

# Issue Trespassing in Barack Obama's 2008 Campaign Speeches

Iris van Dorp

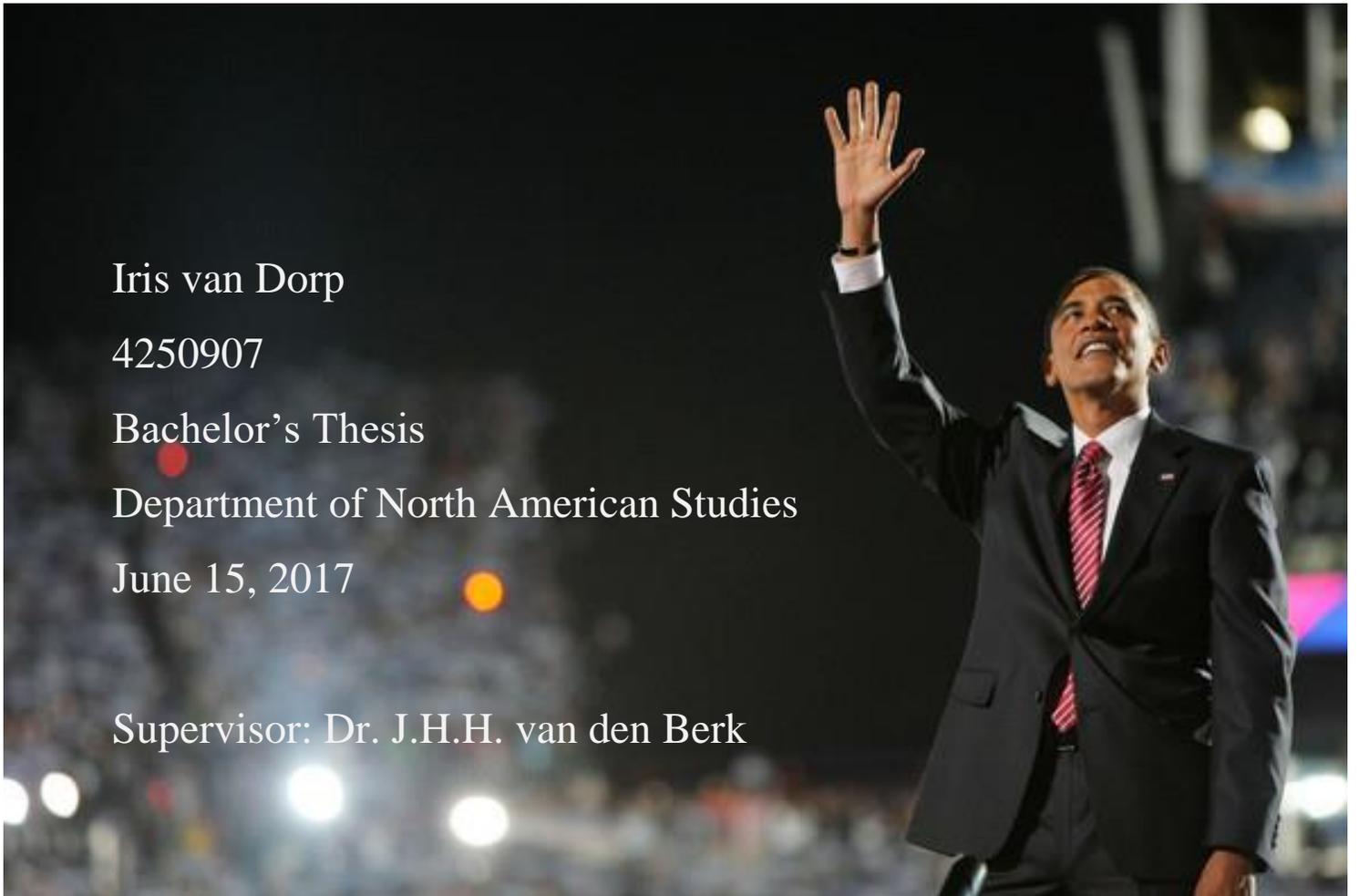
4250907

Bachelor's Thesis

Department of North American Studies

June 15, 2017

Supervisor: Dr. J.H.H. van den Berk



American Studies

Teachers who will receive this document: J.H.H. van den Berk & P. van der Heiden

Title of document: Issue Trespassing in Barack Obama's 2008 Campaign Speeches

Name of course: BA Thesis

Date of submission: June 15, 2017

The work submitted here is the sole responsibility of the undersigned, who has neither committed plagiarism nor colluded in its production.

Signed

Name of student: Iris van Dorp

Student number: s4250907

## Abstract

Issue ownership theory argues that the perceived competence of a party on a certain issue creates an ownership over that issue. This influences a voter's choice, mostly when the issue is valued by the voter. A segment of issue ownership deals with issue trespassing, the notion that a party still speaks out on a topic when they do not own it. The manner in which a party's candidate speaks out on an issue owned by the opposition, however, has not broadly been researched. This research adds to the existing knowledge of issue trespassing by studying techniques used to speak out on un-owned issues. The research does so by studying three speeches given by Barack Obama given during his 2008 presidential election campaign. A discovery is the manner in which Obama uses his ownership of one issue to create credibility for himself on an un-owned issue.

## Keywords

Issue ownership

Issue trespassing

Case studies

Content analysis

## Table of Contents

Cover sheet	2
Abstract	3
Keywords	3
Introduction	5
Theoretical Framework	8
1.1 Issue Ownership and Issue Trespassing	8
1.2 Method	13
Case study 1: Candidacy Announcement Speech	16
Case study 2: Democratic National Convention Acceptance Speech	23
Case study 3: Closing Argument Speech	28
Conclusion	32
Works cited	35
Appendix A	38
Appendix B	44
Appendix C	55

## Introduction

“For that is our unyielding faith- that in the face of impossible odds, people who love their country can change it” (Obama, 2007).

With these words, future-President Obama kicked off his presidential race on February 17, 2007 in Springfield, Illinois. It encompassed the message of hope and change that he would embody throughout his campaign. At the time of his candidacy announcement, Barack Obama was mostly known for his keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. This speech, *The Audacity of Hope*, narrated Obama’s life as the son of a Kenyan father and a mother from Kansas. He mesmerized the audience and brought out a bestselling book in the fall of 2006. The book was based on the speech and carried the same name. The emphasis on hope that he had throughout his 2008 campaign had its foundation in that speech and that book. This emphasis was also heavily featured in the campaign speeches that Obama gave. He has often been depicted as a strong orator who gave equally inspiring speeches while on the campaign trail as he had done at the Convention.

Besides having given that keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama was largely unknown. He had served as a state senator in Chicago and was a junior Senator for the state of Illinois. When he announced his presidency, not many believed that the young Senator could match the experience and reputation of another presidential candidate for the nomination of the Democratic Party: Senator Hillary Clinton. Obama managed to do the unlikely when he won the nomination over her.

Another unlikely feat that followed was Barack Obama facing John McCain in the general election. McCain was the example of an experienced statesman and had also served in the army during the Vietnam War. This experience and status as a veteran was expected to win him the election. Especially since one of the most important issues to the electorate was the Iraq War (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). Not only did John McCain seem to have the advantage on this topic due to his experience, the Republican Party was also traditionally considered as the party with the best reputation on the issue of war in a general sense (Petrocik, 1996).

The notion that one party has a better reputation on an issue and that this can affect voters’ behavior can be labeled as issue ownership (Petrocik, 1996). This theory was formed in

1983 by researchers Budge and Farlie. They defined issue ownership as the understanding that the electorate links certain issues to specific parties on the basis of the party's competence on handling this issue. According to the traditional distribution of issues, as created by John Petrocik in 1996, in the U.S. political system, the Republican Party would have had an advantage in the 2008 election, since its reputation on issues such as war and the economy surpasses that of the Democratic Party.

Theories of issue ownership also deal with the notion of issue trespassing: when a party speaks out on a topic they do not own (Damore, 2004). This especially is interesting within the context of the 2008 presidential election, since the Iraq War and the Great Recession were the most relevant issues to the electorate. Obviously, any candidate running for president would have to discuss these topics endlessly. The Republican candidate would have a beneficial position on these issues, according to the theory. What space did this leave for the Democratic Party to speak on these topics? How could a Democratic candidate have their voice heard?

Questions such as these are what this research focuses on. Barack Obama faced an election with issues that his party did not own. He did, however, speak on these issues frequently throughout his campaign. This thesis seeks to answer the following question. How did Barack Obama speak out on Republican-owned issues in his campaign speeches during the 2008 election? In answering this question, theory can be added to the sphere of issue ownership and issue trespassing since it operationalizes the question of how a candidate can speak out on issues which are not owned by their party.

To uncover a meaningful answer to these questions, this research first gives an overview of the theory on issue ownership and issue trespassing up until this point. The specific theories used in the research are expanded upon and the methods used are defined. Following this framework are three case studies. The choice was made to focus on speeches made by Barack Obama during the 2008 presidential election. This choice was made because Obama is a Democrat and the 2008 presidential election centered around Republican-owned issues. Past research into issue ownership and issue trespassing has mostly focused on TV advertisements, no research has been done on speeches yet. The three case studies are on the February 17, 2007 candidacy announcement speech, the August 28, 2008 Democratic National Convention speech, and the October 27, 2008 speech in Ohio which has been labeled as the closing argument of Obama's campaign. These speeches span the entire timeline of the 2008 presidential election and

thus possibly reflect the changes in stances and manner of speech. The case studies are discussed in light of the theories of issue ownership and issue trespassing and an analysis of media surrounding the speeches is done to discover how the media picked up on certain topics in Obama's issues. Whenever possible, Gallup polls are used to reflect the opinion of the electorate on the issue ownership of a presidential candidate or on the importance of issues.

Considering the previous research on issue trespassing, it is expected that Barack Obama spoke out on the Republican-owned issues throughout his campaign. As explained by Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik, Democratic presidential candidates discuss Republican-owned issues more often than the other way around (2003). They argue that this is due to the importance of Republican-owned issues to the electorate and the office of the president. No specific hypothesis can be formed on the technique used by Obama to trespass into Republican-owned issues, considering the limited theory on this paradigm.

This research, then, uses three speeches from Barack Obama, given during the 2008 presidential election, as a case study into issue trespassing and issue ownership. Results add to the existing knowledge on issue trespassing. The field of issue ownership saw an uptick in research in the early 2000s, but has mostly focused on case studies between the 1950s and 2000. Mr. Obama's speeches during the 2008 presidential election are thus a new addition to these existing case studies and therefore present new perspectives specifically on the use of issue trespassing and issue ownership in presidential election campaign speeches.

## Theoretical Framework

### 1.1 Issue Ownership and Issue Trespassing

This chapter defines the concepts of issue ownership and issue trespassing as used in the current and past political science field. The changes in the field from 1983 until 2009 are outlined and the theories that are used for the case studies are highlighted at the end of this section. The theories discussed below are not the complete volume of work written on the subjects, but do reflect all relevant points of view on the matter, both for the thesis and as an overview of conceptualizations.

The concept of issue ownership was first introduced by Budge and Farlie in 1983. They assert that elections are determined by a party's ability to profit from issues that benefit them. In Budge and Farlie's view, the outcome of elections "lies in persuading electors to vote in terms of their membership of the benefited group rather than the disadvantaged one" (Petrocik, 1996). This basic notion of issue ownership was broadened over a decade later by John R. Petrocik. His theory furthered the field and is still used as the foundation of many contemporary research. He explained issue ownership as a division of issues between parties based on their perceived competence in dealing with the issues. This definition of issue ownership still holds today as the main conceptualization. He went beyond the existing definition of the concept and argued that issue ownership has a duality to it. Not only does the issue owning of a party contribute to the voters' behavior, it also influences that of the party's campaign. He expects voters to vote for the party that excels at an issue that matters to them and for parties to emphasize the issues that they own as a way to sway more voters (Petrocik, 1996).

The theories formed by Budge and Farlie, and by Petrocik were the predominant school of thought until the early 2000s, when a number of political scientists started to focus more on the field of issue ownership. The newfound interest in the field quickly added new conceptualizations, but mostly a broadening of the field by dividing issue ownership into various levels. Belucci (2006) focused on the voter level, which means that he specifically researched whether or not the perceived competence of a party influenced voters. He found this to be the case. Bélanger and Meguid (2008), note, however that issue salience is a necessary variable for a strong outcome. The value ascribed to the issue by the voter is an important variable in their research. In other words, the voter needs to value the issue, otherwise it does not matter which

party owns it. Indeed, by focusing on issue salience, Bélanger and Meguid added another variable to Belucci's research.

The voter level was not the only division which started to gain emphasis. Aside from the voter level, the party level also gained attention from scholars. How does the knowledge of issue ownership influence the behavior of political parties? Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik (2003) researched this side of the division and found that parties usually find a balance between the issues that they own and the ones that they do not. Furthermore, parties also speak out more on issues that are significant to the electorate at the time (Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik, 2003). The accentuation of owned issues and those important to the voters might seem like an obvious campaign strategy. However, Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik also discovered that in the campaigns between 1952 and 2000, both the Republican and the Democratic candidate tended to speak more on Republican issues. One possible explanation that the researchers give is that the Republican issues tend to be more on the federal level and are therefore viewed as more important by the electorate and during a national election (Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik, 2003). Exceptions, of course, do exist. In the 2000 campaign, George W. Bush devoted more attention to issues owned by the Democratic Party instead of GOP-owned issues in his TV advertisements. Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik state that they cannot explain this exception, but that it does suggest a variability in the issues addressed during campaigns (2003).

