## Exploring Nuances in American Republican Discourse: A SFL-driven Basic Content Analysis of G. Bush and D. Trump as Case Studies

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*Abstract*
*This exploratory study uses a Functional-Semantic approach to language with the aim to foreground the contrasting ideological, discursive, thematic and political discourse features that mark D. Trump and George Bush's nationalistic discourse. Using a Nvivo12-facilitated CDA-oriented Basic Content Analysis (BCA), I examine 5 purposively sampled public addresses delivered by George W. Bush and Donald Trump (5 for each case) during their respective presidencies. The key findings of this lexicometric analysis disclosed subtle variations and significant intertextual connections in these two nationalistic discourse genre chains. Both discourse makers deployed certain socio-cognitive elements consistent with their discursive purposes and addressee mental models. George Bush's sample attests to a 'conservative Jeffersonian internationalist discourse' that is marked by a call for Americans to think of themselves as one people, whose members are equal, rather than being in conflict with an out-group America-internally. Indeed, Donald Trump's discourse subscribes to hardline Jacksonian stream, introducing an ideological and political nationalism, characterized by heightened polarization, conspiracy theories and group essentialization. This research has broader implications for political communication, informing discussions on how language shapes political ideologies and societies. The revealed intertextual links support previous research on the intertextuality and ideological encoding of nationalistic narratives in American political discourse.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Central to discourse is that language is a carrier of ideology. The unsaid of a text, what it takes as given, deserves to be the subject of textual analysis. Discourse is a complex term with a wide range of meanings, but it generally refers to how language is used to construct and reproduce social reality. It can be spoken, written, or visual and can occur in various contexts,

including formal and informal settings. As such, political speeches represent rich data to be targeted by critical discourse analysts (CDAs), as they can illustrate, with clear-cut evidence, the relationship between language, society and power, hence their critical stance of how texts are cohesively and coherently made. Analyzing how language is used to construct and reproduce social reality can help raise people's awareness of social injustice and promote social change. With this in mind, a text is shaped and penetrated, in certain contexts, by (ideological) elements, which are delivered in schemata that derive their discourse structure from socio-cognitive elements comprising mental models of the addressee (Van Dijk, 2008). A text is a form of content, like movies, images, and semiotic representations. Texts are spaces where two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world (Fairclough, 1995). They inherently contribute to a particular discourse discernible by discourse analysts.

In the light of the literature review conducted in this study, research papers using computer-assisted SFL-driven Basic Content Analysis to compare G. Bush and J. Trump's Political and, by extension, ideological Discourse conducted on American Nationalism remain very limited. Therefore, this study is meant to fill this gap and contribute to the CDA research on American Nationalism using a computer-assisted SFL exploratory design. Undoubtedly, this study will provide a deep understanding of the intricacies of nationalistic discourse, contribute to the scholarship on political communication, and provide a nuanced analysis of how political leaders employ language to convey and shape ideologies. It also supports previous research on intertextuality as a characteristic nature of discourse, especially regarding the ideological encoding of nationalistic narratives in political discourse.

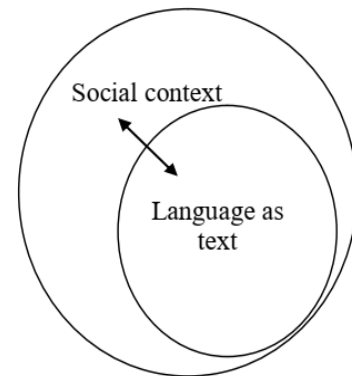## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW
### 2.1. SFL At the Service Of CDA

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) views grammar as a meaning-making resource, emphasizing the interrelation of form and meaning. Developed in the 1960s by British linguist M.A.K. Halliday, SFL was influenced by the Prague School and the work of British linguist J.R. Firth (1890-1960) (Halliday, 1925). Trask and Stockwell (2007) note that systemic linguistics (SL) is deeply concerned with the purposes of language use, prompting questions such as, "What is this writer (or speaker) trying to do? What linguistic devices are available to help them do it, and on what basis do they make their choices?" (p. 326). Thus, using language is a semiotic process of making meaning by choosing (Fawcett, R., 2013). I quote Halliday (1976e) attesting to this perspective:

"The speaker of a language, like a person engaging in any kind of culturally determined behaviour, can be regarded as carrying out, simultaneously and successively, a number of distinct choices. At any given moment, a certain range of further choices is available in the environment of the selections made up to that time. It is the system that formalizes the notion of choice in language."

(p. 3)

Halliday (followed by Hasan, Martin, Matthiessen and others) has proposed that an adequate description of a language requires a higher and more abstract level of system networks: one that Martin (1992) terms 'discourse semantics' and others 'socio-semantics' or simply 'semantics' (Fawcett, 2013).

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) views language as a verbal social process, where language is treated as social semiotic systems representing sociocultural norms and values (Santosa, 2016). CDA has been introduced by Fowler and its concept is derived from Halliday that language is a form of social and ideological action (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 314). Critical discourse analysis shows the relationship between language and ideology or language and power (Fairclough, 1995). In addition to this, SFL is based on the theory that there is an inextricable linkage between social context and language use, with the interrelation between context and language is not cause-effect but one of realization symbolization or representation (Figure 1, Santosa, 2016, p. 47).



**INTERRELATION BETWEEN CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE**

Figure 1: INTERRELATION BETWEEN CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE

## 2.2.Why use SFL in CDA?

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is often used in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) due to its unique focus on the relationship between language and social structures. There are several reasons why SFL is particularly suitable for CDA (Santosa, 2016; Parvin, 2017). Below are some of these advantages (Santosa, 2016):

1. It is used to understand language as it is.
2. SFL believes that language is a social process, and so society explains how language is
3. used, not neurological context.
4. Systemic means that language is stratified within linguistic levels, including discourse
5. semantics, lexicogrammar, and phonology or graphology.
6. Each system contributes to the holistic meaning of a social process.
7. Functional means each level has three meta-meanings, involving ideational, interpersonal, and textual, which work simultaneously to achieve the social goal.

Therefore, the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can have reciprocal feeding and connections between the two by employing SFL tools in analyses (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). The first major work connecting SFL and CDA was *Language and Control,* edited by Fowler et al. and published in 1979. In this study, Fowler noted that "ideology is linguistically mediated" (Fowler, 1979, p. 185), suggesting that linguistic analysis can systematically foreground ideological content. Focusing on the ideational, the grammar of modality, and lexical distribution, CDA analysts can examine transformations such as nominalizations, passivization and classification in terms of lexical patterns (Fowler, 1979, p. 3). Fairclough (2006) proposed an interdiscursive analysis, arguing

that it could show "the mediating link between linguistic analysis and social analysis" (Fairclough, 2006, pp. 112–113), allowing "textual analysis to be properly integrated into social analysis," known as the Relational Approach to CDA (Fairclough, 2006, p. 113). However, CDA is far from a straightforward enterprise, involving a constant self-reflexive trade-off between the researcher's interests, values, and knowledge of the context against the practicalities of a microanalysis that cannot go on indefinitely (Barker & Galasinski, 2001, p. 84).

Vinh. et al. (2015) provide an interesting account of how and why four linguistic features, nominalization, grammatical metaphor, thematic structure, and lexical density, are useful in examining qualitative data. Especially relevant to the analysis section in this study is Lexical density. The latter is defined as a measure of the density of information in texts, which depends on how tightly the lexical items have been packed into the grammatical structure (Halliday and Martin, 1993). Lexical density is measured by the proportion of lexical items per total word (Ure, 1971; Halliday, 1985b) – Method 1 or by the ratio of lexical items per ranking clauses (Halliday, 1985b) – Method 2. Lexical items are traditionally nouns, verbs, adjectives and some kinds of adverbs (Halliday, 1985b), while grammatical items are pronouns, determiners, finite verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, several kinds of adverbs, interjections, discourse markers and reactive tokens (O'Loughlin, 1995; Ure, 1971; Castello, 2008; To and Le, 2013).

### 2.3.Discourse as Ideology

The close relation between language and ideology has gained currency recently among geo-politicians, linguists, and CDA researchers (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998; Abdo, 2015). Politicians often use language manipulation to convey specific messages (Abdo, 2015). Abdo (2015) inquired about ideology in George W. Bush's discourse during his presidency using CDA. For him, the speech is an appeal from Bush to Muslims around the world and a call to subscribe to universal rules for all nations to fight terrorism and extremism. Van Dijk (1998) proposes a general theory of ideology and its reproduction by discourse, including ideologies of domination (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, or neo-liberalism) as special examples, and ideologies such as anti-racism, feminism, socialism, pacifism, or environmentalism, among many others, that may not be meant to legitimate domination. Ideology is said to be the basis of the social representations of a group, its functions in terms of social relations between groups, and its reproduction as "enacted by discourse" (Van Dijk, 1998).

