

# Political Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Rhetoric: A Linguistic Study of Cognition and Discursivity

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## Abstract

To elucidate the deliberate use of Islamophobia in the political sphere, this study carefully examines Donald Trump's presidential campaign speeches using political discourse analysis (PDA). Trump's Islamophobic position in political discourse has sparked a global discussion. His divisive political language during the 2016 elections contributed to an overall rise in incidents showing hatred for Muslims in the America by painting a poor picture of the Muslim world. The present study employs the theoretical framework of Van Dijk (1998) to examine the socio-political contexts of the discourse: participants' insight (their goals, relevant knowledge and their belief system), group organization, power dynamics, as well as favourable and unfavourable perceptions of "us" against "them". The purpose of the work is to highlight the processes by which Islamophobia is created, propagated, and normalised in public discourse. The nature of the current investigation involves heterogeneous techniques. It analyzes the text using PDA methods. Additionally, it computes word frequency to determine the proportion of positive to negative terms in Donald Trump's political speech. The analysis reveals that political leaders use language as a tool to serve their own political ends. This study focusses on understanding the complex interplay between language, power, and ideology in contemporary political communication. By shedding light on the pervasive influence of Islamophobia as a political strategy, it underscores the imperative of critically engaging with political discourse to challenge hegemonic narratives, and to foster all-inclusive and democratic societies. Political leaders frequently employ language as a weapon to further their agendas. This research work highlights the necessity of critically interacting with political discourse to challenge dominant narratives and promote inclusive and democratic societies by bringing to light the pervasive influence of Islamophobia as a political strategy.

**Keywords:** PDA, Rhetoric Islamophobia, Donald Trump's discursivity

## 1. Introduction

Every discourse has opacity, and context of a political discourse is cognitively defined or shaped by political elites; that is then employed by them in producing and understanding discourse processes. Political discourse can thoroughly be understood only by understanding the political discourse structures, and their intimate relation with the mental representations (political cognition) which in turn exposes the political structures. In this way, a long-time neglected gap existing between political language and political insight can be bridged (Van Dijk, 2002).

Since it has been mentioned earlier that political elites decide the ways for the public and create impact on their minds regarding any situations (Kobylarek, 2020a), the hatred for Islam and Muslims cannot be ignored in America's 2016 presidential campaigns. Donald Trump's (a Republican candidate) political discourse has gained increasingly more importance as compared to Hillary Clinton, and this is the reason to linguistically investigate Trump's political discourse. His anti-muslim stance has started a new debate not only internationally but also in America. Internationally, it is believed that he has posed a threat to the Muslim community all over the world by presenting derogatory remarks about Islam at various platforms. It also hinted to Muslims in America that they should better think about their future. Since this study deals with Political Discourse Analysis, our concern also lies with political issues related to Trump's political discourse, and their broader effects on world's political discourse. It, in turn, targets to explore interconnectivity of politics, discourse and political cognition.

There are two main questions regarding the newly coined, ambiguous and complicated term of Political Discourse Analysis. Firstly, which discourse can be taken as political? and secondly, which approach has to be taken to its analysis? The most common interpretation that exists in a society regarding political discourse is discourse belonging to politicians, political actors or political elites. Though the analysis of a political discourse is mainly known as a political discourse analysis, yet it is not enough because the critical- political inquiry has to be incorporated to the analysis of discourse produced by politicians (Olejniczak, 2018). Political Discourse analysis offers a lot, not only in the field of discourse analysis, but also in broader fields of both political science as well as social sciences because it closely relates to political

and social issues (Van Dijk, 1997).

In America's political discourse, Islam has become an important element of discussion, and particularly important word when there is discussion about terrorism, which is the main threat to the entire world. Islam is being discussed negatively at every point which has resulted in marginalization of Muslims all over the world. The term Islamophobia or anti Islam perspective is not something new in the world but it got prominent after the incident of 9/11. This incident changed the entire vision of Islam across the globe and so that of the Muslims. Since the term phobia means something to be afraid of, the term Islamophobia makes people afraid of the religion- Islam. This term has now got immense significance after the incident of 9/11 as reflected through American political discourse (Blake, 2011).

