.1.5 Metaphor

As I said in chapter 1, metaphors create and assert an equivalence in speeches (Mooney and Evans 2019). This is what Kamala Harris decides to do in her speech for the contribution of immigrants to society:

In the early weeks of this administration, we have seen an unprecedented series of executive actions that have hit our immigrant and religious communities like a cold front striking a chilling fear in the hearts of millions of good hardworking people (Harris 2017).

The metaphor in the example is contained in the noun phrase “a cold front”. This idea of “cold front” is a familiar one, a routine metaphor to describe the seriousness of the situation. In addition, Kamala Harris echoed the following example:

It was the senior United States senator from the great state of Arizona who said undocumented immigrants should not be “condemned forever to a twilight status (Harris 2017).

In this metaphor, I see Harris quoting her colleague Kirsten Sinema, who herself used the structure of equivalence. She compared the situation of undocumented immigrants to the twilight zone, which means “left open”.

3.2.1.6 Problem-solution

As I reported in chapter 1 and as Partington and Taylor (2018) write: “In the problem-solution method of persuasion, the persuader first proposes and outlines a supposed problem and suggests that he or she has the solution to the problem”. In the following example, Harris states what for her is a problem:

Donald Trump's failure of leadership has cost lives and livelihoods (Harris 2017).

Second, she provides a solid argument why they should believe her:

And while this virus touches us all, let's be honest, it is not an equal opportunity offender. Black, Latino and Indigenous people are suffering and dying disproportionately. This is not a coincidence. It is the effect of structural racism. Of inequities in education and technology, health care and housing, job security and transportation. The injustice in reproductive and maternal health care. In the excessive use of force by police. And in

our broader criminal justice system. The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone (Harris 2017).

Third, once you proposed a solution you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem:

And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more. We must elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want. We must elect Joe Biden. (Harris 2017).

Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience:

I knew Joe as Vice President. I knew Joe on the campaign trail. But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend. Joe's son, Beau, and I served as Attorneys General of our states, Delaware and California. During the Great Recession, we spoke on the phone nearly every day, working together to win back billions of dollars for homeowners from the big banks that foreclosed on people's homes (Harris 2017).

3.2.2 Pronoun use

Let us now turn to Harris' pronoun use. Harris is also a well-known activist in the USA, and a lawyer. The speeches have in total 4103 words and instances of pronominal references of “I”, “we” and “you (plural)” in it are 172, that is 4.2 per cent, distributed as shown in Table 3. As can be seen in Table 3, 89 of them are instances of the pronoun “we”, 52 are occurrences of “I” and 31 of the pronoun “you (plural)”.

Table 3. Total number of pronouns

Pronouns	Number
I	52
We	89
You (Plural)	31
Total pronouns	172

Total words	4103
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3.2.2.1 Reference to self: “I” and “we”

Table 4 shows the total number and frequency of occurrences of the pronouns in every political speech of Kamala Harris I analyzed. It is clear that in Kamala Harris’ speeches the use of the first plural pronoun “we” is considerably more frequent than that of the first singular pronoun “I”: 63.1% vs. 36.9% respectively.

Table 4. Number of pronouns per speech

	The contributions of immigrants to society	Vice-Presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech	The Status of Women	TOT.
Pronouns				
I	21	29	2	52
We	20	53	16	89

The “we” reference is complex: in fact, it brings into the speech a number of different actors (De Fina 1995). As shown in line 1 and 4 of Table 5 below, the referent of the pronoun may be ambiguous (De Fina 1995). “We” may include the audience or not: it is important to take into account the identity of the speaker and the context to assign a referent to this pronoun (De Fina 1995). Both the fact that the speaker is an activist and a lawyer, and the fact that knowledge of this kind of topic does not require experts, allows me to form the hypothesis that this pronoun may be for all the people present (De Fina 1995). Furthermore, due to the fact that she is an activist, the use of an inclusive “we” could be considered as an instance of empathic use and a polite form. In terms of concordance patterns, the pronoun “we” is primarily used with verbs of cognition, perception, sense, state of mind i.e. stative verbs and with linking verbs i.e. to be, to have (Wilson and Boxer 2015).

Table 5. The “we” reference

Line	Speech	Example
1	The contributions of immigrants to society	By fiat, <u>we have seen</u> the President stick taxpayers with a bill for a multibillion-dollar border wall without regard for the role of the United States Congress under Article 1 of the Constitution (Harris 2017).
2	The contributions of immigrants to society	And in particular, the State of California I believe is a microcosm of who <u>we are</u> as America (Harris 2017).
3	The contributions of immigrants to society	Imperfect though we may be, I believe <u>we are</u> a great country. I believe we are a great country (Harris 2017).
4	The status of women	And today, <u>we know</u> that democracy is increasingly under great strain (Harris 2021).

As Table 6 shows, when “we” is used with action verbs, the most frequent collocation in Harris’ speeches are with verbs “to stand”, “to use”, “to confront”, “to celebrate”. This is partly explained by context as the speeches deal with the importance of minority groups.

Table 6. “We” with action verbs

Line	Speech	Example
5	The contributions of immigrants to society	Above all, I rise today with a sense of gratitude for all those upon whose shoulders <u>we stand</u> (Harris 2017).
6	The contributions of immigrants to society	And knowing my mother, she’s probably saying, “Kamala, what on earth is going on down there? <u>We have got to stand up</u> for our values!” (Harris 2017).
7	The contributions of immigrants to society	I rise on behalf of California’s more than 250,000 “Dreamers” who were told by the federal government — if you sign up, <u>we will</u>

		<u>not use</u> your personal information against you (Harris 2017).
8	The status of women	And <u>we celebrate</u> the women who fought for that right (Harris 2021).