Building on Bakhtin's concept of Intertextuality, Fairclough argues for a significant relationship between Intertextuality and hegemony, where intertextual allusions and links may render texts opaque and inaccessible to certain addressees, establishing power relations among interlocutors (1992: 102-120). Norman Fairclough's approach to the intertextual analysis of discourse (1992, 1995a, 2003) within the paradigm of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) uncovered the possible effects of Intertextuality on the discursive construction of national identities and power relations in political (and ideological) discourse. Fairclough's approach shows how Intertextuality generates representations that "usher" the addressee ideologically closer to the producer's perspective, reorganizing social groups and changing power relations and representations, often referred to in the CDA literature as 'discursive re-hierarchization'.

### 1) Intertextuality in Public Communications

Some researchers argue that Intertextuality is most salient in public communication, such as political speeches as discursive occasions, where the boundaries between the in-group and the out-group are set (Adami, Leclercq, & Tyne, 2012, p. 141). Taking a reader-centred constructivist stance, other Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) analysts argue that the election of Donald Trump in 2016 was an event that contributed to new texts falling under nationalism and ethnocentrism as already historically existent ideologies (Bristow, Robinson, Mollan, & Geesin, 2020). Yet, new linkages can be traced in the light of the new high and low contexts. The intertextual network that a text can subscribe to is subject to change, and its linkage is subjectively influenced by the reader's background, attitudes, and knowledge (Kristeva, 1980). Whenever a political discourse is made, social orders, power relations, and boundaries are delineated through discursive practices discernible by CDA analysts (Fairclough, 2010, p. 95). As such, Intertextuality may be in the form of quotations, allusions, literary conventions, imitations, parodies, and paraphrases. In the discourse of the group Identitare Bewegung Deutschland (IBD), a CDA analysis (Caiani & Kröll, 2017) found that prominent identity actors frequently appeared (recurring 207 times in the website and 46 in the blog, together with the actor "we," appearing 191 and 209 times respectively) and mostly there is a collocation with the expression "its militants" in allusion to the nationalist construct of Patriotism (8).

### 2) Right Wing Parties: Insights from Previous CDA Studies

Several studies have effectively employed Basic Content Analysis (BCA) within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. For instance, Krzyżanowski (2009) utilized BCA to investigate the discursive strategies of right-wing populist parties in Eastern Europe, uncovering their anti-political discourse and its impact on political cleavages. Cap and Novak (2013) applied BCA to assess the representation of migrants and migration in Czech online news, emphasizing the role of linguistic and framing choices in shaping public perception. Mason and Iyengar (2017) combined BCA with experimental methods to explore the influence of media coverage of terrorism on public attitudes and political behaviour. Additionally, van Dijk (1997) discussed the methodology of political discourse analysis, including BCA, while Reisigl and Wodak (2009) introduced the Discourse-Historical Approach, which incorporates BCA, as a comprehensive method for CDA. These studies collectively demonstrate the utility of BCA in examining power relations, ideologies, and discourse in various contexts.

Indeed, Donald Trump's language and style have made him a well-known political figure on national and international social media and an eccentric public persona (Francia, 2018). When the Republican Party nominated Donald Trump as a candidate for the 2016 US presidential election, he started trending on social media platforms. During 2017, Donald Trump's personal Twitter channel, @realDonaldTrump, has been the main information resource chosen by the US President to generate opinion and sentiment on US civil society and has become the White House's public diplomacy tool (Giménez et al., 2018, pp. 363-39). Moreover, Dueck (2019) notes that Donald Trump's Discourse is "best understood as a resurgence of one specific form of conservative American nationalism" (p. 5). It is "bigger than Donald Trump and will, therefore, probably outlast him," arguing that "conservative nationalism is here to stay" (Dueck, p. 135). Indeed, Donald Trump used populist-nationalist themes that appealed to white working class voters and solidified their increasingly long-term

support for the GOP (p. 148). Trump's foreign policy was also described as "directional," to change the direction of policies that he thinks are "disproportionally costly" for America (p. 132).

Bristow et al. (2020), however, approached the discourse of Donald Trump from three perspectives: ideology, leadership, and businessman identity. In this article, Donald Trump and his emerging ideology of 'Trumpism' are interpreted from managerial and organizational perspectives (pp. 405-418). The article begins with a short biography, highlighting that Donald Trump, a boasting Republican, had been originally a Democrat member before he migrated to the Republican Party. The mindset of Donald Trump made him an exemplary right-wing nominee and an impossible Democrat. The article by Bristow et al. (2020) argued that Donald Trump's politics led to a radical conservative agenda in office. Important to note is that the ideology of 'Trumpism' is said to feed from Steve Bannon (see more in the page footnote below), who is known for his populist rhetoric packaged with ethnocentric nationalism that appeals to a large section of the electorate (Green, 2017).

### 3) Group Essentialization and Identity Politics

Anthropologically speaking, group essentialization is a discursive, behavioural, or institutional practice that entails the naturalization of existent power relations and the marginalization and exclusion of the out-group (Mahalingam, 2007, p. 301), especially with the rise of exclusionary versions of nationalism in response to large-scale migration patterns (see more in Kaufmann, 2019, and Stoler, 1995). In fact, new waves of immigrants are often racialized through nationalistic projects where they are ascribed a salient group identity and interpersonally and institutionally treated as inferior and threatening to "the Americans" (Abrajano & Hajnal, 2015, p. 88). Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) analysed the link between immigration attitudes and voting (pp. 87-100).

In fact, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective treats identity as a cognitive, pre-discursive, and essentialist phenomenon (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995), especially for the businessman-nationalist President D. Trump as a case study. Note that group essentialization (when super-inflated) conflicts with pluralism development in the American context, especially in a clash with American nationalism as it is today. Baskin (1970) provided an interesting account of how pluralism development "bumps into" waves of power group essentialization and how this conflict is intertwined with questions of democracy, religion, race, ethnicity, and assimilation.
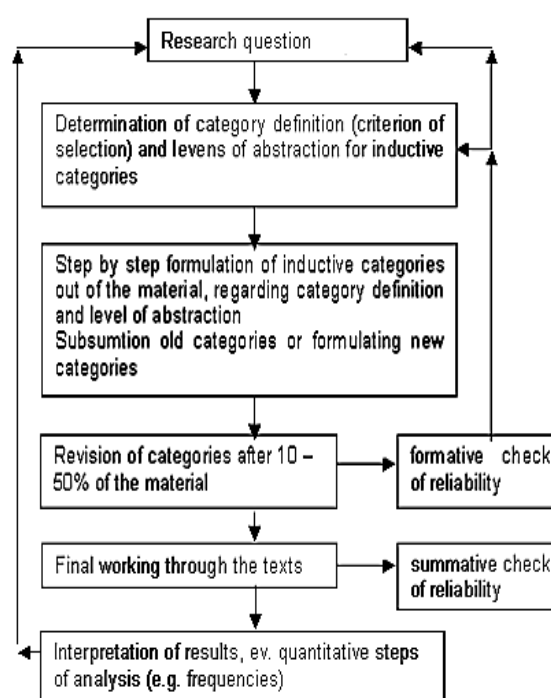
Bonikowski and DiMaggio (2008) are some of the researchers who have produced an invaluable resource for scholars and students interested in American nationalism. There is ample historical and social-scientific research that demonstrates a strong tradition of ethnocultural nationalism in the U.S, sustaining that Americans of other than European descent have often been perceived as less fully "American" than white Christians of northern European origin (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2008, p. 2). It should be noted that the bulk of studies on nationalism have focused on specific forms of nationalist sentiment: ethnocultural or civic nationalism, patriotism, or national pride, without revisiting the "recent mutations" of American nationalism brought about by D. Trump during his 4 years USA presidential term.

Note that the supremacy of one group over another is a discourse element that intertextually relates to Jacksonian nationalism (Dueck, 2019), making D. Trump a hard-line unilateralist. George W. Bush, however, is essentially a conservative internationalist who was super-obsessed with democracy promotion and nation-building (Fonte, 2020). Fonte argues that most forms of nationalism emphasized the preservation of national sovereignty, and they upheld a foreign policy which focused on American national interests, including retaining freedom of action, promoting trade, non-interference in European affairs, and territorial expansion on the North American continent (Fonte, 2020, p. 163).

