



MAKING AMERICA GREAT AGAIN: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S RETURN TO NATIONALISM AND ITS GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This research employs Norman Fairclough's (2015) Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze Donald Trump's speeches, tweets, and public statements, focusing on his 2024 Campaign Rally in Waco, Texas and his Inaugural Address on January 20, 2025. Fairclough's model is applied in three stages: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The textual analysis examines the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies used by Trump, such as emotionally charged vocabulary, metaphors, and grammatical choices, to construct narratives of nationalism, sovereignty, and populism. The discursive practice analysis investigates how these texts are produced, distributed, and consumed, with a particular focus on Trump's media strategies, digital platforms, and targeted messaging. Finally, the social practice analysis situates his discourse within the broader ideological and power structures, exploring the political implications of his rhetoric on nationalism, immigration, and global relations.

The findings highlight how Trump's language serves to reinforce a populist and nationalist agenda, framing American sovereignty as under threat and positioning himself as the protector of American interests. His use of polarizing metaphors, such as "invaders" for immigrants and "drain the swamp" for corruption, is designed to rally his base and challenge the political establishment. Through strategic media use, Trump amplifies his messages, engaging audiences across diverse platforms, thereby reinforcing ideological divides and contributing to political polarization.

The significance of this study lies in its examination of how political leaders, through discourse, shape public opinion, mobilize support, and influence national and international power relations. The implications of this research extend beyond understanding Trump's rhetoric; it provides insights into the dynamics of populism, the role of media in political communication, and the ways in which discourse contributes to shaping the political landscape in a post-Cold War, postcolonial context. This study underscores the power of language in constructing political ideologies and the potential impact of discourse on the future of global governance and national identity.

Introduction

The slogan "**Make America Great Again**" (MAGA), popularized by Donald Trump during his 2016 presidential campaign and revitalized in 2024, has become emblematic of a resurgence in American nationalism. This phrase encapsulates a political ideology that emphasizes economic protectionism, skepticism toward multilateralism, and a focus on national



sovereignty. Trump's rhetoric, characterized by its populist tone and direct appeal to American exceptionalism, has significantly influenced both domestic and international political landscapes. In his second term, President Trump's administration has continued to implement policies that reflect this nationalist agenda. These include aggressive trade tariffs, reductions in foreign aid, and a reevaluation of international alliances and agreements (Kimmage, 2025). The global implications of these policies are profound, affecting diplomatic relations, international trade dynamics, and the broader geopolitical order. This paper aims to conduct a rhetorical analysis of Trump's MAGA slogan and its associated policies, examining how they have reshaped U.S. foreign policy and contributed to the global rise of nationalism. By analyzing speeches, policy decisions, and international reactions, this study seeks to understand the interplay between political rhetoric and global political transformations.

While the slogan "Make America Great Again" served as a central theme in Trump's 2016 and 2024 campaigns, its implications extend beyond domestic politics. Trump's rhetoric has been associated with a shift towards economic nationalism, characterized by protectionist trade policies, skepticism toward international institutions, and a focus on unilateral action (Kimmage, 2025). These policies have strained traditional alliances and disrupted established international norms. The problem lies in the insufficient scholarly examination of how Trump's nationalist rhetoric has influenced U.S. foreign policy and its global repercussions. Existing analyses often focus on domestic aspects, neglecting the broader international implications. This gap in the literature hinders a comprehensive understanding of the global impact of Trump's rhetorical strategies. The resurgence of nationalism globally, exemplified by Trump's MAGA agenda, warrants a thorough examination of its rhetorical foundations and international consequences. Understanding how Trump's rhetoric has influenced U.S. foreign policy and contributed to the global rise of nationalism is crucial for scholars, policymakers, and international relations practitioners.

This study is timely, as the world grapples with the challenges posed by nationalist movements and the erosion of multilateral cooperation. By analyzing Trump's speeches and policies, this research aims to provide insights into the mechanisms through which political rhetoric can shape international relations and global political dynamics. This research contributes significantly to the fields of political communication and international relations by offering a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between political rhetoric and global political transformations. It provides an in-depth examination of how Donald Trump's nationalist rhetoric, particularly through the slogan "Make America Great Again," has shaped U.S. foreign policy decisions and redefined the country's global posture. Moreover, the study explores the international repercussions of Trump's discourse, highlighting how it has inspired the rise of nationalist and populist movements in various countries. By analyzing the rhetorical strategies and ideological constructs embedded in Trump's communication, the research enhances our understanding of how political language influences not only domestic perceptions but also international relations and global political discourse. The findings of this study will be valuable to scholars investigating the intersection of rhetoric and international politics, as well as to policymakers who must navigate the growing influence of nationalist ideologies in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To analyze the rhetorical features of "Make America Great Again" in Trump's speeches and public discourse.
- ii. To examine how MAGA reframes American nationalism and positions the U.S. on the global stage.