Since it has been mentioned that political elites decide the ways for the public and create impact on their minds regarding any situations, the hatred for Islam and Muslims cannot be ignored in America's 2016 presidential campaigns. There are mainly two big nominations: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Hillary Clinton got nominated as a democrat candidate for presidential campaign for 45<sup>th</sup> president of the USA on 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 (Megerian, 2016) whereas Donald Trump as a republican representative on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2016 (Martin & Healy, 2016). Democrat and Republican are the two major political parties in the USA.

Democrats are far more liberals. They support an active role played by the government for the betterment of pluralistic society. They also believe in enforcement of laws against certain social issues by the government since it is their belief that only this way equal standard of life can be achieved for the whole society. On the other hand, Republicans are basically known as conservative. They are usually pro-business and do not prefer bureaucracy. They have got dislike for big government since they consider them an obstruction in getting things done smoothly (Democrat vs. Republican, 2016).

Donald Trump as a real estate tycoon is the owner of numerous luxurious hotels, resorts, airlines and casinos. The book "The Art of the Deal" as published in 1987 really helped Trump to be known as a celebrity, and later on his show "The Apprentice" made him famous too. Trump started his political struggle in 2000 but only a small number of people took him seriously until 2015 when he started his campaigns for the Republican Party nomination. In a highly condemned declaration speech of his presidential campaign, Trump pointed out illegal immigration as the most significant issue of the time and declared Mexicans into the United States as criminals. Trump's public meetings have fascinated huge crowds since he has chanted the slogan: "Make America Great Again" in his campaigns. The moment he employed more rhetoric in his political discourse, he started getting more poll numbers. Trump has also put his fellow Republicans in hot water by attacking them personally (Donald Trump Biography, 2016).

Trump's political discourse gained increasingly more importance as compared to Hillary Clinton in 2016 elections of presidential campaigns and the same is the reason to linguistically investigate Trump's political discourse. His anti-Muslim stance started a new debate not only internationally but also in America. Internationally, it is believed that he gave a threat to the Muslim community all over the world and presented derogatory remarks about Islam both nationally and locally. Current works relates to Political Discourse Analysis, so the focus lies on political issues dealing with Trump's political discourse, and their broader effects on the discourse used by the whole world in political context.

## 2. Research Question

How does Political Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Islamophobia help understand and demonstrate interconnectivity of politics, discourse and cognition?

## 3. Research Objectives

The research aims to explore:

- The relation between politics, discourse and cognition to better understand any political discourses and to conduct its analysis
- Donald Trump's Islamophobia as a political strategy to gain political interests
- The understanding of the notion of Political Discourse Analysis within the premises of Critical Discourse Analysis

## Research Delimitation

This research is delimited to:

- Donald trump's political speeches delivered during his presidential campaigns 2016

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Politics, Cognition and Discourse

The term Politics is related to implementation of power to incorporate the definite social, political and economic thoughts into practice (Bayram, 2010). John Dewey declared people as puppets in the hands of politicians to serve their interest just like "keys of the piano" which can be poked well by a pianist who knows which one is to poke (Sommer, 2013, p. 402; Kobylarek, Madej, & M Ą rrik, 2023). According to Chilton, politics has two folds, on the one hand it strives for power and on the other hand, it makes efforts to bring people of different interests together (Chilton, 2004). Wodak (2009a, p. 01) states that politics is a legitimate principle of vision and division. Later she discovered connection of politics with shaping, doing and thinking of masses (Wodak, 2001a, p. 29). According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p. 46; 2009, p. 94): politics is mainly argumentation that can also be known as discursive strategy. Later on, it has been declared to be an effective strategy to portray oneself as better and the others as negative (T ĩ lea, 2016). Isabela and Fairclough state that changing the world

to meet certain goals or objectives is what could be termed as function of politics (2013).