In contrast, the use of “I” instead of “we” in line 2, 3, 5 and 7 could risk the audience’s perception of self-glorification. Nonetheless, the dilemma of individual agency remains, as a leader cannot solely appeal to collective responsibility for actions without risking some loss of personal authority. The focus here is on Kamala Harris’ use of pronominal reference to shift perspective and how this impact on her performance of leadership. Shifting perspective neatly fulfills the need for a democratic political leader, such as Kamala Harris, to balance the ego with the group, be this a political party and a government.

3.2.2.2 Reference to others: “you”

In Table 6 Harris uses “you” in order to address parts of, or the entire audience. “You” in English does not distinguish between the singular and plural second person, and so the pronoun allows the author to use it strategically (Mooney and Evans 2019).

Table 6. Reference to others: “you”

Line	Speech	Example
1	The contributions of immigrants to society	On that day, she probably could have never imagined that I would be standing before <u>you</u> now speaking these words: I accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States of America (Harris 2020).
2	The contributions of immigrants to society	If <u>you're</u> a parent struggling with your child's remote learning, or <u>you're</u> a teacher struggling on the other side of that screen, <u>you</u> know that what we're doing right now isn't working (Harris 2020).
3	The contributions of immigrants to society	Make no mistake, the road ahead will not be not easy. We will stumble. We may fall short. But I

		<p>pledge to <u>you</u> that we will act boldly and deal with our challenges honestly. We will speak truths. And we will act with the same faith in you that we ask <u>you</u> to place in us (Harris 2020).</p>
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As one can see, Kamala Harris wants to show solidarity by emphasizing the pronoun “you” covering the whole country including herself (Maia Alavidze 2017).

3.2.3 Appraisal Theory

This section explores the Appraisal framework approach to exploring, describing and explaining the way Harris uses language to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships (The Appraisal Website 2020). It investigates how her attitudes, judgements and emotive responses are explicitly presented in texts and how they may be more indirectly implied, presupposed or assumed (The Appraisal Website 2020). As well, it explores how the expression of such attitudes and judgements is, in many instances, carefully managed so as to take into account the ever-present possibility of challenge or contradiction from those who hold differing views (The Appraisal Website 2020). To do so I use the Appraisal Theory and its three sub-system: *affect, judgment and appreciation*.

3.2.3.1 Affect

In this section, I will consider attitudinal meanings in their sub category *affect*. Under *affect*, I am concerned with emotions, with positive and negative emotional responses and dispositions (The Appraisal Website 2020). In my corpus I find some instances of *affect*:

- Through verbs of emotion (The Appraisal Website 2020)

A vision of our nation as a Beloved Community—where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love (Harris 2020).

In the above example, during the Vice-Presidential nominee’ speech, Kamala Harris tries to reassure her audience claiming that the nation is a Beloved Community and that listeners should feel safe.

- Through adverbs (The Appraisal Website 2020)

By fiat, the president wants to slam the gates of freedom by instituting a Muslim ban — a ban which was carelessly written as it has been incompetently enforced (Harris 2017).

In the above extract from her speech about immigrants, Kamala Harris depicts a gloomy scenario in which the president, who at the time was Donald Trump, is devastating freedom and serenity of the nation. Far from reassuring her audience, she evokes a sense of impending danger.

- Through adjectives of emotion

A few instances of *affect* comprise “pride”, which refers to the achievements that the United States have accomplished during the past years. For example:

And I am proud to report that, while the United States still has work to do, we, too, are making progress—and that women strengthen our democracy everyday (Harris 2021).

In most cases, expressions of affect are chosen in order to make politics more human, to incorporate feelings and emotions into a world made of economy and money such as politics. Harris’ texts manifest her personality and refer to individual human beings and their actions. In her speeches there are frequent references to the human side, such as disappointments, anecdotes and personal references:

For me, it starts with my mother, Shyamala Harris. She arrived at the University of California, Berkeley, from India in 1959 with dreams of becoming a scientist. The plan, when she finished school was to go back home to a traditional Indian marriage. But when she met my father Donald Harris, she made a different plan. She went against a practice reaching back thousands of years, and instead of an arranged marriage, chose a love marriage (Harris 2017).

I have personally prosecuted everything from low-level offenses to homicides. I know what a crime looks like. I will tell you: an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal (Harris 2017).

This allows listeners to recognize in the distant figure of a politician a fellow human being, one who shares similar feelings and experiences with them.

3.2.3.2 Judgement

The term *judgement* has been chosen to reference attitudinal evaluation in which human behavior is negatively or positively assessed by reference to some set of social norms (The Appraisal Website 2020). Where *judgement* is explicitly indicated we encounter terms such as *corrupt, virtuously, dishonest, murderous, tyrant, bully, hero, betray, obstinate, indefatigable, abuse, defraud, courageously, skilled, genius, dunce, stupidity, foolishly, eccentric, maverick* (The Appraisal Website 2020). The instances of judgement in my corpus are not very frequent, and not regularly distributed among the texts. In the text “The status of women” judgments are completely absent. In can also be observed that in the speech “the contribution of immigrants to society” there are very few judgments, for example:

And we have seen an administration violate court orders, attack the first amendment, bully federal judges, and mock Americans exercising their right to freely assemble (Harris 2017).

These data seem to suggest that the absence or the low frequency of judgements might be related to the topic of Harris’ speeches: the need to put emphasis on the importance of minority groups could be a fair point. Kamala Harris does not want to make judgments because her strategy, for these three speeches on minority groups, is to be seen as a fellow human being who shares the same feelings as her audience.

