DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN DONALD TRUMP'S *AMERICA FIRST* NARRATIVE

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Abstract
This paper is an analysis of the discursive construction of American national identity by the America First narratives of Donald Trump, involving inclusion and exclusion tactics. Although the contemporary literature has focused on populism of Trump, it has given minimal focus to the specific linguistic and rhetorical processes that determine his nationalism discourse. The study examines a purposive sample of Trump speeches that include 2017 Inaugural Address, State of the Union speeches, and selected campaign rallies using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The text being analyzed involves repeated use of language, lexical clustering, metaphors, pronominal contrasts, and us-versus-them framing, which are used to explore how language can serve as an instrument of power in the redefining of the boundaries between true Americans and the other (immigrants, foreign countries, and the global institutions). Results suggest that Trump builds national identity by using exclusive terms (they, them) that demonize immigrants and foreign actors as a threat to national identity and prosperity, and inclusive terms (we, our) that build solidarity. In addition, negative stereotyping and nationalism legitimizing appeals support exclusionary policies and strengthen the loyalty to the in-group. In theory, the research is relevant to the discourse and ideology literature in that it uses the three-dimensional model of Fairclough and the social-cognitive analysis of Van Dijk to Trump rhetoric. In practice, it illuminates the mobilisation of collective identity by political leaders' use of language and this applies not only to the political discourse of the country but the world at large and U.S. values and allies. The study highlights the strength of discourse to formulate the national identity, especially during the polarization and the global uncertainty, providing a way forward on the next comparative and longitudinal research involving populist rhetoric.
Key words: America First, CDA, us, them, other, identity, inclusive, exclusionary

1.   Introduction

1.1.   Background of the Study

The rebirth of the America First narrative of Donald Trump has reinvented the political conversation in the United States by giving priority to nationalist ideas of sovereignty, economic protectionism, and withdrawal of liberal internationalism (Thompson, 2017). However, in contrast to earlier presidential discourse, which drew upon American exceptionalism as a moral international imperative, the Trumpian version of exceptionalism explicitly denies that master-story in favor of a much narrower, realist-based approach to nationalism and cultural shielding (Texas National Security Review, 2019). The first and perhaps most prominent example of the contemporary U.S. political rhetoric is the America First narrative by Donald Trump, which includes the very harsh us vs. them rhetoric and

promotes the themes of nationalism, including sovereignty, cultural security, and the rejection of liberal internationalism (Street, 2019). His speech presents a rhetorical framework of an endangered in-group (us, American people) and an accusatory group (them) of national decay, which he establishes through the design of a so-called Crisis America, which could be traced in his campaign speeches (Street, 2019).

Language is also a major vehicle with which this rewriting of national identity is enacted and spread. Dr. The critical discourse analysis of the 2017 inaugural speech by Trump, written by Johan K. Linokhtreens, shows that repetitions and anaphora were employed as tools to express the ideas of isolationism and support the message of America First (2023). In line with this, a CDA examination of Trump campaign speeches, as presented by Kadim (2022), establishes how discursive strategies were enlisted to favorably present themselves as us (Trump, the majority of Americans) and opponents (immigrants, the Obama-Clinton administration, etc.) as them, through the manipulation of ideological language to mold the ideas of in-group belonging and out-group threat.

Digital linguistic analyses also show that the speech of Trump is dramatically different compared to the speech of other politicians. His speech is marked by simplistic wordplay and a very negative tone, which rose to exceptional levels in the 2016 primaries and became an omnipresent aspect of the U.S. political discourses as soon as he entered the stage (Külz et al., 2022). Further, the computational research identifies the tendencies of antagonistic and divisive speech by Trump as a distinct set of patterns that remain stable over time and are characterized by the regular focus on repetition and hostile vocabulary in contrast to other presidents (Zhou et al., 2024).

Such discursive boundaries are further reinforced by Trump in his populist rhetoric via crisis framing, and dichotomous language, where Trump presents himself as a member of the people and their savior in the face of an imagined national decline (the Crisis America narrative). Simultaneously, the discussion of political communication during the 2020 campaigns reveals that the tweets of Trump were exploited on the basis of ethnic nationalism, and those of Biden on the basis of civic nationalism. The communications of Trump disproportionately invoked White, Christian tradition, implicit warnings about the loss of cultural continuity, and emotional appeals based on fear (Dolan et al., 2024).