Besides focusing on the individual voter or the party level, other categories are also conceptualized within issue ownership. Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave (2012) have made a distinction between competence and associative issue ownership. Competence issue ownership describes the parties' perceived competence on dealing with an issue. This is the conceptualization of issue ownership as previously described by Petrocik in 1996. It is a description of ownership from the voters' point of view on the party with the best track record on handling an issue. Associative issue ownership is, then, an issue ownership focused on the party that people associate with an issue, regardless of the party's competence. This category also views issue ownership from the perspective of the voter. The distinction between associative and competence issue ownership was not made before the research by Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave and therefore older publications usually deal with competence issue ownership.

This ambiguity on the conceptualization of issue ownership also plays a factor in determining which party owns what issue. The measurement of ownership is different per

researcher. However, in the case of U.S. presidential elections, researchers focus mostly on voters' perception of the competence of a party on an issue. In multi-party democratic systems, a difference can occur between a party who owns the issue on a competence or associative level. This can happen because of varying positions in government or opposition. Since the United States is a two party system, the party that owns an issue on a competence level usually owns it on the associative level as well (Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave, 2015). The division created by Petrocik (1996) based the distinction on surveys conducted by ABC and the *Washington Post* as well as a survey by CBS and the *New York Times*. The surveys focused on competence issue ownership on a voter level and thus asked members of the electorate which party they deemed more able to handle a certain issue. The distribution of issues that Petrocik found was that the Democrats are seen as more capable of handling welfare and social issues. In comparison, Republicans are thought of as owning quite a few more issues according to his measurement: crime, foreign policy, and the economy were seen as topics best dealt with by Republicans (1996). Other researchers have based the division of the issues on which parties actually focus on the most.

For many years, the spreading of issues as established by Petrocik in 1996 was used. In 2009, new research was published by Jeremy Pope and Jonathan Woon that shed new light on the distribution of the issues. They created new issues by dividing up topics such as the economy into multiple segments such as taxes and the deficit. The study describes the changes in party reputation between 1939 and 2004 based on survey questions from public opinion polls (Pope & Woon, 2009). This study, too, uses the voter level competence issue ownership as a determinate. Pope and Woon based their categories on available data. For instance, peace and prosperity were used instead of war and economy due to the former being a standard question in a Gallup poll (Pope & Woon, 2009). It is important, however, to note that their research shows a discrepancy with Petrocik's findings. A crucial finding is that the ownership of the issues of prosperity and peace oscillate between both parties. Petrocik, on the other hand, largely labeled these as owned by the Republicans. This dissemblance comes from the timeline both of the researched used. Pope and Woon focused on data available form 1939 until 2004 whereas Petrocik used data from 1988 to 1991. Further issues belonging to the Democratic party, according to Pope and Woon, are the environment, education, social security, health care, and jobs. Republicans, on the other hand, own taxes, law and order, deficits, and foreign policy. Pope and Woon also researched

whether or not people had a party preference for a certain issue, they called this “partisan choices” (2009). In the case of both prosperity and peace, a strong preference for one party over the other was observed. The research added by Pope and Woon thus strengthened the ownership of some issues, whereas it gave a more nuanced look on others with respect to the previous distribution made by Petrocik.

The previously discussed research by Benoit, Hansen, and Petrocik portrayed that, while it might seem logical, candidates do not merely speak on issues that they own. In fact, the Democratic candidates often discuss Republican issues, as the above-cited research showed. In other words, parties do not stick solely to the issues they are perceived as most competent in (Buell and Sigelman, 2004). Speaking on an issue not owned by the party is called issue trespassing. Damore (2004) shows that parties and candidates sometimes focus on issues owned by a different party or candidate. Holian (2004) goes as far as to state that issue trespassing can lead to a shift in the perceived ownership of an issue. He uses the 1992 U.S. presidential election as an example. In this election, Bill Clinton focused his message on eradicating crime; an issue commonly owned by the Republicans, according to Petrocik. He was effective in temporarily owning the issue because he agreed with the Republicans on the death penalty and then expanded his stance by emphasizing the importance of crime prevention, which was the standard Democrat stance of the time. Clinton convinced the electorate of his and his party’s competence on the matter of crime. Here, the standard voter level competence issue ownership is used. Holian further derives from this case study three factors as important for claiming an issue owned by a different party: the public’s opinion must shift, there must be some indication that the candidate/party actively attempted to strengthen their position on that issue, and lastly, the media must pick up and underline this shift. In Clinton’s case, he neutralized the Republican’s strong position on crime and was able to then focus on the Democrats’ stance on the subject. This supports the criticism on Petrocik’s distribution of issues and confirms the division as given by Pope and Woon, since it shows that ownership is not static and can change over time.

Further research by Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave (2015) was conducted regarding issue trespassing from an associative issue ownership perspective. The experimental study by Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave shows that issues cannot be stolen, not even for a short period of time. This contradicts the study by Holian conducted in 2004. Holian focused on competence issue ownership, whereas Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave focus on associative issue ownership. They

researched issue trespassing, issue retention (“the effect of voter exposure to party campaign messages where the party owns the issue”), and the long term effects of both issue trespassing and retention (Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave, 2015). Their research showed that short term effects on associative issue ownership do exist when parties focus more on issues that they already own. This can temporarily strengthen their position. The same, however, does not go for issue trespassing. A candidate speaking out on an issue not currently owned by their party does not automatically lead to them owning the issue temporarily. These different theories on issue trespassing and its effect show that the category of issue ownership determines the flexibility of the ownership itself. Where competence-based issue ownership of an issue can differ over time, this is not the case for associative issue ownership (Holian, 2004; Lefevre, Tresch, and Walgrave 2015).

This overview shows the changes in issue ownership theory over the past three decades. Most of the above-cited research has built on predecessors and added new levels to the theory. Issue ownership developed from the notion that voters are affected by the perceived competence of a party on a specific issue to a theory that encompasses multiple divisions. The division between voter- or party-level issue ownership and associative- or competence-based issue ownership needs to be taken into account when researching within the paradigm of issue ownership. Furthermore, much of the research in the paradigm has been based on the distribution of issues amongst parties as designed by Petrocik in 1996. Since then, only Pope and Woon have developed a new distribution based on data from 1939 to 2004 (2009). Their distribution is less static than Petrocik’s and depicts the change of ownership which is possible over time, especially when it comes to the subjects of prosperity and peace.

In this thesis, the main segment of the paradigm of issue ownership that is used is voter-level, competence-based issue ownership. The reason for this is the prevalence of supporting theories and the available measurements. The distribution of ownership used is that of Jeremy Pope and Jonathan Woon, since their research was published closest in time to the case studies discussed and also since the fluctuation in their results show the possibility of issue ownership transferring to another party. Lastly, the theory of issue trespassing as researched by Holian in 2004, Damore in 2004, and Buell and Sigelman in 2004 are used to research the techniques of issue trespassing in the case studies.

## 1.2 Method

This subchapter outlines the method used to analyze the chosen case studies within the context of issue ownership and issue trespassing. The methods discussed are case studies, content analysis, and discourse analysis. These serve as the foundation of the research conducted into the case studies. These methods were selected because they enable us to study the theory in-depth. The case studies offer a solid example and can be used to both test theory and build it. The research conducted is thus both deductive and inductive.

The chosen unit of research for this thesis are case studies. Since the entire election cycle spans multiple years and different media, a complete analysis of all speeches is impossible within the frame of a single thesis. Therefore, the choice was made to focus on three speeches made by Barack Obama over the span of the election. Speeches are an insight in the deliberate expressions of a campaign, because every sentence has been meticulously designed to reflect a candidate's message. Focusing on speeches gives a better view of the issues that the campaign wanted to speak on. The three speeches were chosen because of their importance within the timeframe of the election and their ceremonial value. The first speech is the one given on February 17, 2007 where Barack Obama announced his candidacy. This speech was chosen since it kicked off his presidential campaign and was the first moment where Obama asserted himself towards certain issues. The second case study is the speech given at the Democratic National Convention on August 28, 2008. The speech was selected because it ended the primary campaign and started the general presidential election. Obama would face the Republican candidate starting from this moment on and an expectation is that he then starts to focus more on Republican-owned issues. The final speech is the one given in Ohio on October 27, 2008. The Obama campaign labeled this as *The Closing Argument* and it was selected since it sums up Obama's point of views on a large number of issues.

In order to analyze these three case studies content analysis is used. Content analysis allows for an objective and systemic discussion of a text (Stemler, 2001). In content analysis, software is often used to carry out lexical searches that organize the coding of text. Ideally, a text is coded by multiple people. This is not the case in this research. Since software is used to conduct a lexical search and the text is checked by hand as well, this fallacy is obviated. The word count created by coding is expected to reflect a certain importance of the topic. However, within the context of issue ownership and more specifically issue trespassing, this might not be

the case. A candidate mentioning a topic outside of their ownership could be more significant than them speaking persistently on an issue that they do own.

When approaching the coding of a text, two distinct methods can be used to come up with the codes: emergent and a priori coding. Emergent coding means that codes are created during the process of coding, based on units found in the text. A priori coding means that codes are established preceding the coding process on the basis of theory (Stemler, 2001). The latter is used in this research.

To analyze the speeches selected for this thesis, ATLAS.ti software is used to allow for an organized manner of coding. A priori coding is used in this thesis. The codes used are taken from the work of Pope and Woon (2009), since their theory is used as the basis for the dispersal of issues amongst parties. The codes used are: prosperity, peace, environment, education, social security, health care, jobs, deficit, taxes, law and order, and foreign policy. These codes represent the issues and subsets of issues which are frequently discussed by presidential candidates, polled in Gallup polls, and used by researchers in the field of issue ownership.

In order to create a notion of the issue ownership of candidates during the election process, newspaper articles are researched. The articles are selected on the basis of timeframe, topic, and the newspaper itself. Articles are used to give context to the position of Barack Obama in the electoral race and also to gain perspective on how certain aspects of the speech, mostly the topics he spoke on, were received. Therefore, articles are selected from both shortly before as well as within a week after the speeches. In order to research these articles, discourse analysis is used. Discourse analysis is a method to analyze text, both written and verbal, in a matter which goes beyond studying on a sentence level (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). This type of analysis is particularly useful within the context of newspaper articles, since aspects of writing such as tone can also be taken into account.

The analyses of the speeches are all organized in a similar scheme. First of all, an explanation is given for the selection of the case study. Next, context is provided on the relevant political climate and the position of Barack Obama in the election. Following this context is a content analysis of the vital parts of Obama's speeches which deal with intersections of issues and issue trespassing. A discourse analysis of newspaper articles is done next. Only major newspapers are used, such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Guardian. The articles are used to distil the influence of the speeches and whether Obama speaking out on

certain issues was regarded as remarkable. Finally, Gallup polls are used whenever possible to reflect the ownership of a candidate on a certain topic and to show the salience of issues for the electorate.

## Case Study 1: Presidential Candidacy Announcement speech

The first speech to be discussed is the speech in which Barack Obama announced his candidacy on 10 February 2007. This is not only the start of the campaign, but it is also the natural starting point for a temporal overview of that campaign and its most important speeches. The speculation surrounding Obama's candidacy started four years earlier, in the previous presidential election cycle, when he gave the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention where John Kerry was nominated as the party's presidential candidate. His speech, *The Audacity of Hope*, introduced future-President Obama to a broad audience by talking about his background and narrating his experiences and hopes for the future. A number of themes he discusses in the speech are health care, challenges of unity of the nation, and war. These would go on to become staples in his campaign speeches.

Barack Obama announced his candidacy for president in Springfield, Illinois, the state's capital, where he had served as a state senator for eight years before representing Illinois in the U.S. Senate. He had relatively little experience in politics compared to most who seek the highest office, but the 2004 DNC keynote address had given him a high enough profile to make an impression and allowed for his candidacy to be noticed. However, this does not mean that he was the evident winner of the Democratic nomination, let alone of the presidential election. His main competition, of course, was Senator Hillary Clinton. A candidate revered for her grasp on policy, her understanding of the presidential office, and her experience in Washington D.C. (Nagourney & Zeleny, 2007). In fact, the news coverage of Obama's announcement zoomed in on his inexperience and the competition he was up against. Barack Obama addressed his inexperience in the speech and spun it to his advantage by stating that his lack of experience in Washington D.C. made him the perfect "agent of change" (Obama, 2007), change also being one of the main themes on which he built his campaign.

Besides receiving criticism for his short run in national political positions, Obama was also not particularly forthcoming on any particular stances until he kicked off his campaign (Nagourney & Zeleny, 2007). His 2004 speech at the Democratic National Convention did mention issues such as health care, the war in Iraq, and the challenge of unifying the nation, but he did not give concrete plans as to what he wanted to change and exactly how he intended to do it. His campaign would have to turn this around and instill confidence in the people that a man

who had limited experience with being a politician in D.C., and whose point of view was not widely expressed, could become the man in the oval office.

The speech in which Senator Obama announced his candidacy was filled with themes and one-liners which would become familiar over the year and a half of campaigning that followed. Themes such as war, hope, change, and the state of the economy were prevalent then and throughout his candidacy. Analyzing the speech shows that the theme of peace and war is mentioned the most; on fourteen occasions during his twenty-one minute address does he spend a (partial) sentence on it. Of course, this is not a surprising issue to speak on. The U.S. had been in the Iraq war since 2003 and the support for the war had dwindled ever since the number of deaths of U.S. soldiers had gone up (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). A June 2007 poll also presented that the Iraq War was considered the number one issue for the electorate in terms of importance (Newport, Saad, Jones, & Carroll, 2007). Obama had a unique position regarding the Iraq war in respect to his competitors for the Democratic nomination and even the presidency; he had always opposed the Iraq War (Nagourney & Zeleny, 2007). As a senator, he had also introduced legislation to reduce the number of soldiers in Iraq, which made this a topic on which Obama had the high ground, both in opinion and in legislative history.