## 3.  METHODOLOGY
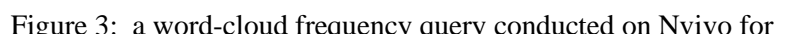
### 3.1. Basic Content Analysis

Mayring (2000) defines qualitative content analysis as "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within the context of communication, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantification." Each interpretation is focused on and pours into the researcher's chosen questions. Our qualitative content analysis seeks to inductively develop categories that are revised and refined in an interactive, feedback-loop process to ensure credibility and usefulness (Mayring, 2000, p. 4). In this model, aspects of text and context are examined jointly to show more fully how meaning is shaped. After intensive exposure to the data corresponding to the sampling characteristics outlined below, certain broad codes emerged, but not to the extent of making generalizations that are grounded for all the sample sets (which are unmanageably large). Some codes emerge from the data itself, thanks to qualitative coding. Each iteration of qualitative coding involved contextualizing and recontextualizing data into themes



Graph 2: Mayring's inductive category development step model (2000)

(Refining codes and text and context recheck; see also the analysis section, Intertextuality). The model in Graph 1 is a visual step-wise design for our basic content analysis of the data sampled (See Graph 2).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe the transition from Basic Content Analysis (BCA) to qualitative analysis as moving from description to conceptualization. For BCA, analysis is generally quantitative and centres on the use of descriptive statistics. As Weber (1990, p. 12) states, "a central idea in content analysis is that the many words of the text are classified into much fewer categories." The results of basic content analysis are often, but not always, used to empirically document a perceived social problem (e.g. an aggressive ethnocentric nationalist discourse). The process of categorizing the multitude of words within a text into a more

'manageable number of distinct categories' (p. 12) involves systematically identifying and coding specific content features, allowing researchers to discern patterns, themes, and trends within the textual data. By doing so, researchers aim to distil the essence of the content, making it more amenable to systematic analysis and interpretation. This categorization process is essential for transforming qualitative data into a structured format that can be quantitatively examined, providing a basis for rigorous analysis.

### 3.2. Use of Nvivo software as a BCA facilitator

The frequency of words or ideas is treated as a technique to determine the relative importance of specific content (see Figure 3 below). Due to its ability to automatically transfer coding information to the modeller of the software, NVivo (and almost all other qualitative data analysis software) is capable of creating compelling visual displays of the data coded. The researcher can also create models manually with all or part of the data.



Figure 3: a word-cloud frequency query conducted on Nvivo for

Two of the most recent books on research methods have suggested that qualitative analysis software, often termed computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), is playing an increasingly important role in storing, managing, and analyzing qualitative data (Hughes & Hayhoe, 2007; S. Blythe, 2007; Fielding& Lee, 1991). Nvivo is frequently employed for systematic data analysis and coding in qualitative research (Araujo et al., 2018; Gibbs, 2007). The software provides a structured environment for researchers to code and organize qualitative data efficiently (Richards, 2015). Researchers use qualitative data analysis software to compare and contrast cases or data segments (Araujo et al., 2018; Gibbs, 2007). Its capabilities make it easier to conduct comparative analyses across different data points (Paulus et al., 2017; Saldaña, 2015; Hoover & Koerber, 2009).

The growing prevalence of digital texts and multimedia is often the motivation for this advice and computer- and internet-based solutions are suggested as ways to solve our research problems. Analyzing unstructured data in the form of large texts constitutes a huge sample to manage, pre-process, organize and retrieve. Add to this the demanding task of collecting and curating *metadata* related to the texts. Nvivo's reductive and powerful lexicometric tools and metadata matrix charts spare the researcher these time-consuming tasks.

### 1) The Epistemological Stance of Basic Content Analysts

In content analysis, there are roughly two camps that researchers split into a) those who are more quantitatively oriented researchers emphasize validity, reliability, and objectivity (Berelson, 1952; Berger, 1991; Neuendorf, 2002, 2017); and b) those who are more qualitatively oriented researchers emphasize validity, replicability, and transparency (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Mayring, 2000, 2010). Note that in BCA, the researcher's personal and

cultural histories, social context, and research purpose are not viewed as shaping the analysis of the data in important ways (Maschi, 2016), while inferences can only be made valid by means of reproducible 'quantitative query results.' In other words, if another coder uses the same query criteria, word frequencies, word search lists, and the same texts, s/he obtains the same results as presented in the analysis section (reproducibility), using the same software program, contributing to the rigour of qualitative textual analysis driven by a SFL approach (see more about the implications of using Nvivo software and the users' best practices in Paulus, et al., 2017).

Interpretive and qualitative content analyses target latent and manifest content and require greater researcher judgments in coding and in data analysis (Drisko & Maschi, 2016). Content is coded and analyzed to foreground thematic saliency and account for it, uncover relations, and test hypotheses for a research focus, with the implication of content analysis to raise awareness about a given social issue and call for public advocacy as evidenced by the analysis (e.g. Kertész and Berzleja, 2020). Note that Credibility in content analysis is enhanced when readers can see that the researcher did not simply "line up" with supporting evidence. Where context shapes meaning, the researcher should provide sufficient raw data to show the impact of context on meaning (Maschi, 2016, p. 127). The more qualitatively oriented researchers emphasize validity, replicability, and transparency (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Mayring, 2000), whereas those who are quantitatively oriented give rise to validity, reliability, and objectivity (Berelson, 1952; Berger, 1991; Neuendorf, 2002).

It is upheld in this study that discourse and communication play a central role in the transformation of ideology (Van Dijk, 2003). Ideological content is encoded and decoded via certain discursive practices, thanks to the shared social cognition and events stored in episodic memory which can inform a particular ideology attired in a 'collective narrative,' so to speak. Ideologically encoded discourses are based on "a system of cultural common ground, featuring shared general knowledge and attitudes and their underlying principles, such as values and cultural truth criteria. Groups select from this cultural base specific beliefs and evaluation criteria and construe these, together with other basic principles of their group, as systems of specific group beliefs that are organized by underlying ideologies.

### 2) Data Collection and Sampling

A clear advantage for content analysis is that it can be used to analyze natural yet often unstructured data that was not originally created for research (Maschi, 2016, p. 13). In other words, researchers usually select such data sets for content analysis in part because other people created the material for purposes other than research. Therefore, data collection for this method is unobtrusive. When it comes to unstructured data such as political speeches or interviews, both perspectives are important, and sampling is mostly convenient, especially when the data is unmanageably large. Note that Basic Content Analysis (quantitative) is a very useful reductionist method that can lay the foundations for and aggregate the qualitative (interpretive) content analysis. BCA's reductionist power makes it easy to summarize how the media characterizes a politician, a sports figure, or an artist over a certain period of time (Maschi, 2016, p. 12).

Sampling in content analysis is rarely a single-step endeavour (Maschi, 2016, p. 37). To sample our data on both sets (J. Trump and G. Bush), I accessed the Presidential Speeches Millercenter archive platform. I collected 5 transcribed speeches for each data set, D. Trump and George Bush. These large samples were studied by means of quantitative queries and autocoding using NVIVO12 to generate structured data such as graphs and charts on polarization, thematic, and sentiment codes. Our research question forced us to study a sample from each set and conduct a content analysis to foreground the contrasting features of nationalism that mark D. Trump's discourse, ideological, discursive, and thematic patterns which are not present in George Bush's. Because the corpus relevant to the characteristics of the sample (nationalistic discourse by George Bush and D. Trump) is unmanageably large, I decided to use to conduct a basic content analysis to see which data sample is 'initially' representative of the content inquired about.

Therefore, I have chosen the data sample that best matches our sampling frame and has higher content relevance, a **sample**. Our sampling of the data was therefore purposive and convenient, and only political speeches that are marked by the following sampling frame features were selected :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • G. Bush+<br>• D. Trump+ | • American nationalism+<br>• Republican Party+ | • Inaugural speech+<br>• Farewell speech+ |
| • Election/Rally | | |

To allow for consistency and validity of content analysis of the sample data, the same quantitative queries and autocoding (same word frequencies, word search lists, crosstabs and word trees peer, thematic coding and sentiment coding criteria) were conducted on the data sets below:

**DATA pool 1 (Population sample 1)**

- **Text 1: D. Trump's Inaugural Address as the 45th President of the USA (January 20th 2017)**
- **Text 2: D. Trump's address to the UN assembly (ADDRESS TO THE UN ASSEMBLY september-19-2017)**
- **Text 3: D. Trump's farewell speech (2021) & Save America Speech (2021)**