The uniqueness of the Trump rhetorical style is visible in the computational linguistic studies, too: in one of the studies, it was identified that his speech is significantly different than that of other presidents, characterized by divisive lexis, repetitive form, and increased amount of antagonism- a trend observable both in campaign and official speech (Zhou et al., 2024). In addition, sentiment analysis at scale indicates that negative emotional tone among U.S. politicians has increased sharply relative to the time Trump announced his candidacy- an effect especially strong in his own personal language (Külz et al., 2022).

Further interpretive studies shed more light on the populous communication style of Trump and also its rhetorical framework. According to Martin Montgomery (2017), instead of pursuing truth, the attractiveness of Trump was based on authenticity, that is, presenting himself as a sincere anti-establishment figure even when the facts were dubious. This dynamic was boosted by his unmediated appearance on social media, particularly Twitter, in which the format of tweets and rally speech produced the feeling of direct, immediate communication with the people (Lacatus, 2021). In fact, his conversational, informal style, based on short sentences, simple syntax, and the use of direct pronouns is commonly viewed as a conscious means of increasing his relatability (Ahmadian et al., Egbert and Biber, Kayam, Ronan and Schneider as cited in Society journal, 2024).

Additional layers are discovered with the help of multimodal and linguistic studies guided by CDA. Verbal and nonverbal aspects, such as tone, imagery, composition, among others, were

discussed in Ohio and Arizona 2016 campaign speeches by Trump, as Elsanhoury and colleagues (2020) established that these modes are interconnected to form a populist leadership message based on simplified themes and visual representations. Moreover, Van Dijk-inspired CDA methods show how Trump establishes discursive in-group and out-group with non-Americans or political opponents being the threat and himself and his supporters being represented as a good and unified group (Alshammari, 2020; Zeb et al., 2023).

Although there has been extensive discussion of Trump rhetoric, with perspectives on the subject offered by computational linguistics, populist theory, and media studies, there has been no in-depth Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the subject based on a wide range of disciplines. In particular, none of the studies have systematically presented these linguistic tendencies (e.g., crisis framing, lexical simplicity, authenticity claims, modal choices, visual rhetoric) to a coherent CDA model to unravel how hegemonic national identity is being constructed through the prism of the America First narrative.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

The rise of the America First narrative by Donald Trump has reshaped political communication in the United States by prefiguring nationalism, sovereignty and protectionism. Nonetheless, there is scant focus on the discursive processes with which Trump constructs and plays around with the concept of American national identity linguistically. The issue is in the interpretation of how the language can be used as an instrument of power to make some groups inclusive and leave another group out and redefine the borders between us (the American people) and them (immigrants, foreign countries and global authorities). Despite the existence of such studies on Trump in terms of populism, a systematic Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of his rhetoric is still necessary that will assist in understanding how his linguistic strategies (lexicon, metaphors, pronominal use, and modality) are used to re-define nationhood and gather political support.

1.3. Objectives of the study

Following are the research objectives:

• To explore the ways in which Trump's *America First* narrative discursively formulate American national identity based on language and rhetorical practices.

• To analyze the discourse of Trump which makes use of inclusion and exclusion to redefine the lines between "us" the Americans and the others (immigrants, foreign countries, and international institutions)

1.4. Research Questions

• How does the *America First* narrative of Trump discursively formulate American national identity based on language and rhetorical practices?

• In what ways does the discourse of Trump make use of inclusion and exclusion to redefine the lines between "us" the Americans and the others (immigrants, foreign countries, and international institutions)?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is quite important because it enhances the current literature on the subject of political discourse, nationalism, and identity construction. Using the Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze the Donald Trump narrative of America First, the study contributes to the understanding of how language is strategically used to build, legitimize and settle specific ideas of national identity. This analysis is important since the rhetoric of Trump was not only determining the political debates in the United States but also affected the way the whole world understood the American values, priorities, and alliances.

Both theoretical and practical levels of the study are important. Theoretically, it enhances the comprehension of discourse/ideology relationship through the three-dimensional model by Fairclough and the socio-cognitive approach to a modern political situation by Van Dijk. In

practice, it provides a glimpse into the ways political leaders channel identity-based discourses into the appeal to collective feelings, justification of policies and displacement/ marginalization of others.