The opinion that Barack Obama stood strong on the topic of war might have been surprising in regard to the issue ownership theory by John R. Petrocik (1996). His often-used division of issues amongst the Democratic and Republican party puts the themes of war and peace square in the Republican corner. The more recent study by Jeremy Pope and Jonathan Woon has shown that the issue of war and peace is subject to volatility (2009). Over the course of 1939 to 2004, the years measured in the study, the Democrats owned and lost the issue of war on a regular basis. In 2004, however, the Democrats convincingly owned the issue (Pope & Woon, 2009). This is arguably not surprising since the Iraq and Afghanistan War were both started by a Republican president: George W. Bush. When asked for a February 2007 Gallup poll whether or not the Iraq War was a mistake, 56% of the participants said it was. Comparing this to only 23% in 2003, when the war started. The combination of the disapproval for the war and it having been started by a Republican president corresponds with Pope and Woon's finding that the Democrats largely owned the issue of war in 2004, at which point the Gallup Poll showed a disapproval rating for the involvement in the war which fluctuated between 38 and 54 %.

In this speech, Barack Obama uses his ownership of the issue of war, or at least ownership of the Iraq War, to also trespass into the territory of foreign policy. Where the ownership of war seems to oscillate between the two parties, the ownership of foreign policy lies firmly with the Republican party (Pope & Woon, 2009; Petrocik, 1996). Obama says: “[w]e’ve been told that tough talk and an ill-conceived war can replace diplomacy, and strategy, and foresight” (Obama, 2007). Here he reiterates his position on the war, without making explicit which war is being discussed, and calls the current government out on foregoing the route of “diplomacy, strategy, and foresight” (Obama, 2007). In doing so, he shows his preference for the diplomatic strategy over one of war which had been used by the Republicans. Of course, hindsight is 20/20 and Obama benefited here from not having been involved in the decision-making process. After all, he was not yet a Senator when the vote on the Iraq War came to the floor. Obama was capable of using the negative favorability of the people for the war and his own position to improve his standing between competitors who were deemed more qualified because of their experience. He, therefore, appeared to own the issue early on and solidified his position as the anti-Iraq War candidate. In this speech, he then used that ownership to trespass into the issue of foreign policy, a Republican-owned issue. This was the first instance of a technique that Obama would use throughout his campaign.

Another important issue in the 2008 election was the economy. The U.S. and the global market were struck by an economic crisis which influenced the lives of many members of the electorate. While certain parts of the economy, such as taxes and the deficit, were clearly issues owned by the Republican Party, the overall prosperity of the country and its people remains in volatile ownership (Pope & Woon, 2009). Pope and Woon show that from 1939, the starting point of the study, to 1980 the issue of prosperity was mostly owned by the Democratic Party. After 1980 the issue seemed to be owned by the Republican Party more often than not, a slight change in this only occurring after the turn of the millennium (Pope & Woon, 2009). Pope and Woon do not expand on the reason for this 1980 turning point. However, it is not hard to imagine a link between the change in ownership and the economic crisis in the early 1980s. At the time Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, was president. Jimmy Carter was defeated in the 1980 presidential election by Ronald Reagan, a Republican candidate. The similarities with the 2008 election are clearly present. The economic crises in both 1980 and in 2008 caused a change in the ownership

of the issue. In 1980 the ownership goes from Democrat to Republican, in 2008 the ownership goes back to the Democrat.

A June 2007 Gallup poll showed the economy to be the number two issue for voters in the 2008 election (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). It was, therefore, important for Obama to do well on issues surrounding the economy from the start of the campaign. In regard to the economy, or prosperity as Pope and Woon call it, he establishes himself as a part of the people as opposed to the “politicians a million miles away” (Obama, 2007). Furthermore, he uses the Democrats’ ownership of the jobs issue to talk about the economy. This is most prevalent in the following sentence: “And as our economy changes, let’s be the generation that ensures our nation’s workers are sharing in our prosperity” (Obama, 2007). Within this one sentence he establishes himself as a man of the people, talking about “our economy”, “our nation’s workers”, and “our prosperity”. He calls his generation to action, and talks about the workers as a part of the prosperity. It is an effective sentence that clearly speaks to a large portion of the electorate; blue collar workers who do not share in the wealth of the nation or the companies they work for.

Besides embedding jobs and the economy, he also embeds the economy in an issue it seems to have less of a connection to: education. In fact, he starts the paragraph on education by stating: “Let us begin this hard work together. Let us transform this nation” (Obama, 2007). Once again portraying himself as an agent of change. He then continues: “Let us be the generation that reshapes our economy to compete in the digital age” (Obama, 2007). A sentence which again calls to action and showcases Obama as one of the people. Finally, he continues with his views on education. This is where he becomes more concrete on matters he wants to accomplish; increase teachers’ pay in return for more accountability and making college more affordable. He expands on education in a way that he does not on the economy. For education he gives a number of examples of goals, whereas in regard to the economy he remains vague.

Two more subsets of the economy are briefly mentioned in the speech: deficit and taxes, both issues owned by the Republican Party (Pope & Woon, 2009). Obama speaks about deficit or debt in a subliminal connection to the Republicans. He states that “[f]or the past six years we’ve been told that our mounting debts don’t matter” (Obama, 2007). It is not explicitly mentioned, but it is obvious because of the time period mentioned that the “mounting debts” have been ignored by the Republican in the highest office: George W. Bush. Not only does Obama point a finger, he points to the inaction and indifference all the while not offering a

solution himself. He uses a different approach when speaking on taxes. Instead of lighting a negative spotlight on the Republican Party in regard to an issue that the party owns, he showcases his experience with taxes in a positive light. He says himself that “we made the tax system right here in Springfield more fair” (Obama, 2007). He does not expand any further than that, all he does is quickly mention his experience with reforming the Illinois tax system and in doing so creates a positive link between himself and taxes, a Republican-owned issue.

After listening to the speech and reading it, it is not hard to see what its purpose was, namely to establish Barack Obama as a serious candidate for the Democratic nomination and ultimately the presidency. To establish a movement of change with the campaign as its motor. Lastly, it aimed to counter the idea that Barack Obama did not have clear plans about important issues by speaking out on the war and education. Obama established his ownership on the issue of the Iraq War and linked this ownership to his plan for foreign policy, a Republican-owned issue. A similar technique was used when Obama linked the economy, an issue which ownership oscillates, to both jobs and education, which are Democratic-owned issues. By using this technique, the ownership from one issue possibly transfers to the other.

The media certainly picked up on some of these goals. The *New York Times* reported on the announcement on 11 February 2007 with a piece that highlighted Obama’s strategy and how it might beat Senator Hillary Clinton. The authors, Adam Nagourney and Jeff Zeleny, discuss how Obama positions himself as a “candidate of generational change running to oust entrenched symbols of Washington, an allusion to Mrs. Clinton” (2007). The article also discusses the concerns surrounding the Obama candidacy and the lack of plans that had been released by Obama . “[H]e has avoided offering the kind of specific ideas that his own advisers acknowledge could open him up to attack by opponents or alienate supporters initially drawn by his more thematic appeals” (Nagourney & Zeleny, 2007). It is suggested that the lack of expansion on specific ideas and plans is to prevent Obama from losing followers or offering ammunition to opponents. They could then only attack him on his grand visions, and who could disagree with a more prosperous America? *The Washington Post* also discusses the lack of plans in a 11 February 2007 article: “he will be challenged to fill in the blanks of a policy agenda that is longer on goals than details” (Davidson, 2007). *The New York Times* authors acknowledge Obama’s emphasis on the Iraq war in the speech and his unique position in regard to the other Democratic candidates. They also make it clear that this is the only plan he has shared with the public,

especially linked to his proposed legislation. Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* speak of Obama as a serious candidate whose biggest opponent would be Hillary Clinton, both papers discuss the way in which his speech and Obama himself invoked a movement of change, and both papers underlined Obama's ownership of the Iraq war issue within the Democratic race.

This opens up an interesting new segment in the field of issue ownership. Theory up until now has focused on the ownership between parties. The U.S. election, of course, has a lengthy election before the general election within the parties. The issue ownership within a party, however, has not been researched. In this case, Obama established his ownership on the topic of war over his fellow candidates because of his legislative experience on the topic and his longstanding disapproval of the Iraq War. The ownership of economy and its many subsets was not clearly defined in the race and also not written on by the media.

No polling on issue ownership was conducted shortly before or after the announcement speech by Obama. However, extensive polling was done on electability and on which issues mattered to the electorate at the time. A June 2007 Gallup Poll shows the Iraq War and the economy to be the top issues for voters (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll). A poll conducted by CBS before January 22, 2007, showed that Clinton was likely to win the Democratic nomination with 51 % of Democrats asked stating they would vote for her (Roberts, 2007). The same question asked around February 15, 2007, showed Clinton receiving 49% and Obama 32% of the vote (Hillary Clinton versus, 2007). A poll by *USA Today* and Gallup, which was released on February 14, 2007, asked registered voters to choose between Obama or potential Republican candidate John McCain. They tied, both receiving 48% of the support (Preferences expressed, 2007). This shows that while Obama's support within the Democratic Party was not yet equal or higher than Clinton's, he did have a chance of winning in the national race. Considering the importance of the Iraq War and the economy to the electorate, these polls could suggest a growing faith in both Obama's competency on these issues, as well as a growing faith in the Democrats' ownership of them.

Barack Obama's first speech during his candidacy offers many insights concerning the important issues in this presidential race. Obama showcases a new technique here where he speaks out on two issues of which he owns one, but not the other. This then mixes the ownership and gives him more credibility on the topic. Whether or not Obama does so because of conscious

reasoning is unknown. No background information is available on the speech and so it is unknown whether the speech writers were aware of the theory of issue ownership. This speech and its analysis also presents an interesting new area within the field where the ownership of issues within a party can be discussed. Which could potentially also offer the question whether ownership is strictly a matter of parties or also of the individual candidates.

## Case Study 2: Nomination Acceptation Speech

The second speech to be discussed is Barack Obama's speech from 28 August 2008: the night he accepted the nomination as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate. The speech was chosen for three reasons. It was selected because of its place on the campaign timeline; over a year into the campaign and with two and a half months to go until the election. Enough time had passed for a development in message and a development of the people's perception of Barack Obama as a candidate. The second reason is the ceremonial value of the speech and its occasion. The acceptance of the nomination marks the end of the primary election of the Democratic Party and the beginning of Obama as the presidential candidate who was to face the Republican candidate: John McCain. I expect that this also means that Obama waivered more into Republican issues, since the start of the general election also means that he is trying to sway voters in swing states who might have been more inclined to vote for a Republican candidate. The final reason for selecting this speech is the length and topic density. This speech was a break from the repetitional speeches used on the primary campaign trail and is therefore a significant speech in Obama's campaign. Indeed, this speech went on to inform many of his speeches in the final stretch of the campaign leading up to the elections on November 4.

The speech at the Democratic National Convention was preceded by a year and a half of campaigning and primaries for the three main candidates, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, and Barack Obama. Polls expected Clinton to win ever since she announced that she was running (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). This was because of her experience, backing by a beloved former president, and the Clintons' standing in the Democratic Party. However, the movement surrounding Barack Obama was undeniable and not even a scandal surrounding tapes that made him seem elitist could stop him from winning the majority of the delegates. After months of Clinton and Obama challenging each other, Obama was nominated on 27 August 2008. During the roll call for the vote, Hillary Clinton moved to nominate Obama by acclamation and thereby gave her full support to the new candidate for the Democrats. The following night, Barack Obama gave his acceptance speech in Invesco Field stadium, not at the actual convention, a break previously made by John F. Kennedy and done in order to seat more of the people essential to his movement.

The speech, naturally, thanked his supporters, his wife and children, his running mate Joe Biden, and Hillary Clinton for all her hard work. It also expanded on his actual plans for the

nation, the absence of which had been a focal point of his opponents' criticism towards him. While Obama had spoken on issues of which the ownership frequently oscillates between the Republican and the Democratic Parties, such as peace and the economy, he trespassed into a Republican dominated territory in this speech: taxes (Petrocik, 1996; Pope and Woon, 2009). Holian's theory on issue trespassing and issue overtaking says that a candidate or party can temporarily overtake the ownership of an issue if the candidate actively attempts to overcome the party's weakness on the subject, if the public opinion shifts, and if the media picks up on the narrative (2004). In this theory, the first- and last-mentioned prerequisites are the most important (Holian, 2004).

Obama had previously attempted to strengthen his credibility on issues of which the ownership oscillates between the two parties, namely peace and the economy. He once again trespasses by first speaking on a topic he owns and connecting it to the issue which was in Republican hands at the time. This particular technique is not yet described by the literature on issue ownership and issue trespassing, but seems to be a signature move for Obama. As discussed in the theoretical framework, Holian does describe a technique used by Bill Clinton in the 1992 election where he took away the Republicans' footing in crime by first and foremost agreeing with their stance and then introducing measures to prevent the need for capital punishment. Obama re-offers the technique used in the February 2007 speech. He, once again, uses his authority on one subject to speak on another subject where his authority is not yet established.