According to Aristotle, there is an intimate relation between language and politics as language decides what is just or unjust, and true or false. He put forward three main features of political discourse such as: deliberative, epideictic and forensic. The deliberative function encompasses deliberate choice of what to say and what not to, the epideictic function revolves around humiliation or appraisal of another person or party the speaker talks about, whereas in forensic domain of function, the speaker defends or criticizes another person's activities (Rhetoric, 1358b, Lawson-Tancred, 1991; Ahmad, Alam & Kaur, 2022). Voloshinav (1973) perceived discourse to be deeply rooted in a material world. He focused on critical study of discourse in order to highlight that discourse can be evaluated well by considering present, past and future of participants' cognition: ideological assumptions. Ideological assumptions deal with "Micro and Macro" structures which are present both in social sciences and linguistic studies. Macro structures refer to government or institutions whereas Micro structures deal with individuals. How Micro structures create impact at Macro level is of worth importance in CDA (Voloshinav, 1973)

Further, in Rozina and Karapetjana's views, language in political discourse serves to persuade and motivate people with rhetoric as its important ingredient (2009). The notions of Ethos, Pathos and Logos, which refer to appeal to character, appeal to emotions, appeal to logic respectively, as put forward by Aristotle, have become the key features of political discourse. (Sproat, Driscoll & Brizee. (ed.) 2012). For example, British Labour Party politician, Tony Blair ex-prime minister of the UK from 1997 to 2007, made use of the words 'The People's Princess' for Lady Diana on the occasion of her death. This statement showed Blair's brawny emotions for Diana due to her sad demise (Mendick, 2013).

According to Van Dijk (2009), Discourse is not a single but a multidimensional entity as it is linked to various other aspects of society like culture, knowledge, interaction, opinion, social practices (Van Dijk, 2009). As it has been discussed earlier that the relation between discourse and society is not direct rather discourse and society are connected to each other via ideology as pointed out by Van Dijk in "Discourse, Semantics and Ideology". This work describes ideology as construct produced through texts and talks, in a society, by social actors (Van Dijk, 1995). Social actors refer to members of a society who play their role in any discourses (Alam & Haque, 2021). The explicit relation existing between power and discourse can only be well portrayed by ideologically based discourse (Kobylarek, Madej, 2023).

#### 4.2 Political Discourse Analysis

Langer takes CDA very carefully as it presents a critical attitude not only towards a society but also language (Langer, 1988). Besides, language is not derived from power rather power is derived from language used by powerful people of a society (Sharma et al., 2024; 2023). It is due to this fact that language or everyday discourse has always been of great significance for experts of CDA. They examine the means through which powerful individuals exercise power over non-powerful entities. Van Dijk (1997) states that CDA is a discourse analytical approach besides being a political phenomenon that explores power relations. However, Political Discourse Analysis centers on the analysis of political language with a political perspective that underscores political questions (Van Dijk, 1997). Moreover, it demonstrates that how power exercised by politicians results in abuse and domination via political discourse structures. In other words, what makes CDA different from PDA is the notion of political analysis of political discourse. Such analyses bring into light political discussions and questions via political discourse structures, it also highlights similarities in CDA and PDA: an effort to conduct critical inquiry and explore power relations.

According to Dunmire, PDA explores a vital role that discourse plays in range of political structures, context and practices along with intricacies of political discursivity. In fact, PDA has participated more actively and efficiently in "politicization" of social life on broader spectrum (Dunmire, 2012). Moreover, Luke (2002) mentions that very few CDA researches can be taken as PDA researches if we focus on the theme of politics. In fact, the term Political Discourse Analysis is quite complicated and perplexing since it amalgamates critical inquiry and political context with the properties of political discourse. For PDA, power abuse as employed by the political actors is the main concern (Fairclough 1995; van Dijk, 1993b). Political discourse analysts primarily serve as linguists and secondarily as discourse analysts such as Chilton, 1985, 1988; Wilson, 1990; and Menz & Wodak 1990 (Van Dijk, 1997).