In addition, the results of the study can be of use to researchers and political theorists and communication scholars interested in uncovering the forces of populism, nationalism, and media manipulation on the opinion of the masses. It is also a means of having a critical approach to political narratives, thus making citizens more conscious of the strength of discourse in creating social realities. Finally, the study contributes to the overall knowledge on the discursive construction and contestation of national identity during political polarization and political uncertainty on the global scale.

2.   Literature Review

The communication style adopted by Donald Trump has been subject to a great deal of discussion in terms of populist rhetoric. Populism is frequently based on the creation of a binary distinction between the people and the elite or outsiders, and this approach is manifested in political speeches and social media of Trump (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017). The simplicity, emotional appeal, and straightforwardness of Trump rhetoric deviated from the traditional presidential discourse and fitted well into the features of the populist rhetoric (Montgomery, 2017). It is also emphasized in the research that he relied on repetition, exaggeration, and hyperbolic statements, which have assisted in enhancing his reputation as an authentic outsider to the political establishment (Jamieson & Taussig, 2017).

The term nationalism is core to the discourse of Trump, America First which draws the American identity in the exclusionary terms. According to the scholars, Trump framed immigrants, Muslims, and foreign countries as a threat to the national sovereignty, thus creating an us versus them dichotomy (Street, 2019). Trump views of nationhood tend to be directed towards ethnic nationalism (as opposed to civic nationalism), and is self-advertising in nationalisms of culture and race (Dolan et al., 2024). The fact that he continuously repeats the slogan, Make America Great Again, strengthens an overarching narrative of national degradation, which unifies the sense of collective identity with the promise of cultural recovery (Harsin, 2018).

CDA offers the means of analyzing a language that entails the presence of power and ideology (Blommaert, 2005). When CDA is used on the rhetoric of Trump, it becomes apparent that the linguistic devices influencing political meaning are at work. An example is Kadim (2022), who shows how the campaign speeches made by Trump create positive images of the us (Americans) and a negative image of the them (immigrants and opponents). Elsanhoury et al. (2020) reveal the interconnections between verbal and nonverbal aspects of the speeches of Trump, demonstrating the role that the multimodal discourse plays in the populist mobilization. Likewise, Kreis (2017) demonstrates that the use of Twitter by Trump is an example of tweet politics, in which the language is employed against adversaries and strengthens the assumptions of the groups. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers mechanisms through which we reveal language as an act of power, ideology and exclusion. Although the CDA has been used traditionally on political texts (Blommaert, 2005; Wodak and Meyer, 2016), scholars have yet to implement the approach to systematically analyze the speeches and policies of Trump.

The emergence of Donald Trump in the American political arena has been tightly connected to his unique way of communication, which is commonly defined as populist, disruptive, and highly performative. According to Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017), populism defines politics as a moral one between a righteous people and a corrupt elite. Trump changed this formula to fit into the U.S. context by positioning himself as the outsider who talks directly to the forgotten Americans, bypassing the established political and media organizations. His

rhetoric approach has been termed as authentic instead of accurate and is based on being blunt, informal, and emotional (Montgomery, 2017).

Researchers observe that the communication style of Trump is not technocratic speech typical of presidents, but it uses simple syntax, short sentences, and common words (Ahmadian et al., 2017; Kayam, 2018). Corpus analysis by Egbert and Biber (2019) demonstrates that his speech is more similar to verbal conversation rather than the formal political oratory. This rhetoric of the low style serves to increase relatability and authenticity at the same time destabilizing a set of norms in presidential communication (Lacatus, 2021).

Moreover, Trump's discourse thrives on antagonism and spectacle. According to Ott and Dickinson (2019), his communication shows the politics of White rage, which uses grievances by scapegoating the immigrants, Muslims, and foreign powers symbolically. The combination of campaign-like and governing rhetoric introduced by Trump made the difference between campaigning and governing unclear, keeping the populist mobilization in a permanent state of agitation.

The "America First" narrative functions as both a policy framework and an identity discourse. Researchers believe that it is a reiteration of exclusionary nationalism, which prefigures sovereignty and protectionism at the expense of multilateralism and international collaboration (Thompson, 2017; Chafetz, 2017). This rhetoric reconstructs American identity with ethnic and cultural identifiers and not ideals of civicism, which supports an exclusionary form of nationhood (Bonikowski, 2017; Dolan et al., 2024).

