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Paving the Path for Sex Education:  
An Analysis of Journey Metaphors in Political Rhetoric

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes four key political texts regarding access to comprehensive and abstinence-only sex education in the United States, beginning in 1919 and culminating in 2016. The aim is to draw attention to the relationship between political rhetoric on sex education and the metaphorical language that is utilized to discuss the matter. Presented here is the argument that discourse on sex education revolves around journey metaphors and most often reflect the underlying conceptual metaphors that LIFE IS A JOURNEY and/or POLITICS IS A JOURNEY. This framing of the debate began in 1919 when a pamphlet distributed by the United States' government referred to moral-based sex education as placing children on the right *path* and has endured through 2016. Now politicians from both parties highlight the importance of *leadership* and *direction* when it comes to the finishing their journey in search of the form of sex education that prefer.

*Key words:* Metaphor analysis, political rhetoric, sex education, journey

### Introduction

While traditionally the view of the sex education debate in America has been considered to be split by political affiliation, the reality is that many factors other than party preference play a role. Research suggests that even more important than liberal or conservative tendencies, one's views of gender roles, family norms, and sexuality as a whole contribute to one's attitude about the integration of comprehensive sex education into public schools (Mahoney, 1979; 2010). This means that, unlike many other controversial topics, citizens feel less party loyalty when it comes to sex education and therefore an eloquent speaker from either party may be able to alter one's perception through intentional word choice, well-placed example, or appealing and developed metaphors. In order to keep up with their supporters' malleable views, both parties have made changes to the type of sex education for which they advocate. For instance, the liberal preferences on sex education in 1919 is more closely aligned with modern conservative rhetoric, whereas in 1919 conservatives advocated the complete abolition of sex education.

The movement to include any form of sex education in public schools began during the progressive era of politics, which is generally defined as the time between the 1890s and the 1920s in the United States marked by social activism and political reform. Not only was sex education introduced during this time but hygiene, health, and physical education were also emphasized as important for the development of children and adolescents. As a result, between 1910 and 1940 the United States government created and attempted to disseminate sex instructional materials despite the fact that many of these essays and pamphlets were stopped by the mail system on a state level and therefore rarely reached their intended audience (Carter, 2001). A large contributing factor to these regimented and continual attempts to normalize sex

education curriculums was the presidency of Woodrow Wilson from 1913 to 1921. While Woodrow Wilson identified as a democrat and was attempting to establish progressive policies, he was also a devout presbyterian and the form of sex education that he advocated for focused solely on the dangers of venereal disease and emphasizing morals through “just say no” rhetoric.

Shifting to a consideration of the newest presidential reign in the United States under Donald Trump, it becomes clear that the policies he endorses as a conservative in 2016 actually align closely with that of liberals almost 100 years prior. Donald Trump also identifies as a presbyterian but, unlike Woodrow Wilson, he is a republican. As such, the majority of his staff endorse abstinence-only sex education which, as rebranded by Valerie Huber, the administration refers to as Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA). SRA curriculums focus on similar key ideas as the form of sex education that Woodrow Wilson was advocating for whereas modern liberal politicians tend to advocate for a more comprehensive form of sex education. In order to be considered comprehensive, sex education should include material about gender identity and the spectrum of sexuality, an explanation of all contraceptive methods, the tools to build healthy relationships, the effects of alcohol and drug use on responsible decision making, as well as the dangers of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and definitions of consent and rape (SIECUS, 2016; Livni, 2017; Planned Parenthood, 2017; Santelli, 2017).

According to an article published by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in 2016, comprehensive sex education has many benefits to adolescents as well as society as a whole. Comprehensive sex education has been found to have a negative correlation with teenage pregnancy and abortion rates (Kohler et al., 2008). Similarly, comprehensive sex education is also related to delayed initiation of sexual activity and more

monogamous and healthier relationship practices. Conversely, abstinence-only programs are not associated with the use of contraceptives nor delaying of sexual initiation (Kohler et al., 2008). Despite this, very few public middle and high schools in the United States integrate comprehensive sex education into their curricula (NPR, 2004). This paper aims to identify the metaphors used by those advocating for comprehensive sex education and those advocating for abstinence-only sex education in American public schools; the goal being to understand how the metaphorical imagery developed in the debate has evolved from 1919 to 2016.

