

Running head: HIGH CONTEXT VS. LOW CONTEXT

High Context vs. Low Context Political Messages and Audience Preference

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### Abstract

Research has shown that the differences in Eastern and Western communication styles may affect political messages and diplomatic relations. The difference in these communication styles includes the context, such as high context (Eastern style) where the burden of making the message understandable is placed on the person listening to the speaker(s), and low context (Western style) where this burden is placed on the speakers themselves and the way the communicator relates to others. To see if there is an audience preference as to which style is used in political messages, videos were created and were shown to participants in this research study. These videos contained examples of both Eastern and Western styles of communication. Two messages were recorded using an actor delivering the same message in each style and were then played to determine which style the audience(s) liked better. Because the Eastern style was more involved, it was the preferred style, however, because of this study's limitations more research should be done.

### **Introduction**

Today, our diverse world is more connected than ever before. It is because of this we need to find a way to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. Like many other aspects of our world, however, the styles of communication which humans use may evolve and change into new forms. Once this occurs, new styles of communication are created, and they tend to differ from one another. An example of two different styles of communication include the Eastern style of communication, which is often seen as a high context style of communication, and the Western style, which is low context (Dingemans, 2010 & Nishimura et al. 2008). As per Dingemans' (2010) article, what we may refer to as the Eastern style, or the high context style, puts more emphasis on the message's inferred meaning and not the message itself thus making the listener more involved. The opposite is true of the Western style, or low context style, where most of the meaning is found within the message itself (Dingemans' 2010). While there is no right or wrong style of communication, some styles may be preferred in certain situations and by different groups of people. In the case of political messages, one style of message may influence people in ways the other style cannot, making this style the preferred method of communication for delivering political messages.

This study aims to examine whether one style of communication is more effective based on voter/audience preference. Another question this study hopes to answer is: Do people from different regions prefer different communication styles when listening to political messages and if so, are they the same style that originated in the region where these people are from? The researcher argues that answering these questions may help political leaders craft their messages in a way that will help them gain the most support from their voters. The results of this study

may also improve diplomatic relations because it helps diplomats learn what types of communication to use when delivering political messages in certain places.

### **Literature Review**

Effective communication is an integral part of diplomacy. Trenholm (2014) discusses how communication forms emerge from the collective world views of certain groups of people. Isenhardt's (1987) study discussed the importance of styles of communication in industry, including the differences in Eastern and Western styles in the business industry, namely the styles commonly found in the United States and Japan. The study found that in the business sector, the Japanese style was not as effective, however, the study did not examine these communication styles in the form of political messages. Instead, the study discussed the importance of understanding Eastern and Western styles when dealing with the connections members of a group share within a technology-based company. Isenhardt found that the Eastern, specifically Japanese style, was not beneficial in situations dealing with technology, therefore, it would be helpful to see if these findings also apply to political messages. As stated in an article by Mingxing, (2012) the definition of the word in the Chinese language meaning diplomacy is actually "interpersonal interactions." Therefore, it can be inferred that interactions involving communication, such as political messages and campaigns are a key part of diplomacy because they involve interactions between other people. Mingxing (2012) stressed the importance of translation in diplomacy and how inaccurate translation, both by mistake or intentionally, can

lead to international unrest, such as that between the United States' and Chinese military, but little research has been done on the importance of how the message is conveyed.

One may also wish to better understand different communication styles in order to understand how politicians may convey their message to people of different backgrounds. Wong (2005) used phone or mail messages to encourage voting and even though her study was inconclusive, one may wish to examine how the messages could have been more effective in a communication style more familiar to the participant. Chen and Starosta's (1997) research, as well as research done by Sanchez-Burks et al. (2003) show an Eastern perspective is focused on keeping interpersonal tranquility. Sanchez-Burks et al. (2003) noted that sometimes the Eastern process is indirect in an attempt to "save face" and Westerners may find it difficult to understand the implied undertones. Therefore, from a political perspective, it is important to learn and understand these implications in order to avoid conflict and maintain diplomatic relations. A study also examined whether different cultures such as Japan and the United States shared a different world view (Hamamura, 2012). To study this, Hamamura (2012) used people's description of paintings to see if their world view was more focused on the individual or the group as a whole. Most of the participants from Japan focused on the background, showing that they were more focused on the group as a whole, while most of the Western counterparts instead described the main object. Knowing different cultures focus on different ideas, one may wish to study what aspects these cultures choose to focus on and craft their messages around the ideas