This nationalist turn is epitomized in the slogan of Trump campaign, Make America Great Again. It is discursively an idyllic myth of national decay and certain salvation, which is especially popular among White, Christian, working-class Americans, who experienced a sense of threat with globalization and multiculturalism (Hochschild, 2016). Research points out that Trump, in his nationalism, often equates the concepts of patriotism with that of nativism, which takes the form of immigrants and other foreign countries to pose existential threat to American values and economic success (Street, 2019; Jamieson and Taussig, 2017).

Comparative studies also indicate that populism of Trump is in line with populism of the world. Norris and Inglehart (2019) state that cultural backlash to immigration, feminism, and globalization is used as an instrument by populist leaders across the world, with Trump being an embodiment of this occurrence in the United States. Therefore, his speech has to be interpreted not only as a household rhetorical approach but a global revival of right-wing nationalism.

The application of social media and more specifically twitter by Trump is a popular topic of research as an aspect of his communication. Kreis (2017) refers to the rhetoric of Trump on Twitter as a type of populist, direct communication, bypassing journalistic gatekeeping, termed tweet politics. Through the use of colloquialism, insults, and hashtags, Trump transformed Twitter into a Twitter-for-setting-agendas and polarizing platform.

Enli (2017) demonstrates that the digital communication created by Trump shaped the perception of the the real outsider, which contrasted his crude tweets with the refined language of political establishment politicians. In the same vein, Parmelee and Bichard (2021) say that the Twitter policy of Trump strengthened his populist identity by creating a real-time hostility against elites, media and political opponents.

Media framing analysis also throws light on how the communication style of Trump broke the standard norms. Stuckey (2017) argues that repeated attempts by Trump to label mainstream journalism as fake news and the enemy of the people not only delegitimized its operation but also redrew the symbolic lines of truth and authority in the political culture of the United States. Harsin (2018) puts this change in the context of the wider-ranging post-truth, where emotion appeal and identity validation is more important than factual accuracy.

A CDA of Trump campaign speeches by Kadim (2022) demonstrated that he continuously created a positive image of the in-group (Americans) and a negative image of the out-groups (immigrants, political rivals, foreign countries). Elsanhoury et al. (2020) explored multimodal characteristics of Trump campaign speeches in 2016 and demonstrated the interplay of verbal and visual messages as a way of re-enforcing populist agendas. Alshammari (2020) discovered that polarization, simplification and demonization are common strategies of discourse used by Trump.

Those patterns are also substantiated by corpus-based CDA research. Egbert and Biber (2019) show that the pronominal use by Trump (we, our, and they, them, etc.) is a very important part of boundary construction. Zhou et al. (2024) quantitatively demonstrate that the discourse of Trump is linguistically unparalleled among the presidents of the United States because it is characterized by the excessive use of repetition, simplicity, and antagonistic framing.

3.   Methodology

The analysis presented in this study follows a qualitative research design that is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how the American national identity is discursively constructed in the America First narrative by Donald Trump. Because the research questions are oriented at analyzing how the rhetoric about Trump uses language and rhetoric strategies to include some and exclude others, CDA emerges as a good framework to examine how language, ideology, and power interact (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). The analysis aims to display how the notion of national identity is being re-articulated and mobilized in populist politics by redefining it as a linguistic artifact as well as a social practice in the context of Trump.

The data take the form of a purposive sampling of the Trump speeches where the theme of *America First* has been eminent. These contain campaign speeches (2016 and 2020), the Inauguration Address of 2017 where the phrase was first coined, State of the Union speeches of 2017-2020, and some of his rally speeches where his inclusionary and exclusionary rhetoric is most clearly articulated. The American Presidency Project (UCSB, n.d.) also serves as the source of about twenty to twenty-five speeches to guarantee the variety of contexts, including formal politics and populist mass rallies.

The research uses the three-dimensional CDA model by Fairclough (1995) to be analyzed with the addition of the discourse-historical approach by Wodak to ground the study in context. On the textual level, the emphasis is given to language elements of lexical selection, the metaphors, pronouns, and modality which define identity limits. On the discursive practice level, the analysis focuses the manner in which Trump constructs and disseminates his discourse, especially by use of repetition, slogans and the appeal to the people. At the social practice level, the results are placed within the greater ideological conditions in American politics of nationalism, protectionism and anti-globalism.