### Literature Review

Sex education has been a controversial topic in the United States since the early 1900's due to funding debates, and perceived religious and moral differences. American culture treats sex as a taboo subject in the abstract while over compensating in our media with near-pornographic portrayals of youth in movies, television shows, and video games. Because of the strange relationship between politics and sex education, much of the language that is used in political debates about the matter is coded in metaphor or develops metaphorical stories to make the arguments more accessible to the citizens. Like many issues in the United States, a country built on a foundation of religious freedom, sex education rhetoric has often found itself blurring the lines between political and religious discourse (Favier, 2009). These religious advocates often rely on morality based arguments that reflect the underlying conceptual metaphors GOOD IS UP and BAD IS DOWN as well as GOOD IS LIGHT and BAD IS DARK. These conceptual metaphors could be related to the Christian understanding that Heaven is a literal location above us near the bright sun where good souls go after death and that Hell is a literal location below us where bad souls go to repent in the darkness.

Very little research has been published in the field of metaphor analysis on the sex education debate in America. This may be due to the fact that many pro-sex organizations see the debate as unwinnable because their right-wing opponents often use black box arguments to prevent potential rebuttal (Jackson, 2008). Black box argument focus on points and values that are not open for expansion, therefore rendering the opposition unable to counter. Despite being boxed out of the argument, these pro-sex organizations, such as Planned Parenthood and SIECUS, tend to be some of the most prominent advocates for comprehensive sex education. Their arguments are primarily centered around health concerns for adolescents, which tends to lend itself to science or nature metaphors as a juxtaposition to their opponent's dependence on religion metaphors (Huber & Firmin, 2008).

Metaphors play an important function in political rhetoric. They reflect underlying conceptual metaphors that form our schemas and understanding of political issues (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Whether an audience consciously processes a metaphor as such or not, this attribute transfer contributes to their schema about the concept and primes them to relate new words to the issue (Ritchie, 2017). In an increasingly partisan country, this is particularly powerful coming from a politician who can manipulate voter perceptions about an issue through covert metaphor use. This study focuses on how these metaphors may be utilized to appeal to specific audiences in order for them to feel more connected to the speaker or make the argument more appealing through the use of perceptual simulations. Metaphors allow an opportunity for an orator to connect with audience members by transferring the attributes of something familiar to them to a less familiar concept (Ritchie, 2017).

Throughout history, journey metaphors have been prevalent and appear to contribute to the way that humans organize our thoughts about many topics. As can be seen in various religious, artistic, and political texts through time and across cultures, “many of us conceptualize our different experiences of life, love, or politics in terms of a journey” (Cibulskienė, 2012, p. 132). The word “journey” and related terms have contributed to popular and long established underlying conceptual metaphors such as LIFE IS A JOURNEY and POLITICS IS A JOURNEY. Cibulskienė (2012) points out that the latter is commonly used because journeys imply some sort of planned progress in which one or more individuals will follow a specific path to arrive at a goal. By utilizing journey metaphors, speakers are able to map these same qualities onto their commitment to achieve their own political goals in a way that is appealing and relatable for their audience.

### Methods

Four key texts were selected and coded for metaphor in order to understand the past and contemporary metaphors utilized in relevant political rhetoric. The first text is a pamphlet that was the result of an effort by the United States Bureau of Education and the United States Public Health Services to develop a plan on how the nation would tackle sex education through its public schools. This pamphlet was issued by the United States Treasury Department in 1919 and can be viewed as a starting point for sex education being integrated into public school curriculum. While the text does not directly advocate for abstinence-only education, as it was formed under a liberal and fairly progressive president for the time, it does highlight morals and asks for a form of sex education that is far from what would be considered comprehensive today. It therefore aligns more closely with the sex education preference of modern conservatives and

can still function as reflecting the opinions of the abstinence-only movement. The second selected text is a speech entitled “A Victory, A New Year, and A New Day” that was written by Margaret Sanger the same year. The objective of her speech was to point out the hypocrisy of the United States government, which released this pamphlet regarding their definition of proper sex education but also arrested Kitty Marion and herself for publishing an essay on similar issues earlier that year with a more scientific approach. Sanger and Marion were well-established pro-sex advocates who, only two years after this speech, established America’s first birth-control clinic (Winderman, 2014).