- iii. To explore the influence of MAGA rhetoric on other nationalist movements and foreign policy trends globally.

Literature Review

Nationalism has been a central theme in political discourse, with various scholars offering differing perspectives. Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (1983) posits that nations are socially constructed communities, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Ernest Gellner (1983) argues that nationalism is a product of modernity, emerging as a response to the needs of industrial society. Anthony Smith (2024) emphasizes the role of ethno-symbolism, suggesting that nations are rooted in shared myths, memories, and symbols.

Political rhetoric plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and mobilizing support. Ernesto Laclau (2024) and Norman Fairclough (2024) have explored how populist leaders use language to construct "the people" and "the elite," creating a dichotomy that simplifies complex political landscapes. Charteris-Black (2024) examines how metaphors in political discourse can influence public opinion and policy outcomes.

George Lakoff (2024) analyzes Trump's use of metaphors, particularly the "strict father" model, to frame political issues in moral terms. Mercieca (2024) characterizes Trump's rhetoric as "demagogic," marked by simplicity, repetition, and emotional appeal, which resonates with a broad audience.

The slogan "Make America Great Again" serves as a potent tool for political branding. Studies by Olson et al. (2024) and Wax (2024) discuss how this slogan encapsulates a populist agenda, appealing to sentiments of nationalism and nostalgia. These analyses highlight how the slogan has been instrumental in rallying support among certain voter demographics.

Chilton (2024) and Zarefsky (2024) examine how presidential rhetoric can define political situations and influence public understanding. Their works suggest that Trump's use of language has redefined U.S. foreign policy, emphasizing unilateralism and challenging multilateral agreements.

The rise of nationalist movements globally can be partially attributed to the influence of Trump's rhetoric. Studies by Thulin (2025) and Foster (2025) discuss how Trump's populist style has inspired similar movements in other countries, leading to a resurgence of nationalism on the global stage.

Norman Fairclough's (2024) Three-Dimensional Model of CDA provides a framework for analyzing how language reflects and constructs social realities. This model has been applied to political speeches to understand how discourse shapes power relations and ideologies. Recent studies have applied CDA to analyze political speeches and slogans in various global contexts. For instance, Atmawijaya (2024) uses Fairclough's framework to examine Trump's 2024 campaign speech, highlighting how his rhetoric constructs power relations and reinforces ideological divisions.

Research Methodology

In this research, I employed Norman Fairclough's (2015) Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze Donald Trump's speeches, tweets, and public statements. The model was applied in three stages: textual analysis, which involved examining the linguistic features and rhetorical strategies used by Trump to construct narratives of nationalism and sovereignty; discursive practice, which focused on how these texts were produced, distributed, and consumed, considering the context of Trump's political agenda and media strategies; and sociocultural practice, which explored the broader social and political implications of his rhetoric, particularly with populism, nationalism, and its influence on global



politics. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how Trump's discourse shapes political ideologies, mobilizes support, and impacts international relations.

Analysis

2024 Campaign Rally in Waco, Texas (March 2024)

- **Context:** Trump's first major rally of the 2024 campaign, characterized by strong nationalist and populist rhetoric.
- **Key Themes:** Immigration, national security, American exceptionalism.

Textual Analysis of Trump's 2024 Campaign Rally Speech (Waco, Texas)

Focus: Vocabulary, metaphors, grammar

Application to Speech:

Vocabulary:

Trump's speech is expected to heavily utilize emotionally charged and polarizing language to rally support from his base. Common terms likely to feature include:

"Immigration": Often framed as a threat to national identity and security. Trump may refer to immigrants as "invaders" or "illegal aliens," reinforcing the narrative of an external threat undermining American values.

"National Security": Trump will likely emphasize words like "danger," "threat," and "crisis" when discussing national security, specifically immigration and foreign threats. These terms create a sense of urgency and the need for strong, decisive action.

"American Exceptionalism": This term will likely be used to emphasize America's unique role in the world, with words like "great," "unique," "superior," and "freedom" framing the U.S. as a beacon of hope and democracy.

"Patriotism": Strong nationalist vocabulary, likely reinforcing the idea of defending the American way of life, with words like "freedom," "liberty," and "sacrifice" used to appeal to American pride.

Metaphors:

Trump often employs metaphors to simplify complex political issues and make them more relatable. In this speech:

"Invaders" (for immigrants): This metaphor will be used to describe immigrants, portraying them as hostile outsiders threatening the nation. This aligns with a militaristic or defensive view of immigration, suggesting that the U.S. is under attack.

"Drain the Swamp": A recurring metaphor in Trump's rhetoric, this phrase refers to eliminating corruption in Washington. It will likely be used again in the context of his campaign, portraying himself as the anti-establishment figure.