In the case of taxes, he speaks on taxes in combination with jobs, an issue clearly owned by Democrats (Pope & Woon, 2009). "Unlike John McCain, I will stop giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, and I will start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America" (Obama, 2008b). In this one sentence he condemns McCain's plans, links the Republicans to corporations as allies, and appeals to the working class, which was much needed after the release of a taped conversation made him sound elitist (Thrush, 2008). It is a very effective way of tearing down any credibility McCain might have had on jobs and also showing how Obama intended to use tax breaks to support the increase of jobs and the American economy. He continues on taxes by stating: "I will cut taxes for 95% of all working families. Because in an economy like this, the last thing we should do is raise taxes on the middle-class" (Obama 2008b). The significance in these two passages not only lies in his trespassing into

Republican-owned issues, it is also important because he laid out a plan. He had previously been called out by the media, Clinton, and Edwards on his lack of expansion on his ideology (Nagourney & Zeleny, 2007). The tax plan mentioned here is nothing set in stone or too specific, but Obama shows where his focus was to lie and that he was to break with the Republican policy of George W. Bush, who had favored a trickle-down approach to taxes and the economy. This meant that tax breaks were giving to the highest percentile in hopes of their profit trickling down into the rest of the economy and that corporations would be stimulated by the tax breaks to keep their manufacturing in the country rather than abroad. Obama made it clear that his tax breaks would be focused on the middle and working class. He brings his tax plan in line with the values of the Democratic Party.

A topic widely discussed in both Barack Obama's candidacy announcement speech and his acceptance speech is the Iraq War. Again, this is not surprising considering how important the issue was amongst the electorate and how salient it was in the media (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). As discussed in the previous chapter, Obama claimed the moral high ground when it came to the Iraq War. This claim was linked to his outspoken opposition of the war since its beginning, something none of his opponents in the primaries could claim and neither could his new opponent, John McCain. Barack Obama continued to use the rhetoric in this speech, now aimed at John McCain. "For while Senator McCain was turning his sights to Iraq just days after 9/11, I stood up and opposed this war, knowing that it would distract us from the real threats we face" (Obama 2008b). Here, Obama reiterated his stance on the war and at the same time marked McCain as a man who followed the herd and was caught on the wrong side of history. The quote also portrayed Obama as a commander who would thoughtfully consider his options before going into war as a consequence of his temper and emotions.

Previously, McCain attacked Obama on lacking the temperament and judgement necessary to lead the military. John McCain himself had served in the Navy and been deployed in the Vietnam War. This experience created an associative ownership on the issue of war. McCain's apparent reputation in the area of war is supported by a June 2008 Gallup Poll. When adults were questioned on the fitness of John McCain to serve as commander-in-chief, 80% answered positively, whereas only 55% said the same about Barack Obama. When asked who they would trust more to make the decision to send troops into battle, 87% of Republicans believed McCain to be trustworthy and 67% of the Democrats felt the same way about Obama.

Out of independents, 54% favored John McCain and 39% of independents favored Obama (Saad, 2008). Most important about these results is that McCain received more crossover favor from Democrats than Obama did from the Republicans. This supports the notion that McCain owned the issue of peace and war at this time. However, this did not mean that Obama would not speak on the subject. Besides pushing forward his stance on the Iraq War, he also went against McCain's criticism of his fitness to serve as the commander-in-chief and the general concern that a Democratic candidate would not be as willing to use military action. "We are the party of Roosevelt. We are the party of Kennedy. So don't tell me that Democrats won't defend this country. Don't tell me that Democrats won't keep us safe" (Obama 2008b). Here, Obama references two presidents from his party who served during the second World War and the Cold War and in those times successfully defended the nation. According to research conducted by Pope and Woon, the Democratic Party owned the issue of peace and war during the presidency of both Kennedy and Roosevelt (2009). In fact, Obama alludes to the two periods in time before the 2000s when the Democratic Party owned this issue most convincingly. This allusion connects the Democratic Party of the present to the successful presidents of the past and reaffirms the associative ownership of the Democrats of the issue of war.

Obama as a candidate, however, did not yet own the issue in respect to McCain. He addresses this by creating a clear image of himself as the commander-in-chief as someone who "will never hesitate to defend this nation, but [...] will only send our troops into harm's way with a clear mission" (Obama 2008b). He continues on with a clear plan on how to end the war in Iraq and U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. In doing so he establishes a mixed vision of both a thoughtful and resolute commander who does not give in to his temper. Whether or not this image was picked up by the electorate, is unknown. No further Gallup poll was conducted on the topic of fitness to serve as the commander-in-chief.

The media, of course, widely covered the speech. *The New York Times* even labelled it as "arguably Mr. Obama's most important of the campaign to date" (Nagourney & Zelenyau, 2008). According to *The Guardian*, Obama had a clear task ahead of him. This speech needed to explain policy rather than only moving and stirring those attending the speech (Freedland, 2008). Something he did by explaining his tax plan and also by vowing to invest in renewable energy and to resign the dependence on oil from the Middle East. Interestingly, limited attention is given to Obama's focus on the Iraq War. National security as a whole was discussed by both *The New*

*York Times* and *The Guardian*. Both state that Obama attacked McCain on what they called his strongest area: national security. They argue that Obama links McCain to the Bush administration by doing this. *The Guardian* even goes as far as to say that Obama was “casting McCain as nothing more than a loyal echo for its fatal combination of tough talk and bad strategy” (Freedland, 2008). Obama does, effectively, link McCain to Bush and his failed policies in regards to foreign policy. He attempts to use the negative associative ownership of Bush and the Republican Party to have it wear off on McCain. Obama even proclaims that “the same party that brought you two terms of George Bush and Dick Cheney will ask this country for a third. [...] On November 4, we must stand up and say: Eight is enough” (Obama, 2008b). McCain is portrayed as a continuation, not of the Republican Party, but specifically of the Bush administration, no distinction between the two is made.

This speech and the topic of fitness to serve as commander-in-chief leads to a hole in the theory surrounding issue ownership. Here, we have a clear example of candidates whose ownership diverges from the ownership of their parties. McCain owns the topic of war in the Gallup poll, yet in another Gallup poll the Republican Party’s image is considered unfavorable by 59% of those questioned and the Iraq War is depicted as the most important issue of the election (Newport, Saad, Jones & Carroll, 2007). Previous literature has not described the phenomenon of a candidate’s reputation deviating from that of the party. This hole in the field connects to the previously discussed segment of personal ownership versus party ownership.

Obama’s speech accepting his nomination is then significant because it highlights the deviation between personal issue ownership and party issue ownership. Furthermore, Obama clearly trespasses into Republican territory by broadly discussing taxes and showing his tax plan. In doing so in combination with the topic of jobs, an issue which his party owns. This is showing to be the quintessential move of Obama as he trespasses into Republican issues. Obama used a new technique in this speech. He used the negative reputation of George W. Bush on the issue of war, specifically the Iraq War, to discredit John McCain’s stance. McCain received favorable ratings on this topic, in contrast to Bush. Obama then linked McCain to the actions of Bush in an attempt to discredit McCain. This is not a technique previously used by Obama, nor is it discussed in literature.

### Case Study 3: The Closing Argument

The third and final speech was given on October 27, 2008 in Ohio. It was selected as a case study because it was seen as the roundup of Barack Obama's campaign for president. It has aptly been named 'The Closing Argument', reflecting its purpose of recapitulating Obama's main vision and goals and driving the message forward one last time on a grander scale.

Between the speech accepting the Democratic nomination and the speech given on October 27, 2008, much had happened in the presidential election. Senator John McCain was nominated as the Republican candidate on September 3, 2008 and with that the election turned from an internal occasion to an inter-party campaign. In the midst of the election came the low point of the economic crisis. In order to stimulate companies to restart spending and lending money, President George W. Bush proposed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 which would be a government bailout for these companies. The act created the Troubled Assets Relief Program which encompassed 700 billion dollars in relief (Troubled Asset Relief Program, 2017). On September 25, 2008, John McCain and Barack Obama went to the White House to meet with the President and discuss his plans. After, they issued a joint statement voicing their support for the act and also recognizing its flaws (Bash et al, 2008). Obama also offered his personal views on the act, stating that "[t]his plan cannot be a welfare program for CEOs whose greed and irresponsibility has contributed to this crisis", but instead needed to focus on "millions of families facing foreclosure" (qtd. in Bash et al, 2008). He used the bailout plan by the Republican president to offer himself up as the fighter for the middle-class families and the protector of the issues of the 99%.

The economy continued to be an important issue in the presidential debates held between September 26 and October 15. After the first debate, a Gallup poll determined Obama to be the winner of the debate, with 46% of people asked naming him the candidate who did best in the debate (Newport, 2008). The same poll also asked members of the electorate about their confidence in both candidates' competence on the economy. 34% Of people said that they had more confidence in Obama's competency after watching the debate and 23% said the same about John McCain. The same question was asked about national security and foreign policy and McCain and Obama scored nearly exactly the same here with 34% of the people stating that their confidence in McCain's competence on the subject had grown after the debate and 35% saying the same about Obama (Newport, 2008). These statistics reflect the issue ownership of the

candidates after the first debate. An issue here being that the percentage represents the growth of confidence and a starting point is not given. An important final question was which candidate offered the best solutions for the country's problems. Obama was seen by 53% of the questioned people as the candidate with the best solutions.

Obama continued on to win the second presidential election debate 56% to 23% (Jones 2008a), and the third debate 56% to 30% (Jones, 2008b). Jones, in his explanation of the Gallup poll, does emphasize that the winning of debates has not pointed directly towards a victory in the election in the past. The debates did, however, strengthen Barack Obama's overall image (Jones, 2008b).

In the days before the final big speech, Obama was ahead in the polls by a small margin. A Gallup poll taken between October 23 and 25 shows that 51% of registered voters favor Obama over McCain (Gallup Daily, October 26, 2008). So, going into this final speech Barack Obama was ahead in the polls and according to the best estimation of issue ownership that we have, he had greatly improved his reputation in the areas of economy and national security and foreign policy. Did this affect his previously used strategy of transferring his credibility on a Democratic owned issue onto a traditionally Republican owned issue?

Overall the 'Closing Argument' speech likens the greatest hits of Obama's previous appearances. It heavily relied on previously used rhetoric and borrowed directly from both of the speeches analyzed in the preceding chapters. As in the other speeches, Obama emphasized the economy, as the election took place during the low point of the economic crisis. According to the Gallup poll he had the best reputation on the economy at the start of this speech and thus started using it as an issue with which to enter all other issues. This is something he had previously done with a topic such as jobs. One example from the Ohio speech is the issue of the Iraq War. Obama went from speaking on education, an issue clearly owned by the Democratic Party, to speaking on the Iraq War. The second sentence he spent on the war used the leverage Obama now has on economy to speak on the war, which remained in a tied ownership between Obama and McCain. He stated that "[i]t is time to stop spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq while the Iraqi government sits on a huge surplus" (Obama, 2008b). He discussed the Iraq War from a new perspective, an economic one. While John McCain was still expressing support for the war, Obama found a new way to oppose. The economic statement then tied in with Obama's vision

for the conclusion of the war: the Iraqi government needs to step up, take responsibility, and stop relying on the United States for aid.

Barack Obama also discussed taxes in this speech. He does so in a similar way as he did in his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention. He effortlessly weaved from taxes to jobs and back again. His speech in Ohio used the same rhetoric as was used when he spoke on the economy and jobs in the candidacy announcement speech in February 2007 and when he spoke on the Iraq War and taxes in his nomination acceptance speech in August 2008. He connected Senator John McCain and his tax plan to corporations that export American jobs and therefore obstruct the growth of jobs in America. He spoke on taxes more than once in this speech and at one point did so in a natural connection to the economy. A particularly effective line of rhetoric is when he first spoke on the economy and Senator McCain's support for President Bush's policies and followed this up by accusing McCain of not having any new ideas on economy and taxes. Something that would not have mattered if it was not for the economic crisis that started during the Bush administration. Obama went on to criticize McCain's proposed tax policies of giving tax breaks only to large corporations. Here, he mixed in his overall campaign message. After all, Obama's slogan for the 2008 campaign was "Change we can believe in" and this message of change resonated in his movement. In this instance, Obama connected McCain to the opposite of that by saying "[t]hat's not change" (Obama, 2008b) in regard to McCain's tax plan. Barack Obama thus spoke out on the Republican owned issue of taxes to condemn the proposed tax plan of the Republican candidate.

Similar to the Democratic National Convention nomination acceptance speech, Obama again continuously connected Senator McCain to the failed policies of President Bush. He does so on seven different occasions and most of them are connected to economy and taxes. The juxtaposition he creates between himself and McCain on those issues is quite clear. Obama paints himself as the man of the middle class, whereas McCain's plans favor large corporations. Obama is the man that will bring change and McCain is the perpetuation of George W. Bush. "We've tried it John McCain's way. We've tried it George Bush's way" (Obama, 2008b). Obama takes McCain's experience and reverses it from being an advantage to marking him as the emblem of the old days which has brought on the crisis. He takes the old issue ownership of the Republican Party on economy and takes down their reputation on the issue because of their actions (Pope & Woon, 2009).

This particular speech was not widely covered in the media, probably since it was not given at a specifically ceremonious time and it was, after all, a summary of Obama's former speeches. *The Guardian* did cover the speech and marked it as significant due to its geographical location (Goldenberg, 2008). Ohio is a well-known swing state and important for the Democratic nominee since no Democrat has won the election without winning Ohio since John F. Kennedy (Goldenberg, 2008). The speech was so important because, while Obama was doing well in typically Republican states, he was lacking support in Ohio. In her coverage of the speech, Goldenberg also discusses the way in which Obama paints Senator McCain. "It was also an indictment of McCain, who Obama cast as a clone of George Bush" (Goldenberg, 2008). The rhetoric Obama used here, was obviously clear.