upon which they focus. Mingxing (2012) discussed how ideologies such as Taoism and Confucianism, which stress balance and purification, play a role in Chinese culture and probably other Asian cultures. This may lead to what Nishimura et al. (2008) defines a “high context” culture/style of communication. A high context communication style is more concise, specific, and speakers take turns speaking with little to no interruptions. The speaker is more focused on body language where emotions are not directly spoken and the listener uses multiple forms of information such as religion, relationships, social status, nonverbal cues, and history in order to give context to the conversation. This differs from the familiar “low context” culture which involves openly speaking about one’s emotion or desires. A direct and flamboyant communication style appears to be more Western. As Sevin (2015) stated, measuring diplomacy is a hard endeavor, however, because Sevin’s piece is about diplomatic communications, it leaves gaps in the research such as to how political messages affect diplomacy.

Though it is understood that an Eastern style of communication differs from a Western style causing some to prefer one style over the other, past studies on Asian American political behavior have not examined which of these two styles are preferred. Instead, they focus more on how minority groups are mobilized. Hsu (2013) shows lower than predicted levels of political participation within the Asian American community despite what is usually predicted by their socio-economic status. The participation gaps, however, is lower in places where electoral competition is higher (Hsu, 2013). This shows that mobilization from parties is an integral part

of mobilizing voters, but this does not completely explain why very few Asian Americans participate in the first place. It can be inferred that when the members of a certain ethnic group participate in politics, it may encourage the political participation of other minority groups. An example of this can be seen in advertisements containing minorities of similar background which appeal to the minorities to whom the ad is being shown (Abrajano, 2010). This is why one may benefit from this experiment, which aims to discover how different groups respond to different messages, as well as explain which style of messages are the most preferred.

### **Methods**

The first method of studying High and Low Context communication styles involved viewing and analyzing videos of political messages which were filmed to attract voters in different areas of the world in order to understand how these styles of communication are portrayed. This was to complement the video which was later shown to audiences as part of the study where the audience responses helped the researcher discover which style of communication was preferred.

### **Videos**

The videos were that of leaders presenting a message with two communication styles, however, both conveyed a similar message. Another video was also used to help further explain the different types of messages. This video was entitled: "High Context vs. Low Context Cultures - What is the difference?" These resources explained important differences in the two styles of communication, such as high context communication, where the bulk of the conversation is inferred and is the style often used in Asian nations, making it part of the Eastern

style (Dingemans, 2010). The low context form of communication is more often used in Western nations, which is why the Western script for part two of the study included phrases such as “I want to lead you.” Both scripts can be found in the appendix along with a list of interview questions which the researcher asked during the interview. In order to convey political messages in the Eastern style, instead of saying something like “We can make the dream of electing me into office into a reality” the line in the Eastern script instead stated that “dreams come true” inferring that with the support of the constituents, the dream of electing this fictional candidate into office could thus become a reality (Elsinga, 2014). High context cultures are often more deliberate in their hand gestures based on personal experience by the researcher. After examining the videos of political messages, the video about communication styles, and using the information from Dingeman’s, (2010) and Hamamura’s (2012) publications, it appeared to the researcher that the use of hand gestures is more frequent in the Western style simply as a way of drawing attention to one’s self while using the low context style of communication. To show this, the Western video depicted a great deal of hand gestures while the Eastern video showed mostly the actor holding a paper containing a script of the political message in an attempt to show the importance of the political message itself. The quieter, more professional demeanor, such as speaking in a softer tone and the professional posture while holding the script was used in order to depict what the researcher believed was part of the Eastern communication style. It provided intimacy instead of directly asking the audience for their votes, thus focusing on the collective whole. The Eastern style’s script focused on appealing to the collective whole instead of the individual self in order to match Hamamura’s (2012) research. To further show this style, the script for the Eastern video was written to address the entire group. Examples of how these



styles play a role in both political messages can be found in the politically themed videos which are discussed below.