"America First": This metaphor serves as a foundational slogan of Trump's nationalism, signaling that the interests of the U.S. will take precedence over international concerns, emphasizing self-interest and national sovereignty.

"Wall": The metaphor of the "wall" often represents both a literal and symbolic barrier, used to emphasize the need for strict control over borders and the separation of America from perceived threats.

Grammar:

Use of Imperatives: Trump frequently uses imperatives (e.g., "We must defend our borders," "We will build the wall") to create a sense of urgency and authority. This grammatical choice positions the speaker as the one capable of decisive action, empowering his supporters to act in solidarity.



Repetition: Repetition is a key strategy to reinforce the central messages. For example, "Make America Great Again" will likely be repeated throughout, as well as phrases like "We will win," "America is strong," and "This is our time." The repetition of these phrases serves to rally the audience and establish a sense of collective identity.

Personal Pronouns: Trump will likely use first-person pronouns ("I," "We") to establish a personal connection with the audience, while also using the collective "we" to build a sense of unity among his supporters.

By focusing on vocabulary, metaphors, and grammar, Trump's speech constructs a narrative that frames the issues of immigration, national security, and American exceptionalism in ways that resonate with his base. The language used is intended to inspire action, create solidarity, and position Trump as the protector of American interests against perceived external and internal threats.

Discursive Practice Analysis of Trump's 2024 Campaign Rally Speech (Waco, Texas)

Focus: Production, distribution, consumption

Application to Speech:

Production:

Speaker and Source: Donald Trump, as the speaker, is both the producer and the primary influencer of the discourse. As a former president and political figure, his speeches carry a certain weight and authority, enabling him to shape public opinion and influence political discourse. His identity as a populist leader lends credibility to his statements, especially among his base, who view him as a direct representative of the people rather than a part of the political elite.

Setting and Context: The speech takes place at a rally in Waco, Texas, a location chosen to resonate with his supporters. Texas is a historically conservative state, and Waco, with its unique history, amplifies the message of rebellion against the so-called "establishment." The rally itself is a strategic production to energize and mobilize his base. The choice of venue signals a deliberate effort to connect with voters outside the traditional political hubs and appeal to rural, working-class Americans.

Framing of Issues: The speech is likely framed to emphasize themes of nationalism, immigration, and American exceptionalism. By presenting these issues in a way that appeals to a sense of collective identity, Trump is positioning himself as a protector of traditional American values against what he portrays as external and internal threats. The framing also serves to differentiate him from his political opponents, positioning them as either out of touch or actively working against American interests.

Distribution:

Media Coverage: The speech is distributed through various media channels, both traditional and digital. Television networks, social media platforms (especially Twitter, where Trump is highly active), and campaign websites all serve as outlets for spreading the speech. The use of social media allows Trump to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and directly connect with his audience, a tactic that has been central to his populist appeal.

Targeted Messaging: The campaign's digital strategy ensures that the speech and its key themes are tailored to specific demographic groups. For example, ads and snippets of the speech could be targeted at particular voter blocs (e.g., conservative Christians, rural voters, and suburban families) to maximize outreach and voter engagement. Trump's team likely uses data analytics to monitor and adjust messaging for maximum impact, targeting users based on their political leanings and engagement with previous content.

Consumption:



Audience Reception: The speech is consumed by a diverse audience, ranging from those physically present at the rally to online followers and viewers watching via media platforms. Each group consumes the speech differently. For those attending the rally, there is the immediate, visceral impact of the speaker's presence, the atmosphere of collective enthusiasm, and the sense of shared purpose. For online viewers, consumption is often fragmented, with clips or highlights being shared across social media, which can either be applauded by Trump's supporters or criticized by his detractors.

Engagement and Interaction: The consumption of Trump's speeches is also highly interactive, especially through social media. Supporters engage with the speech by sharing it, commenting, and participating in online discussions. The act of sharing the speech or specific quotes can serve to amplify his message, fostering a sense of community and reinforcing the ideological messages. On the flip side, detractors consume the speech for critique, often highlighting what they see as divisive or inaccurate rhetoric.

Echo Chambers: The distribution and consumption of Trump's speeches are often confined to echo chambers, especially on social media platforms. Supporters are more likely to engage with content that aligns with their views, while opponents may filter out or dismiss it. This dynamic reinforces ideological divides, as people are more likely to consume content that reaffirms their beliefs, creating a feedback loop where the discourse becomes increasingly polarized.

Contextualizing the Speech:

Trump's rally speech in Waco, Texas, is part of a broader political strategy aimed at strengthening his nationalist and populist base. The production, distribution, and consumption of this speech serve to amplify his political messages on immigration, national security, and American exceptionalism. The speech's delivery at this particular time and location emphasizes his commitment to outsider politics, fighting against the establishment, and positioning himself as the defender of the "common man" against what he perceives as elitist forces. The strategic use of social media and digital platforms also reflects a shift in political communication, where candidates can bypass traditional media channels to directly engage with voters.