If properties of any discourse are politically contextualized, it will be regarded as Political Discourse Analysis, otherwise it will be simple discourse analysis. PDA is not simply a method like DA (Gaňko, 2018), it is something where Political Science gets involved. For example, when a right-wing parliamentarian in British Parliament says something about minorities and immigrants, even the biasness can be felt though nothing is said explicitly because the speaker is aware of the facts that politics demands appropriate choice of lexical items to win hearts of people. Failure to understand all this can lead to bitter criticism. Though the use of offensive words is not allowed according to their law and order (Van Dijk, 1997), yet it's a job of political discourse analysts to make explicit such implicit political ideologies.

Political elites are meant and expected to use language appropriately, bearing in mind that political ideas will mould and reshape public opinion (Kobylarek, 2020b). Political elites decide on a range of social issues regarding housing, education, accommodations for immigrants and minor ethnic groups, as well as the discriminatory issues faced by minorities. (Rich & Layton-Henry, 1986. Van Dijk, 2002). PD analysts are the very first people to give their views or definitions about the recent issues which are very well formed in the light of opinions given by famous scholars, well-reputed politicians, renowned professionals, and the mass media representors negotiating with the party officials (Lau & Sears, 1986; Nimmo & Swanson, 1990; Van Dijk, 2002).

The mutual understanding and knowledge that people share as political actors is their political cognition or, in other words, their mental representations of the concepts reflected through their political discourse. Knowledge of Political actors can reconstruct the public's whole

ideology with the help of media and socialization (Merelman, 1986). In fact, political cognition is formed by means of discourse because people shape and reshape their views and opinions about political actors via discourse. The discourse structures are thought to be analysis at micro level whereas the political structures are considered to be the analysis at macro level (Van Dijk, 2002).

The theory of political cognition takes into account the uniqueness possessed by the individuals, and a variety of political discourses with mutually shared political ideologies and institutions. For example, a text full of prejudices about immigrants reflects an individual's opinion about immigrant or, at wider scale, it may echo the opinion of a large racist group. In other words, there is a dire need to bring into account the broader meanings along with the limited meanings presented by a single individual.

#### 4.3 Islamophobia and the United States

Islamophobia or existential threat posed by Islam is a post-cold war ideology, it is the result of the clash of civilizations led by transformed objectives of Western particularly American world. Following are a few facts about islamophobia:

- Grosfoguel (2010) took Islamophobia as rooted in Eurocentric world views, and it is based on racial demarcation.
- An imaginary Islam has been shaped over many centuries; it is not an immediate outcome of the 9/11 incident (Arjana 2015).
- The current Islamophobia has political grounds. (Husain, 2017)
- Grosfoguel and Mileants present a road map to Islamophobia:
- As a form of racism with historical perspective
- As a form of cultural racism
- As a form of orientalism
- As a form of epistemic racism.

Considine (2017) explored Islamophobic discourses and relevant actions in American discourses with the help of 42 articles. Also, IO and advocacy groups in US realize that anti Islam political discourse results in hate crimes. Bradner (2015) and Woldman (2015) too quoted Trump's words "Muslims are uncorked animals, I wouldn't advocate that we put Muslims in charge of the nation", and regarded them counterproductive for social fiber of USA. This point is very obvious that the Anti-Muslim racist groups have got access to 205 million dollars to spread hatred against Islam

Negative views about Islam and criticism on Muslims is not something astonishing since the advent of Islam. However, the real problem for the Muslims started after the disjunctive moments of 9/11. After this historical event, America's president Bill Clinton declared a war on terrorism. In reality, it was a war on Muslims since whatever was done specifically targeted Muslims; and right after this incident, Muslims, all over the world, were declared to be terrorists. The incident of 9/11 did not change America but it heavily influenced the perspective of Islam all over the world. According to John Blake (2011), 9/11 did not only change America but it also entirely changed America's attitude toward Islam. He further mentioned that the 9/11 incident necessitated, for Americans, to know about Islam. Islamic books and materials got the status of best-sellers. A few colleges also began offering academic courses about Islam. News channels started conducting interviews of Muslim scholars to know more about Islamic doctrines and philosophies, and their relation with terrorism. This phenomenon led to the actual rise of Islamophobia: hatred and dislike for Islam and its followers. As clearly stated by John Blake:

Some of America's most vocal anti-Muslim critics knew quite well about Muslims and their belief system, yet they used their intellect and knowledge to portray Islam in very negative sense.