The differences between the two communication styles are evident in political messages and videos such as the following YouTube videos. For example, in the video by CGTN entitled “China's economic achievement and President Xi's speech” the correspondent from Washington whom we can infer is a person of Asian descent, who was either born in the United States or has spent a great deal of time in the United States before or while working at the China India Institute, displays what the researcher feels is an example of the Western style while also incorporating versions of the Eastern style. She is constantly gesturing almost to grab attention and not as an attempt to further the part of the message that would otherwise be omitted in the high context Eastern style of communication. In the video, she does have a Chinese accent and gestures often but when she gestures it often goes along with words such as stretching one's arm out when saying the word “long” to show that something is long. This is why the method of speaking may fall into the Eastern category. Perhaps the word “long” would have been omitted in a conversation where the high context communication style was the primary communication style. The correspondent in China, which this video featured, did not move around, aside from the slight swaying which one can argue was simply him trying to gain his balance in front of the camera. Ironically, the correspondent in China, probably because he was trained specially to be a political affairs' commentator, did not have an accent so it is hard to tell where each of these correspondents were from, however, the interviewer who was clearly not of Asian heritage when asking a question gestured by waving her hand just before the 7:39 minute mark. This gesture did not appear to be linked with any sort of word and instead was just used as a way of showing that they were trying to command attention when asking the question. A possible reason for the

female correspondent adapting and showing examples of both styles of communication was to better relate to the audience with whom she was dealing, as the video appeared to be a Chinese political channel but was targeted toward Western audiences. The male correspondent may have also been from a Western area such as the United States because that was where the target audience of the video was, however, because they were working in China they may have been trained to work with those who use the Eastern style. For this reason, it would be beneficial to examine videos which originate for the United States and China as these videos have been tailored to match the communication style of the audience where they targeted.

A video of China's current political leader was used to examine the Eastern style of communication in political messages. This video theoretically should depict the Eastern style of communication because geographically, China falls under the Eastern region. The video that was selected was also uploaded to YouTube by CGTN (2017) and was entitled "Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers 2018 New Year Address in Beijing." The video depicted the Chinese President addressing his subjects and reiterating all of the achievements of the previous year. Though the use of subtitles may have resulted in a loss of translation, it was clear from the subtitles in the beginning of the video that this piece matched the High Context Eastern Style of communication. Instead of focusing on himself or even China, President Xi Jinping mentioned specific places such as Taiwan and most other foreign nations, even singling out those of Chinese ancestry who are living in other nations. Because he did not simply focus on himself and instead viewed the world as a collective whole, he was showing signs of the Eastern style of communication because the Eastern style is more group-focused according to Hamamura's (2012) research. Also, instead of using gestures to draw attention to himself, President Xi Jinping simply kept his hands folded neatly on the table which not only gave a feeling of professionalism, but also

showed signs of the Eastern style because gestures are used to convey a message instead of simply to bring attention to himself. The use of gestures to emphasize words instead of to command attention falls under the Eastern category because in this style, gestures are used help convey the parts of the message which would otherwise be inferred. In order to compare the two styles, it was beneficial to also examine the New Year message which was delivered by the leader of the United States at the time of this study.

In order to compare the Eastern style of communication with the Western style, a video depicting the President of the United States, Donald Trump, was used to represent the Western style of communication because the United States is a Western nation. In the video, the camera mostly focused on the top half of President Trump's body, however, during one part, one can see his thumb and arm make their way into the bottom of the frame as if trying to gesture toward himself. Because this gesture was not used in place of an idea as discussed by Dingemans (2010), one may argue that this gesture was not used as a way of helping convey a message. He instead used words to help convey his message and even emphasized words which he thought were important in his message. An example of this was when he mentioned how the nations "economy" was going "up, up, up," as a way of showing how the economy was improving because stocks values kept increasing. He also "spelled out" his message by using descriptive words such as "big" and "beautiful" when describing his "Christmas gift," a tax break for his citizens. Overall, the Western style was more emotive, gestured more often and not deliberately, and the messages were conveyed by using and emphasizing words in order for others to understand the overall meaning. Which one of these types of styles will be the most effective when conveying political messages, however, is what this study aims to discover and the results and data sets from this study are shown below.