Unlike the first two texts, the third text that was coded for this paper is a modern example of public discourse on sex education. “Sex Education and the Seduction of Selective Science” was written in 2016 by Valerie Huber, the new Chief of Staff for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health at the United States Department of Health and Human Services under the Trump administration. Before she was appointed to this position, Valerie Huber was the president and CEO of Ascend (a program formerly called the National Abstinence Education Association). The purpose of her essay is to condemn a list compiled by the Obama administration of sex education programs that will produce positive results because abstinence-only sex education is not on this evidence based list. The final relevant text is a speech made by Hillary Clinton during her 2016 presidential campaign. This speech was given in Washington, D.C. at a Planned Parenthood Action Fund membership event. Planned Parenthood supporters have long been advocates for greater access to contraceptive methods and access to comprehensive sex education in the United States. Planned Parenthood as an organization was established in 1916 by Margaret Sanger as a way to provide reproductive health care services

and educational programs while advocating for public policies which ensure access to these services as a right (Planned Parenthood, 2017). Clinton attacks her opponent's campaign for encouraging the further dissemination of abstinence-only sex education curricula in an otherwise progressive nation.

All four of these texts, two advocating for abstinence-only or moral based sex education and two advocating for comprehensive sex education, were coded independently in order to understand the use of metaphor in the development of the two respective arguments. Every metaphor in the texts were coded by identifying the topic and the vehicle. The majority of the coding was done utilizing MIP-VU, a metaphor identification process from VU University of Amsterdam, that focuses on identifying the most basic meaning of each word or phrase and deciphering whether it is incongruous with the context<sup>1</sup> (Steen et al., 2010). The focus of the coding was identifying underlying conceptual metaphors used in the rhetoric in order to draw more relevant comparisons between sides and times of the debate, based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980).

### Analysis

#### The Debate in 1919

On the inside cover of the pamphlet distributed by the United States Public Health Services department in 1919, the authors present the purpose of sex education as "... for the encouragement of scientific and *carefully guided efforts to combat venereal diseases* and to teach the facts of sex *in a wholesome manner*" (p. 2). By utilizing the phrase *carefully guided*, the

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, metaphorical words and phrases will be identified with italics (i.e., *path*), while conceptual metaphors will be identified with capital letters (i.e., LIFE IS A JOURNEY)

pamphlet personifies the public school's *efforts* as lost individuals who require guidance from a more knowledgeable leader in order to continue on their journey, as well as to successfully combat the personified *venereal diseases* that are preventing safe passage on this journey. Not only does this activate the underlying conceptual metaphor that EDUCATION IS A JOURNEY through the placement of the government and educators as those tactically leading their *efforts* on a complicated route, but it also develops a metaphorical story in which these *efforts* must physically fight off their enemy, *venereal diseases*, before they can move forward and make physical progress through space. The second part of the sentence maps the traits of a container onto a "wholesome manner" through the use of the word *in*. This therefore implies that the destination of these *efforts* is the container or location, "wholesome manner", where the facts of sex can be taught after the *carefully guided* journey to arrive at this point.

The pamphlet continues to develop journey metaphors, although not all activate the same underlying conceptual metaphor. For example, the document states that "... the *failure to give* early sex instruction results *in* sex practices, which, too often, are the *first steps in a career* of immorality and resulting venereal disease" (p. 6-7). Sex education is given a physical presence in this excerpt, as an object that is *given* (or *failed to be given*). By *failing to give* this important object to adolescents, there is an implied interference with their journey through the use of the phrase *first steps in a career*. This phrase is rich in metaphor, utilizing multiple words associated with journeys to develop a clear image for the reader of the consequences of failing to *give* the metaphorical object of knowledge to the metaphorical travelers. Through this word choice (i.e., *first steps* and *career*), the quote activates the underlying conceptual metaphor that LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and leaving without first receiving the proper equipment (such as early sex

education) can result in a journey down the wrong path, a path leading to “immorality and [...] venereal disease”. Career, while often associated with occupation in modern discourse, refers to the course or passage that those without sex education will begin down as they take their *first steps* on the journey of life in this case. This furthers the idea that LIFE IS A JOURNEY with multiple possible courses, and therefore the intervention of adults onto the life of adolescents is presented as the most reasonable way to prevent the wrong choice of path.