**DATA pool 2 (Population sample 2)**

- **Text 1: G. W. Bush's inaugural speech (January 20, 2001)**
- **Text 2: G. W. Bush's farewell**
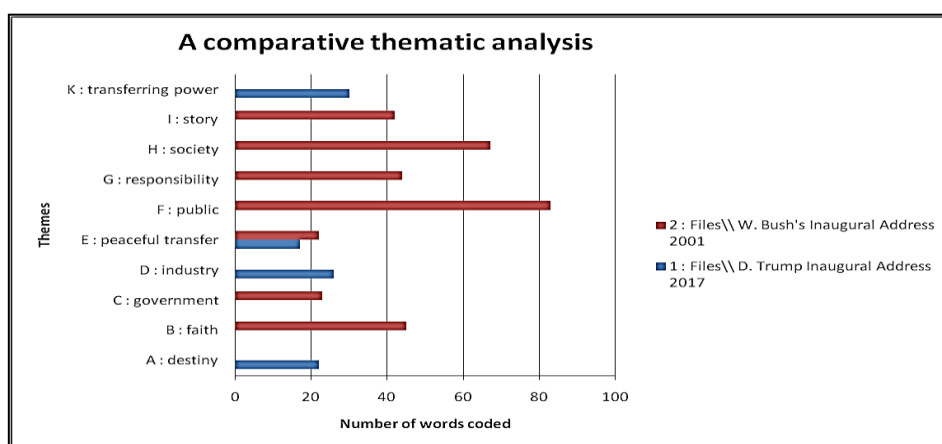- **Text 3: G. W. Bush (April 9, 2007 Speech on Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

The BCA query results (Wordclouds, cluster analysis, sentiment analysis, word trees, word searches, diagrams...) also helped us capture the most relevant texts (data sample) in the data at large imported to Nvivo. Since the research question was analysed to foreground the contrasting features of nationalism that mark D. Trump's discourse and ideological, discursive and thematic patterns not present in George Bush's, I was forced to study a sample from each

set and conduct a lexicometric content analysis. Because the corpus relevant to the characteristics of the sample (nationalistic discourse by George Bush and D. Trump) is unmanageably large, I decided to use to conduct a basic content analysis to see which data sample is 'initially' representative of the content inquired about.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1.Thematic Autocoding

Autocoding taps into the manifestly thematic patterns based on the frequency of words within a topical frame (See more about the algorithm of Nvivo Autocoding in NVivo 12 Tutorials). With a comparative analysis in mind, I imported the data populations for the same pool (First Presidential Inaugural Speech) and launched an Nvivo-based autocode query. The quantitative facet of this autocoding is that it is concerned with the number of words coded for each theme, the tool which allows us to see which themes prevail in each data set. Below are the results of this first stage autocoding based on the frequency of words coded for each theme (Graph 4):



**Graph 4: A Nvivo-based comparative thematic analysis**

**Given that inaugural speeches are known for their revealing power about the discourse maker, mostly state presidents, they are an opportunity for both the politician to lay down his or her cards open on the table and for the electorate base (and by extension** the citizens) to have a clear idea about their plans and '**ideological compass'.** Looking at the autocoding results, it is apparent that the two nationalist discourse makers, D. Trump and George Bush have quite **different agendas.** Both texts include the transitive peaceful transfer of power which marks every inaugural speech, but only D. Trump marked the presence of the code '**destiny'.** Likewise**,** Bush's speech included code '**the story of a nation'**, on which I shall elaborate sections of this analysis. The reader can also discern that the largest percentage of the words coded pertain to **social sectors** such as **responsibility** (of the individual and the government), **society and private character, education reform and schools,** the **American dream** of a **melting pot America** that is founded on American values of **equality, family bonds, and the goodwill** of the  individual. A large of percentage of words was devoted to the lexical field of the **civil society** and civil duty where the citizen serves their country and the government serves that citizen. Besides, 45 words were coded under faith, which suggests that the speaker instantiated the place of faith in his discourse. The conservative tinge of this text

resides in the active deployment of religion at the service of legitimation and unity-evoking. George Bush's text attests to the presence of a set of words that are within the framework of what can be called '**conservative internationalist discourse', given** George W. Bush's *democracy-promoting lexical fields* (**government, 23; peaceful transfer of power, 22; public service, 83).**

However, D. Trump's data shows that the discourse is laden with four themes which are lexically salient: **Industry, economy, Destiny of greatness, and transferring power** (see figure 2 above). Following the analysis, the reader shall see how this thematic make-up pours into the agenda marketed by George Bush in his version of American Nationalism in contrast to that which is promoted by D. Trump based on the data samples.

### 4.2.A lexicometric analysis : Word Frequency, Wordclouds and Word Tree queries

A wordcloud query of the most frequent 30 words peer each speech visually represents this thematic makeup in the form of a cloud, showing which themes prevail in which speech (See Graph 5 below; word clouds for D. Trump vs. Bush):



**G. Bush's Inaugural speech**      *J. Trump's Inaugural*

A lexicometric analysis of the texts is helpful here. The scarcity of the term 'people' in Bush's inaugural speech (used only once), where instead the word 'citizen' is used 10 times, given its democratic dimensions and deictic power. This **citizen/people** dichotomy cannot go unnoticed, for each discourse maker carefully selects that which is most consonant with his overall version of nationalism (Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, interventionist or conservative internationalist).

Looking at the two word clouds, I note the predominance of '**the story of a nation'** in the data of W. Bush, whereas there is an overemphasis on America now and the dreams '**stolen'** in D. Trump's sample. However, I see that both discourses are nationalistic in nature, as there is a highly significant count of word use for the lexis '**nation', 'America'** and **'Americans'** (*People* **1.72** % and *citizens* **0.81** % for D. Trump's Inaugural speech 2017 **Vs**. *Citizens* **1.32** %** and *people* **0** % in G. Bush's). Yet, The words **commitment, courage, ideals, freedom and civility** have been used equally in Data GB (G. Bush Data; see table 1 below), which shows the significance of the these words for the version of nationalism George Bush markets in his inaugural speech; one which is **progressive** from a **democratic perspective and conservative in** the sense that it evokes ideals of a melting pot society that is founded on democracy, equality and a united nation. The *nation* G. Bush evokes is a nation of '**justice and opportunity'**, a nation of **character** and of **civility** (see graph 6, below).

**Graph 6:  word frequency query for G. Bush sample**

When I compared the frequency for the word set '**nation, America, country, citizen, Americans, people'**, I found that they are present in both texts but with different frequencies. While G. Bush has used the word **'Nation' 14 times**, D. Trump used it **9 times**, all this within the overall discourse of *building the nation,* though the 45th USA president continued to speak about '**re**building the nation' (see graph 7):



Graph 7: Lexical composition in D. Trump's sample

The distribution of this lexicon provides insights into the 'genre' of political discourse in question. It can be located within the framework of Conservative American nationalism. This attribution is influenced by the prevalence of the same set of lexemes used in nationalistic discourses across Europe, including Italy, Germany, and France. These lexemes often revolve around themes like 'defending the people,' 'rebuilding the nation,' and 'restoring the glorious days.' The intended effect of such discourse is to challenge the current status quo in favour of the in-group, as described by Trump as 'the people' (Caiani & Kröll, 2017). In fact, many analysts reported that D. Trump is a full expression of **American populism**. It is no coincidence for us to find the words and labels the people or real Americans on top of the frequency charts of his speeches. His January 6 'Save America' speech is an epitomizing speech of his hard-line nationalism. Save America as a title insinuates that America is in danger. It is also imperative in tone and so it addresses the people and asks them to act urgently. I subjected the speech to a frequency query and it produced the following Nvivo-generated word-cloud 1 (Graph 8; a wordcloud):
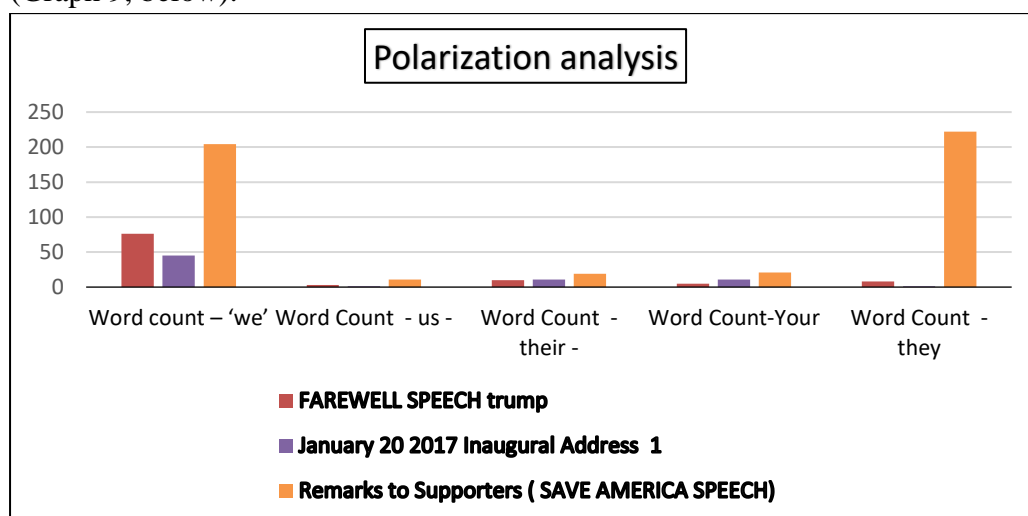
Graph 8: Word-cloud attesting to a populist discourse

It is no surprise that words like 'ballots, election, going, votes' are highly frequent, as the text is contextualized within an election rally period. What is staggering is the way the populist tone is intensified (see the full frequency chart in the appendix section) in this particular speech 'Save America'. The length of this speech is also significant compared to his inaugural speech. More surprising is the number of times the word ''citizen'' is used (2 occurrences only) in comparison to the length of the text.