3.2.3.3 Appreciation

Brombin (2004) observes that some texts foreground one or another of the three subsystems of appraisal and that the choice of a particular appraisal system might be dictated by the field or context. In my corpus the appraisal subsystem which is foregrounded is *appreciation*. We categorize as *appreciation* those evaluations which are concerned with positive and negative assessments of objects, processes and states of affairs rather than with human behavior (Brombin 2004). In all the texts of the corpus the target of most appreciation is, as can be expected, America. What is evaluated is America as a nation built by minority groups, together with future generations that will come and restore it. As to be expected, Kamala Harris opens her speech “Vice-President nominee” putting considerable emphasis on America:

Greetings America. It is truly an honor to be speaking with you (Harris 2020).

And again, in her speech “The contribution of immigrants in society”:

I rise with a deep sense of reverence for this institution, for its history, and for its unique role as a defender of our nation’s ideals (Harris 2017).

The appreciation of the United States of America is almost always positive in all three speeches. At one extreme here is the political speech “Vice-President nominee”, in which almost all the evaluations of America are positive. However, the few negative appreciations in the text all refer to problems which the new presidency could solve: one could say that in this text appreciations that are technically negative serve to enhance the positive appreciation of the new presidency. For example:

The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone. It's a lot. And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more. We must elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want. We must elect Joe Biden (Harris 2020).

At the other end of the scale is the speech “The status of women”, which contains a considerable number of negative appreciations of America. The aspect which is criticized is democracy:

And today, we know that democracy is increasingly under great strain. For 15 consecutive years, we have seen a troubling decline in freedom around the globe. In fact, experts believe that this past year was the worst on record for the global deterioration of democracy and freedom (Harris 2021).

However, even here, Kamala Harris tries to enhance the positive appreciation of the new presidency:

We are also rejoining the Human Rights Council. Because we know the status of democracy depends on our collective commitment to those values articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These are signs of progress. These are signs of strength (Harris 2021).

3.3 Results

The analysis of pronoun use has revealed that Kamala Harris uses first person pronouns to personalize her statements and arguments (Proctor and Su 2010). Particularly, her preferred perspective is collective as testified by getting people involved in her speeches using the first-person plural pronoun “we” (Proctor and Su 2010). A concept that can be related to Kamala Harris is charisma. It can be understood as an extraordinary, almost miraculous influence or the mere sharing of ideology values (Proctor and Su 2010). The use of inclusive language, collective perspectives and citizen agency “you” is seen as one element of charismatic leadership. Furthermore, based on my analysis, I find that external context and topic influence pronoun distribution (Proctor and Su 2010). The most influential factors were the purpose in the political discourse, and in this case what Harris was trying to do was emphasize with her audience so she could raise awareness about minority groups (Proctor and Su 2010). This study concludes that Kamala Harris reveals self-identification through pronominal choice, in other words, whom she supports. It also shows how personal pronouns can be manipulated depending on the goal of Harris. She focused on convincing others that she has the experiences to understand any person in the audience (Proctor and Su 2010). She did not use personal pronouns to incite banal nationalism, but she uses them to appeal to the hearts of people (Proctor and Su 2010).

My analysis of appraisal choices in the three political speeches of Kamala Harris has shown the means of persuasion that Harris uses in her political discourses. These three speeches are supposed to attract the attention of experts and non-experts, but they are also meant to give the impression of offering access to political knowledge and to the power associated with it. They do not give detailed technical information, nor do they describe the procedures through which Harris makes her speeches. Only in a few cases does she highlight detailed economic data, while emphasis is put on raising awareness about the topic. Moreover, the great use of expressions of appreciation, and particularly of positive appreciation in this small corpus can be seen as relating to this strategy. The analysis of her expressions of affect and of the judgment reveals that Harris often presented herself as a fellow human being who shares the same feelings as her audience. It can be concluded that quite often, while giving a political speech, Kamala Harris makes knowledge more

accessible to any kind of audience; her speeches mainly contribute to reinforce her ideologies through the power of language in the field of politics.

Conclusions

At the beginning of this dissertation I decided to ask two questions, which I have been trying to answer throughout my work and analysis. What features of political discourse can be found in the speeches of Kamala Harris? How do these features relate to the ideas that Kamala Harris tries to convey to her audience? The former question can be explored thanks to the theoretical background presented in the first chapter, in which I cited scholars such as Partington and Taylor (2018) and Mooney and Taylor (2019), who focused their work on the analysis of language in politics and modern society. They highlight that politics is persuasion, and persuasion is conducted predominantly through language (Partington and Evans 2018). In addition, authors such as Brombin (2004) helped there with her work on Appraisal Theory as elaborated by Martin (1997, 1997).

In the first chapter I studied evaluative language, pronoun use, features of political speeches and vocabulary use as used by politicians, in particular, by Kamala Harris. Evaluative language is defined as the linguistic method of persuading the audience in issues related to what is *good* or *bad*. Pronoun use reveals with whom a politician is identifying himself/herself. Furthermore, we have seen too that a careful study of the vocabulary use in politics can also tell us a great deal about the beliefs, character and strategies of the would-be persuader. In addition, I observed with Appraisal Theory some of the subtleties, but also some of the dangers, for both the speaker, in this case Kamala Harris, and the audience; for instance, in sub-system *affect*, including in the *appreciation* sub-system.

In the second chapter I have introduced the second question, which gravitates around some background to the figure of Kamala Harris. Her history is closely connected to the analysis of her political speeches: the findings of my study have shown that personal experiences and the character of a person affect the choices of the features of a political speech. Along the way in the same chapter I provided the method by which the analysis was conducted.

