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The system is rigged A discursive analysis of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders

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An important aspect of the populist theory, and what this work will argue for, is how discourse plays a role in the implementation of populist ideology in political campaigns. One of the most recognizable ways candidates gain support is through speeches at rallies and their performance in debates (Benoit, 2007). These discursive events culminate and create a specific message intended for the electorate. The spoken elements of campaigning present an opportunity for a researcher to study what is said and the implications of such speech. In an attempt to bypass the mediation of politics (Meyer, 2002) I will use speeches the candidates deliver at key stages in the campaign: the announcement of their candidacy, after Super Tuesday¹, and the Indiana Primary. Not only do these speeches represent important points in the American electoral calendar, but they are widely accessible to the average voter through online and offline mediums. In this manner, discourse is a form of social practice that uses language to produce knowledge and subjectivity (Hall, 1997). I will use Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to challenge claims made by the media, as outlined above, in its coverage of Sen. Sanders and Mr. Trump throughout the primary process. The aim of this work, through original research, is to answer the question: Do Mr. Donald Trump and Senator Bernie Sanders construct themselves as 'anti-establishment' in their discourses? If so, how? It is my hope that by addressing this

2015). In addition to these political movements, the digital revolution has changed how everyone lives their lives – an upheaval similar to what was brought on by the agrarian and industrial revolutions – potentially causing a further rise in inequality (McFarland, 2015). The media has deemed the resulting frustration with the ‘status quo’ felt amongst the electorate as opposition to the establishment: the political establishment (Barford, 2016).

This is not the first time such frustrations have influenced the political field in the United States. Mr. Trump is serving as the media’s populist torchbearer (Lehmann, 2015), but populism is not limited to the American conservative ideology (Kazin, 1995). In his work, Kazin (1995) discusses at length the populist movements in American history, tracing its initial appearance to the People’s Party in 1890. Throughout its history in America’s political landscape, populist conventions

candidates throughout the primary process (Kurtzleben, 2016). As

By removing the class privilege from our analysis, we realize the importance of non-class struggles not only for their own goals and those of the classes with which they may form alliances, but even for the possible responses to such struggles by dominant political practices.

(Westlind, 1996, p. 90)

Westlind expands the field of populism, allowing analysts to investigate the construction of popular identities through populist discourse that incorporates non-class identities. Discourse's critical importance to populism applies to populist movements and their organization. Specifically highlighting the charisma of leaders who, through their discourse, are able to both establish themselves as representative of 'the people' thus breaking with

As such, discourse plays a crucial role in the creation of populist movements because, as examined by Westlind (1996), populism is 'a process of naming, of defining movements and political discourses as "populism." Populism is not a fully pre-constituted object that we then find a name for, rather, we create it as an object in our very act of calling something "populism".' (p. 159). Populism is

conducting of this research project. It is my contention that Westlind's (1996) reworking of Laclau's theory of populism is most appropriate for the analysis at hand. It is not, therefore, my goal to label either Mr. Trump or Sen. Sanders as populist; they have done this themselves by their 'common discursive reference to "the people"' (Westlind, 1996, p. 60). Thus through their definition of 'the people' they simultaneously define 'the other': the antagonists to what is popular (Westlind, 1996). 'Populist critics must always pinpoint which individuals and which elites have defamed the national spirit; they cannot question the terms of the civic religion itself.' (Kazin, 1995, p. 12-3). This of course, is done discursively, with the use of anti-establishment appeals being a defining characteristic of populism (Westlind, 1996; de la Torre, 2000; Laclau, 1977; Barr, 2009; Canovan, 1981). At the heart of populist discourse is the construction of politics as a moral and ethical struggle between the people and the powerful elite (de la Torre, 2000).

But for such speech to be successful, a populist leader must break from 'the people' they claim to represent to establish themselves as the 'exclusive representatives of the people' all while minimizing the distance and hierarchy to be conceived as an authentic member of the identity they are spokesperson for (Westlind, 1996, p. 103). Of course, the ability to construct an identity is the power to constitute the social order. Symbolic power is 'a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world'. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170). Mr. Trump and Sen. Sanders, in the very act of running for president must define, through various discursive events, how they see the world, America, 'the people' and themselves.