In general, Barack Obama chose to use the classic juxtaposition in this speech of the Republican candidate favoring corporations and Wall street over the Democrat candidate who stands up for the middle and working class. Of course, this division is made from the Democrat perspective. Furthermore, Obama reused rhetoric from other speeches and once again included his technique of using his reputation on one issue to create more credibility on a different issue. A Gallup poll taken in the days following the speech shows Obama in the lead 52 to 41% amongst registered voters (Gallup Daily: Obama 52%, 2008). Obama would continue to hold on to this lead and eventually won the 2008 presidential election. An election where he, as a Democrat, found a way to win in a race dominated by Republican-owned issues.

## Conclusion

This thesis researched the way in which candidate Barack Obama spoke on issues owned by the Republican Party, according to the classic distribution of issues in the context of issue ownership theory. More specifically, three campaign speeches were researched as case studies. These case studies spanned the entire length of Obama's 2008 campaign and reflected his position on various issues. Specifically, the research aimed to answer the question of how Barack Obama spoke out on issues which his party did not own according to the distribution of issues made in issue ownership theory. This answer could shed light on a underdeveloped segment of issue ownership and issue trespassing theory.

The main result of the content analysis and close reading of these speeches is the technique Obama used to discuss issues on which his reputation was lacking. He developed a precise way of discussing these issues in combination with topics which the Democratic Party did own. This way, he transferred his reputation from one issue onto another. He attempted to connect the issues to one another in a way that the boundaries of the issues blurred and he, therefore, had the ownership to discuss them all. He did this, both with issues of which the ownership oscillates between the Democratic and the Republican Party, such as prosperity and peace, and also with issues definitely owned by the Republicans, such as taxes. This is a new method which has not been discussed before in the theory of issue ownership and issue trespassing.

The only researcher who discussed a similar situation of a Democratic candidate speaking on Republican issues was Holian in 2004 when he delved into the 1992 election. The method described earlier in this thesis, where Bill Clinton spoke on crime by first agreeing with the Republicans' point-of-view and then adding the Democrats' solution, differed from Obama's method. Where Clinton used a singular issue and undercut the Republicans by taking away their unique point-of-view on the matter of capital punishment and then adding a prevention method as a way of speaking out on an issue on which he did not have ownership. Obama instead spoke out on the issues without altering the Democrats' standpoint and mixed similar issues together to reach a higher reputation. Both have shown to be effective methods for Democratic candidates who are often forced to speak on Republican issues (Benoit, Hansen, & Petrocik, 2003).

The research not only showed this new technique, it also highlighted the way in which Barack Obama linked Senator John McCain to President George W. Bush. Bush had a low

approval rating at the time because of the economic crisis and his handling of the Iraq War. Bush, therefore, created a possibility for Obama, as a Democrat, to claim ownership over the issues of prosperity and peace. Obama used the president's low approval rating to discredit Senator McCain and his attempt to own the issue of war as a veteran.

These case studies have added to the existing theory on issue trespassing by showing a new way to trespass. As research by Lefevre, Tresch and Walgrave has shown, this idea of trespassing might not have a lasting effect on the associative ownership of a party (2015). This leads to an interesting follow up of this research on the difference of a candidate's ownership versus the party's ownership. The current field focuses entirely on the ownership that the party has over a certain topic, whereas in the context of primary elections it might be intriguing to study the importance of issues owned by the other party and how these are discussed. Within the context of the 2008 election, an example would have been the discussing of war in the Democratic Party's primary elections. Furthermore, in the general election, the ownership of the candidate's might not always reflect that of the parties.

Another element that would be beneficial to further deal with in the field of issue ownership is the data available. Since this topic has only become prevalent again in recent years, not much data in the form of surveys is available to research the change in ownership in smaller timespans such as during the election. This would have been advantageous in this research as a way of measuring the effect of speeches and time on the ownership of certain issues by the candidate. Now, a reliance on Gallup polls and media analysis was created to help counter this lack of data. Although the Gallup polls did cover the major issues of ownership, such as the ownership over war, it did not ask the electorate about the ownership of issues such as taxes or jobs, which might have added vital insight to this research.

Other revisions to the research design that might have aided the results and the method are the addition of a second coder for the speeches. Usually a text is coded by two people to ensure that the content analysis is as close to an objective observation as possible. Since this research was conducted by only one person, the coding of the speeches was done just once. However, the usage of the ATLAS.ti software to do a lexical search has taken the place of a second coder.

The research conducted has given new insights in the particular way in which Barack Obama discussed issues owned by the Republican Party and their candidate John McCain. The

method of using the ownership of one issue to create credibility on another was used quite often and shows a deliberate attempt at crossing into Republican topics. The effect of these particular speeches cannot be precisely measured due to the lack of data. It does, however, leave the field of issue ownership and issue trespassing open with enough new insights to build upon and has highlighted new areas in the field that need to be further researched in order to gain new perceptions on current and future elections.

## Works Cited

- Balz, D., & Kornblut, A. (2008, August 28). Democrats Nominate Obama. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- Bash, D., Bolduan, K., Homick, E., King, J., Mooney, A., Sinderbrand, R., & Quijano, E. (2008, September 25). McCain, Obama headed to Washington for bailout talks. *CNN*. Retrieved from [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com).
- Bélangier, E., Meguid, B. (2008). Issue Saliency, Issue Ownership, and Issue-based Vote Choice. *Electoral Studies*, 27(3), 477-491.
- Belucci, P. (2006). Tracing the Cognitive and Affective Roots of 'Party Competence': Italy and Britain, 2001. *Electoral Studies*, 25(3), 548-569.
- Benoit, W. L., Hansen G.J., Petrocik, J.R. (2003). Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952-2000. *Political Science Quarterly*, 118(4), 599-626. doi: 10.1002/j.1538-165X.2003.tb00407.x
- Buell, E. H. Jr., Sigelman, L. (2004). Avoidance or Engagement? Issue Convergence in U.S. Presidential Campaigns, 1960-2000. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(4), 650-661.
- Damore, D. F. (2004). The Dynamics of Issue Ownership in Presidential Campaigns. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57(3), 391-397.
- Davidson, L. (2007, February 10). Obama Joins Race with Goals set High. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).
- Freedland, J. (2008, August 30). Democratic Convention: a Stage and a Performance Fit for a President. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com).
- Gallup Daily: Obama continues to lead McCain (2008, October 26). *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Gallup Daily: Obama 52%, McCain 42% among likely voters (2008, November 1). *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Goldenberg, S. (2008, October 28). Obama tempers optimism with economic caution. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com).
- Holian, D. B. (2004). He's Stealing my Issues! Clinton's Crime Rhetoric and the Dynamics of Issue Ownership. *Political Behavior*, 26(2), 95-124.
- Holian, D. B. (2006). Trust the Party Line. *Politics and Space*, 34(6), 777-802.

- Hillary Clinton vs. Barack Obama (2007, February 15). Fox Broadcasting Company. Retrieved from [www.foxnews.com](http://www.foxnews.com).
- Jones, J.M. (2008, October 9). Obama Rated as Winner of Second Presidential Debate. *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Jones, J.M. (2008, October 17). Obama Viewed as Winner of Third Debate. *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Lefevre, J., Tresch, A., & Walgrave, S. (2015). The associative dimension of issue ownership. *Archive Ouverte Unige*. doi:10.1093/poq/nfs023
- Lefevre, J., Tresch, A., & Walgrave, S. (2015). 'Steal me if you can!' The impact of campaign messages on associative issue ownership. *Party Politics*, 21(2), 198-208. doi:10.1177/1354068812472576
- Nagourney, A., & Zeleny, J. (2007, January 11). Obama Formally Enters Presidential Race. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Nagourney, A., & Zeleny, J. (2008, August 29). Obama Takes the Flight to McCain. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Naylor, B. (2008, August 29). Obama's Acceptance Pledge: Fix 'Broken Politics'. *NPR*. Retrieved from [www.npr.com](http://www.npr.com)
- Newport, F., Jones, J.M., Saad, L., & Carroll, J. (2007, June 27). Where the Election Stands: June 2007. *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Newport, F. (2008, September 28). Debate Watchers Give Obama Edge Over McCain. *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).
- Obama, Barack H. (2007, February 10) "Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President." Springfield, IL. *The American Presidency Project*.
- Obama, Barack H. (2008, August 28). "The American Promise." Denver, CO. *Obama's Speeches*.
- Obama, Barack H. (2008, October 27) "Remarks Presenting Presidential Campaign Closing Argument." Canton, OH. *The American Presidency Project*.
- Petrocik, J. R. (1996). Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3), 825-850.
- Pope, J. C., & Woon, J. (2009). Measuring Changes in American Party Reputations, 1939-2004. *Political Research Quarterly*, 62(4), 653-661. doi:10.1177/1065912908322406

Preferences expressed when registered voters were asked to make a choice between Barack Obama and John McCain (2007, February 14). *USA Today/Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).

Roberts, J. (2007, January 22). Poll: Democrats Favor Clinton over Obama. *CBS*. Retrieved from [www.cbs.com](http://www.cbs.com).

Saad, L. (2008, June 25). McCain vs. Obama as Commander in Chief. *Gallup*. Retrieved from [www.gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com).

Thrush, G. (2013, August 1). Clinton's 08 Slaps still Sting Obama. *Politico*. Retrieved from [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com).

Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) Information. *The Federal Reserve*. Retrieved from [www.federalreserve.gov](http://www.federalreserve.gov).

## Appendix A

### Candidacy Announcement Speech. Springfield, IL February 17, 2007

Hello Springfield! Look at all of you. Look at all of you. Goodness. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Giving all praise and honor to God for bringing us here today. Thank you so much. I am so grateful to see all of you. You guys are still cheering back there.

Let me begin by saying thanks to all you who've traveled, from far and wide, to brave the cold today. I know it's a little chilly -- but I'm fired up.

You know, we all made this journey for a reason. It's humbling to see a crowd like this, but in my heart I know you didn't just come here for me. You came here because you believe in what this country can be. In the face of war, you believe there can be peace. In the face of despair, you believe there can be hope. In the face of a politics that shut you out, that's told you to settle, that's divided us for too long, you believe that we can be one people, reaching for what's possible, building that more perfect union.

That's the journey we're on today. But let me tell you how I came to be here. As most of you know, I'm not a native of this great state. I moved to Illinois over two decades ago. I was a young man then, just a year out of college. I knew no one in Chicago when I arrived, was without money or family connections. But a group of churches had offered me a job as a community organizer for the grand sum of 13,000 dollars a year. And I accepted the job, sight unseen, motivated then by a single, simple, powerful idea: that I might play a small part in building a better America.

My work took me to some of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods. I joined with pastors and lay-people to deal with communities that had been ravaged by plant closings. I saw that the problems people faced weren't simply local in nature, that the decisions to close a steel mill was made by distant executives, that the lack of textbooks and computers in a school could be traced to skewed priorities of politicians a thousand miles away, and that when a child turns to violence -- I came to realize that -- there's a hole in that boy's heart that no government alone can fill. It was in these neighborhoods that I received the best education that I ever had, and where I learned the meaning of my Christian faith.

After three years of this work, I went to law school, because I wanted to understand how the law should work for those in need. I became a civil rights lawyer, and taught constitutional law, and after a time, I came to understand that our cherished rights of liberty and equality

depend on the active participation of an awakened electorate. It was with these ideas in mind that I arrived in this capital city as a state Senator.

It was here, in Springfield, where I saw all that is America converge -- farmers and teachers, businessmen and laborers, all of them with a story to tell, all of them seeking a seat at the table, all of them clamoring to be heard. I made lasting friendships here, friends that I see here in the audience today. It was here where we learned to disagree without being disagreeable; that it's possible to compromise so long as you know those principles that can never be compromised; and that so long as we're willing to listen to each other, we can assume the best in people instead of the worst.

That's why we were able to reform a death penalty system that was broken; that's why we were able to give health insurance to children in need; that's why we made the tax system right here in Springfield more fair and just for working families; and that's why we passed ethics reform that the cynics said could never, ever be passed.

It was here, in Springfield, where North, South, East, and West come together that I was reminded of the essential decency of the American people -- where I came to believe that through this decency, we can build a more hopeful America. And that is why, in the shadow of the Old State Capitol, where Lincoln once called on a house divided to stand together, where common hopes and common dreams still live, I stand before you today to announce my candidacy for President of the United States of America.

Look, I recognize that there is a certain presumptuousness in this, a certain audacity, to this announcement. I know that I haven't spent a lot of time learning the ways of Washington. But I've been there long enough to know that the ways of Washington must change. The genius of our Founders is that they designed a system of government that can be changed. And we should take heart, because we've changed this country before. In the face of tyranny, a band of patriots brought an empire to its knees. In the face of secession, we unified a nation and set the captives free. In the face of Depression, we put people back to work and lifted millions out of poverty. We welcomed immigrants to our shores. We opened railroads to the west. We landed a man on the moon. And we heard a King's call to let "justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

We've done this before. Each and every time, a new generation has risen up and done what's needed to be done. Today we are called once more, and it is time for our generation to

answer that call. For that is our unyielding faith -- that in the face of impossible odds, people who love their country can change it.