Not long after this idea is presented, the pamphlet asserts that “... often it does not suffice to *lead* the pupil *into* the right *paths*” (p. 11). This is where the pamphlet shifts from simply recommending the integration of sex education to recommending the integration of moral-based, abstinence-only sex education. Not only should the educators *give* their pupils early sex education to avoid going down the wrong *path* in their journey, but “*with proper direction and guidance they can be made* wholesome and positive” (p. 11). These two quotes present educators as those *leading* their pupils, therefore once again reinforcing the underlying conceptual metaphor that LIFE IS A JOURNEY. This implies that to provide information about sex education would be to simply “*lead* the pupil *into* the right *paths*,” which is insufficient when it comes to ensuring that they are successful on their journey. This activates a metaphorical story in which the teacher walks their student to the edge of a forest or unknown land and, after indicating where the trailhead starts, abandons the child to walk the path alone. This story is developed further by the objectification of *direction* and *guidance* as two things that can travel *with* the student as long as the educator provides them before the journey. It is not enough to simply *lead* the students to the path, but the educator must also provide them with the *direction* and *guidance* needed to navigate the path as well. If these two items are imparted from the

teacher, then along their path the students can develop and be *made* wholesome and positive, like an object that is being molded or created by their teachers. These same ideas can be mapped from the metaphorical journey onto the pupil's sexual initiation and life after school.

Unlike the United States department of Public Health Services, Margaret Sanger's speech in 1919 develops different kinds of journey metaphors in order to renounce these pamphlets and advocate for a more comprehensive form of sex education. At the beginning of her speech, "A Victory, A New Year, A New Day," Sanger points out that "many other [pamphlets] looked as if they might have been *in large* part rewritten from the book, 'What Every Girl Should Know,' which *covers exactly the same ground* as the article which caused the arrest of Miss Marion and myself" (para. 4). In order to bring attention to the hypocrisy of the government for arresting two women for using scientific language to talk about sex education openly while simultaneously promoting the circulation of similar messages from men, Sanger utilizes a journey metaphor to appeal to a wider audience. By asserting that the pamphlet and the article that caused her arrest *cover exactly the same ground*, Sanger is activating the underlying conceptual metaphor that KNOWLEDGE IS MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE or EDUCATION IS A JOURNEY. This presents the idea that the information in the article written by herself and Kitty Marion is on one journey, while the information in the pamphlet above is another journey. While the government sees the two as on radically different journeys, Sanger is trying to relate the two by claiming that they are at equal points in their journey, having traveled the same distance across the same *ground*. While the two texts may be on different *paths*, they have arrived at the same metaphorical destination.

While the pamphlet promotes morals and values as the key components of sex education, Sanger is hoping for “... a *free, unhindered spreading* of the knowledge...” (para. 7). If her presented knowledge is a group of people traveling on a journey together, then it is clear that Sanger is situating the government as those who are trying to limit the *spreading* of this knowledge, these individuals, from traveling to their destination without restriction. The word *spread* implies that Sanger would like for her knowledge to move across the land in an way that is not subject to control or manipulation by others. It would appear that the government is attempting to *hinder* these efforts, and take away their *freedom* to explore the land ahead of them on this journey by forcing the collection of knowledge to stay, single-file, on the limited path. Sanger is attempting to position the ground as the entire girth of knowledge that can possibly be taught in a sex education curriculum, and while she wants sex education to *spread* across this ground as it moves on its journey to reach the students, the government wants sex education to follow a narrow path, only *covering* a limited amount of knowledge.

Sanger gives a small allowance to her opposition when she concedes that “at last the state and the nation *have come to* a more *enlightened* standard” (para. 10). She is providing the government with a small allowance despite their hypocrisy by acknowledging that they have been on a journey of their own. The implicature of a journey is made by the phrase *have come to*, suggesting an arrival at the destination of a standard bathed in light. This activates two common underlying conceptual metaphors, POLITICS IS A JOURNEY and GOOD IS LIGHT. Here she frames the government’s decision to allow for sex education in public schools as the end of their journey through darkness, or anti-sex education policies for schools, and their arrival out of the woods, if you will, to an open space with sunlight and a more appropriate standard for what

children should be taught. The wisdom of their new standard, one encouraging sex education information, is seen as light while their journey up to this point, by contrast, is framed as being dark and therefore full of ignorance.

To conclude her speech, Sanger develops a powerful metaphorical story utilizing two different journey metaphors: “but the time is *coming*--perhaps sooner than some of us can believe-- when these *mediaeval* legal *monstrosities* will *follow* others of their *kind to the dustbin*” (para. 17). The first metaphor that she presents is a common one, TIME IS MOVEMENT THROUGH SPACE. This presents the world as stagnant and a specific point in time as moving closer to it, eventually culminating in its arrival through the use of the word *coming*. Once this time has *come*, then the more developed metaphorical story can occur. Sanger then frames the legal recommendations of the government for sex education as being related to the Middle Ages (between the years 501 and 1500) through the word *mediaeval*. While the policies are not actually from this time period, she is mapping the qualities commonly associated with the Middle ages onto them, such as cruelty and brutality. She continues this attack through the use of the word *monstrosities* to describe the policies, further mapping negative qualities such as those belonging to a monster (like malformation and danger) onto them. These ugly, outdated policies are then given physical forms in which then can *follow* others of their *kind* on a journey, with the destination being a *dustbin*, implying the word “trash”. By framing these policies as on a slow march to their own demise in a trashcan, she is trying to make space on the *path* that is politics for new, well-formed policies (as presented by herself and Marion) to start their own journey into the political arena.