It should not, however, be assumed that symbolic power is only applicable to speech acts, for discourse 'brings into complex relations which constitute social life: meaning, and making meaning.' (Fairclough, 2013, p. 3). The study of discourse is an analysis of an entire setting; it goes beyond language and incorporates forms of social action that correspond to a given discursive formation (Savage,

themselves as anti-establishment using populist discursive patterns, and if so, how? Using Critical Discourse Analysis, I will focus on three specific speeches made by each candidate and will focus on their construction of the United States, 'the people', their own identities, and finally their perceived antagonists. Through these discourses their impact on the hegemonic order and ideology of society will be observed in the specific speeches being analyzed.

The news media has certainly decided that Mr. Trump is in fact populist (Lehmann, 2015) but I hypothesize this analysis will reflect both of their discourses to be populist. It is unclear, however, how and in what way they manifest. This research thus aims to contemporize the existing scholarship on populist discourse.

METHODOLOGY

Research using CDA is not without its trepidations. Analysts must accept its subjective nature as an inevitability and that the discourse being analyzed is up to the researcher's interpretation (Fairclough, 1992). 'What we are able to see of the actuality of a text depends upon the perspective from which we approach it, including the particular social issues in focus, and the social theory and discourse theory we draw upon.' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 16). Neither the circumstances under which the discourse being analyzed was fashioned nor the potential impact such discourses would have upon their dissemination are part of Critical Discourse Analysis (B

Phillips argue discourse theory overlooks 'the structural constraints because they focus so much on contingency: everything is in flux and all possibilities are open.' (p. 30).

Fairclough's CDA is the analysis of 'dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as analysis of the 'internal relations' of discourse' (2013, p. 4) and not strictly the discourse itself. Thus, CDA allows for a more thorough analysis of the entire situation in which Mr. Trump and Sen. Sanders is speaking; specifically, what the candidates are speaking about, to whom, as well as the current and historical events that lead to this moment. While quantitative content analysis allows for the process of larger amounts of data it fails to consider the 'text above the level of sentences.' (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 16).

Research Design and Sampling Method

Above outlines why critical discourse analysis was the appropriate method to conduct my

The above three-dimensional structure will be employed during the investigation of the texts chosen for this research by a system of codes that references the three components to Fairclough's CDA methodology. Its implementation will occur in the annotation of the texts, as seen in the appendices.

Sampling

Before specifying the sampling criteria, it is worth acknowledging why speeches were the discursive text chosen in the first place. Speeches by candidates are an essential aspect of campaigns. They offer a glimpse into what direction the candidate and campaign are moving in and what can be expected by supporters as well as where they fit in the campaign. In addition, campaign speeches are a form of direct communication between 'the leader' and 'the people' (Benoit, 2007). This direct communication would be hindered by observing media texts such as interviews or debates: 'the concept of "mediation" also includes the notion of communication through a medium which has specific properties which affect the nature of the communication.'

restricted to a specific political party or policy stance. Therefore, I used purposive sampling again to shorten each text to approximately two pages each, equaling six pages of text

country has tremendous potential. We have tremendous people.' (Appendix A). Mr. Trump has his eye on the future of America, where it 'can' become great like it used to be (implied