That's what Abraham Lincoln understood. He had his doubts. He had his defeats. He had his skeptics. He had his setbacks. But through his will and his words, he moved a nation and helped free a people. It's because of the millions who rallied to his cause that we're no longer divided, North and South, slave and free. It's because men and women of every race, from every walk of life, continued to march for freedom long after Lincoln was laid to rest, that today we have the chance to face the challenges of this millennium together, as one people -- as Americans.

All of us know what those challenges are today: a war with no end, a dependence on oil that threatens our future, schools where too many children aren't learning, and families struggling paycheck to paycheck despite working as hard as they can. We know the challenges. We've heard them. We've talked about them for years.

What's stopped us from meeting these challenges is not the absence of sound policies and sensible plans. What's stopped us is the failure of leadership, the smallness of our politics -- the ease with which we're distracted by the petty and trivial, our chronic avoidance of tough decisions, our preference for scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up our sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle the big problems of America.

For the past six years we've been told that our mounting debts don't matter. We've been told that the anxiety Americans feel about rising health care costs and stagnant wages are an illusion. We've been told that climate change is a hoax. We've been told that tough talk and an ill-conceived war can replace diplomacy, and strategy, and foresight. And when all else fails, when Katrina happens, or the death toll in Iraq mounts, we've been told that our crises are somebody else's fault. We're distracted from our real failures, and told to blame the other Party, or gay people, or immigrants.

And as people have looked away in disillusionment and frustration, we know what's filled the void: the cynics, the lobbyists, the special interests -- who've turned our government into a game only they can afford to play. They write the checks and you get stuck with the bill. They get the access while you get to write a letter. They think they own this government, but we're here today to take it back. The time for that kind of politics is over. It is through. It's time to turn the page -- right here, and right now.

Look, we have made some progress already. I was proud to help lead the fight in Congress that led to the most sweeping ethics reforms since Watergate. But Washington has a long way to go, and it won't be easy. That's why we'll have to set priorities. We'll have to make hard choices. And although government will play a crucial role in bringing about the changes that we need, more money and programs alone will not get us to where we need to go. Each of us, in our own lives, will have to accept responsibility -- for instilling an ethic of achievement in our children, for adapting to a more competitive economy, for strengthening our communities, and sharing some measure of sacrifice.

So let us begin. Let us begin this hard work together. Let us transform this nation. Let us be the generation that reshapes our economy to compete in the digital age. Let's set high standards for our schools and give them the resources they need to succeed. Let's recruit a new army of teachers, and give them better pay and more support in exchange for more accountability. Let's make college more affordable, and let's invest in scientific research, and let's lay down broadband lines through the heart of inner cities and rural towns all across America. We can do that.

And as our economy changes, let's be the generation that ensures our nation's workers are sharing in our prosperity. Let's protect the hard-earned benefits their companies have promised. Let's make it possible for hardworking Americans to save for retirement. Let's allow our unions and their organizers to lift up this country's middle-class again. We can do that.

Let's be the generation that ends poverty in America. Every single person willing to work should be able to get job training that leads to a job, and earn a living wage that can pay the bills, and afford child care so their kids can have a safe place to go when they work. We can do this.

And let's be the generation that finally, after all these years, tackles our health care crisis. We can control costs by focusing on prevention, by providing better treatment to the chronically ill, and using technology to cut the bureaucracy. Let's be the generation that says right here, right now: We will have universal health care in America by the end of the next President's first term. We can do that.

Let's be the generation that finally frees America from the tyranny of oil. We can harness homegrown, alternative fuels like ethanol and spur the production of more fuel-efficient cars. We can set up a system for capping greenhouse gases. We can turn this crisis of global warming into a moment of opportunity for innovation, and job creation, and an incentive for businesses that

will serve as a model for the world. Let's be the generation that makes future generations proud of what we did here.

Most of all, let's be the generation that never forgets what happened on that September day and confront the terrorists with everything we've got. Politics doesn't have to divide us on this anymore; we can work together to keep our country safe. I've worked with the Republican Senator Dick Lugar to pass a law that will secure and destroy some of the world's deadliest weapons. We can work together to track down terrorists with a stronger military. We can tighten the net around their finances. We can improve our intelligence capabilities and finally get homeland security right. But let's also understand that ultimate victory against our enemies will only come by rebuilding our alliances and exporting those ideals that bring hope and opportunity to millions of people around the globe. We can do those things.

But all of this cannot come to pass until we bring an end to this war in Iraq. Most of you know that I opposed this war from the start. I thought it was a tragic mistake.

Today we grieve for the families who have lost loved ones, the hearts that have been broken, and the young lives that could have been. America, it is time to start bringing our troops home. It's time to admit that no amount of American lives can resolve the political disagreement that lies at the heart of someone else's civil war. That's why I have a plan that will bring our combat troops home by March of 2008. Letting the Iraqis know that we will not be there forever is our last, best hope to pressure the Sunni and Shia to come to the table and find peace.

And there's one other thing that it's not too late to get right about this war, and that is the homecoming of the men and women, our veterans, who have sacrificed the most. Let us honor their courage by providing the care they need and rebuilding the military they love. Let us be the generation that begins that work.

I know there are those who don't believe we can do all these things. I understand the skepticism. After all, every four years, candidates from both Parties make similar promises, and I expect this year will be no different. All of us running for President will travel around the country offering ten-point plans and making grand speeches; all of us will trumpet those qualities we believe make us uniquely qualified to lead this country. But too many times, after the election is over, and the confetti is swept away, all those promises fade from memory, and the lobbyists

and special interests move in, and people turn away, disappointed as before, left to struggle on their own.

That's why this campaign can't only be about me. It must be about us. It must be about what we can do together. This campaign must be the occasion, the vehicle, of your hopes, and your dreams. It will take your time, your energy, and your advice to push us forward when we're doing right, and let us know when we're not. This campaign has to be about reclaiming the meaning of citizenship, restoring our sense of common purpose, and realizing that few obstacles can withstand the power of millions of voices calling for change.

By ourselves, this change will not happen. Divided, we are bound to fail. But the life of a tall, gangly, self-made Springfield lawyer tells us that a different future is possible. He tells us that there is power in words. He tells us that there's power in conviction. That beneath all the differences of race and region, faith and station, we are one people. He tells us that there's power in hope.

As Lincoln organized the forces arrayed against slavery, he was heard to say this: "Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought to battle through."

That is our purpose here today. That is why I am in this race -- not just to hold an office, but to gather with you to transform a nation. I want to win that next battle -- for justice and opportunity. I want to win that next battle -- for better schools, and better jobs, and better health care for all. I want us to take up the unfinished business of perfecting our union, and building a better America. And if you will join with me in this improbable quest, if you feel destiny calling, and see as I see, the future of endless possibility stretching out before us; if you sense, as I sense, that the time is now to shake off our slumber, and slough off our fears, and make good on the debt we owe past and future generations, then I am ready to take up the cause, and march with you, and work with you -- today.

Together we can finish the work that needs to be done, and usher in a new birth of freedom on this Earth.

Thank you very much everybody -- let's get to work! I love you. Thank you.

## Appendix B

### Democratic Nomination Acceptation Speech. August 28, 2008

To Chairman Dean and my great friend Dick Durbin; and to all my fellow citizens of this great nation; With profound gratitude and great humility, I accept your nomination for the presidency of the United States.

Let me express my thanks to the historic slate of candidates who accompanied me on this journey, and especially the one who traveled the farthest - a champion for working Americans and an inspiration to my daughters and to yours -- Hillary Rodham Clinton. To President Clinton, who last night made the case for change as only he can make it; to Ted Kennedy, who embodies the spirit of service; and to the next Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden, I thank you. I am grateful to finish this journey with one of the finest statesmen of our time, a man at ease with everyone from world leaders to the conductors on the Amtrak train he still takes home every night.

To the love of my life, our next First Lady, Michelle Obama, and to Sasha and Malia - I love you so much, and I'm so proud of all of you.

Four years ago, I stood before you and told you my story - of the brief union between a young man from Kenya and a young woman from Kansas who weren't well-off or well-known, but shared a belief that in America, their son could achieve whatever he put his mind to. It is that promise that has always set this country apart - that through hard work and sacrifice, each of us can pursue our individual dreams but still come together as one American family, to ensure that the next generation can pursue their dreams as well.

That's why I stand here tonight. Because for two hundred and thirty two years, at each moment when that promise was in jeopardy, ordinary men and women - students and soldiers, farmers and teachers, nurses and janitors -- found the courage to keep it alive.

We meet at one of those defining moments - a moment when our nation is at war, our economy is in turmoil, and the American promise has been threatened once more.

Tonight, more Americans are out of work and more are working harder for less. More of you have lost your homes and even more are watching your home values plummet. More of you have cars you can't afford to drive, credit card bills you can't afford to pay, and tuition that's beyond your reach.

These challenges are not all of government's making. But the failure to respond is a direct result of a broken politics in Washington and the failed policies of George W. Bush.

America, we are better than these last eight years. We are a better country than this.

This country is more decent than one where a woman in Ohio, on the brink of retirement, finds herself one illness away from disaster after a lifetime of hard work.

This country is more generous than one where a man in Indiana has to pack up the equipment he's worked on for twenty years and watch it shipped off to China, and then chokes up as he explains how he felt like a failure when he went home to tell his family the news. We are more compassionate than a government that lets veterans sleep on our streets and families slide into poverty; that sits on its hands while a major American city drowns before our eyes.

Tonight, I say to the American people, to Democrats and Republicans and Independents across this great land - enough! This moment - this election - is our chance to keep, in the 21st century, the American promise alive. Because next week, in Minnesota, the same party that brought you two terms of George Bush and Dick Cheney will ask this country for a third. And we are here because we love this country too much to let the next four years look like the last eight. On November 4th, we must stand up and say: "Eight is enough."

Now let there be no doubt. The Republican nominee, John McCain, has worn the uniform of our country with bravery and distinction, and for that we owe him our gratitude and respect. And next week, we'll also hear about those occasions when he's broken with his party as evidence that he can deliver the change that we need.

But the record's clear: John McCain has voted with George Bush ninety percent of the time. Senator McCain likes to talk about judgment, but really, what does it say about your judgment when you think George Bush has been right more than ninety percent of the time? I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to take a ten percent chance on change.

The truth is, on issue after issue that would make a difference in your lives - on health care and education and the economy - Senator McCain has been anything but independent. He said that our economy has made "great progress" under this President. He said that the fundamentals of the economy are strong. And when one of his chief advisors - the man who wrote his economic plan - was talking about the anxiety Americans are feeling, he said that we

were just suffering from a "mental recession," and that we've become, and I quote, "a nation of whiners."

A nation of whiners? Tell that to the proud auto workers at a Michigan plant who, after they found out it was closing, kept showing up every day and working as hard as ever, because they knew there were people who counted on the brakes that they made. Tell that to the military families who shoulder their burdens silently as they watch their loved ones leave for their third or fourth or fifth tour of duty. These are not whiners. They work hard and give back and keep going without complaint. These are the Americans that I know.

Now, I don't believe that Senator McCain doesn't care what's going on in the lives of Americans. I just think he doesn't know. Why else would he define middle-class as someone making under five million dollars a year? How else could he propose hundreds of billions in tax breaks for big corporations and oil companies but not one penny of tax relief to more than one hundred million Americans? How else could he offer a health care plan that would actually tax people's benefits, or an education plan that would do nothing to help families pay for college, or a plan that would privatize Social Security and gamble your retirement?

It's not because John McCain doesn't care. It's because John McCain doesn't get it. For over two decades, he's subscribed to that old, discredited Republican philosophy - give more and more to those with the most and hope that prosperity trickles down to everyone else. In Washington, they call this the Ownership Society, but what it really means is - you're on your own. Out of work? Tough luck. No health care? The market will fix it. Born into poverty? Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps - even if you don't have boots. You're on your own. Well it's time for them to own their failure. It's time for us to change America. You see, we Democrats have a very different measure of what constitutes progress in this country.

We measure progress by how many people can find a job that pays the mortgage; whether you can put a little extra money away at the end of each month so you can someday watch your child receive her college diploma. We measure progress in the 23 million new jobs that were created when Bill Clinton was President - when the average American family saw its income go up \$7,500 instead of down \$2,000 like it has under George Bush.

We measure the strength of our economy not by the number of billionaires we have or the profits of the Fortune 500, but by whether someone with a good idea can take a risk and start a

new business, or whether the waitress who lives on tips can take a day off to look after a sick kid without losing her job - an economy that honors the dignity of work.

The fundamentals we use to measure economic strength are whether we are living up to that fundamental promise that has made this country great - a promise that is the only reason I am standing here tonight.

Because in the faces of those young veterans who come back from Iraq and Afghanistan, I see my grandfather, who signed up after Pearl Harbor, marched in Patton's Army, and was rewarded by a grateful nation with the chance to go to college on the GI Bill.

In the face of that young student who sleeps just three hours before working the night shift, I think about my mom, who raised my sister and me on her own while she worked and earned her degree; who once turned to food stamps but was still able to send us to the best schools in the country with the help of student loans and scholarships.

When I listen to another worker tell me that his factory has shut down, I remember all those men and women on the South Side of Chicago who I stood by and fought for two decades ago after the local steel plant closed.

And when I hear a woman talk about the difficulties of starting her own business, I think about my grandmother, who worked her way up from the secretarial pool to middle-management, despite years of being passed over for promotions because she was a woman. She's the one who taught me about hard work. She's the one who put off buying a new car or a new dress for herself so that I could have a better life. She poured everything she had into me. And although she can no longer travel, I know that she's watching tonight, and that tonight is her night as well.