### 4.3.Polarity analysis: G. Bush vs. D. Trump

Nvivo allows the researcher to conduct statistical descriptive queries on the basis of word frequencies (Subject pronouns) to measure the polarization level in data samples ('externals'). In the sample of J. Trump, it can be noticed that it is relatively higher than that of G. Bush (Graph 9, below):
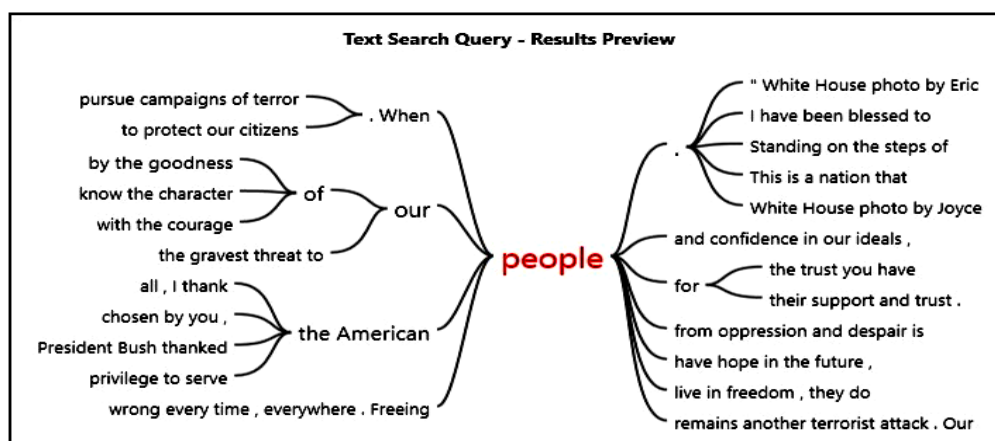


Graph 9: Polarity in D. Trump's data sample at large (a word count for subject pronouns)

All the text is laden with embedded conspiracy assumptions ('**They** could use **you**'). The **polarity** generated in D. Trump is so high that it can be generalize on all his data samples in this research. So, I conducted the same query with the same criteria. Below are the findings of this query (Graph 10).



Graph 10: Polarity in D. G. Bush's data sample at large

As the reader can notice, the discursive practice of group Essentialization and identification reaches its peak in the inaugural speech 2001, whereas it plummets in the texts 3 and 1. Let us see the contextual distribution of the two words to see the determinants of this co-occurrence. In contrast with polarity and group mobilization, I also want to inquire about level of polarity in G. Bush's sample set too. Therefore, I conducted the same query with the same criteria. Below are the findings of this query (Graph 11).
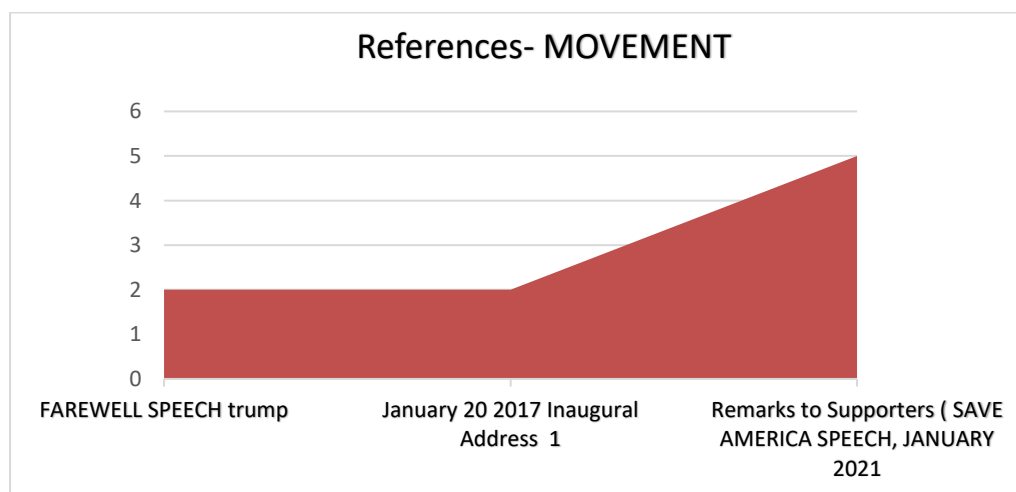


To examine if there is an Essentialization of a particular group based on skin color by the speaker, I conducted a word search query for the word 'white', and I have found that none of the occurrences attests to a usage of the adjective *white* as a modifier for 'people', which will otherwise have undesirable effects in terms of racial reference. All of the occurrences are

modifiers of the word **House**. I conclude that this is a **generic usage** of the white as part of the compound word **White House**. More interesting is that G. Bush did not use the word *white*, *not even once* in his inaugural speech 2001. The presence or absence of a lexical item is significant for content analysis, especially when its presence has effect on the discourse. Beyond, the choice of a specific paint color rather than another (e.g. White) for a particular building is itself 'content' for content analysts.

### 4.4.A movement of the people to 'save America'

Now that I confirmed that there is an ideology-encoding discursive practice, which is in the form of lexical patterns, let us now move to another category instantiated by means of a lexical field, which I shall label '**Movement**'. D. Trump describes his nationalism as a movement, activating the mental model categories of '**Risk**' and '**homeland**'. I conducted a text search query and word tree query for the word '**movement**' and I have found that there is a consistency in using the term movement across all the data samples for D. Trump. Below is the result of this query (graph 12):
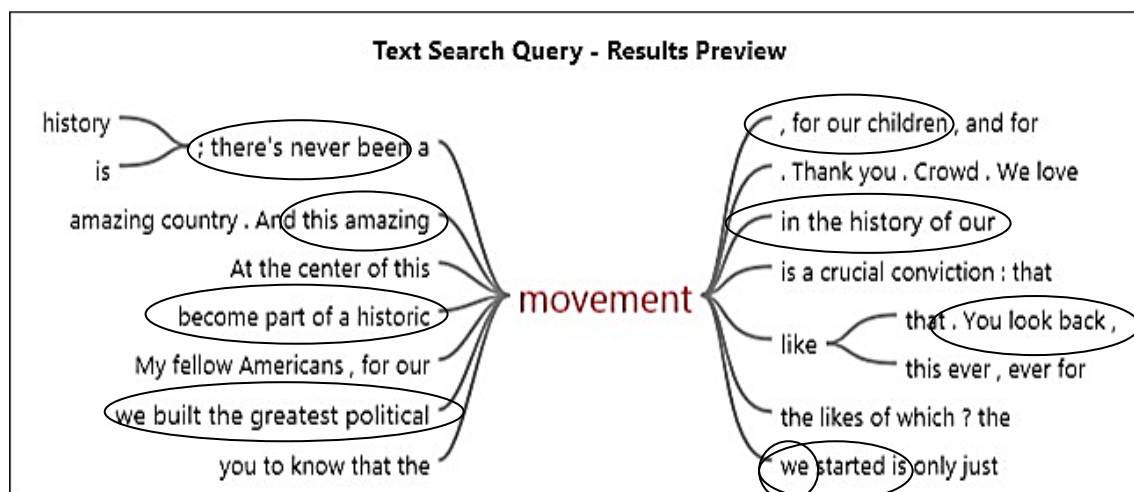


Graph 12: Word count for 'movement' in both data sets

As you can see there is an increase in the word frequency in the SAVE AMERICA SPEECH, while there is equal assignment of the word in both speeches 'January 20 2017 Inaugural Address' and the Farewell speech (2 times). The significant augmentation of this lexically encoded social cognition related to a group as a *movement* serves two purposes:

- **To maintain a sense of belongingness and national sentiment.**
- **To mobilize a group of people towards action (Prognostic Frame), to 'save America'**

This sense of **belongingness and Group Essentialization is** instantiated by means of the overuse of subject pronouns, especially 'we' in contrast with the out-group 'they'. Yet, certain instances (a few) may refer to the in-group in **3$^{rd}$ person** perspective, which is another way to refer to the in-group, itself. The narrow context of the word 'movement' in the SAVE AMERICA text is as follows:

Our exciting adventures and boldest endeavours have not yet begun. My fellow Americans, for *our movement*, for our children, and for our beloved country, and I say this despite all that has happened, the best is yet to come. [*applause*]



Graph 13: Word tree for the word ''MOVEMENT'' in Donald Trump's Save America Speech

Looking at the word tree for the category *movement* (Graph 13*)*, you can easily infer the ideological content that is assigned across all the samples of D. Trump, which is in line with the previously mentioned categories, namely group Essentialization and belongingness. Evidence of the prognostic frame of context) of the category most D. Trump's speeches is abundant. It is a movement the likes of which history has never witnessed before, and it is '**we**', D. Trump claims, who 'started' it, as he is using the active voice rather than the passive one. This is agency in its overt form. This movement is also the 'greatest' historic movement which they should keep for *their* children. It is D. Trump and his supporters who built this movement. Note that G. Bush samples have no occurrence of the word 'movement*',* not even once.