Sen. Sanders is contending that not just democracy, but American democracy is being destroyed from antagonists that do not have its best interests at heart. While this will be discussed in further detail below, the point remains that Sen. Sanders is connecting values that he, and the people in his movement (with the use of 'we're'), is fighting for with what American democracy stands for. This claim of equivalency (Fairclough, 2000) assists in building the 'us vs. them' discursive trope of populism (Barr, 2009). Like Mr. Trump, Sen. Sanders defines America as a democracy because it is what the United States was founded around and gives meaning to the signifier of America (Westlind, 1996). Again, he calls upon American history as the basis for his claims and the values he is fighting for. These values unite 'us',

referring to the people, it creates a rhythm emphasizing his point. Being 'tired' is an easily relatable sentiment. He continues by describing this community as a movement, but removes himself from actually labelling it directly. The movement label comes from someone else, a third party observer, thus giving it more weight than if Mr. Trump were to label it as a movement himself (Potter, 1996). What should be noted in the second excerpt, however, is the credit for the formation of the movement goes to Mr. Trump. While he seems neutral to this assertion, Mr. Trump claims at an earlier point in the campaign that he is a 'unifier' (Appendix B). This will be an important aspect of how he constructs himself discursively, from claiming he uni

being a revolution is being willing to fight to change the current situation 'the people' find themselves in. Sen. Sanders refers to this revolution as

evidence found in the media. In addition to the first excerpt he qualifies that he is 'proud' of his wealth, that he has done an 'amazing' job to earn so much money, and how 'great' his company is. In the first excerpt, this is juxtaposed with a perceived smaller operation he was part of with his father; a father and son business that started in the outskirts of Manhattan. This seemingly 'rags-to-riches' tale plays into the 'American Dream' ideal all Americans have grown up with (Westlind, 1996). In both excerpts he spins his wealth confession as a positive characteristic and evidence for his qualifications to be President: 'that's the kind of thinking our country needs'. Mr. Trump is portraying himself as a successful business man and thus has authority (or a 'category entitlement' (Potter, 1996)) and can be trusted.

These assertions, of course, do nothing to overtly align himself with 'the people'. Instead it comes out with the subtle uses of 'we', 'our' country, and 'our' nation. He unites himself with 'the people' in their view of America:

I'm doing that to say that that's the kind of thinking our country needs. We need that thinking. We have the opposite thinking. [...] We have people that are selling this country down the drain. (Appendix A)

Mr. Trump's construction of antagonists will be explored below, but for now it can be recognized that he is being sold short along with everyone else in this country by our leaders, the 'power-bloc' (Laclau, 1977). Mr. Trump is in the same boat as 'the people', no matter how successful he may be. They are all united against a common enemy that is ruining 'our' country that belongs to all of us.

Through h

be A given A's relation to B.'

Ever since the Citizen's United decision in 2010 (Tedford, 2010), complaining about money in politics has been a common strategy for politicians (Cole, 2016). Mr. Trump believes that this is wrong because the power is out of 'the people's' hands and is in the hands of those who donate large sums of money to politicians.

The antagonists in Sen. Sanders' eyes are closer to home. Unlike Mr. Trump, Sen. Sanders is strictly focused on the economic inequalities, the political system, and the media within the United States (Canovan, 1999).

[...] I hope all of us agree that we're going to not allow billionaires and their Super PACs to destroy American democracy. [...] And you know that while our people are working so hard,

Where Mr. Trump and Sen. Sanders differ is their view of the antagonist. This assessment directly relates and explains the production of the other observed themes. It is Mr. Trump's perspective that the antagonists to 'the people' (and by extension America and himself) is globalization and the loss of identity such a change threatens; an assertion consistent with populists in the past (Kazin, 1995). Meanwhile, Sen. Sanders threatens the overpowering neoliberal way of thinking and it's resulting greed as the reason for strife felt by 'the people' (and by extension America and himself). These threats are historical in nature as well, aligning with the 'put people first' message of the 1990s (Kazin, 1995).

CONCLUSION

What remains to be seen is whether Mr. Trump will have the opportunity to put his words into

Collinson, S. (2016). Donald Trump and Ted Cruz: From Ivy League to anti-establishment. URL:
<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/28/politics/donald-trump-ted-cruzanti-establishment/> [May 02, 2016]

Collinson

Roberts, D. (2015). Bernie Sanders sees poll surge after series of record-breaking appearances. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/usnews/2015/jul/02/bernie-sanders-pollsurge-hillary-clinton> [August 18, 2016]

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Donald Trump Announcement Speech, June 16, 2016

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