I don't know what kind of lives John McCain thinks that celebrities lead, but this has been mine. These are my heroes. Theirs are the stories that shaped me. And it is on their behalf that I intend to win this election and keep our promise alive as President of the United States.

What is that promise?

It's a promise that says each of us has the freedom to make of our own lives what we will, but that we also have the obligation to treat each other with dignity and respect.

It's a promise that says the market should reward drive and innovation and generate growth, but that businesses should live up to their responsibilities to create American jobs, look out for American workers, and play by the rules of the road.

Ours is a promise that says government cannot solve all our problems, but what it should do is that which we cannot do for ourselves - protect us from harm and provide every child a decent education; keep our water clean and our toys safe; invest in new schools and new roads and new science and technology.

Our government should work for us, not against us. It should help us, not hurt us. It should ensure opportunity not just for those with the most money and influence, but for every American who's willing to work.

That's the promise of America - the idea that we are responsible for ourselves, but that we also rise or fall as one nation; the fundamental belief that I am my brother's keeper; I am my sister's keeper.

That's the promise we need to keep. That's the change we need right now. So let me spell out exactly what that change would mean if I am President. Change means a tax code that doesn't reward the lobbyists who wrote it, but the American workers and small businesses who deserve it.

Unlike John McCain, I will stop giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, and I will start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America. I will eliminate capital gains taxes for the small businesses and the start-ups that will create the high-wage, high-tech jobs of tomorrow. I will cut taxes - cut taxes - for 95% of all working families. Because in an economy like this, the last thing we should do is raise taxes on the middle-class. And for the sake of our economy, our security, and the future of our planet, I will set a clear goal as President: in ten years, we will finally end our dependence on oil from the Middle East. Washington's been talking about our oil addiction for the last thirty years, and John McCain has been there for twenty-six of them. In that time, he's said no to higher fuel-efficiency standards for cars, no to investments in renewable energy, no to renewable fuels. And today, we import triple the amount of oil as the day that Senator McCain took office. Now is the time to end this addiction, and to understand that drilling is a stop-gap measure, not a long-term solution. Not even close.

As President, I will tap our natural gas reserves, invest in clean coal technology, and find ways to safely harness nuclear power. I'll help our auto companies re-tool, so that the fuel-efficient cars of the future are built right here in America. I'll make it easier for the American people to afford these new cars. And I'll invest 150 billion dollars over the next decade in

affordable, renewable sources of energy - wind power and solar power and the next generation of biofuels; an investment that will lead to new industries and five million new jobs that pay well and can't ever be outsourced. America, now is not the time for small plans.

Now is the time to finally meet our moral obligation to provide every child a world-class education, because it will take nothing less to compete in the global economy. Michelle and I are only here tonight because we were given a chance at an education. And I will not settle for an America where some kids don't have that chance. I'll invest in early childhood education. I'll recruit an army of new teachers, and pay them higher salaries and give them more support. And in exchange, I'll ask for higher standards and more accountability. And we will keep our promise to every young American - if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford a college education.

Now is the time to finally keep the promise of affordable, accessible health care for every single American. If you have health care, my plan will lower your premiums. If you don't, you'll be able to get the same kind of coverage that members of Congress give themselves. And as someone who watched my mother argue with insurance companies while she lay in bed dying of cancer, I will make certain those companies stop discriminating against those who are sick and need care the most.

Now is the time to help families with paid sick days and better family leave, because nobody in America should have to choose between keeping their jobs and caring for a sick child or ailing parent.

Now is the time to change our bankruptcy laws, so that your pensions are protected ahead of CEO bonuses; and the time to protect Social Security for future generations. And now is the time to keep the promise of equal pay for an equal day's work, because I want my daughters to have exactly the same opportunities as your sons.

Now, many of these plans will cost money, which is why I've laid out how I'll pay for every dime - by closing corporate loopholes and tax havens that don't help America grow. But I will also go through the federal budget, line by line, eliminating programs that no longer work and making the ones we do need work better and cost less - because we cannot meet twenty-first century challenges with a twentieth century bureaucracy.

And Democrats, we must also admit that fulfilling America's promise will require more than just money. It will require a renewed sense of responsibility from each of us to recover what

John F. Kennedy called our "intellectual and moral strength." Yes, government must lead on energy independence, but each of us must do our part to make our homes and businesses more efficient. Yes, we must provide more ladders to success for young men who fall into lives of crime and despair. But we must also admit that programs alone can't replace parents; that government can't turn off the television and make a child do her homework; that fathers must take more responsibility for providing the love and guidance their children need.

Individual responsibility and mutual responsibility - that's the essence of America's promise. And just as we keep our keep our promise to the next generation here at home, so must we keep America's promise abroad. If John McCain wants to have a debate about who has the temperament, and judgment, to serve as the next Commander-in-Chief, that's a debate I'm ready to have.

For while Senator McCain was turning his sights to Iraq just days after 9/11, I stood up and opposed this war, knowing that it would distract us from the real threats we face. When John McCain said we could just "muddle through" in Afghanistan, I argued for more resources and more troops to finish the fight against the terrorists who actually attacked us on 9/11, and made clear that we must take out Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if we have them in our sights. John McCain likes to say that he'll follow bin Laden to the Gates of Hell - but he won't even go to the cave where he lives.

And today, as my call for a time frame to remove our troops from Iraq has been echoed by the Iraqi government and even the Bush Administration, even after we learned that Iraq has a \$79 billion surplus while we're wallowing in deficits, John McCain stands alone in his stubborn refusal to end a misguided war.

That's not the judgment we need. That won't keep America safe. We need a President who can face the threats of the future, not keep grasping at the ideas of the past. You don't defeat a terrorist network that operates in eighty countries by occupying Iraq. You don't protect Israel and deter Iran just by talking tough in Washington. You can't truly stand up for Georgia when you've strained our oldest alliances. If John McCain wants to follow George Bush with more tough talk and bad strategy, that is his choice - but it is not the change we need. We are the party of Roosevelt. We are the party of Kennedy. So don't tell me that Democrats won't defend this country. Don't tell me that Democrats won't keep us safe. The Bush-McCain

foreign policy has squandered the legacy that generations of Americans -- Democrats and Republicans - have built, and we are here to restore that legacy.

As Commander-in-Chief, I will never hesitate to defend this nation, but I will only send our troops into harm's way with a clear mission and a sacred commitment to give them the equipment they need in battle and the care and benefits they deserve when they come home. I will end this war in Iraq responsibly, and finish the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. I will rebuild our military to meet future conflicts. But I will also renew the tough, direct diplomacy that can prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and curb Russian aggression. I will build new partnerships to defeat the threats of the 21st century: terrorism and nuclear proliferation; poverty and genocide; climate change and disease. And I will restore our moral standing, so that America is once again that last, best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom, who long for lives of peace, and who yearn for a better future. These are the policies I will pursue. And in the weeks ahead, I look forward to debating them with John McCain.

But what I will not do is suggest that the Senator takes his positions for political purposes. Because one of the things that we have to change in our politics is the idea that people cannot disagree without challenging each other's character and patriotism. The times are too serious, the stakes are too high for this same partisan playbook. So let us agree that patriotism has no party. I love this country, and so do you, and so does John McCain. The men and women who serve in our battlefields may be Democrats and Republicans and Independents, but they have fought together and bled together and some died together under the same proud flag. They have not served a Red America or a Blue America - they have served the United States of America. So I've got news for you, John McCain. We all put our country first.

America, our work will not be easy. The challenges we face require tough choices, and Democrats as well as Republicans will need to cast off the worn-out ideas and politics of the past. For part of what has been lost these past eight years can't just be measured by lost wages or bigger trade deficits. What has also been lost is our sense of common purpose - our sense of higher purpose. And that's what we have to restore.

We may not agree on abortion, but surely we can agree on reducing the number of unwanted pregnancies in this country. The reality of gun ownership may be different for hunters in rural Ohio than for those plagued by gang-violence in Cleveland, but don't tell me we can't

uphold the Second Amendment while keeping AK-47s out of the hands of criminals. I know there are differences on same-sex marriage, but surely we can agree that our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters deserve to visit the person they love in the hospital and to live lives free of discrimination. Passions fly on immigration, but I don't know anyone who benefits when a mother is separated from her infant child or an employer undercuts American wages by hiring illegal workers. This too is part of America's promise - the promise of a democracy where we can find the strength and grace to bridge divides and unite in common effort.

I know there are those who dismiss such beliefs as happy talk. They claim that our insistence on something larger, something firmer and more honest in our public life is just a Trojan Horse for higher taxes and the abandonment of traditional values. And that's to be expected. Because if you don't have any fresh ideas, then you use stale tactics to scare the voters. If you don't have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run from. You make a big election about small things.

And you know what - it's worked before. Because it feeds into the cynicism we all have about government. When Washington doesn't work, all its promises seem empty. If your hopes have been dashed again and again, then it's best to stop hoping, and settle for what you already know.

I get it. I realize that I am not the likeliest candidate for this office. I don't fit the typical pedigree, and I haven't spent my career in the halls of Washington. But I stand before you tonight because all across America something is stirring. What the nay-sayers don't understand is that this election has never been about me. It's been about you.

For eighteen long months, you have stood up, one by one, and said enough to the politics of the past. You understand that in this election, the greatest risk we can take is to try the same old politics with the same old players and expect a different result. You have shown what history teaches us - that at defining moments like this one, the change we need doesn't come from Washington. Change comes to Washington. Change happens because the American people demand it - because they rise up and insist on new ideas and new leadership, a new politics for a new time. America, this is one of those moments.

I believe that as hard as it will be, the change we need is coming. Because I've seen it. Because I've lived it. I've seen it in Illinois, when we provided health care to more children and moved more families from welfare to work. I've seen it in Washington, when we worked across

party lines to open up government and hold lobbyists more accountable, to give better care for our veterans and keep nuclear weapons out of terrorist hands.

And I've seen it in this campaign. In the young people who voted for the first time, and in those who got involved again after a very long time. In the Republicans who never thought they'd pick up a Democratic ballot, but did. I've seen it in the workers who would rather cut their hours back a day than see their friends lose their jobs, in the soldiers who re-enlist after losing a limb, in the good neighbors who take a stranger in when a hurricane strikes and the floodwaters rise.

This country of ours has more wealth than any nation, but that's not what makes us rich. We have the most powerful military on Earth, but that's not what makes us strong. Our universities and our culture are the envy of the world, but that's not what keeps the world coming to our shores.

Instead, it is that American spirit - that American promise - that pushes us forward even when the path is uncertain; that binds us together in spite of our differences; that makes us fix our eye not on what is seen, but what is unseen, that better place around the bend. That promise is our greatest inheritance. It's a promise I make to my daughters when I tuck them in at night, and a promise that you make to yours - a promise that has led immigrants to cross oceans and pioneers to travel west; a promise that led workers to picket lines, and women to reach for the ballot.

And it is that promise that forty five years ago today, brought Americans from every corner of this land to stand together on a Mall in Washington, before Lincoln's Memorial, and hear a young preacher from Georgia speak of his dream.

The men and women who gathered there could've heard many things. They could've heard words of anger and discord. They could've been told to succumb to the fear and frustration of so many dreams deferred.

But what the people heard instead - people of every creed and color, from every walk of life - is that in America, our destiny is inextricably linked. That together, our dreams can be one. "We cannot walk alone," the preacher cried. "And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back."

America, we cannot turn back. Not with so much work to be done. Not with so many children to educate, and so many veterans to care for. Not with an economy to fix and cities to

rebuild and farms to save. Not with so many families to protect and so many lives to mend. America, we cannot turn back. We cannot walk alone. At this moment, in this election, we must pledge once more to march into the future. Let us keep that promise - that American promise - and in the words of Scripture hold firmly, without wavering, to the hope that we confess. Thank you, and God Bless the United States of America.

## Appendix C

### The Closing Argument. Canton, OH October 27, 2008

One week.

After decades of broken politics in Washington, eight years of failed policies from George Bush, and twenty-one months of a campaign that has taken us from the rocky coast of Maine to the sunshine of California, we are one week away from change in America.

In one week, you can turn the page on policies that have put the greed and irresponsibility of Wall Street before the hard work and sacrifice of folks on Main Street.

In one week, you can choose policies that invest in our middle-class, create new jobs, and grow this economy from the bottom-up so that everyone has a chance to succeed; from the CEO to the secretary and the janitor; from the factory owner to the men and women who work on its floor.

In one week, you can put an end to the politics that would divide a nation just to win an election; that tries to pit region against region, city against town, Republican against Democrat; that asks us to fear at a time when we need hope. In one week, at this defining moment in history, you can give this country the change we need.

We began this journey in the depths of winter nearly two years ago, on the steps of the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois. Back then, we didn't have much money or many endorsements. We weren't given much of a chance by the polls or the pundits, and we knew how steep our climb would be.

But I also knew this. I knew that the size of our challenges had outgrown the smallness of our politics. I believed that Democrats and Republicans and Americans of every political stripe were hungry for new ideas, new leadership, and a new kind of politics - one that favors common sense over ideology; one that focuses on those values and ideals we hold in common as Americans.

Most of all, I believed in your ability to make change happen. I knew that the American people were a decent, generous people who are willing to work hard and sacrifice for future generations. And I was convinced that when we come together, our voices are more powerful than the most entrenched lobbyists, or the most vicious political attacks, or the full force of a status quo in Washington that wants to keep things just the way they are.