The first two chapters have provided a framework for the third chapter: I analyzed three political speeches of Kamala Harris in which I could find persuasive language and I

examined a number of models and techniques of persuasion. What I have learned through the analysis is that Harris preferred collective perspectives, by getting people involved in her speeches using the 1st person plural pronoun “we”. Furthermore, the analysis of her expressions of *affect* and of *judgment* reveals that Harris often presents herself as a fellow human being, who shares the same feelings as her audience. Overall, what I have learned through my dissertation is that there is a “why” behind every word of a political speech. Only very careful attention to language and the ways it is used can help us to appreciate, exploit and also protect ourselves from the art of persuasion (Partington and Taylor 2018).

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Riassunto in Italiano

L'argomento trattato all'interno della mia tesi riguarda la connessione tra politica e lingua. Specialmente attraverso questo ultimo punto sono riuscita a costruire la discussione che ha effettivamente composto il mio intero lavoro. Questi due argomenti sono state le colonne portanti della mia tesi che è andata a costruirsi all'interno di tre capitoli i quali hanno avuto come principale scopo quello di presentare man mano l'argomento in modo sempre più dettagliato. Le domande iniziali che mi sono posta prima di proseguire con la stesura sono state: "Quali caratteristiche possono essere trovate nei discorsi politici di Kamala Harris? Come si rapportano queste caratteristiche alle idee che Kamala Harris cerca di trasmettere al suo pubblico?". Più in particolare, ho deciso di analizzare il linguaggio utilizzato da lei all'interno di tre dei suoi discorsi politici creando un'analisi quantitativa e qualitativa sulle strategie di persuasione trovate all'interno dei testi. Ho pensato che potesse essere una ricerca interessante, poiché la mia volontà era quella di capire se effettivamente il linguaggio usato all'interno di questi discorsi politici fosse utilizzato per persuadere il pubblico, in modo da rendere il messaggio comunicato universale per tutti. Le fonti che ho adoperato come letteratura hanno come campo quello linguistico, per poi addentrarsi anche nel campo della politica e della comunicazione. Ci sono stati dei testi che più di altri hanno influenzato la stesura del mio lavoro, tra cui il testo di Partington e Taylor (2018) e di Mooney e Evans (2019): il primo mi è servito come linea guida per l'analisi del primo capitolo, mentre il secondo è stato d'aiuto per integrarlo. I testi di Partington e Taylor (2018) e di Mooney e Evans (2019) al loro interno racchiudono diverse informazioni su metodi di persuasione ed utilizzo di vocaboli, argomenti alquanto importanti, per il mio lavoro, che hanno trovato una loro collocazione nel terzo capitolo. Altri autori ed altri testi hanno costituito la letteratura di base che è stata fondamentale come conoscenza per iniziare ad addentrarmi tra le varie caratteristiche e questioni sollevate dalla linguistica politica.

Ora presenterò in breve il lavoro che è stato condotto e come è stato strutturato. Il primo capitolo è sicuramente la parte della mia tesi nella quale ho concentrato la maggioranza di informazioni di base per la comprensione dell'argomento. Sono partita dalla questione dell'utilizzo della lingua nei discorsi politici cercando di dare una definizione di *lingua* e di *politica*. Un'altra tematica importante che ho affrontato è quella del *potere*, inteso però

come potere linguistico, che rappresenta una parte importante del linguaggio utilizzato nei discorsi politici, dal momento che le caratteristiche dei testi analizzati conferiscono un certo livello di potere al loro interno. Un punto di vista interessante è quello di Aristotle (2012) che sottolinea l'importanza di tre tattiche per capire come persuadere: la prima, *ethos*, tentativo di stabilire le credenziali per giustificare il motivo per cui si dovrebbe essere ascoltati. Seconda, *logo*, il tentativo di presentare un argomento plausibile in modo logico o almeno apparentemente logico. Infine, la terza è *pathos*, il tentativo di attrarre le emozioni al pubblico. Una volta stabilito che tattica utilizzare, bisogna capire come metterla in atto. La connessione tra linguaggio e politica è rappresentata dalla classificazione di alcuni metodi persuasivi, tra cui l'uso dei pronomi, strumento perfetto per la retorica politica in quanto rivela molte informazioni su chi li sta usando. Inoltre, ho esplorato le strutture utilizzate nei discorsi politici, come per esempio l'uso di personaggi storici che nel bene o nel male hanno cambiato il mondo, oppure l'utilizzo di un paragone, in questo caso tra Democratici e Conservatori. Ho riportato anche la struttura del parallelismo che consiste nella ripetizione di una stessa frase più volte per enfatizzarla, oltre che all'uso della metafora per semplificare dettagli politici complicati. Ho analizzato la scelta di vocaboli che hanno una connotazione positiva nella società ed ho menzionato quelle parole invece che trovano disapprovazione nel sentirle.

Nel secondo capitolo ho ripercorso la carriera lavorativa di Kamala Harris. Immediatamente ho riportato le sue origini, dal momento che le scelte di certi metodi di persuasione sono date anche dalla storia personale di chi le sceglie. Ho inoltre presentato i diversi traguardi che ha raggiunto e che spero diano una migliore comprensione dell'analisi che ho conseguentemente fatto. Un altro punto di vista molto interessante è proprio quello di Kamala Harris che sottolinea l'importanza dell'uso delle parole.

Le parole hanno la capacità di dare forza e ingannare, di confrontare e ferire. Possono diffondere idee importanti e idee avventate. Possono spingere le persone ad agire, per buoni e cattivi propositi. Le parole sono incredibilmente potenti, e chi è al potere, visto che le sue parole possono andare più lontano e circolare più velocemente, ha il dovere di pronunciarle con precisione e saggezza (Harris 2020).