In summary, Trump's speech is not just about the content he delivers but also about how it is produced, distributed, and consumed. The interaction between these three elements plays a significant role in shaping the impact and effectiveness of his rhetoric.

Social Practice Analysis of Trump's 2024 Campaign Rally Speech (Waco, Texas)

Focus: Ideological Effects, Power Relations

Application to Speech:

Ideological Effects:

Trump's speech at the 2024 rally in Waco is a prime example of how discourse can perpetuate and reinforce ideologies, especially within the context of nationalism, immigration, and American exceptionalism.

Nationalism and American Exceptionalism: Through his emphasis on "American greatness" and the idea that the U.S. is uniquely destined to lead the world, Trump positions his rhetoric as an ideological defense of American exceptionalism. The idea that America's values, traditions, and way of life are under threat plays into the broader nationalist ideology, which is central to his political messaging. By presenting this narrative, Trump appeals to a sense of pride and fear pride in America's past and fear of losing that status due to external (immigration) and internal (political opposition) threats.



Immigration as a Threat: Trump's use of immigration rhetoric, framing it as an "invasion," is an ideological move aimed at constructing a dichotomy between "us" (the American people) and "them" (immigrants, often depicted as criminal, unassimilable, and a threat to national security). This reinforces xenophobic and exclusionary ideologies, framing immigrants as other, which has been a tactic in populist rhetoric to rally nationalist support.

Populist Ideology: Trump's speeches often appeal to the "common people" as opposed to the "elite." He constructs a binary where the elite politicians, bureaucrats, and mainstream media are depicted as corrupt, out of touch, and working against the interests of the general populace. This ideological framework is central to populist rhetoric and aims to present Trump as the champion of the "forgotten" American people, positioned against a political establishment that is portrayed as betraying their interests.

Power Relations:

Trump's rhetoric plays a key role in shaping and reinforcing power relations, both within the U.S. and in relation to the international community.

Domestic Power Relations (Us vs. Them): Trump's speech reflects a dynamic of power based on a stark division between the elite and the working class. By claiming that the elite (which includes political opponents, the media, and the "deep state") are conspiring against the people, Trump consolidates his own power as the voice of the disenfranchised. This creates a power relationship where Trump claims to be the only one capable of challenging the status quo, positioning himself as the alternative to entrenched power structures. His supporters are positioned as active participants in this struggle against elite dominance, reinforcing their loyalty and power within his political ecosystem.

External Power Relations (International Relations): Trump's focus on national security, especially with respect to immigration, emphasizes a power dynamic between the U.S. and other nations. His rhetoric often suggests that the U.S. is being taken advantage of by other countries (through unfair trade, immigration, etc.) and that his policies will restore America's global dominance. This rhetoric, underpinned by the idea of "America First," seeks to renegotiate the global order in favor of U.S. interests, positioning the U.S. as a powerful, self-interested actor within global politics.

Masculinized Power: Trump's speech, consistent with much of his previous rhetoric, conveys a highly masculinized form of power. He presents himself as a strong, decisive leader who is "fighting" for the American people, particularly in areas like immigration control and national security. This form of leadership is constructed as masculine, decisive, tough, and unwilling to compromise with political correctness or diplomatic niceties. This, in turn, shapes the way his audience perceives him as a leader who is willing to do what is necessary to protect the nation, even if it means challenging established norms.

Broader Context in Colonial/Postcolonial IR and Nation-Building Struggles:

Trump's speech is situated within a broader framework of postcolonial and nation-building struggles, especially as they relate to the politics of identity, sovereignty, and the nation-state.

Colonial and Postcolonial Power Dynamics: Trump's emphasis on strong national borders and resistance to immigration can be understood in a postcolonial context, where power struggles around borders and national identity are central. In the modern global order, issues of immigration and national sovereignty often take on a postcolonial dimension, particularly in terms of how wealthy nations (like the U.S.) interact with poorer, often formerly colonized countries. Trump's rhetoric around immigration positions the U.S. as a sovereign nation that must protect itself from an influx of migrants from countries that are often depicted as



"lesser" or "in crisis," which can be framed as a continuation of colonial power dynamics, where the global south is seen as a source of instability that must be controlled.