Thomas Kidd, author of "American Christians and Islam", reinforced the above statement and believed that "religious prejudice is not always rooted in raw ignorance" which means that there is knowledge but for the sake of propaganda or manipulation; it is applied to present positive things as negative ones (Blake, 2011).

All the public attacks on Islam such as: the anger at policy to construct an Islamic community center, the priest threatening to burn the Quran were fueled by the feelings of hatred created by all those conservative Christian leaders who declared Islam as evil and wicked. Such leaders as Franklin Graham, the son of revered professor of religious studies at the College of Wooster in Ohio, even said that Islam is a distorted religion. Ironically, this person is considered to be torchbearer of religious freedom in America (Blake, 2011).

#### 4.4 Islamophobia and Trump

According to critics, now Islamophobia is far more visible and obvious than ever before since presidential campaigns of Donald Trump in 2016. Trump is candidate of American Republican Party. According to Beydoun, an assistant professor at the Barry University Dwayne O Andreas School of Law, Trump has undoubtedly become an incarnation of modern racism in the USA. He further mentions that trump has taken Islamophobia not particularly as the political strategy but also as a campaign strategy. In almost every political discourse for 2016 elections, he directly or indirectly talks about Islam and its followers in a negative way. His political discourse is more likely to incite hatred and intolerance among Americans against Muslims, and eradicate already existing positive feelings. Trump's supporter Ben Carson's statement that a Muslim cannot be a president is also the reflection of Islamophobia as a political strategy because 60% of republican voters supported the ban on Muslims suggested by Trump in the wake of Orlando shooting which resulted into death of more than 40 Americans by an Afghan American. This support is even more extensive and strong in such areas as Florida, Ohio, Alabama and Arkansas where there are more Republicans. So, it is obvious that Islamophobia is essentially a political strategy (Beydoun, 2016).

**5. Research Methodology**

- ❑ This research work is basically qualitative as it is aimed at exploring reality of political discourse with help of discourse structures in political context. However, it is quantitative as well to some extent because it deals with the frequency of words to be categorized as negative or positive in political discourse by Donald Trump for 2015-16 election campaign.
- ❑ Moreover, selected parts of Trump’s political speeches have been analyzed linguistically from cognitive perspective to find out how political discourse acts as a prominent factor in political processes

*5.1 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure*

The data will be collected through internet sources and it will be analyzed via Van Dijk’s notion of Political Discourse Analysis that is Critical Discourse Analysis with politics as its major area to deal with.

*5.2 Theoretical Framework*

Political discourse needs to be analyzed and investigated both at micro and macro levels. The gap between both levels can be filled by understanding the theory of cognition. Therefore; despite many other factors influencing any written text, the text also reflects the biasness, prejudice and irrational beliefs of relevant political leader influential in shaping and reshaping the thought processes of that community (Alam et al., 2021; Tkáčová, 2021). So political leaders convey their political messages in accordance with their personal prides and prejudices. Such elements need to be analyzed both at micro and macro levels of discourse in CDA (Van Dijk, 2008, p.155).

This research will employ the significant discipline of Discourse Analysis known as Political Discourse Analysis by keeping in mind Van Dijk’s perspective of PDA that takes PDA as mainly CDA but with more integration of political approach and political context that helps in exploring issues relating to political science and linguistics (Luke, 2002). PDA as a mixture of discourse analysis, and as a political approach to such analysis is better understood by observing a text from following aspects (Van Dijk, 1998b, pp. 61-63):

**Discourse according to its political context**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ● | overall realm and authority (e.g., politics)  |
| ● | general societal action (making laws)   |
| ● | existing setting (location and time)  |
| ● | present circumstances (bills under discussion)  |
| ● | current interaction (debates by politicians)  |
| ● | Contemporary discourse genre (speech)   |
| ● | Different kind of roles as played by the participants (Member of Parliament, speaker, member belonging to Conservative Party, white, senior citizen, man etc.), |
| ● | participants’ cognitive abilities (knowledge, goals, belief system).  |

- i. **Societal or group power relations as they prevail in society**
- ii. **Positive or negative viewpoints referring Us versus Them.**

Van Dijk (2003), labels ideologies as “self-serving ideas of dominant groups” (p. 7).