Kamala Harris dedica la sua vita alla rappresentanza di gruppi minoritari: si dedica fin da subito a proteggere coloro che sono tra i più vulnerabili e senza voce nella società americana. Come conclusione del secondo capitolo ho deciso di inserire due linee guida che Kamala Harris e la sua squadra utilizza fin dalla sua ascesa in politica per sottolineare il ruolo che vuole ricoprire nella politica americana: “nessuno dovrebbe combattere da solo” e “le parole contano”. Prima di presentare la mia analisi, ho proseguito con la metodologia che ho utilizzato per la ricerca svolta nei tre discorsi politici da me scelti. Ho deciso di fare un’analisi sia di tipo quantitativo che qualitativo con l’utilizzo di programmi dedicati alla ricerca linguistica quali: *AntConc*, *CoCa* e *Skell*. Questi ultimi mi hanno dato la possibilità di ricercare le parole chiave, parole più frequenti e con che aggettivi, pronomi, verbi ed avverbi venivano utilizzate. Per l’analisi qualitativa ho analizzato frase per frase di ogni singolo discorso politico per cercare quanti più metodi di persuasione possibili. Infine, ho utilizzato la “Teoria della Valutazione” elaborata da Martin (1996, 1997) che mi ha fornito gli strumenti analitici per indagare come Kamala Harris esprime emozioni, giudizi e valutazioni.

Il mio corpus si compone di tre discorsi politici: il suo primo discorso politico che tiene al Senato, nel 2017, a proposito del contributo che gli immigrati danno alla società americana; il discorso in cui si incarica del ruolo di Vice presidentessa degli Stati Uniti d’America e come terzo testo ho scelto un discorso politico tenuto nel 2021 sullo stato delle donne nella società democratica americana.

Il terzo capitolo include la parte pratica della mia analisi dal momento che, attraverso l’utilizzo di un corpus di tre documenti e dei programmi linguistici sopra citati, ho iniziato a cercare quanti più esempi possibili in modo da iniziare a mettere in pratica le teorie sviluppate nel capitolo uno. Avendo già avuto un’infarinatura generale attraverso la letteratura dei primi capitoli e conoscendo già alcune delle caratteristiche dei discorsi politici ho deciso di cercare come prima cosa parole chiave e concordanze. Nell’analisi quantitativa, infatti, ho analizzato parole che sapevo potevano essermi utili nella formulazione delle mie conclusioni, come per esempio: *donne*, *immigrati* e *famiglia*. Si evince dalla mia analisi che, essendo lei una donna proveniente da una famiglia di persone immigrate, utilizza queste tre parole chiave per persuadere il suo pubblico mettendosi al

loro posto e cercando di empatizzare, raccontando esperienze personali. Ho poi riportato i dati e i procedimenti che ho eseguito per altri termini assieme a spezzoni di testi in modo da rendere ancora più chiare le mie spiegazioni e le motivazioni che mi hanno spinto a formulare determinate ipotesi. Ho inserito numerose tabelle che riportano i dati raccolti attraverso le mie analisi, tra cui le liste di frequenza che mi hanno permesso di creare un elenco dei termini in base al numero di volte che vengono utilizzati nel testo. Ho poi deciso di concentrarmi sull'utilizzo dei pronomi, i quali risultati rivelano che Harris utilizza la prima persona per personalizzare le sue dichiarazioni e argomenti. In particolare, si nota che il suo punto di vista preferito è quello collettivo: lei utilizza spesso il pronome plurale in prima persona "noi". Un concetto che può essere collegato a Kamala Harris è quindi il carisma. Si identifica in chi supporta e cioè nei gruppi minoritari di cui la sua persona ha sempre fatto parte. In un'analisi più dettagliata quale è quella della "Teoria delle Valutazioni", l'autrice Brombin (2004) mi aiuta ad analizzare i testi. La mia analisi delle scelte di valutazioni nei tre discorsi politici di Kamala Harris ha mostrato i mezzi di persuasione che lei usa nei suoi discorsi. Infatti, questi ultimi, attirano l'attenzione di esperti e non esperti, non è tanto a chi sta parlando quanto alla sensibilizzazione sull'argomento. L'analisi delle sue espressioni di affetto e del giudizio rivelano che Harris si è spesso presentata come un essere umano che condivide gli stessi sentimenti del suo pubblico. Si può concludere che molto spesso, mentre tiene un discorso politico, Kamala Harris rende la conoscenza più accessibile a qualsiasi tipo di pubblico; i suoi discorsi contribuiscono principalmente a rafforzare le sue ideologie attraverso il potere del linguaggio nel campo della politica.

In conclusione, l'obiettivo della mia tesi era quello di capire in che modo Kamala Harris si rappresentasse attraverso l'utilizzo della lingua dei suoi discorsi politici, ponendo sempre particolare attenzione anche a tutti quegli elementi che ho raccolto attraverso la letteratura dei primi due capitoli. È evidente come i metodi di persuasione e di valutazione, riportati nel capitolo uno, all'interno dei tre discorsi analizzati siano numerosi. Credo, inoltre, che sia stato importante sottolineare il contesto di crescita di Kamala Harris riportato nel capitolo due, poiché ha contribuito fortemente alla scelta di quegli elementi di persuasione che le hanno permesso di arrivare ad una carica così alta come quella di Vice Presidentessa degli Stati Uniti d'America.

Appendix

The contributions of immigrants to society

I rise today humbled to offer my first official speech as the junior United States senator from the great state of California.

I rise with a deep sense of reverence for this institution, for its history, and for its unique role as a defender of our nation's ideals.