The analytical procedure is based on the following steps: close reading speeches to find out repeated language patterns, systematic coding themes, including patriotism, sovereignty, and exclusion, and interpretive analysis to relate the speech to the larger social and political context. Particular emphasis is placed on how the rhetoric of Trump builds a contrastive relationship between them (the American people) and us (immigrants, foreign nations and world institutions).

To be credible and trustworthy, the study is triangulated among various types of speeches, cross-examine them with the existing body of research (e.g., Jamieson and Taussig, 2017; Kreis, 2017), and present the detailed quotes to substantiate interpretative statements. Because the data is in the form of publicly available political speeches, no direct ethical issues will arise. However, the researchers are reflexive so that they do not make partisan bias but remain analytically neutral as discourse is an object of analysis but not of political judgment.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Trump's "America First" and National Identity

The inaugural address delivered by Donald Trump in January 2017 is one of the brightest examples of how linguistic and rhetoric tools which are used to construct the identity of a nation according to the *America First* discourse. This address begins with contrast and repetition, most prominently, the word "American carnage," which frames the situation in the country in a dystopian context and creates an excellent dramatic context of his nationalistic protest agenda. It is a rhetorically strong image that evokes fear and urgency and presents the speech of Trump as the call to save the nation. This is how Trump puts himself and those he encompasses into the role of saviors of a country that is falling, who is a member of that group and who falls outside it.

The common lexical items related to the nation are repeated, which strengthens the core of collective identity. To illustrate, the opening speech mentions the word America many times, the phrases "America," "American labor," and "Make America Great Again" are clumped together, but the failures of the past (carnage) are blamed on the establishment. This repetition, with hyperbolic intensifiers, "very sad depletion," "total allegiance," "never, ever let you down", are used to intensify emotional appeal, in effect forming an almost rhythmic national slogan.

Another important strategy is the use of pronoun. The speech used by Trump is rich in the use of first-person plural pronouns: "we," "us," and "our"and so on, to ensure unity and collective responsibility. As an example, the words such as "we will make America great again"both the speaker and the domain in the same in-group, which puts a cemented identity of the group. Conversely, the third person plural pronoun "they," is employed to alienate the political establishment or the world actors and to portray "them" as others, who are causing the suffering of the nation.

Metaphorical framing is of critical importance as well. Trump employs metaphor by characterizing poor urban environments as being languishing in poverty and an education system as being awash with cash yet starved of knowledge, to create dramatic illustration of institutions which are ruining American life. These rhetorical techniques highlight the ineffectiveness of the current state of affairs and the necessity of the nationalist recovery process.

And finally, direct us-versus-them comparisons betray a feeling of betrayal and solidify the inclusion of the real Americans. Such expressions as, We have been enriching the foreign industry to the disadvantage of American industry, We have been patrolling other nations borders and not patrolling our own, clearly define who is an in-group (ordinary Americans) and who is an out-group (the political elite, foreign economies), solidifying the national identity frame with discursive opposition.

Table.4.1. Discursive Strategies

Strategy	Example Text	Impact on National Identity Construction
Repetition & Lexical Clusters	"America," "American labor," "Make America Great Again"	Reinforces national keywords; anchors identity in positivity and urgency.
Hyperbolic Intensifiers	"very sad depletion," "total allegiance"	Heightens emotional engagement and urgency.
Inclusive vs. Exclusive Pronouns	"We," "us" vs. "they," "their"	Defines in-group solidarity and out-group exclusion.

Strategy	Example Text	Impact on National Identity Construction
Metaphors	"trapped in poverty," "flush with cash"	Democratizes the institutional failure and redemption.
Us vs. Them Framing	"foreign industry at the expense of American industry"	Creates barriers and assembles identity-based support.

The America First narrative by Donald Trump is an imagined history, created by means of both linguistic accuracy and rhetorical approach, to form a strong national identity of America. Involving severe repetition, use of inclusive pronouns, emotionally pregnant metaphors and strong contrasts between the terms "us" and "them", his speech does not only establish who qualifies as a real American, but also mobilizes these listeners as a collective identity- but against failures, elites and foreign influence.

4.2. Inclusion and Exclusion in Trump's "America First" Discourse

The rhetoric of Donald Trump always creates strong dividing lines between the true Americans and the outsiders or the internal others. His 2016 campaign launch speech is a good example of this: in it, he portrayed Mexican immigrants as criminals: "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people" (Trump, 2015). In this case, exclusion is attained by negative stereotyping whereby the immigrants are linked with danger and illegality whereas the Americans are implicitly placed as the victims who need to be protected. On the contrary, the term "good people", suggests that it is conditional and reserved inclusion.