- iii. **The formal structure: syntactical structures as well as lexemes that assist prevail dominant group’s views** (Van Dijk, 1998b, pp. 61-63).
  - Topics (selection of major and minor topics to be discussed)
  - Schemata (mental representation about US VERSUS THEM)
  - local Semantics (selection of suitable words to best serve one group’s interests)
  - style and Rhetoric (emphasis and de-emphasis on invisible meanings, monitored and evaluated by contextual models)

- iv. **MACRO STRATEGIES**
- v. **Donald Trump: Self, We, Us → In-group**
- vi. **Muslims: Others, They, Them → Out-group**
- vii. **MICRO-STRATEGIES**

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ● | Description of Actor |
| ● | Authority            |
| ● | Burden,              |
| ● | Classification       |
| ● | Comparison           |
| ● | Harmony              |
| ● | Fakeness             |
| ● | Deniel               |
| ● | Euphemism            |

|  |
|--|
| • Evidentiality                        |
| • Arguments                            |
| • Illustration/example,                |
| • Generalization,                      |
| • Hyperbole,                           |
| • Implication,                         |
| • Irony,                               |
| • Lexicalization,                      |
| • Use of metaphor,                     |
| • Self-glorification as a nation       |
| • normalization                        |
| • Playing the game of numbers          |
| • Division and polarization (us-them), |
| • populism                             |
| • presumption                          |
| • vagueness,                           |
| • victimization. (Van Dijk, 2006).     |

Linguistic and cognitive analysis, as mentioned earlier, is very essential to depict and elaborate the way political discourse plays its pivotal role in all political proceedings. In other words, political text and discourse is connected to the immediate political incidents and their context. Moreover, political discourse is a personal phenomenon besides being a social and collective one because personality is always involved in the development of ideology.

Additionally, a Political Discourse Analyst has to examine the properties of a discourse in a political context. The important questions, here, is regarding the organization, structuring, and expression of the political thoughts as employed in political discourse in the broader political context. He also examines the impact and consequences made as a result of these publically shared thoughts. It is need of hour that Eurocentric political principles and attitudes be exposed and highlighted (Van Dijk, 1997).

PDA, as presented by Van Dijk (1997), "deals particularly with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter power techniques to cope with such forms of discursive dominance" (p. 11). Politicians, holding political, administrative and legislative posts, use various strategies to convince the masses approve their views to win their votes. The political ideologies of such leaders are often fairly disguised in their speeches; they hide them to avoid explicit rejection by public. In some other cases they hide their views to influence masses' though paradigms. The primary function of PDA is to uncover such concealed agendas and create awareness among people about role and impact of such political discourse. The researcher of the current study is also interested in analysis of Trump's political discourse with same concerns.

**6. Discussion**

The study focusses on discussing following important linguistic aspects with reference to politics:

*6.1 Immigrants with Particular Reference to Muslims*

Immigrants have usually been discussed in the context of:

- Islamic terrorism (24 times)
- 48 Times illegal immigrants with Islamic terrorism

Following are few major chunks from the speeches delivered:

- **“Islamic terrorism** is eating up large portions of the Middle East. They’ve become rich. I’m in competition with them.” (July 16, 2015)
- “We are importing **Radical Islamic Terrorism** into the West through a failed immigration system -- and through an intelligence community held back by our president.”
- “Even **our own FBI Director** (illustration/example/evidentiality) has admitted that we cannot effectively check the backgrounds of the people we are letting into America.”
- “All of the **September 11th hijackers were issued visas**” (evidentiality, June 14, 2016)
- **Islamic terrorist attacks** (attacks have been generalized as Islamic) have been made during weekend.

The micro strategies of Generalization, hyperbole, victimization, polarization, national self-glory, and number game have been underlined. All the incidents have been conditioned to the occurrence of 9/11. The repetitive use of word 9/11 is to grasp minds of people to work in negative direction for Muslims.