Twenty-one months later, my faith in the American people has been vindicated. That's how we've come so far and so close - because of you. That's how we'll change this country - with your

help. And that's why we can't afford to slow down, sit back, or let up for one day, one minute, or one second in this last week. Not now. Not when so much is at stake.

We are in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. 760,000 workers have lost their jobs this year. Businesses and families can't get credit. Home values are falling. Pensions are disappearing. Wages are lower than they've been in a decade, at a time when the cost of health care and college have never been higher. It's getting harder and harder to make the mortgage, or fill up your gas tank, or even keep the electricity on at the end of the month.

At a moment like this, the last thing we can afford is four more years of the tired, old theory that says we should give more to billionaires and big corporations and hope that prosperity trickles down to everyone else. The last thing we can afford is four more years where no one in Washington is watching anyone on Wall Street because politicians and lobbyists killed common-sense regulations. Those are the theories that got us into this mess. They haven't worked, and it's time for change. That's why I'm running for President of the United States.

Now, Senator McCain has served this country honorably. And he can point to a few moments over the past eight years where he has broken from George Bush - on torture, for example. He deserves credit for that. But when it comes to the economy - when it comes to the central issue of this election - the plain truth is that John McCain has stood with this President every step of the way. Voting for the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy that he once opposed. Voting for the Bush budgets that spent us into debt. Calling for less regulation twenty-one times just this year. Those are the facts.

And now, after twenty-one months and three debates, Senator McCain still has not been able to tell the American people a single major thing he'd do differently from George Bush when it comes to the economy. Senator McCain says that we can't spend the next four years waiting for our luck to change, but you understand that the biggest gamble we can take is embracing the same old Bush-McCain policies that have failed us for the last eight years.

It's not change when John McCain wants to give a \$700,000 tax cut to the average Fortune 500 CEO. It's not change when he wants to give \$200 billion to the biggest corporations or \$4 billion to the oil companies or \$300 billion to the same Wall Street banks that got us into this mess. It's not change when he comes up with a tax plan that doesn't give a penny of relief to more than 100 million middle-class Americans. That's not change.

Look - we've tried it John McCain's way. We've tried it George Bush's way. Deep down, Senator McCain knows that, which is why his campaign said that "if we keep talking about the economy, we're going to lose." That's why he's spending these last weeks calling me every name in the book. Because that's how you play the game in Washington. If you can't beat your opponent's ideas, you distort those ideas and maybe make some up. If you don't have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run away from. You make a big election about small things.

Ohio, we are here to say "Not this time. Not this year. Not when so much is at stake." Senator McCain might be worried about losing an election, but I'm worried about Americans who are losing their homes, and their jobs, and their life savings. I can take one more week of John McCain's attacks, but this country can't take four more years of the same old politics and the same failed policies. It's time for something new.

The question in this election is not "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" We know the answer to that. The real question is, "Will this country be better off four years from now?"

I know these are difficult times for America. But I also know that we have faced difficult times before. The American story has never been about things coming easy - it's been about rising to the moment when the moment was hard. It's about seeing the highest mountaintop from the deepest of valleys. It's about rejecting fear and division for unity of purpose. That's how we've overcome war and depression. That's how we've won great struggles for civil rights and women's rights and worker's rights. And that's how we'll emerge from this crisis stronger and more prosperous than we were before - as one nation; as one people.

Remember, we still have the most talented, most productive workers of any country on Earth. We're still home to innovation and technology, colleges and universities that are the envy of the world. Some of the biggest ideas in history have come from our small businesses and our research facilities. So there's no reason we can't make this century another American century. We just need a new direction. We need a new politics.

Now, I don't believe that government can or should try to solve all our problems. I know you don't either. But I do believe that government should do that which we cannot do for ourselves - protect us from harm and provide a decent education for our children; invest in new roads and new science and technology. It should reward drive and innovation and growth in the free market, but it should also make sure businesses live up to their responsibility to create

American jobs, and look out for American workers, and play by the rules of the road. It should ensure a shot at success not only for those with money and power and influence, but for every single American who's willing to work. That's how we create not just more millionaires, but more middle-class families. That's how we make sure businesses have customers that can afford their products and services. That's how we've always grown the American economy - from the bottom-up. John McCain calls this socialism. I call it opportunity, and there is nothing more American than that.

Understand, if we want get through this crisis, we need to get beyond the old ideological debates and divides between left and right. We don't need bigger government or smaller government. We need a better government - a more competent government - a government that upholds the values we hold in common as Americans.

We don't have to choose between allowing our financial system to collapse and spending billions of taxpayer dollars to bail out Wall Street banks. As President, I will ensure that the financial rescue plan helps stop foreclosures and protects your money instead of enriching CEOs. And I will put in place the common-sense regulations I've been calling for throughout this campaign so that Wall Street can never cause a crisis like this again. That's the change we need.

The choice in this election isn't between tax cuts and no tax cuts. It's about whether you believe we should only reward wealth, or whether we should also reward the work and workers who create it. I will give a tax break to 95% of Americans who work every day and get taxes taken out of their paychecks every week. I'll eliminate income taxes for seniors making under \$50,000 and give homeowners and working parents more of a break. And I'll help pay for this by asking the folks who are making more than \$250,000 a year to go back to the tax rate they were paying in the 1990s. No matter what Senator McCain may claim, here are the facts - if you make under \$250,000, you will not see your taxes increase by a single dime - not your income taxes, not your payroll taxes, not your capital gains taxes. Nothing. Because the last thing we should do in this economy is raise taxes on the middle-class.

When it comes to jobs, the choice in this election is not between putting up a wall around America or allowing every job to disappear overseas. The truth is, we won't be able to bring back every job that we've lost, but that doesn't mean we should follow John McCain's plan to keep giving tax breaks to corporations that send American jobs overseas. I will end those breaks as President, and I will give American businesses a \$3,000 tax credit for every job they create right

here in the United States of America. I'll eliminate capital gains taxes for small businesses and start-up companies that are the engine of job creation in this country. We'll create two million new jobs by rebuilding our crumbling roads, and bridges, and schools, and by laying broadband lines to reach every corner of the country. And I will invest \$15 billion a year in renewable sources of energy to create five million new energy jobs over the next decade - jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced; jobs building solar panels and wind turbines and a new electricity grid; jobs building the fuel-efficient cars of tomorrow, not in Japan or South Korea but here in the United States of America; jobs that will help us eliminate the oil we import from the Middle East in ten years and help save the planet in the bargain. That's how America can lead again.

When it comes to health care, we don't have to choose between a government-run health care system and the unaffordable one we have now. If you already have health insurance, the only thing that will change under my plan is that we will lower premiums. If you don't have health insurance, you'll be able to get the same kind of health insurance that Members of Congress get for themselves. We'll invest in preventative care and new technology to finally lower the cost of health care for families, businesses, and the entire economy. And as someone who watched his own mother spend the final months of her life arguing with insurance companies because they claimed her cancer was a pre-existing condition and didn't want to pay for treatment, I will stop insurance companies from discriminating against those who are sick and need care most.

When it comes to giving every child a world-class education so they can compete in this global economy for the jobs of the 21st century, the choice is not between more money and more reform - because our schools need both. As President, I will invest in early childhood education, recruit an army of new teachers, pay them more, and give them more support. But I will also demand higher standards and more accountability from our teachers and our schools. And I will make a deal with every American who has the drive and the will but not the money to go to college: if you commit to serving your community or your country, we will make sure you can afford your tuition. You invest in America, America will invest in you, and together, we will move this country forward.

And when it comes to keeping this country safe, we don't have to choose between retreating from the world and fighting a war without end in Iraq. It's time to stop spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq while the Iraqi government sits on a huge surplus. As President, I will end

this war by asking the Iraqi government to step up, and finally finish the fight against bin Laden and the al Qaeda terrorists who attacked us on 9/11. I will never hesitate to defend this nation, but I will only send our troops into harm's way with a clear mission and a sacred commitment to give them the equipment they need in battle and the care and benefits they deserve when they come home. I will build new partnerships to defeat the threats of the 21st century, and I will restore our moral standing, so that America is once again that last, best hope for all who are called to the cause of freedom, who long for lives of peace, and who yearn for a better future. I won't stand here and pretend that any of this will be easy - especially now. The cost of this economic crisis, and the cost of the war in Iraq, means that Washington will have to tighten its belt and put off spending on things we can afford to do without. On this, there is no other choice. As President, I will go through the federal budget, line-by-line, ending programs that we don't need and making the ones we do need work better and cost less.

But as I've said from the day we began this journey all those months ago, the change we need isn't just about new programs and policies. It's about a new politics - a politics that calls on our better angels instead of encouraging our worst instincts; one that reminds us of the obligations we have to ourselves and one another.

Part of the reason this economic crisis occurred is because we have been living through an era of profound irresponsibility. On Wall Street, easy money and an ethic of "what's good for me is good enough" blinded greedy executives to the danger in the decisions they were making. On Main Street, lenders tricked people into buying homes they couldn't afford. Some folks knew they couldn't afford those houses and bought them anyway. In Washington, politicians spent money they didn't have and allowed lobbyists to set the agenda. They scored political points instead of solving our problems, and even after the greatest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, all we were asked to do by our President was to go out and shop.

That is why what we have lost in these last eight years cannot be measured by lost wages or bigger trade deficits alone. What has also been lost is the idea that in this American story, each of us has a role to play. Each of us has a responsibility to work hard and look after ourselves and our families, and each of us has a responsibility to our fellow citizens. That's what's been lost these last eight years - our sense of common purpose; of higher purpose. And that's what we need to restore right now.

Yes, government must lead the way on energy independence, but each of us must do our part to make our homes and our businesses more efficient. Yes, we must provide more ladders to success for young men who fall into lives of crime and despair. But all of us must do our part as parents to turn off the television and read to our children and take responsibility for providing the love and guidance they need. Yes, we can argue and debate our positions passionately, but at this defining moment, all of us must summon the strength and grace to bridge our differences and unite in common effort - black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American; Democrat and Republican, young and old, rich and poor, gay and straight, disabled or not.

In this election, we cannot afford the same political games and tactics that are being used to pit us against one another and make us afraid of one another. The stakes are too high to divide us by class and region and background; by who we are or what we believe.

Because despite what our opponents may claim, there are no real or fake parts of this country. There is no city or town that is more pro-America than anywhere else - we are one nation, all of us proud, all of us patriots. There are patriots who supported this war in Iraq and patriots who opposed it; patriots who believe in Democratic policies and those who believe in Republican policies. The men and women who serve in our battlefields may be Democrats and Republicans and Independents, but they have fought together and bled together and some died together under the same proud flag. They have not served a Red America or a Blue America - they have served the United States of America.

It won't be easy, Ohio. It won't be quick. But you and I know that it is time to come together and change this country. Some of you may be cynical and fed up with politics. A lot of you may be disappointed and even angry with your leaders. You have every right to be. But despite all of this, I ask of you what has been asked of Americans throughout our history.

I ask you to believe - not just in my ability to bring about change, but in yours.

I know this change is possible. Because I have seen it over the last twenty-one months. Because in this campaign, I have had the privilege to witness what is best in America.

I've seen it in lines of voters that stretched around schools and churches; in the young people who cast their ballot for the first time, and those not so young folks who got involved again after a very long time. I've seen it in the workers who would rather cut back their hours than see their friends lose their jobs; in the neighbors who take a stranger in when the floodwaters rise; in the soldiers who re-enlist after losing a limb. I've seen it in the faces of the men and women I've met

at countless rallies and town halls across the country, men and women who speak of their struggles but also of their hopes and dreams.

I still remember the email that a woman named Robyn sent me after I met her in Ft. Lauderdale. Sometime after our event, her son nearly went into cardiac arrest, and was diagnosed with a heart condition that could only be treated with a procedure that cost tens of thousands of dollars. Her insurance company refused to pay, and their family just didn't have that kind of money.

In her email, Robyn wrote, "I ask only this of you - on the days where you feel so tired you can't think of uttering another word to the people, think of us. When those who oppose you have you down, reach deep and fight back harder."

Ohio, that's what hope is - that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better is waiting around the bend; that insists there are better days ahead. If we're willing to work for it. If we're willing to shed our fears and our doubts. If we're willing to reach deep down inside ourselves when we're tired and come back fighting harder.

Hope! That's what kept some of our parents and grandparents going when times were tough.

What led them to say, "Maybe I can't go to college, but if I save a little bit each week my child can; maybe I can't have my own business but if I work really hard my child can open one of her own." It's what led immigrants from distant lands to come to these shores against great odds and carve a new life for their families in America; what led those who couldn't vote to march and organize and stand for freedom; that led them to cry out, "It may look dark tonight, but if I hold on to hope, tomorrow will be brighter."

That's what this election is about. That is the choice we face right now.

Don't believe for a second this election is over. Don't think for a minute that power concedes. We have to work like our future depends on it in this last week, because it does. In one week, we can choose an economy that rewards work and creates new jobs and fuels prosperity from the bottom-up.

In one week, we can choose to invest in health care for our families, and education for our kids, and renewable energy for our future.

In one week, we can choose hope over fear, unity over division, the promise of change over the power of the status quo.

In one week, we can come together as one nation, and one people, and once more choose our better history.

That's what's at stake. That's what we're fighting for. And if in this last week, you will knock on some doors for me, and make some calls for me, and talk to your neighbors, and convince your friends; if you will stand with me, and fight with me, and give me your vote, then I promise you this - we will not just win Ohio, we will not just win this election, but together, we will change this country and we will change the world. Thank you, God bless you, and may God bless America.