Nation-Building and National Identity: Trump's speech is deeply embedded in the U.S. nation-building project. His portrayal of immigration as a threat to national security can be viewed as part of an ongoing effort to define the U.S. national identity who belongs, who does not, and how the nation should view its role in the world. This is not just about defending U.S. sovereignty but about shaping what it means to be American, which plays into the broader ideological struggle over national identity in the context of global migration and changing demographics. Trump's call for a return to traditional values and a strong national identity can be seen as part of a broader reactionary movement in postcolonial states, where there is a struggle over the legacy of colonialism and how it shapes contemporary society. In summary, Trump's 2024 rally speech functions as a powerful tool to perpetuate specific ideologies that reinforce power structures both domestically and internationally. His rhetoric around nationalism, immigration, and sovereignty are not only key to his political identity but also reflect larger struggles over identity, power, and control in a postcolonial world. By situating his speech in this broader social practice context, we can understand how his words contribute to shaping the political discourse around American exceptionalism, national security, and populism.

Analysis of Inaugural Address (January 20, 2025)

Context: Delivered upon his return to the presidency, Trump emphasized themes of American sovereignty, national pride, and a commitment to putting "America First."

Key Themes: Nationalism, sovereignty, populism, anti-globalism.

Textual Analysis of Trump's Inaugural Address (January 20, 2025)

Focus: Vocabulary, metaphors, grammar

Application to Speech:

Vocabulary:

Trump's speech is likely to use charged and strategic vocabulary that resonates with his base, emphasizing key themes of nationalism, sovereignty, and populism. Some expected terms include:

"America First": A central phrase in Trump's rhetoric, reinforcing the idea that U.S. interests come before international or foreign concerns. This term reflects his commitment to prioritizing domestic issues, including job creation, border security, and military readiness.

"Sovereignty": Trump is likely to emphasize national sovereignty as a cornerstone of his policy, framing the United States as a country that should make its own decisions free from foreign influence, international organizations, or global institutions like the United Nations or the World Health Organization. Terms like "independence," "autonomy," and "self-determination" may reinforce this idea.

"Globalism": A critical term often used by Trump to denounce international cooperation and agreements that he believes undermine American interests. The vocabulary surrounding "globalism" is framed negatively, casting it as a threat to American autonomy and prosperity. He will likely contrast this with the idea of "America First" to emphasize national interests over global commitments.

"Patriotism": Trump is expected to invoke terms like "freedom," "liberty," and "greatness" to appeal to American nationalism. These words will reinforce the idea of national pride and allegiance to American values.



"Security": National security, particularly in the context of borders and military strength, will be central to his vocabulary. Words like "defense," "protection," and "safety" will frame the U.S. as a nation under threat, needing to assert its power to maintain its sovereignty.

Metaphors:

Metaphors are central to shaping emotional responses and simplifying complex political issues. Trump's speech is likely to include:

"America as a beacon": Trump has historically framed America as a symbol of hope and freedom for the world. He may use metaphors that depict America as a "shining city on a hill," a symbol of democracy and strength. This metaphor ties into the idea of American exceptionalism, reinforcing the belief that the U.S. is a unique and unparalleled nation.

"Swamp": The metaphor of "draining the swamp," a reference to eliminating corruption in Washington, D.C., will likely feature prominently. This metaphor casts the U.S. government as dirty and corrupted, positioning Trump as the outsider capable of cleansing the political system and bringing about change.

"Walls": The metaphor of "walls" can represent both literal and symbolic barriers. Trump has frequently used the "wall" metaphor to emphasize the need for a strong border, particularly with Mexico. In his inaugural address, it may symbolize the broader effort to protect the U.S. from external threats both physical and ideological such as immigration and globalism.

"Struggle" and "Fight": The metaphor of a national struggle or fight, often used in Trump's rhetoric, casts the political and cultural climate in terms of a battle. Words like "battle," "fight," and "victory" will be used to portray the presidency as a mission to reclaim America's greatness from perceived threats whether from foreign adversaries, internal forces, or political elites.

Grammar:

Imperatives and Direct Speech: Trump often uses imperative statements ("We will make America great again," "We will defend our borders") to create a sense of action and decisiveness. This rhetorical choice positions him as the leader capable of making change happen, demanding attention and action from the American people.

Use of Pronouns: Trump frequently uses personal pronouns to connect with his audience. The first-person singular ("I") positions him as the central figure in the action, underscoring his role in leading the nation. The use of "We" serves to unite the audience, implying that Trump's mission is a collective one with the people. The collective "We" emphasizes the sense of community in his populist message.

Repetition: Trump is known for his use of repetition to reinforce key messages and create rhythm in his speech. Expect to see repetitive phrases like "America First," "We will win," "We will be strong," etc. Repetition helps solidify the core messages in the minds of his audience and makes them memorable, especially when used in key moments of the speech.

Polarizing Language: Expect stark contrasts in Trump's speech, particularly between "us" (the American people) and "them" (the political elite, immigrants, foreign adversaries, or globalists). These oppositions will likely be drawn through the use of direct contrasts, like "the people vs. the establishment" or "our values vs. foreign influence," creating a clear dichotomy to galvanize support and energize his base.