Above all, I rise today with a sense of gratitude for all those upon whose shoulders we stand.

For me, it starts with my mother, Shyamala Harris.

She arrived at the University of California, Berkeley, from India in 1959 with dreams of becoming a scientist. The plan, when she finished school was to go back home to a traditional Indian marriage. But when she met my father Donald Harris, she made a different plan. She went against a practice reaching back thousands of years, and instead of an arranged marriage, chose a love marriage.

This act of self-determination made my sister Maya and myself. And it made us Americans, like millions of children of immigrants before and since.

And I know she's looking down on us today.

And knowing my mother, she's probably saying, "Kamala, what on Dreamers is going on down there? We have got to stand up for our values!"

So in the spirit of my mother, who was always direct, I cannot mince words.

In the early weeks of this administration, we have seen an unprecedented series of executive actions that have hit our immigrant and religious communities like a cold front, striking a chilling fear in the hearts of millions of good hardworking people.

All by executive fiat.

By fiat, we have seen the President stick taxpayers with a bill for a multibillion-dollar border wall without regard for the role of the United States Congress under Article 1 of the Constitution.

By fiat, we've seen a president mandate the detention of immigrants, both documented and undocumented, creating a dragnet that could ensnare 8 million people.

By fiat, the President has ordered the creation of what essentially will be a 15,000-member deportation force.

By fiat, he wants to take away state and local authority, by making local police officers act as federal immigration officials.

By fiat, the president wants to slam the gates of freedom by instituting a Muslim ban — a ban which was carelessly written as it has been incompetently enforced.

And in recent days, we have seen an increased severity in immigration raids sweeping across this country, including the arrest of a DREAMer in Seattle and a domestic violence victim in Texas.

And we have seen an administration violate court orders, attack the first amendment, bully federal judges, and mock Americans exercising their right to freely assemble.

Mr. President, I rise today to discuss how these actions impact my state of California and our country. And in particular, the State of California I believe is a microcosm of who we are as America. In California we have farmers and environmentalists, welders and technologists, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and the largest number of immigrants — documented and undocumented — of any state in the nation.

I rise because the president's actions have created deep uncertainty and pain for our refugee and immigrant communities.

I rise on behalf of California's more than 250,000 "Dreamers" who were told by the federal government — if you sign up, we will not use your personal information against you.

I rise to say, the United States of America cannot go back on our promise to these kids and their families.

And I rise today as a lifelong prosecutor and as the former top cop of the biggest state in this country to say these executive actions present a real threat to our public safety.

Let me repeat that. The president's immigration actions and Muslim ban will make America less safe.

As a prosecutor, I can tell you, it is a serious mistake to conflate criminal justice policy with immigration policy as if they are the same thing. They are not.

I have personally prosecuted everything from low-level offenses to homicides. I know what a crime looks like. I will tell you: an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal.

But that's what these actions do. They suggest all immigrants are criminals and treat immigrants like criminals.

And there's no question, those who commit crimes must face severe and serious and swift consequence and accountability. But the truth is the vast majority of immigrants are hardworking people who deserve a pathway to citizenship.

Instead of making us more safe, these increased raids and executive orders instill fear in immigrants who are terrified they will be deported or have to give up information resulting in the deportation of their family members.

For this reason, studies have shown Latinos are more than 40 percent less likely to call 911 when they have been a victim of a crime.

This climate of fear drives people underground and into the shadows, making them less likely to report crimes against themselves or others.

Fewer victims reporting crime and fewer witnesses coming forward.

And these executive actions create a strain on local law enforcement. Any police chief in this country will tell you they barely have enough resources to get their job done in their communities. So when you make local law enforcement do the job of the federal government, you strain the resources for local law enforcement. And that hurts everybody's safety.

And let's consider, the economic harm this order will cause. Immigrants make up 10% of California's workforce and contribute \$130 billion to our state's gross domestic product. Immigrants own small businesses, they till the land, they care for children and the elderly, they work in our labs, attend our universities, and serve in our military.

So these actions are not only cruel. They cause ripple effects that harm our public safety and our economy.

The same is true of this Muslim Ban.

This ban may as well have been hatched in the basement headquarters of ISIS. We handed them a tool of recruitment to use against us.

Policies that demonize entire groups of people based on the God they worship have a way of conjuring real life demons.

And policies that isolate our Muslim American community take away one of the greatest weapons we have in the fight against home-grown extremism.

And here's the truth, Mr. President.

Imperfect though we may be, I believe we are a great country. I believe we are a great country. And part of what makes us great are our democratic institutions that protect our

fundamental ideals — freedom of religion and the rule of law, protection from discrimination based on national origin, freedom of the press, and a 200 year history as a nation built by immigrants.

So this brings me to my message today, we have a responsibility to draw a line with these administrative actions and say no.

And this is not a question of party.

This is about a government of co-equal branches with its inherent checks and balances.

This is about the role of the United States Senate, the greatest deliberative body in the world.

I know having spent now a few weeks in this chamber, that we have good men and women on both sides of the aisle, men and women who believe deeply in our immigrant communities and who understand that nationalism and patriotism are not the same thing

I know that it was the junior United States Senator from the State of Texas who said “it’s an enormous blessing to be the child of an immigrant who fled oppression, because you realize how fragile liberty is and how easily it can be taken away.”

It was the junior United States senator from the great state of Kentucky who said we “must always embrace individual liberty and enforce the constitutional rights of all Americans-rich and poor, immigrant and native, black and white.”

It was the senior United States senator from the great state of Arizona who said undocumented immigrants should not be “condemned forever to a twilight status.”