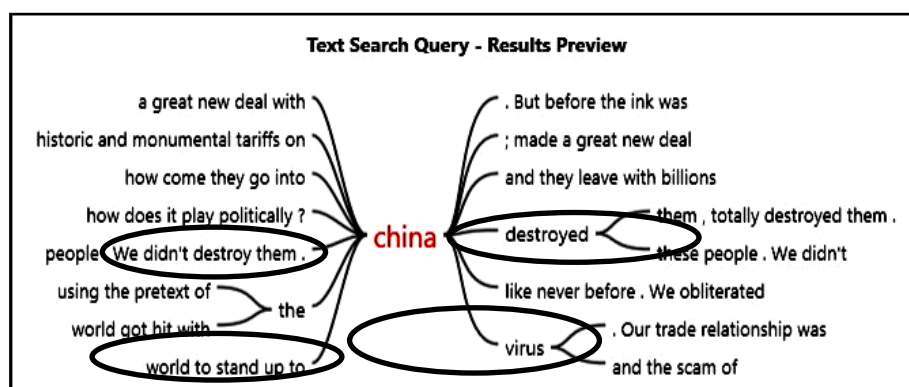### 4.5.The US capitol violence incident as a discursive event
Note that immediately after this long speech (SAVE AMERICA), a pro-trump mob attacked the US Capitol and caused so much chaos which amounted to assaulting the national guards. The causal link can be made based on the timing of the event and the violent rhetoric of populism emitted by D. Trump who denied his speech was linked to the incident in one way or another. I believe that the sociocognitive constructs were tapped upon so strongly in Save America SPEECH (which I shall also subject to the quantitative content analysis too). I conducted a word tree query and found the following framing of this axial category for a *nationalistic discourse*.

As it is conspicuous in in the augural speech, there are only 4 references (0.42 %), whereas in the Farewell speech there is higher frequency of 10 occurrences (0.56%). Yet, in the speech Remarks to Supporters, I have found only one occurrence (0.01%), meaning that he is addressing his supporter base, *the people,* rather than all citizens of the USA. In fact, the only instance of Americans was framed quite precisely to approximate the connotative meaning 'my people'. In sum, this lexical pattern is all typical of a nationalistic right wing discourse. I still cannot, at this stage, determine the intertextual version of D. Trump's nationalism.

In sum, this lexical pattern is all typical of a nationalistic right wing discourse. Yet, I still cannot, at this stage, determine the intertextual links to other versions (e.g. Caiani & Kröll, 2017) in D. Trump's nationalism. This analysis reiterates the fact that discourse is capable of shaping society, while the reverse is also true. I will proceed in our BCA inquiry to look for manifest content related to conspiracy theories in D. Trump's discourse.

### 4.6. Conspiracy Theories and Group Essentialization

The employment of conspiracy theories as rhetoric strategy is not something unknown about GOP parties and Right Wing political streams in most countries (See GOP parties in Germany, France and Italy, for instance). A couple of quantitative queries on the data samples of D. Trump have easily shown this thematically recurrent pattern of America being conspired against by 'traitors of the nation', including mainstream media and existent official political parties like Democrats, and economically strong countries like China. While the category was not referred to not even once in the inaugural speech, China was referred to in negative frames, often in conspiracy against the American economy. Below is a word tree (graph 14 for the word 'China' in the entire data sample set of D. Trump.
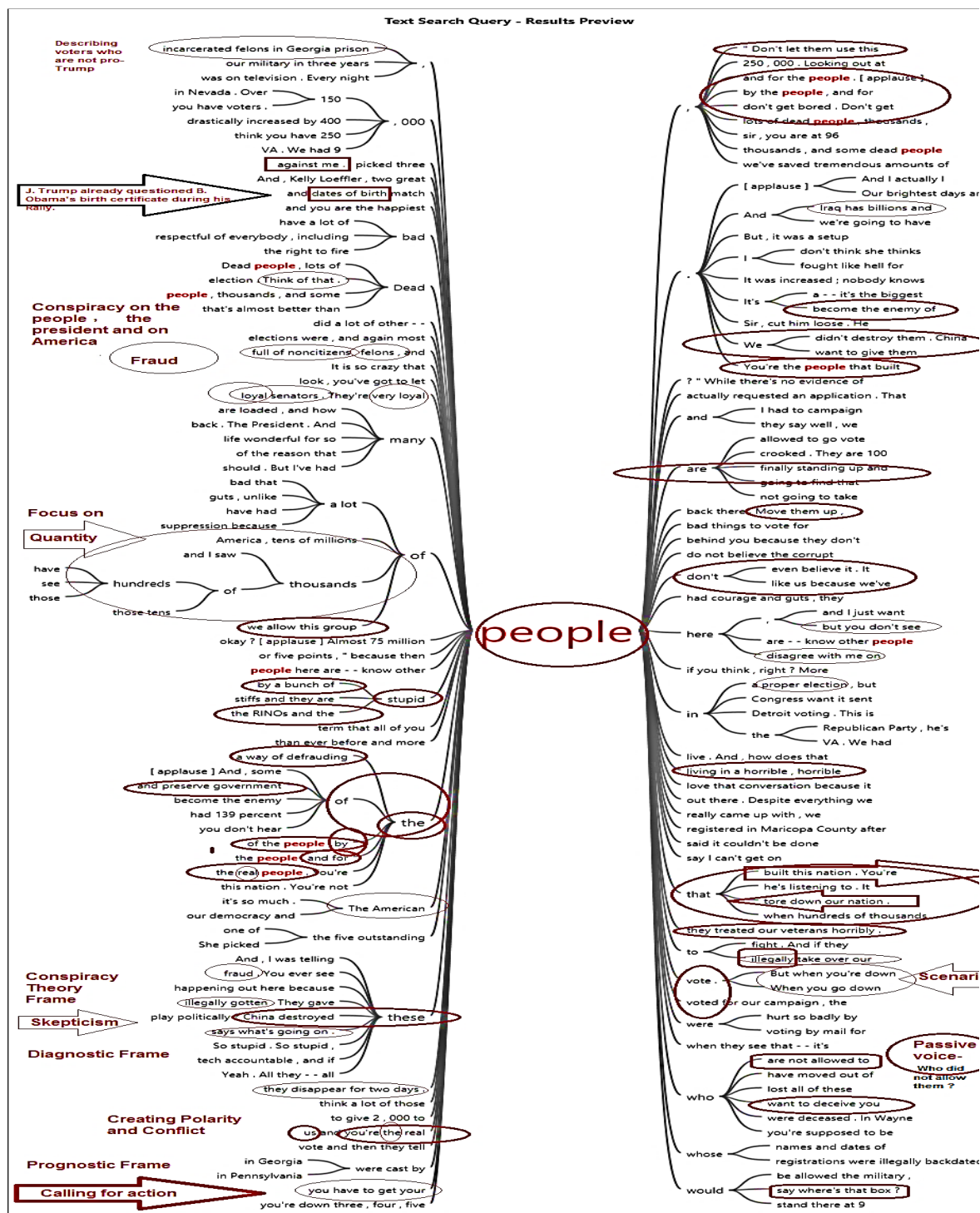