Trump's inaugural address on January 20, 2025, will likely be rich in emotionally charged vocabulary, metaphors that frame the U.S. as a nation under siege, and grammatical structures that demand action and unity. Through terms like "America First," "sovereignty," "globalism," and metaphors like the "swamp" and "walls," Trump aims to strengthen his message of nationalism, sovereignty, and populism. His use of imperatives, repetition, and



personal pronouns further reinforces his authority as a leader and positions the American people as a collective force in achieving the goals of his administration. This approach sets the tone for his presidency, presenting himself as a defender of American interests against perceived foreign and domestic threats.

Discursive Practice Analysis of Trump's Inaugural Address (January 20, 2025)

Focus: Production, distribution, consumption

Application to Speech:

Production:

Speaker and Authority: Donald Trump, as the speaker, is not just an individual delivering a speech; he is a highly recognized political figure with significant influence in U.S. politics. As a returning president, he holds a position of institutional authority. His words in this context are designed to resonate with those who supported him in his first term, as well as to assert his authority over the nation's future direction.

Context of Delivery: The speech is delivered during a significant moment Trump's return to the presidency. This is a pivotal moment that signals a transition from one political era to another. His return is positioned as a restoration of "American greatness," and the tone of the speech emphasizes themes of renewal and reclaiming national pride. The setting of the inaugural address the steps of the Capitol adds to its symbolic power, representing the core of U.S. democratic and political authority.

Political Agenda and Strategy: The speech is an expression of Trump's populist ideology, focusing on themes like nationalism, sovereignty, and anti-globalism. The production of this speech is not only about conveying policy priorities but also about reaffirming the deep divisions within American political discourse. It serves as a clear statement of where Trump stands, contrasting his vision of the nation with that of his political opponents, particularly those advocating for globalism or international cooperation.

Distribution:

Media Channels: Trump's inaugural address will be distributed across a wide range of media platforms television networks, social media, and online news outlets. Traditional television will reach a broad, national audience, while digital platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube will serve to circulate the speech rapidly, especially among Trump's supporters and followers.

Strategic Distribution: The distribution of Trump's speech is targeted to reinforce his messages within his political base. Through social media, the speech can be amplified in ways that bypass traditional media. Clips of the speech, accompanied by specific highlights, can be shared and repurposed by pro-Trump networks and influencers to emphasize key talking points, often accompanied by a narrative that supports his version of "America First."

Impact on Media Ecosystem: The distribution also emphasizes a divide between mainstream media and alternative outlets. Trump's supporters often view mainstream media as biased or hostile, which is why platforms like Fox News, OANN, and social media play an essential role in ensuring that the speech's message reaches his base without being filtered or challenged by what Trump refers to as the "fake news" narrative.

Audience Reception: The speech is consumed by a diverse group of audiences, including his supporters, critics, and the broader American public. For his supporters, the address is likely consumed as a reaffirmation of their beliefs and as a moment of pride and solidarity. His populist and nationalist rhetoric resonates deeply with those who feel alienated from the political establishment. On the other hand, for critics and those on the political left, the



speech might be consumed with skepticism or outright opposition, as many of the terms and concepts used (like "America First" and "anti-globalism") are seen as divisive.

Social Media Amplification: On platforms like Twitter and Facebook, Trump's followers will likely engage with the speech by sharing it with their own networks, commenting on specific phrases, and amplifying the messages that align with their own beliefs. The speech will likely be distilled into bite-sized soundbites, often with particular attention given to his strongest and most provocative statements about sovereignty, immigration, and globalism. These snippets will be widely circulated, creating viral moments that contribute to reinforcing his political identity.

Polarization and Echo Chambers: Given the nature of social media and the current media landscape, the consumption of Trump's inaugural address will largely take place within echo chambers. Supporters will consume the speech in a positive light, interpreting it as a much-needed declaration of sovereignty and strength. Detractors, however, may consume the speech to criticize and counter the points raised, particularly regarding immigration, nationalism, and anti-globalism. This division in consumption contributes to further political polarization and shapes public perceptions of the speech's impact.

Contextualization in the Broader Political Landscape:

Political Landscape: The speech is delivered against the backdrop of a deeply polarized political environment in the U.S. The discourse around "America First," sovereignty, and populism is part of a broader narrative that challenges the established political and economic order. This speech is not just about addressing the U.S. public, but also about framing Trump's vision against the globalist agenda that he often criticizes.

International Consumption: Beyond the domestic audience, Trump's speech will be scrutinized internationally, particularly by foreign governments and international organizations. His anti-globalism rhetoric challenges the established international order, including trade agreements, alliances like NATO, and global institutions like the United Nations. The global audience will consume his speech through a different lens, interpreting it as a shift toward isolationism and protectionism.