Our other objective was to study audience preferences in order to see which style is more effective when dealing with political messages. In order to assess the effectiveness of the different types of political messages, focus groups were scheduled to be held in the Oakland center, at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan after receiving IRB approval. Ideally three focus groups were to be held, each with an equal number of Asian American immigrants, Asian Americans born in the United States, and Non-Asian Americans. Each participant had to verify that they were over the age of 18. This is the legal voting age in the United States and these individuals are more likely to be a target audience for political messages in that particular region. Participants gave consent and had to verify that they were fluent in English because the videos played during the group, and the questions that were asked of the group, were in English. In order to verify their demographics and English fluency, participants were expected to email the principle investigator prior to attending the focus group. Demographics included gender and whether they were Asian American Immigrants, Asian Americans born in the United States, or Non-Asian Americans. A secret coding system was used in order to identify and group these participants. In order to maintain confidentiality, the code was only known to the principle investigator. The first half of the code was assigned during the email correspondence with the principal investigator and the other half was assigned when the participants showed up for the study. This way, steps were taken to protect the identity of the participants by assigning the codes at different times, only referring to the participants by their code, and eventually crossing out part of the code with a permanent marker. Unfortunately, due to logistical difficulties and poor attendance, and despite the best efforts of the researcher, only two subjects were able to participate.

In the focus group/interview, the participants were shown two separate films' political messages with roughly the same message. The messages were composed using information from the literature review as well as the website by Dingemans (2010) and a YouTube video cited at the end of this discussion. The study was held two separate times (three times were expected to meet but this did not occur due to lack of participants) in the Oakland Center at Oakland University, Rochester Michigan. The videos were shown to each group using a laptop.

The script for these videos was recited by an actor who was dressed in formal attire in order to have the appearance of a real political candidate, however, the actor wore gloves in order to hide their skin in an attempt to avoid racial prejudice. The actor's face was also not shown for the same reason. To ensure the actor was accurate, the actor was given two resources, a short webpage created by Dingemans (2010) which appeared to be from a credible resource on globalization, and a YouTube video by Elsinga (2014) which appeared to be of other undergraduate students conducting similar research. The video was then recorded to a password protected iPhone and transferred to a MacBook pro, which was the laptop used in this study. Using the same iPhone, the responses from the focus groups/interviews were recorded during the groups. These responses were then coded based on a Likert scale with 1 as Strongly agree, 2 as Agree, 3 as Neutral, 4 as Disagree and 5 as Strongly disagree. After the focus group/interview, the recordings were deleted to protect the participants' privacy. More information about the focus groups is as follows.

In the focus groups, participants were asked open-ended questions. These questions included "which video did you like better and why?" (these questions can be found in the appendix) the responses were recorded and then transcribed in the same room as soon as the focus group was over. This way, the recording could be deleted soon after the focus group,

helping protect confidentiality. The participants were asked open-ended questions in order to acquire more data. The open-ended questions were then transcribed into a Likert scale based on the questions that were asked. Knowing the conversion from open ended responses to a scale may result in a loss of translation, paraphrased responses to the open-ended questions were recorded. To ensure confidentiality and to ensure the videos stayed private so as not to reveal them to potential participants, the participants were instructed not to share their responses outside of the group. Participants were allowed to leave at any time, however, they had an incentive to stay because they were given a \$10 gift card as compensation for their time. The focus group/interview was expected to last no more that 30 minutes.

### Data

Eastern Table

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Average
Resonated	Agree (2)	Disagree (4)	3
Interest	Neutral (3)	Agree (2)	2.5
Familiarity	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)	1.5
Inspired	Between Strongly Agree and Agree (1.5)	Between Strongly Agree and Agree (1.5)	1.5
Understood the Speaker	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)	1.5

Western Table

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Average
Resonated	Disagree (4)	Disagree (4)	4
Interest	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	1.5
Familiarity	Agree (2)	Between Agree, Neutral, and Disagree (3)	2.5
Inspired	Between Strongly Agree, Agree, and Neutral (2)	Strongly Agree (1)	1.5
Understood the Speaker	Agree (2)	Strongly Agree (1)	1.5

Averages

	Eastern Averages	Western Averages
Resonated	3	4
Interest	2.5	1.5
Familiarity	1.5	2.5
Inspired	1.5	1.5
Understood	1.5	1.5