So yes, we have good people on both sides of the aisle. And I say we must measure up to our words and fight for our ideals because the critical hour is upon us.

I thank you.

Vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris' speech

Greetings America.

It is truly an honor to be speaking with you.

That I am here tonight is a testament to the dedication of generations before me.

Women and men who believed so fiercely in the promise of equality, liberty, and justice for all.

This week marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. And we celebrate the women who fought for that right.

Yet so many of the Black women who helped secure that victory was still prohibited from voting, long after its ratification.

But they were undeterred.

Without fanfare or recognition, they organized, testified, rallied, marched, and fought—not just for their vote, but for a seat at the table. These women and the generations that followed worked to make democracy and opportunity real in the lives of all of us who followed.

They paved the way for the trailblazing leadership of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. And these women inspired us to pick up the torch, and fight on.

Women like Mary Church Terrell and Mary McCleod Bethune. Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash. Constance Baker Motley and Shirley Chisholm.

We're not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders.

There's another woman, whose name isn't known, whose story isn't shared. Another woman whose shoulders I stand on. And that's my mother—Shyamala Gopalan Harris.

She came here from India at age 19 to pursue her dream of curing cancer. At the University of California Berkeley, she met my father, Donald Harris—who had come from Jamaica to study economics.

They fell in love in that most American way—while marching together for justice in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

In the streets of Oakland and Berkeley, I got a stroller's-eye view of people getting into what the great John Lewis called "good trouble."

When I was 5, my parents split and my mother raised us mostly on her own. Like so many mothers, she worked around the clock to make it work—packing lunches before we woke

up— and paying bills after we went to bed. Helping us with homework at the kitchen table—and shuttling us to church for choir practice.

She made it look easy, though I know it never was.

My mother instilled in my sister, Maya, and me the values that would chart the course of our lives.

She raised us to be proud, strong Black women. And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage.

She taught us to put family first—the family you're born into and the family you choose. Family, is my husband Doug, who I met on a blind date set up by my best friend. Family is our beautiful children, Cole and Ella, who as you just heard, call me Momala. Family is my sister. Family is my best friend, my nieces and my godchildren. Family is my uncles, my aunts—my chitthis. Family is Mrs. Shelton—my second mother who lived two doors down and helped raise me. Family is my beloved Alpha Kappa Alpha...our Divine 9...and my HBCU brothers and sisters. Family is the friends I turned to when my mother—the most important person in my life—passed away from cancer.

And even as she taught us to keep our family at the center of our world, she also pushed us to see a world beyond ourselves.

She taught us to be conscious and compassionate about the struggles of all people. To believe public service is a noble cause and the fight for justice is a shared responsibility. That led me to become a lawyer, a District Attorney, Attorney General, and a United States Senator.

And at every step of the way, I've been guided by the words I spoke from the first time I stood in a courtroom: Kamala Harris, For the People.

I've fought for children, and survivors of sexual assault. I've fought against transnational gangs. I took on the biggest banks, and helped take down one of the biggest for-profit colleges.

I know a predator when I see one.

My mother taught me that service to others gives life purpose and meaning. And oh, how I wish she were here tonight but I know she's looking down on me from above. I keep thinking about that 25-year-old Indian woman—all of five feet tall—who gave birth to me at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, California.

On that day, she probably could have never imagined that I would be standing before you now speaking these words: I accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States of America.

I do so, committed to the values she taught me. To the Word that teaches me to walk by faith, and not by sight. And to a vision passed on through generations of Americans—one that Joe Biden shares. A vision of our nation as a Beloved Community—where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love.

A country where we may not agree on every detail, but we are united by the fundamental belief that every human being is of infinite worth, deserving of compassion, dignity and respect.

A country where we look out for one another, where we rise and fall as one, where we face our challenges, and celebrate our triumphs—together.

Today... that country feels distant.

Donald Trump's failure of leadership has cost lives and livelihoods.

If you're a parent struggling with your child's remote learning, or you're a teacher struggling on the other side of that screen, you know that what we're doing right now isn't working.

And we are a nation that's grieving. Grieving the loss of life, the loss of jobs, the loss of opportunities, the loss of normalcy. And yes, the loss of certainty.

And while this virus touches us all, let's be honest, it is not an equal opportunity offender. Black, Latino and Indigenous people are suffering and dying disproportionately.

This is not a coincidence. It is the effect of structural racism.

Of inequities in education and technology, health care and housing, job security and transportation.

The injustice in reproductive and maternal health care. In the excessive use of force by police. And in our broader criminal justice system.

This virus has no eyes, and yet it knows exactly how we see each other—and how we treat each other.

And let's be clear—there is no vaccine for racism. We've gotta do the work.

For George Floyd. For Breonna Taylor. For the lives of too many others to name. For our children. For all of us.

We've gotta do the work to fulfill that promise of equal justice under law. Because, none of us are free...until all of us are free...

We're at an inflection point.

The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone.

It's a lot.

And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more.

We must elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want.

We must elect Joe Biden.

I knew Joe as Vice President. I knew Joe on the campaign trail. But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend.

Joe's son, Beau, and I served as Attorneys General of our states, Delaware and California. During the Great Recession, we spoke on the phone nearly every day, working together to win back billions of dollars for homeowners from the big banks that foreclosed on people's homes.

And Beau and I would talk about his family.

How, as a single father, Joe would spend 4 hours every day riding the train back and forth from Wilmington to Washington. Beau and Hunter got to have breakfast every morning with their dad. They went to sleep every night with the sound of his voice reading bedtime stories. And while they endured an unspeakable loss, these two little boys Always knew that they were deeply, unconditionally loved.