Trump's inaugural address on January 20, 2025, is a carefully crafted political tool designed not only to articulate his policy priorities but also to reinforce his populist, nationalist agenda. The production, distribution, and consumption of this speech are deeply embedded in the political and media dynamics of contemporary America. Its distribution across various media channels ensures that Trump's message reaches his core supporters while bypassing critical scrutiny from mainstream outlets. The speech's consumption, largely within echo chambers, contributes to the ongoing polarization of American society, while also reinforcing the ideological divisions between Trump's supporters and his detractors.

Social Practice Analysis of Trump's Inaugural Address (January 20, 2025)

Focus: Ideological Effects, Power Relations

Application to Speech:

Ideological Effects:

Trump's inaugural address is framed by the ideology of nationalism, sovereignty, and populism, all of which have significant ideological implications. His discourse emphasizes the idea that American sovereignty must be prioritized over global cooperation or influence, aligning with an "America First" worldview. This rhetoric reflects a belief in the nation-state as a central unit of political and social organization, often rejecting external influences like international organizations, immigration, and foreign trade agreements.



Nationalism and Sovereignty: Trump's rhetoric positions America as both a victim of external influence and a powerful nation that must reclaim its strength and autonomy. His repeated emphasis on "America First" serves to reject globalist ideologies and reinforces the idea that the U.S. must act in its own self-interest, without regard for the interests or values of other countries. This focus on sovereignty not only resonates with a nationalist ideology but also seeks to reassert control over the nation's borders, economy, and foreign policy.

Populism: Trump presents himself as the representative of the "common man," standing against the political and economic elite. His populist rhetoric is aimed at creating a narrative of "us vs. them" where "us" is the American people and "them" is the establishment, which he accuses of undermining the nation's interests. This framing creates a sense of collective identity that appeals to people who feel disconnected or left behind by traditional politics. Trump constructs an ideological binary, positioning his base as the protectors of American values against the supposed globalist elites and outsiders.

Anti-Globalism: Trump's anti-globalist stance is central to his broader ideological message. He frames globalism as a force that diminishes national sovereignty and exploits the working class. Through this rhetoric, he links globalization with economic policies that harm American workers, suggesting that international agreements and trade deals have left the U.S. vulnerable to exploitation. The ideological battle, therefore, becomes a contest between American exceptionalism and global systems of governance.

Power Relations:

Trump's speech sets up power relations both within the United States and internationally. At the domestic level, he positions himself as the embodiment of "the people" who are fighting back against an entrenched political establishment. On the global stage, he positions the U.S. as a dominant power, reclaiming control from international institutions and actors that he believes have undermined U.S. interests.

Domestic Power Relations: Trump's rhetoric creates a polarized power structure within the U.S., where the "elite" is vilified as a corrupt and self-serving class that has compromised the nation's future. His framing of "the establishment" versus "the people" is central to his power relations, as it positions him as a champion of the common American worker and the defender of traditional values against a ruling class. This polarization also serves to justify his own authority by portraying the status quo as broken, thus legitimizing his populist, often authoritarian style of governance.

Global Power Relations: On the international stage, Trump redefines U.S. power in terms of a self-interested and sovereign state that seeks to regain its global standing without relying on multilateralism. This approach is often framed as a direct challenge to international institutions such as the United Nations, NATO, and the World Trade Organization, which he claims constrain U.S. sovereignty. Trump's language of "America First" also rejects the idea of global responsibility, positioning the U.S. as an isolated power that should only engage in international agreements when it benefits the nation. This stance reinforces the narrative of U.S. dominance, not as a participant in global cooperation but as a nation asserting its superiority and independence.

Masculine Power Dynamics: Trump's rhetoric also plays into a traditional, masculinized view of power. His speeches often frame political leadership as strong, decisive, and uncompromising. The use of terms like "greatness," "strength," and "victory" constructs a powerful masculine identity for both the U.S. and the leader of the nation. This masculine power dynamic is evident in his consistent portrayal of himself as the protector of American



interests and a leader who will fight for the nation's supremacy, often through combative and confrontational methods.

Broader Context in Colonial/Postcolonial IR and Nation-Building Struggles:

Trump's inaugural address can be situated within the broader framework of colonial/postcolonial international relations (IR) and the struggles of nation-building. His vision of America as an exceptional and self-sufficient power reflects a post-colonial approach to the global order, where the U.S. is depicted as a nation that must distance itself from the negative legacies of global governance and international interventions. His approach to sovereignty and nationalism suggests a desire to reclaim control over U.S. domestic and foreign policies, distancing the nation from international obligations that may be perceived as neo-imperialist or interventionist.