## Results

Based on these methods, the lowest scores represent the one most preferred. While the averages were similar, because the Eastern set had the lowest average scores, it is the most preferred. The lower averages are marked in yellow. The comments in the interviews also showed this to be the case. Despite both participants being of non-Asian descent, they appeared to prefer the more Eastern political message. One participant even mentioned how they disliked the Western video as it did not sound as “professional” as its Eastern counterpart. They even mentioned how the Western video “tried too hard to get the point across.” It was for this reason the more Western video did not resonate with either interviewee. The Eastern video did resonate with one, however, while the second interviewee mentioned how neither video clearly communicated the main point of the campaign. They both agreed that the Eastern video was more persuasive as it got everyone involved instead of being self-centered.

Based on their interview responses, one participant’s opinion on the Eastern style video was neutral in terms of maintaining their interest, however the Western video kept them interested despite being “over the top at times” and there were points where the abundance of gestures in the video actually took away from the video’s message. One participant agreed that both videos seemed familiar to the participant because the Eastern video was more professional in format. This participant used words such as “resumes” and “selling one’s self” when describing the Eastern style. Regarding the Eastern speech, the first participant stated that the speech had more of an “interview format.” The participant agreed that they were able to understand both speakers, but they found the gestures in the Western speech to be distracting. They also found both speeches to be inspiring but they felt that the Western speech was repetitive and was too focused on trying to command attention.



The other participant seemed to like the Eastern message, though neither one was very understandable, as the political message was “not clear” in either situation and after coding her position on both speeches based on the Likert scale, the speeches seemed almost identical. The participant agreed both speeches were familiar to this participant as they have had numerous experiences which involved listening to speeches. Interest-wise, however, the passion which was present into the Eastern presentation was enough to grasp the attention of the participant while the participant seemed to not want to continue with the Western style because she “got it.” The participant discussed how she liked the Eastern style as it was not as self-centered and she agreed that it was inspiring because as the participant stated: “[he] Made it clear that he was interested in what the people wanted.” While it was hard to say how the participant felt about the Western speech, both speeches were well understood by this participant, but the Western speech had more emphasis while the other speech was more focused on, as the participant stated, “working together.” Both participants liked the Eastern style as it addressed the group as a whole. Overall, the fact that the Eastern style appeared to be more polished and encompassed the entire community instead of seeming individualistic made it is the preferred style of communication. It appears the Eastern style has been tailored to fit a more professional model because it is a high context communication style which focuses on the individuals and how they come across in a relationship as opposed to have everything put on paper like the Western style (Dingemans, 2010). Perhaps it would be beneficial if a set of rules was created for political messages. The high context, Eastern style is also known for having a different type of message because points of the message are inferred instead of spelling things out verbatim (Dingemans, 2010). Dingemans, (2010) even noted that using the low context style when someone is used to the high context style may actually make the person using the low context style seem “cold” when recited

to a person who is used to using the Eastern style. It may be beneficial to keep political messages slightly cryptic instead of spelling everything out. The overall conclusion after conducting the interviews, however, was that the Eastern style was preferred because it included the entire group. Therefore, when composing political messages, one may wish to focus on the collective whole rather than simply the individual who wishes to get elected. What really seemed to impress the participants, however, was the fact that the Eastern style was all inclusive instead of individualistic. They really enjoyed feeling like they were a part of the message and were not simply just someone being persuaded to vote a certain way. Perhaps leaders should craft their messages in a way that makes it clear that they wish to serve their constituents and not try to make the message seem focused on the candidate themselves. Based on the data collected during this study, the candidate should focus on trying to make their constituents feel as if they are a part of the election process.