A depiction of a danger is one of the constant forms of exclusion. Trump said in his 2016 campaign speech, that he was announcing his candidacy: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Trump, 2015). This hyper generalization discursively presents the Mexican immigrants as the dangerous "other", which disqualifies their belonging to the American identity. The focus on crime and illegality, by placing true Americans in a moral and legal stance, helps to strengthen the inclusion around a moral national community.

His other approach is seen in his 2017 Inaugural Address, where the Trump asserted: "From this day forward, it's going to be only America first. America first" (Trump, 2017). By means of repetition of the phrase *America first*, the American people are discursively lifted into the status of an in-group, and the "other" peoples (the foreign countries, the international organizations) are shuffled off into the role of exploitation or resistance. The borders are well defined: Americans have the right to loyalty, resources and priority whereas foreigners are shown as sucking national resources and security. Pronouns are also used with a lot of care because Trump would like to emphasize on the inclusion and exclusion. In rally speeches, inclusive pronouns—"we," "our people," "our movement", foster unity among his audience. In the meantime, they and they are usually used to refer to outsiders, e.g., immigrants, China, or NATO allies who are accused of exploiting the U.S. As an illustration, he announced in a rally in 2016: "They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And we're not going to let it happen anymore" (Trump, 2016). In this case, it is made inclusive by identifying the speaker with his audience (we), and it is excluded by stigmatizing the foreign actors as sneering aggressors.

There is exclusion as well in regards to global institutions. The many times Trump has made criticism of the United Nations and NATO is an example of how the global elites are being portrayed as a sovereignty threat to America. The rhetorical strategy of demanding these institutions to use the U.S. resources while not focusing on the interests of the nation makes them an "other", posing a threat to the independence of the country (Balfour, 2019). This does

not only make foreigners outsiders but it also upraises nationalism as the sole rightful foundation of policy.

With these rhetorical tools; negative stereotyping, restatement of nationalist slogans, use of pronouns, delegitimization of the international institutions, Trump discursively creates an American identity of being under siege, upright, and unique. At the same time, immigrants, foreign countries, and international bodies are depicted as dangerous outsiders and perilous to the others, which strengthens the strict borders between inclusion and exclusion.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The discussion of the America First narrative of Donald Trump indicates that his process of creating American nationhood is based on the well-considered linguistic and rhetorical approaches that both unite his followers and separate them against those who are seen as outsiders. Repetition of national keywords, emotionally-focused metaphors, and hyperbolic intensifiers allow Trump to generate a feeling of pride, urgency, and loyalty in the masses. The use of inclusive pronouns (we, our and us), and exclusive pronouns (they, their and them) characterizes his members of the in-group and those of the political elites, immigrants, and foreign countries as outsiders. It is this binary structuring that Trump has been able to redefine the notion of nationhood based on the themes of sovereignty, protectionism, and restoration, thereby positioning his movement as the one that is the sole protector of the real American people.

Simultaneously, in his discussion, he illustrates how language is a means of power because it authenticates acts of exclusion and transforms symbolic frames of belonging. Negative stereotyping of immigrants, condemnations of global institutions, and incessant us- versus-them comparisons confirm an embattled, virtuous, American identity compared with threatening otherness. In the Critical Discourse Analysis view, this shows that more than persuading, the rhetoric of Trump shapes social reality by naturalizing nationalist and protectionist ideas. Finally, the American First talk of Trump is a case in point of how populist leaders rally political backing by discursively redefining the frontiers of national identity by way of inclusion and exclusion.

5.2. Recommendations

The study suggests that future scholars should consider the analysis of the narrative of America First by Trump by further expanding the studies to include comparative studies with the nationalist discourses in other settings and including multimodal methods, such as media and visual texts. It is recommended that policymakers and political leaders should build inclusive stories that enhance democratic principles and shun divisive rhetoric that discriminates against some groups of people. Populist discourse should not be blindly amplified by the media practitioners, but should be critically understood and placed in context, and the media literacy of the masses should be advocated. Teachers are urged to adopt Critical Discourse Analysis in the curriculum to enable students to become critically conscious of the relationship between language and identity as well as power. Lastly, people ought to think critically in politics, where language is a main factor in shaping the identity of the nation and engaging more actively in democracy.

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