*6.2 Immigrants as Islamic Terrorists*

Time and again, Trump has associated immigration of the Muslims with terrorism, and labelled it as Islamic terrorists. The following statements are clear reflection of the ideology:

- ‘When Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State, she allowed thousands of the most dangerous criminal aliens in the world to go free inside America because their home countries wouldn’t take them back. These were people guilty of murder, assault, rape, and all manner of violent crime.’ (29 October, 2016)
- unequivocal references to Muslims were used to incite agony of the working-class people whose family members had gone abroad to serve the military (Lutz, p. 26b).
- The sad reality that the relatives of the working-class had lost their lives in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria to serve the interests of their country. Such emotional reminders morally justify drawing a strong boundary towards such groups.

### 6.3 Muslims as a Threat to LGBTQ and Women

- A night club was targeted by **radical Islamic terrorist** who wanted not only to kill **Americans**, but also to perish lesbian and gay citizens due to their sexual orientation and preferences.
- This act is a profound **strike at the heart and soul** of the people who consider themselves **a nation** (lexicalization/metaphor/polarization).
- **It is an attack** on the capabilities of the people to live and enjoy their lives freely (hyperbole, euphemism, lexicalization), and they freely express their love, and confidently express their identities.
- **Such statement is an attack** on the rights of every single American who wants to live peacefully and safely in their own country.
- Most of the dominant principles of **Radical Islam are considered to be incompatible** with Western belief system and socio-political institutions.
- Radical Islam is portrayed to be **against women, gays and even Americans**.
- I cannot let America become a place where Christians, Jews and gay people are intimidated and persecuted by of preachers of radical Islam promoting hatred and violence.

The repetitive use of the terms like radical Islam points towards the polarization, and populist features of micro strategies applied to manipulate psychology of masses.

### 6.4 Appeal to White Working Class with the help of Islamophobic Statements

Trump acted as an influential cultural agent who knew how to tap into latent and less latent symbolic boundaries that already existed among white working-class Americans in the early 1990s (Lamont, 2000).

Similarly, and simultaneously, through his electoral speeches, Trump also legitimized the concept that American workers hold a superior position in American socio-political system. This concept was promoted by transforming existing 33 symbolic boundaries. (Which Blumer calls ‘sense of group positioning’)

### 6.5 Foreign Policy as Based on Islamophobia

- Iran has become a problem in Iraq, in Syria, in Lebanon, and in Yemen ..... Literally, each and every day Iran leaves no opportunity to provide more sophisticated weapons in support for puppet states,
- Iran strongly supports Islamic Jihad and Hamas. In the West Bank, Palestinians are openly being offered 7,000 dollars for a single terror attack, and they offer 30,000 dollars for each and every Palestinian terrorist home. It is a deplorable... really deplorable situation.
- Military forces are financially supported by Iran in the whole Middle East ..... Iran has handed over a huge amount of 150 billion dollars to such forces commit acts of horror to promote terrorism.
- Terror groups, all across the world, have been seeded and promoted by Iran. (March 21, 2016)
- “Islamic terrorists in Benghazi took down our consulate and killed our ambassador and three brave Americans.”(national self glory, polarization, illustration)
- “We should work together with every nation in the region threatened by the rise of radical Islam.”
- “Containing the spread of radical Islam must be a major foreign policy goal of the United States and indeed that of the whole world. Such policy and consequent events vents may require use of military force, but it is a philosophical struggle, same as our long struggle in the Cold War.” (April 27, 2016)

### 6.6 Social Change as A Product of Islamophobic Statements

- **Islamic radicals** have caused a great **damage and devastation** repeatedly. Time and again, it has been proved – at a party office in San Bernardino, at World Trade Center, at a center for military recruitment in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and at the Boston Marathon. It includes many more locations.