## **Discussion**

### Limitations

An obvious error included the lack of participants. Ideally, there would have had multiple focus groups with 1/3 Non-Asian Americans, 1/3 Asian Americans born in the United States, and 1/3 Asian American immigrants, so it could be determined what people from different backgrounds prefer. Because of the lack of diverse participants, the study was not able to address one of its main objectives: To see if people from different regions prefer different communication styles when listening to political messages and if so, do they prefer messages in the same style that originated in the region where these people are originally from? The venue also caused issues because construction on the venue (the Oakland Center at Oakland University) in which the interview was taking place made it hard to hear the videos. Also, though the Eastern

video is meant to be a quieter video, the participants did need it turned up in order to be understood, which may also have skewed the results. It was also hard to determine if the more Western video was accurate or if it was, as some may say, “a bit over the top.” Even so, these videos seemed accurate to the best of my understanding. While my resources seem credible, I am an undergraduate student and I not trained in linguistics, so it is hard to say if the scripts I have written are accurate representations of the different styles of communication. One may also question how the definitions of high and low context communication styles relate to one another and what may be an accurate representation of the two styles. For example, the investigator noticed that the high context style relied on more deliberate gestures which, based on the researcher’s experience after visiting a nation in what they consider to be a part of the Eastern half of the world and other personal experiences means fewer more deliberate hand gestures. One may argue, that the Eastern video should have instead included more hand gestures because as per the information which was used to create the scripts, hand gestures are an important aspect of the high context style of communication (Dingemans, 2010). This issue may occur, however, simply because of the way communication styles change as a whole.

Another possible error lies within the study of communication styles in itself. A textbook by Sarah Trenholm (2014) was consulted when completing this study, however, the book and other research examples in this study seem to contradict one another. Though there were similarities such as words being inferred, her description of the styles slightly differed from that of webpage by Dingemans (2010). Perhaps this was because of the examples she had used to show how there may be confusion between the two styles of communication. Dingeman’s, (2010) web page appears to have been created to aid with globalization thus helping both business people and diplomats with multicultural interactions. This page was questioned,

however, when a viewer commented saying that the Western style was high context while the Eastern style was low context. The same way messages change when put into different styles of communication, perhaps the way individuals within a certain communication style tend to differ as well. Trenholm (2014) discusses how people are fluid and it is important to not bind them by labels such as stereotypes. Therefore, one should not be bound by the limitations or specific aspects of one style. While there were some parts where it was imperative to use direct quotes from the recordings of the interview as these responses were phrased in a way which could otherwise interfere with the quality of the research, the responses were transcribed in the researcher's own words as a way of further ensuring privacy. As a result, the transcribed responses may not be exactly what the participant was thinking at the time of viewing. Because it is almost impossible to know how another person truly feels or believes, even the interview process itself is flawed. There may also have been some sort of gender bias as both participants were female. Some important information which the interviewees may have shared could also have been lost when some information from the recording was converted into a Likert scale. In the future, the moderator may want to specifically ask if the person agreed or strongly agreed in order to make the coding process much easier when it is converted into a Likert scale. In order to maintain confidentiality, the recordings were transcribed and deleted as soon as the interviews were over. This way it was less likely for the participants' political opinions to be matched with their identities. Because the recording was deleted, one cannot go back and review said recording. As previously mentioned, there were, and are issues with turning open-ended questions into a scale using numbers, so future investigators may also wish to record responses in their own words along with the coded scale in order to ensure the coding is as

accurate as possible. Other suggestions for future experiments may be found in the limitations section.

### **Ideas for Future Studies**

The main limitation of the focus groups used in this study was the lack of participants. It is common knowledge that a larger sample is needed in order to have a successful study because a small sample may not be representative of the entire population. It is suggested that future experiments try to gain more participants or at least try to obtain a pool of participants which had a more diverse population which contains at least some non-Asian participants, at least some Asian-American participants who were born in the United States, and at least some participants who are Asian American immigrants. Since the only participants in the study identified as female, there may also have been a gender bias. Perhaps the study should also take place away from a university campus as the location may have made this study seem too intimidating to students who may have been interested in participating. Also, as it was advertised, students thought it had only to do with politics, which they communicated to the researcher they did not like. This especially interfered with the recruiting process because it was expected that students would participate as mentioned in IRB. This study was created to see if people from different regions prefer different political messages based on the communication style which was used in order to convey the message. Perhaps participants should also be made aware that these videos were performed by an actor and not by an actual candidate in order to help make the study appear less intimidating. When advertising similar studies in the future, one may also want to make it clear that the intention of this project is about political messages and not about politics in general.