Colonial/Postcolonial Struggles: The U.S. has historically engaged in a complex relationship with colonialism and postcolonialism, both as a former colonial power and as a hegemon in global politics. Trump's stance on "America First" can be seen as a reaction to the global postcolonial order, where Western powers, including the U.S., have been seen as imposing their will on developing countries. His rejection of international agreements and global governance frameworks mirrors the broader postcolonial reaction to external dominance, signaling a shift away from cooperative or interventionist policies.

Nation-Building Struggles: Trump's speech reflects the internal nation-building struggles that exist in the U.S., particularly with regard to defining national identity and sovereignty. The emphasis on American exceptionalism and the desire to restore the country to "greatness" speaks to a nationalist project of reclaiming a particular vision of the nation. This vision often contrasts with the multicultural and pluralistic aspects of U.S. identity, and Trump's rhetoric of exclusion especially in relation to immigration mirrors the struggles of many postcolonial states in defining their own national identity in the face of internal and external pressures. Trump's inaugural address of 2025 presents a strong ideological commitment to nationalism, sovereignty, and anti-globalism, shaping both domestic and international power relations. His speech constructs a binary of "us vs. them," positioning America as the protector of its own interests against global forces, while also framing his populist movement as a fight against an elitist establishment. His rhetoric aligns with a postcolonial view of international relations, emphasizing U.S. independence from global institutions. The power dynamics in his speech reflect a masculinized, combative approach to governance, asserting dominance both within the U.S. and on the global stage. This approach contributes to ongoing struggles over national identity and the role of the U.S. in the post-Cold War global order.

Conclusion:

This research applied Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze key speeches, tweets, and public statements by Donald Trump, focusing on his 2024 Campaign Rally speech and his Inaugural Address on January 20, 2025. The analysis unfolded in three stages: Textual Analysis, Discursive Practice, and Social Practice. Each stage illuminated different facets of Trump's discourse, revealing the complex mechanisms through which his rhetoric constructs political ideologies, mobilizes support, and shapes the public perception of both domestic and international issues.

Textual Analysis of Trump's speeches focused on his strategic use of vocabulary, metaphors, and grammar to reinforce key themes of nationalism, sovereignty, and American exceptionalism. Terms like "America First," "immigration," and "national security" served to evoke strong emotional responses, framing issues of immigration as a threat and positioning the U.S. as the rightful protector of its sovereignty. Trump's metaphors, such as describing



immigrants as "invaders" and using the "swamp" metaphor to represent political corruption, framed his narrative in starkly polarizing terms. The frequent use of imperatives, repetition, and personal pronouns in his speeches further reinforced his authoritative voice and the call for collective action, building a sense of unity and urgency among his supporters.

Discursive Practice analysis revealed how the speeches were produced, distributed, and consumed. Trump, as the producer of his discourse, utilized his position of power to directly connect with his audience, bypassing traditional media outlets and relying on social media platforms to disseminate his messages. This distribution method was integral to his populist strategy, enabling him to target specific demographic groups and galvanize support while evading critical media scrutiny. The consumption of his speeches within ideological echo chambers amplified his message, reinforcing the divides between his supporters and detractors, and contributing to the deepening polarization of American political discourse.

In the Social Practice dimension, the analysis situated Trump's rhetoric within broader ideological and power structures, examining how his discourse shapes power relations both within the U.S. and internationally. His speeches constructed a binary of "us" versus "them," positioning himself as the protector of the American people against the corrupt political elite and external threats. Trump's populist rhetoric promoted a nationalist ideology that resonated with those who felt disenfranchised by the political establishment, while positioning globalism as a threat to national sovereignty. On the international stage, his rhetoric of "America First" challenged existing power dynamics by rejecting multilateral agreements and positioning the U.S. as a self-interested, sovereign power.

Additionally, Trump's discourse reflects a masculinized power dynamic, emphasizing strength, decisiveness, and the defense of American interests. His approach mirrors broader postcolonial struggles, where issues of national sovereignty and identity are central to the political discourse. Trump's rhetoric reinforces a vision of America as a dominant global power that must reclaim control over its borders and policies, rejecting what he perceives as the colonial-like influence of global institutions.

In conclusion, Trump's speeches and public statements, analyzed through the lens of Fairclough's CDA, reveal how his rhetoric serves to construct and reinforce a nationalist, anti-globalist, and populist agenda. The interplay between textual features, discursive practices, and social practices highlights the strategic use of language to mobilize support, solidify power, and influence both domestic and international politics. By framing issues in terms of sovereignty, national security, and American exceptionalism, Trump shapes a political narrative that challenges established political norms, positions the U.S. as a global power under his leadership, and strengthens the ideological divisions within American society. This approach underscores the role of political discourse in nation-building, identity construction, and the shifting power dynamics of the post-Cold War global order.

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