Graph 14: Word tree for the word ''China'' in D. Trump

D. Trump has finally found an enemy to use in his conspiracy theory rhetoric, in the course of COVID-19 Pandemic. Below is a word tree for the word China in the entire data sample set of D. Trump. The speaker attributes what is good to his administration (he spoke about the historic and monumental tariffs and taxes on China products), and he accuses China Businessmen to leave America with billions of dollars. Likewise, he assigns responsibility for the Covid-19 virus and for the 'destruction' of the American people to China, a practice which lies within the diagnostic frame. No prognostic frame is provided, where the addressee from the government's responsibility for the health of millions of Americans. Especially notable is the way D. Trump intensifies his conspiracy theory rhetoric by means of increasing the level of polarity in his discourse in his SAVE AMERICA speech (Remarks to Supporters Speech, Jan 2021). Below is an epitomizing excerpt:

> **They could use you**. Your city is going to **hell**. **They** want *Rudy Giuliani* back in New York. We will get a little younger version of Rudy. Is that okay, Rudy? We're gathered together in the heart of our **nation's capital for one very, very basic and simple reason, to save our democracy**
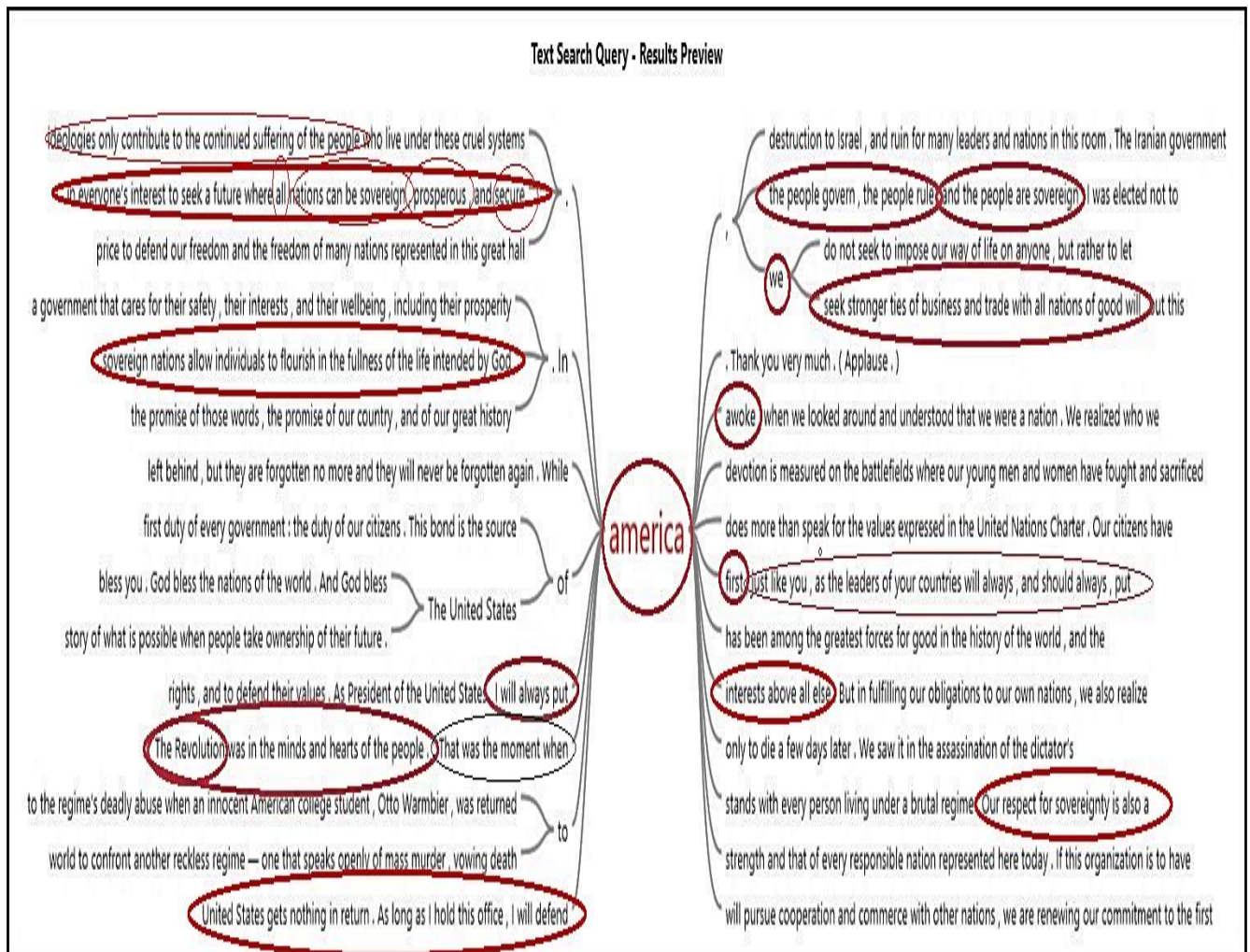
Many areas in the text is laden with embedded conspiracy assumptions ('**They** could use **you'**). The **polarity** generated in D. Trump is so high that I can generalize on all his data samples in this research. In this excerpt, the conspirer is manifestly referred to, namely the Democrats (E.g. , *Rudy Giuliani*, a democrat candidate) by means of the discursive practice of **allusion**. D. Trump **polarity** is a recurrent discursive practice which is in line with the previous category instantiation of **movement**. The ideological content which is so visible is the conspiracy theory framework which is used to create a sentiment of threat and insecurity. Elections are said to be defrauded and so the people must act as soon as possible to preclude what D. Trump call 'the steal'. The word tree below also shows that D. Trump uses a Snow's three frames in discourse: The diagnostic frame, the Motivational Frame and the Prognostic frame. He wants to mobilize towards a specific action: To stop what is going on- But how? He does not provide any specific form of action, which is not advisable. The reader can also notice that D. Trump is dividing the citizens into real and unreal Americans ('**you're the real people'**), a practice which was not present in G. Bush's discourse. On the opposite, the latter's discourse was marked by a call for Americans to think of themselves as **one people**, whose members are equal, rather than being in conflict with an  out-group America-internally.

D. Trump's polarity-generating discourse, creating an in-group in conflict with a small out-group, can be easily identified by word tree query for the right lexical items. Reference to several entities as the enemy of the country and *THE people* is typical of national political figures such as D. Trump. For instance, China was attributed the responsibility for 'the destruction' of the people ('China destroyed these people'). He also explains how these people are subject to deception by some entity or group he does not name, using simply the subject pronoun 'they'. Besides, the speaker also frames element 'the people' in a context where they are conspired against by some particular out-group, which he does not name in this specific narrow context. The word tree below (see graph 15 in the following page; a word tree for ''people'' in the entire sample of J. Trump) reflects much ideological encoding in the word usage of this category):
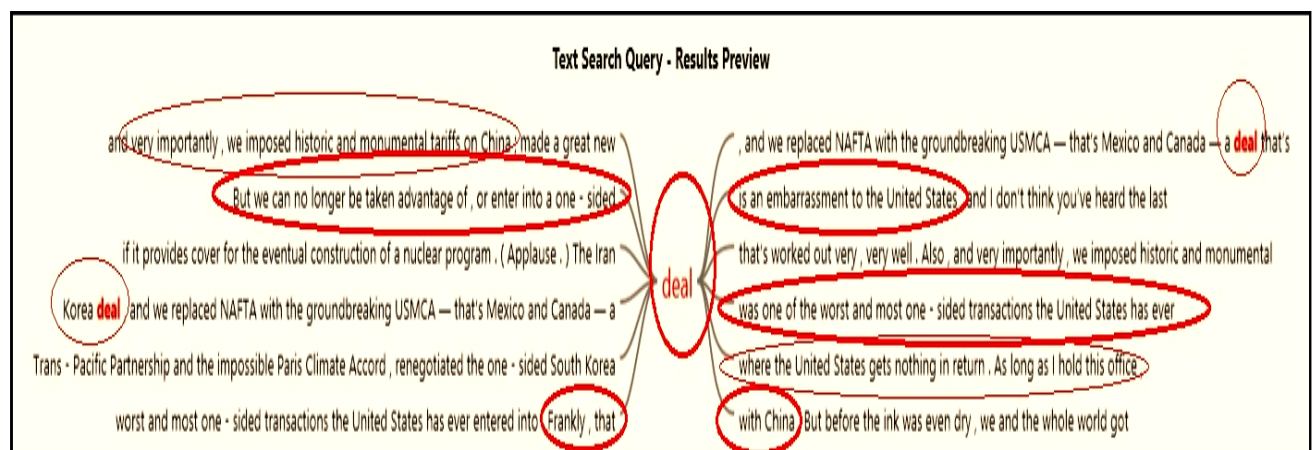
## 4.7.America-first Discourse: No one-sided transactions