The Debate in 2016

Valerie Huber's essay "The Seduction of Selective Science" (the title itself fraught with metaphor) attempts to redefine abstinence-only sex education through the continued use of journey metaphors. She writes that "teens who choose to *delay* sexual *initiation* are able to *invest* more of their time and energy *in* activities that *put them on a path* for future success" (para. 6). Similar to her abstinence-only predecessors, Huber includes metaphors that convey the conceptual metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY here. By situating time and energy as things that can be *invested* she transfers the attributes of a form of currency to them, therefore activating the idea that TIME IS MONEY and ENERGY IS MONEY. When these two currencies are properly invested into *activities* (rather than shares), then the rewards can be reaped as one begins a quest for "future success". In other words, she places value on time and energy, when correctly *invested*, as factors that have control to either *put* children on the correct *path* for their journey or to *put* them (the students) on a *path* that does not have success at the end.

Huber crosses two different journey metaphors later in the essay when she advises that "communities should not be *misled into believing* that programs will *deliver* effective sex education *to* their students..." (para. 11). Through insinuation, she positions Obama as the one who is *misleading* American communities on their journey through education *into* the location of misinformation through the list of acceptable forms of comprehensive sex education that he compiled and endorsed, which excludes abstinence-only. The second journey in this sentence is the one being made by these programs. This is a journey *to* the students in order to *deliver* the physical object that is sex education. Huber is asserting that the programs' journeys will be unsuccessful and as a result, effective sex education will not be *delivered to* the students, because

Obama first *misled* the communities *into* the location of false belief that this journey could be accomplished.

The journey metaphors become slightly more violent with more references to war and battle towards the end of her essay. This essay is considered to be one of the reasons that Huber was chosen to lead Health and Human Services under the Trump Administration, perhaps in part due to the vision for the department that she presents. This sentiment echoes that of the Public Health Services department's pamphlet in 1919, though replacing the word wholesome with honest. She carries on the pamphlet's legacy through enduring journey metaphors. This can be seen where she asserts, "HHS is *in* a unique *position* to *lead* the *conversation* in a healthier and decidedly more honest *direction*. I hope they will *aggressively seize* this *opportunity* to do so" (para. 12). Huber is proposing that the misleadership of Obama be replaced with the Health and Human Services (HHS) department under Trump. The *conversation* about sex education is aimless on its journey and therefore requires a form of guidance from someone or something that is already on the path. Huber claims that HHS is *positioned* on that path and therefore can influence on the *direction* it takes, *leading* this conversation not necessary to a more favorable destination, but down a more favorable route. The following sentence maintains the journey while also implying the use of force to coerce the conversation into going the correct *direction*. When she uses the phrase *aggressively seize* this activates perceptual simulations of a stronger individual grabbing a weaker one, perhaps kidnapping the *opportunity* and carrying it down the preferred path rather than leading or walking beside the *opportunity* on its journey.

Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016 relied heavily on metaphors of leadership and journeys, as can be seen in the speech she gave in Washington, D.C. that year. She begins

the speech to Planned Parenthood supporters by acknowledging the CEO of the nonprofit, “I want to thank my friend, and your courageous *leader*, Cecile Richards” (para. 2). To call Cecile Richards a *leader* situates Planned Parenthood and its supporters as on a journey to achieve access to comprehensive sex education as well as women’s health care. She includes herself as one of the many people on the same journey through the sentence, “we *reached a milestone* together this week” (para. 2). A *milestone*, being a mark of progress, as shown through the number of miles traveled thus far, is a way to map the progress of a journey through space onto Clinton’s own political journey. This activates the underlying conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS A JOURNEY in the same way that Sanger did in her speech almost 100 years before. This conceptual metaphor functions as the metaphorical foundation for Clinton’s whole campaign up to the point of her speech.