The same way different styles of communication vary from East to West, different communication styles may also vary from country to country or from region to region. For example, one may want to consider different communication styles from specific regions such as Russia, China, Japan, the Philippines, India, Korea, Indonesia, and other countries which may fit into the Eastern category. A researcher would then create messages tailored to fit one of these regions and then create a message from one Western region such as the United States. With the exception of the new videos, the same methods could be repeated. This experiment focused on different regions grouped in to categories such as “East” and “West.” For easy division purposes, the Eastern category was even divided to include Russia and India while the West included most of Europe because some believe the Mediterranean to be the border between Eastern and Western cultures. Future researchers may want to rethink this division in order to see if the division effects the results in some way. An example of a way the West could be further divided is by specifically examining the places which Dingemans (2010) stated used the low context communication style, such as the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada. Other researchers may also want to examine the specific communications style in two different nations within the same region and see how those two places compare. For example, they could compare political messages using communication styles from Japan and Russia or the United States and the United Kingdom. While race should be controlled for because it could lead to a bias as previously mentioned, one may wish to use different actors to see if that affects the results. For example, people may perceive the political message differently if it is delivered by a female actor. After all, the actor(s) themselves may cause an issue by making the viewers’ personal bias a factor. The actor(s) may also have different ways of portraying the same issue in the same style. For this reason, it may also be beneficial to have a whole group of actors and have them each perform the

same two videos. This way we can see if the responses vary greatly from actor to actor. One may then want to run the study again with actors whose videos created similar responses from the audience and make sure the actor gave an accurate portrayal of both styles of political messages in order to achieve the desired result of this study: to see if there is an audience preference between Eastern and Western styles of communication when delivering political messages.

The results may differ if the participants knew the person in the videos was indeed a candidate. If one has a large number of perspective participants, one may wish to run this study multiple times using the same scripts. The same actor will read both scripts during the focus groups or interviews in which their video is shown, however, the researcher would alter between actors between interviews and focus groups. This way one can determine if perhaps the actor or how the actor portrayed each message may have affected the results of this study. The coding process may also be improved upon because even though the open-ended questions were a good idea because they allow for more in-depth responses, breaking it into a Likert scale may have affected the results somewhat. For example, when it seemed like it was hard to place the response(s) in a single category such as “agree” or “disagree” the response was coded as both and the two numbers were averaged. Overall, it would appear the study would have created better results if it had more participants, however, based on the interview results that were obtained, using the Eastern style of communication was the preferred method of communication when composing and delivering political messages. The methods and findings can be used as a model for future research which may contribute in more impactful ways. Overall, more research may have to be done, however, with the assistance of this research, this study may help future politicians and diplomats.

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## Appendix A

### Script for Videos

#### Low Context Political Message (Western)

I have one main goal and my goal is this... I want to lead YOU! My goal is to do whatever it takes to help you reach your goals and thus help us all become stronger together! I WANT TO MAKE MIRACLES HAPPEN! I know that if you put your trust in me, then I won't let you down. I WILL WORK WONDERS! Because I am so passionate, I believe I can help us achieve our goals...So let's work hard together. I promise I won't let you down! So, pick me as your next candidate!

#### High Context Political Message (Eastern)

It is imperative that a leader help advance the people whom they serve. If the people and their leader come together, they may reach goals which we once thought were unobtainable. MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN! You can give me the power to help works these miracles. DREAMS CAN COME TRUE! Passion is what allows a leader to help accomplish miracles and dreams. If you allow me to lead I will do my best to fulfill your expectations. It is with collaborative strength goals become more attainable. For this reason, you should consider me as your candidate!

**Appendix B**

## Researcher's Script

Hello, everyone! Thank you so much for coming! Hopefully, you will find this enjoyable and you will receive a free gift card at the end. First, I will pass out these consent forms. Then, we will view two videos of the same politician with different types of political messages. Then, I will ask you questions to see which message you liked better. Please be honest as possible. Here is the first video...Here is the second.

Questions the moderator will ask:

Which presentation did you like better and why?

Which one resonated with your political views more?

Was the speaker interesting to you? Why or why not?

Was there a speech pattern that was more familiar to you?

Were you able to understand the speaker?

Was there someone whom you could understand better?

Was either speech inspiring to you?

Is there a speech pattern you dislike? Why/how so?