He championed The Affordable Care Act, protecting millions of Americans with pre-existing conditions. Who spent decades promoting American values and interests around the world, standing up with our allies and standing up to our adversaries.

Right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons.

Joe will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose.

Joe will bring us together to build an economy that doesn't leave anyone behind. Where a good-paying job is the floor, not the ceiling.

Joe will bring us together to end this pandemic and make sure that we are prepared for the next one.

Joe will bring us together to squarely face and dismantle racial injustice, furthering the work of generations.

Joe and I believe that we can build that Beloved Community, one that is strong and decent, just and kind. One in which we all can see ourselves.

That's the vision that our parents and grandparents fought for. The vision that made my own life possible. The vision that makes the American promise—for all its complexities and imperfections—a promise worth fighting for.

Make no mistake, the road ahead will not be not easy. We will stumble. We may fall short. But I pledge to you that we will act boldly and deal with our challenges honestly. We will speak truths. And we will act with the same faith in you that we ask you to place in us.

We believe that our country—all of us, will stand together for a better future. We already are.

We see it in the doctors, the nurses, the home health care workers and the frontline workers who are risking their lives to save people they've never met.

We see it in the teachers and truck drivers, the factory workers and farmers, the postal workers and the Poll workers, all putting their own safety on the line to help us get through this pandemic.

And we see it in so many of you who are working, not just to get us through our current crises, but to somewhere better.

There's something happening, all across the country.

It's not about Joe or me.

It's about you.

It's about us. People of all ages and colors and creeds who are, yes, taking to the streets, and also persuading our family members, rallying our friends, organizing our neighbors, and getting out the vote.

And we've shown that, when we vote, we expand access to health care, expand access to the ballot box, and ensure that more working families can make a decent living.

I'm inspired by a new generation of leadership. You are pushing us to realize the ideals of our nation, pushing us to live the values we share: decency and fairness, justice and love.

You are the patriots who remind us that to love our country is to fight for the ideals of our country.

In this election, we have a chance to change the course of history. We're all in this fight. You, me, and Joe—together.

What an awesome responsibility. What an awesome privilege.

So, let's fight with conviction. Let's fight with hope. Let's fight with confidence in ourselves, and a commitment to each other. To the America we know is possible. The America, we love.

Years from now, this moment will have passed. And our children and our grandchildren will look in our eyes and ask us: Where were you when the stakes were so high?

They will ask us, what was it like?

And we will tell them. We will tell them, not just how we felt.

We will tell them what we did.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

The status of women

Mr. Secretary-General, Mr. Chairperson of the Commission, Madam Executive Director, Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies, civil society members—it is an honor to address this esteemed commission. Since 1947, this commission has documented the realities women face, shaped global standards on women’s rights, and stood for gender equality. That work is as urgent now as it was at the start.

On behalf of the United States, thank you.

This year, in considering the status of women, especially as it pertains to the participation of women in decision-making, we must also consider the status of democracy.

At its best, democracy protects human rights, promotes human dignity, and upholds the rule of law.

It is a means to establish peace and shared prosperity. It should ensure every citizen—regardless of gender—has an equal voice.

And free and fair elections that will respect the will of the people.

At the same time, democracy requires constant vigilance, constant improvement.

It is a work-in-progress.

And today, we know that democracy is increasingly under great strain.

For 15 consecutive years, we have seen a troubling decline in freedom around the globe. In fact, experts believe that this past year was the worst on record for the global deterioration of democracy and freedom.

So, even as we confront a global health crisis and an economic crisis, it is critical that we continue to defend democracy.

To that end, the United States is strengthening our engagement with the United Nations and the broader multilateral system.

We are also rejoining the Human Rights Council.

Because we know the status of democracy depends on our collective commitment to those values articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The status of democracy also depends fundamentally on the empowerment of women.

Not only because the exclusion of women in decision-making is a marker of a flawed democracy, but because the participation of women strengthens democracy.

And that’s true everywhere.

Looking around the world, I am inspired by the progress that is being made.

And I am proud to report that, while the United States still has work to do, we, too, are making progress—and that women strengthen our democracy everyday.

In every presidential election for the last 56 years, in the United States, more women have voted than men.

More women than ever before serve in the United States Congress.

More women than ever before are their family's breadwinner.

And just last week, the President nominated two women to take the helm of two of our 11 combatant commands.

Women in the United States lead our local, state, and national governments, make major decisions regarding our nation's security, and drive major growth in our economy.

These are signs of progress. These are signs of strength.

But, friends, we cannot take this progress for granted.

Especially now.

COVID-19 has threatened the economic security, the physical security, and the health of women everywhere.

As women struggle to get the healthcare they need, the pandemic appears to be reversing the global gains we've made in the fights against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, malnutrition, and maternal and child mortality.

That's why, on the first day of our Administration, the United States re-engaged as a member state and leader in the World Health Organization.

And we are revitalizing our partnership with UN Women, to help empower women worldwide.

Here's the truth:

When women face obstacles to obtaining quality healthcare...

When women face food insecurity...

When women are more likely to live in poverty, and therefore disproportionately impacted by climate change...

More vulnerable to gender-based violence, and therefore disproportionately impacted by conflict...

Well it's harder for women to fully participate in decision-making.

Which, in turn, makes it that much harder for democracies to thrive.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who shaped the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, once said, “Without equality, there can be no democracy.

In other words, the status of women is the status of democracy

For our part, the United States will work to improve both.

We are committed to upholding the democratic values embedded in the Declaration.

And we firmly believe that, when we work together globally, we can achieve the vision within it.

We look forward to partnering with all of you in the days and years ahead.

Thank you.