- Just a few weeks back, in Orlando, Florida, an **Islamic terrorist savagely murdered our 49 awesome Americans**.....it is not **no good and we have to stop** it. (July 22, 2016)
- **“American cars** will travel the roads, **American planes** will soar in the skies, and American ships will patrol the seas.”
- **“American steel** will send new skyscrapers into the clouds.”
- **“American hands** will rebuild this nation – and **American energy**, harvested from American sources, will power this nation. **American workers** will be hired to do the job.”
- **“I will fight** for every **neglected part of this nation** – and I will fight to bring us all **together as Americans**.” (September, 15 2016)
- **“Imagine what our country** could **accomplish** if we started **working together as One People, under One God, saluting One American Flag**.”
- **“It is time to embrace a new, all-inclusive, prosperous and robust American future** while leaving back bitter failure we met in the past. September 24, 2016
- **“This will be the year the American people say: Enough is enough**.” September 28, 2016

The major noteworthy micro strategies have been as following:

- **Actor description, norm expressions, polarization of Us versus Them**, (description of Muslim and Islamic acts in comparison to western values and norms with praising us and negating them strategy)
- **authority**, (America’s role as a superpower that Trump declared)
- **burden**, (immigrants are only taken as burden)
- **categorization and contrasts**, (Muslims have been categorized as terrorists and extremists and they are contrasted with innocent but brave Americans)
- **Victimization** (existence of Muslims has been taken as an assault on all other nations and races)
- **Euphemism** (even the negative traits of US have been presented in sophisticated words to serve the purpose of self-glorification)
- **Number game, evidentially, illustration/examples and lexicalization** (numbers and dates have been mentioned as proof against Muslims)

6.7 Frequency of Reference

- **Groups Presented in Donald Trump’s Electoral Speeches during the 2016 Presidential Campaign\***

| Groups            | Negative | Positive |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Immigrants /Islam | 34       | 0        |
| Politicians       | 213      | 0        |
| Women             | 0        | 11       |
| America/great     | 0        | 514      |
| LGBTQ             | 0        | 05       |

6.8 Consequences of Trump’s Discursivity

Following consequences were so obvious and evident in American society:

- The Muslims in America were assaulted more frequently and this rate rose quite significantly from 2015 to 2016: 127 victims reported for assaults either simple or aggravated. This number was fairly high as compared to 91 in previous year, or only 93 cases reported in 2001 according to Pew Research Center analysis.
- Almost 1,656 “bias-incidents” and 195 hate-crimes were reported from January to September in 2017. There is obvious increase in such incidents: 9% rise in bias-related incidents and as high as 20% surge in hate crimes as compared to 2016.
- In 2016, 307 incidents of hatred against Muslims were reported. It showed 19% surge as compared to 2017. This increase in hate crime is an extension of a shoot up in crime rate previous year: in 2015, the incidents of Muslim hatred soared from 154 to 257 leading to alarming increase of 67%. (Pew research centre, 2017).

7. Conclusion

In a nutshell, the current study comprehensively explores the intricate dynamics between political discourse and cognition through the lens of PDA in the presidential speeches of Donald Trump delivered in 2016. The study finds use of Islamophobia as a tool for creating a new world order and new policies. The deliberate use of Islamophobia helps the politicians shape desired public perception to achieve their political interests. The Political actors employ certain strategies to grasp the attention of certain people. Time and again Trump repeated his intentions related to Muslims in his political discourse, it ultimately proved to be a winning strategy. The interconnectivity of political discourse and political cognition sheds light on such winning strategies because the political context is always intertwined with provoking



people's emotions to gain political interests.

This research work is an effort understand nuances of the power dynamics inherent to contemporary political communication (Kobylarek, Madej, & Roubalová 2022). It also emphasizes the need for critical engagement with discourse to challenge hegemonic narratives. The study also highlights the importance of language used by politicians in shaping political realities (Petrovska, 2021); moreover, it calls for more scholarly studies to understand the intersections between power, language, ideology and politics (Kobylarek, Madej, & Birova, 2022). By revealing the mechanisms through which Islamophobia functions as a political strategy, the current research calls for challenging and dismantling such discriminatory political discourses to ensure an all-inclusive political landscape.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

#### **Data sharing statement**

No additional data are available.

#### **Open access**

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