As this speech was given very soon before the election which decided her political future, Clinton frames her campaign and political career as a journey that has culminated in this event. She does this by saying, “there’s *nowhere* I’d rather *end* it than right *here*, with the Planned Parenthood Action Fund” (para. 3). When using the words *nowhere* and *here*, she is not referring to her physical location in Washington, D.C., but rather her metaphorical location of solidarity with the Planned Parenthood Action Fund. While a campaign is similar to a physical journey, it that it does often involve traveling long distances across the nation, it is clear that Clinton is referring to a metaphorical journey through the way that she discusses the intended destination. Her destination is not Washington, D.C., not her own home, but rather a more progressive form of sex education, the solidarity and support she feels, and ideally, the presidency.

In order to relate her own political journey to the audience, Clinton then activates another common conceptual metaphor that most people can apply to themselves, LIFE IS A JOURNEY. She does this through giving credit to those hosting her event by stating, “...*Planned Parenthood* has *worked* to *make* sure that the women, men, young people who *count on* you can *lead* their best lives - healthy, safe, and *free to follow* their *dreams*” (para. 11). Here she is using *Planned Parenthood* as a metonym for those working at and supporting the company through volunteerism and donation. She does this to unite all of these people under the one entity that is Planned Parenthood and distribute the credit of women, men, and young people *leading* their best lives across the entire crowd of people. She develops this journey metaphor further by saying that through Planned Parenthood and the policies it supports, such as comprehensive sex education, these people can be unhindered in the journey that is their life, to *follow* the lead of their personified *dreams* to the desired destination.

Clinton goes on the offensive towards the end of her speech when she says, “Instead of *working to continue* the progress we’ve *made*, Republicans, *led* now by Donald Trump, are *working to reverse* it” (para. 18). This frames the two dominant political parties in the United States as on oppositional journeys. Rather than placing the two groups as on different paths leading to the same destination, as Valerie Huber does in her essay, she places them on the same path but heading in opposite directions. She designates each group a leader: herself as the one that democrats have followed to progress to this point in their journey, and Trump as the leader of those going in the other direction who are trying to pull her own followers behind as well. This metaphor is continued when she unveils her analysis of his slogan through the following sentence: “when Donald Trump says, ‘Let’s *make* America great again,’ that is *code* for ‘let’s

*take America backward*" (para. 19). By *decoding* his repetitive and most famous campaign message as the inverse of political progress, she is drawing attention to how limited his political background is. Trump is utilizing a construction metaphor, *making* America into something new through building or molding upon the pre-existing country. Clinton reframes this into a regressive journey on which Trump is attempting to *take* an entire nation, objectified as something he can carry with him, the wrong *direction*.

### Discussion

Though the argument for appropriate styles of sex education may change over time, the audience does not. The opinions of American citizens can and will be altered by the framing effects of metaphor use in political rhetoric whether or not this metaphorical language is used tactically or haphazardly. When this debate became prominent in the United States, around 1919, many underlying conceptual metaphors were used to help people understand the importance of various forms of sex education including EDUCATION IS A JOURNEY, LIFE IS A JOURNEY, and POLITICS IS A JOURNEY. All of these conceptual metaphors were introduced by either the United States department of Public Health Services or their opponent at the time, Margaret Sanger. Journey metaphors have endured the test of time when it comes to the debate on sex education through politicians such as Valerie Huber and Hillary Clinton. The fundamentally factor unifying all of these texts is that none of them will accept the journey towards their desired form of sex education to be aimless. All four texts advocate for a specific leader to direct the conversation, the youth, or knowledge in the appropriate directions.

As the nation continues on its journey, regardless of the destination, it can be seen that how a political issue is framed can carry through for nearly 100 years. This means that as more

modern issues come to light, it is important to use metaphor intentionally and thoughtfully. To be the first politician to discuss an issue, specifically one relating to education or sexuality, is a big responsibility. In order to persuade the largest possible audience as well as frame future discussions, metaphor choice matters. By framing sex education as a journey, early politicians were able to justify their slow progress (as they were only taking their first steps on the journey) while contemporary politicians are able to point out the disparity between the mileage covered by themselves and that covered by their opponent's party. The field of metaphor analysis could benefit from further research on similarly divided issues in order to more fully understand the polarizing effect of oppositional metaphor use in political rhetoric

#### Limitations

This work was lacking intercoder reliability, since coding was done individually and therefore opportunities for further analysis may be available within the texts and metaphors may have been overlooked. In an attempt to compensate for this lack of intercoder reliability, each text was coded multiple times but only by the singular author of this work. The bias towards comprehensive sex education over abstinence-only sex education may have altered the analysis of the texts, though each excerpt was analyzed as a stand-alone quotation to minimize the negative effects of author bias.

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