This cost-driven transactional discourse is so apparent in the word tree of America, where the speaker encodes the two-way Deal business model. Nothing is free in today's America's foreign policy, D. Trump declares (see Graph 16, below):
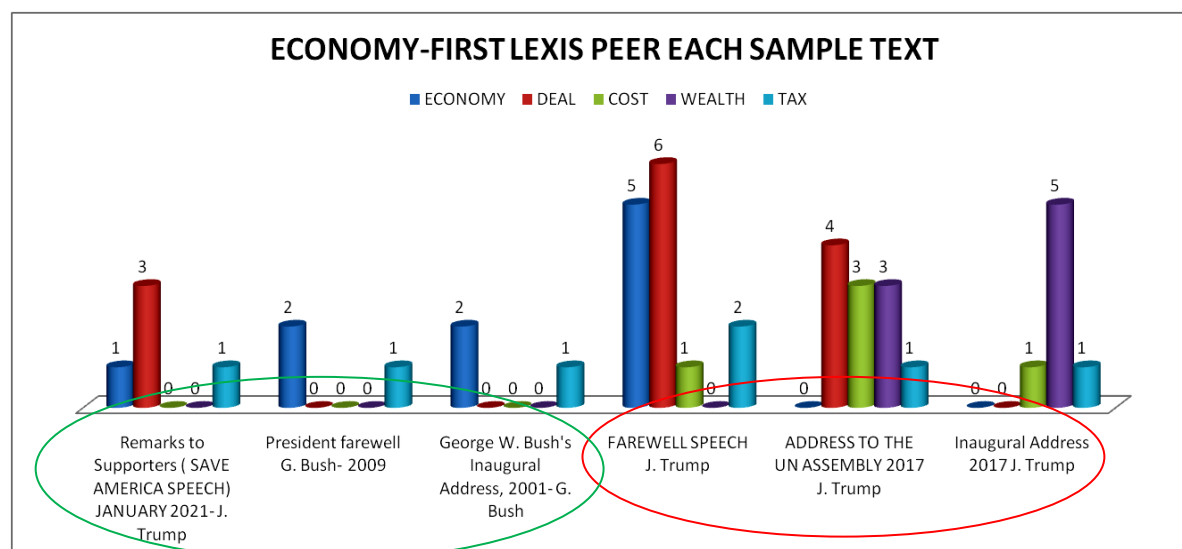
Graph 16: Word Tree for America; showing how America is framed by the discourse maker J. Trump

This **America-first** discourse surely emanates from D. Trump the businessman. Most references to America are framed from cost-driven and two-way traffic transactional perspective. He makes it clear to the addressee that the 'United States gets nothing in return'. A word search query for the term 'deal' has confirmed this new American foreign policy (Graph 17 below):



Graph 17: A word search query for the term 'deal' has confirmed this new American foreign policy
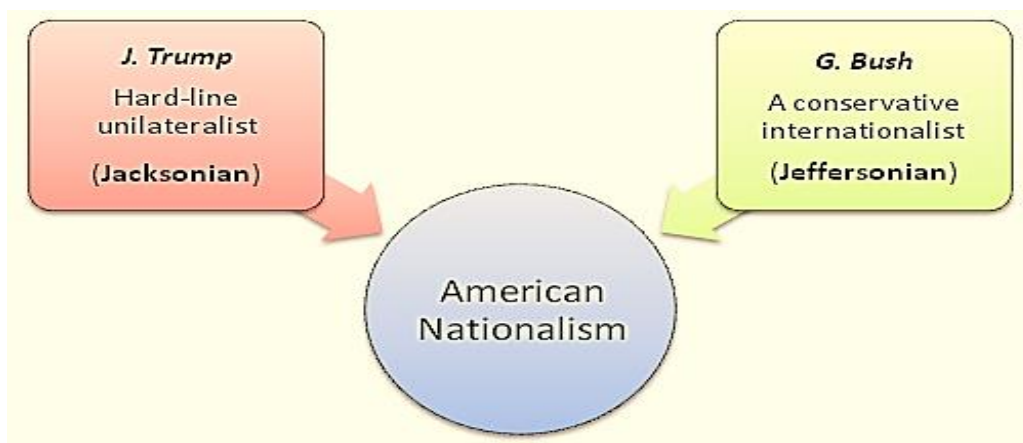
While the word 'deal' did not appear not even once in all the samples of G. Bush, D. Trump's data outnumbers G. Bush's, in terms of the word count for economy-first lexis (Graph 17):



Graph 18: The word count for economy-first lexis

The reader can easily capture the accentuation of the economy-first and business-tainted lexical field in D. Trump's set compared to G. Bush's. In fact, the perspectives from which the two republican nationalists construct their discourse and direct the addressee are different to the extent that one can speak of different versions of American Nationalism. Clearly, D. Trump's discourse is meant to construct a new American Agenda, which is to serve the interests of America above all, calling other nations to do follow this foreign policy too. The USA of today, D. Trump declares, is not the America of yesterday, and no one-sided deal of which there is no return shall ever be signed by his government. After this speech, the USA received a huge business offer from Saudi Arabia, as business deals, in return for the protection America provides for its people, given the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

In the light of the previous insights, it is possible to identify intertextual threads in the discourses of both figures and map them to previous established ideological streams. Thus, I derive the following diagram (Graph 19) which identifies the difference between W. G. Bush and D. Trump's nationalism from an intertextuality perspective:

Graph 19: classifying the discourses of G. Bush and J. Trump's from an intertextuality perspective

Indeed, Dueck (2019) argues that D. Trump Discourse is "best understood as a resurgence of one specific form of conservative American nationalism" (5), maintaining that it is ''bigger than Donald Trump and will, therefore probably outlast him", arguing that "conservative nationalism is here to stay" (Dueck, p. 135). The supremacy of one group over another is a discourse element that intertextually relates to Jacksonian nationalism (Dueck), making D. Trump's a hard-line unilateralist. George W. Bush, however, is essentially a conservative internationalist who was super-obsessed with democracy promotion and nation building (Fonte, 2020). On the other hand, D. Trump used populist-nationalist themes that appeal to white-working class voters and solidified their increasingly long-term support for the GOP (Fonte, 2020, p. 148), with the aim to change the direction of policies that D. Trump thinks are "disproportionally costly" for America (p. 132).

## 5.  CONCLUSION

This basic content analysis has given rise to a large sum of initial codes which, by means of iterative examination, word contextualization (narrow) entextualization (Broad) and recontextualization, I came up with some emergent child-codes (America-first deals, Captain America, populism, ethnocentrism, conspiracy theories, America in decline). I employed the Functional-Semantic approach to language to foreground the contrasting ideological, discursive, thematic and political discourse features that mark D. Trump and George Bush's nationalistic discourse. Using a Nvivo12-facilitated SFL-driven Basic Content Analysis (BCA), I examined 5 purposively sampled public addresses delivered by George W. Bush and Donald Trump (5 for each case) during their respective presidencies.  The Nvivo Qualitative analysis software (Version Nvivo12) was quite useful in data analysis, given its reductive data-structuring nature, allowing the discourse analyst to transform unstructured data into structured quantitatively and qualitatively analyzable data (Frequency charts and graphs, word searches, word trees, thematic and sentiment codes).

The key findings of this lexicometric analysis disclosed subtle variations and significant intertextual connections in these two nationalistic discourse genre chains. Both discourse makers deployed certain socio-cognitive elements consistent with their discursive purposes and addressee mental models. George Bush's sample attests to a 'conservative Jeffersonian

internationalist discourse' that is marked by a call for Americans to think of themselves as one people, whose members are equal, rather than being in conflict with an out-group America-internally. Donald Trump's nationalistic is subscribes to hardline Jacksonian stream, with an ideological and political nationalism, characterized by heightened polarization, conspiracy theories and group essentialization.

The lexicometric analysis also showcased how D. Trump is dividing the citizens into real and unreal Americans, ('you're the real people'), a practice that was not present in G. Bush's discourse. On the opposite, the latter's discourse was marked by a call for Americans to think of themselves as one people, whose members are equal, rather than being in conflict with an out-group America-internally.

This research has broader implications for political communication, informing discussions on how language shapes and is shaped by political ideologies and societies. The revealed intertextual links support previous research on the intertextuality and ideological encoding of nationalistic narratives in American political discourse. A qualitative analysis, however, can provide more tools to examine and interpret the text samples, allowing the researcher to unearth certain discursive practices and strategies, using the socio-cognitive interface (Van Dijk, 2008) as the analytical framework. Methodologically, the true value of this CDA-oriented BASIC content analysis lies in its reductive power and surveying tools (queries) for specific information, but the researcher cannot go beyond an inquiry for manifest content, as latent content is the specialty of interpretive analysis and qualitative content analysis and may extend a multimodal Quan-qual-driven content analysis.

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