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People-building Strategies in Trump's and Biden's Political Discourse

A Critical Discourse Analysis between Populism and Anti-Populism

Abstract

Social-identity creation is crucial for politicians to rhetorically build their political community, legitimise specific actions and mobilise supporters by appealing to specific values or discursive argumentations.

Combining a critical discourse analysis perspective derived from van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach with Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this paper investigates people-building discourse strategies in Donald J. Trump's speech prior to the Capitol Hill riots and President Joseph R. Biden's Inaugural Address. The research aims to compare strategies adopted in populist and anti-populist discourse. Results show that, while the distinction between populism and anti-populism is still underdeveloped, similar discourse strategies and metaphorical mappings chiefly revolving around the ideas of nation and democracy may be deployed with opposite ends. Furthermore, the study highlights how the populist/anti-populist frontier is not clear-cut and may shape different civic identities and ideals of democracy according to the ideology underpinning each politician's discourse.

Keywords: *social identities, populism, anti-populism, critical discourse analysis, metaphor*

1. Introduction[1]

Language in the political realm displays symbolic power and is at once the core medium for the social construction of reality, which helps establish situations, social roles, identities, and interpersonal relations (Wodak, et al. 1999), and a pivotal means in the art of persuasion, constitutive of political oratory (Charteris-Black 2011).

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[1] The paper has been jointly conceived and written by the authors. The individual contributions of the authors are identified as follows: Sections 1-5 have been written by Maria Ivana Lorenzetti, while the analysis section (6) and the conclusions (7) have been jointly written by Elena Mattei and Maria Ivana Lorenzetti.

Bourdieu (1991) defines the symbolic power of language as

> a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization - is a power that can be exercised only if it is *recognized,* that is, (mis)recognized as arbitrary. […] What creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining or subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words and of those who utter them. And words alone cannot create this belief. (Bourdieu 1991, 170)

Hence, language's mobilising power, which resides in its ability to affect, move, and motivate people, works only if it is recognised and acknowledged as legitimate. It is through language and thanks to their preferential access to public *fora* that political leaders may easily and effectively spread their message, "establish common values, aims and concerns […], formulate common sense as well as the consensus, both as individuals and as leaders of the dominant institutions of society" (van Dijk 2002, 148).

Self-legitimation, for politicians, is a crucial part of the building of consensus and must occur on a continuous basis, undertaken not only to restore meaning where it has broken down but also to negotiate and sustain communal common ground (Clark 1996) that may prevent the electorate from fluctuation and uncertainty (Gephart, Topal and Zhang 2010). It relies heavily on a variety of practices that are primarily discursive and symbolic in nature, including "a wide range of meaning-laden actions and non-verbal displays" (Suchman 1995, 586) and does not merely rest on the effective presentation of moral authenticity, authority, and expertise. By contrast, a crucial part of this process is collective identity creation or the shaping of the political community, which enables leaders to rhetorically build "their people" and foster consensus by embedding a sense of social identity shared with potential followers (Haslam, Reicher and Platow 2020; Chilton 2004; Smith 2001). Appealing to specific values or discursive argumentations, leaders seek to advance a sense of shared group membership or *we*-ness with their followers, identify goals associated with that membership, and outline the actions (even in non-specific terms) or patterns of actions necessary to attain those goals. Hence, they may mobilise their community and enable collective action (Haslam et al. 2022).

In the last few years, the rising consensus of right-wing populist parties and leaders across the globe (League in Italy, Rassemblement National in France; UKIP and Brexit Party/Reform UK in the United Kingdom; Vox in Spain; FPÖ in Austria; Tea Party in the US and One Nation in Australia, to name but a few) advocating dichotomous views of society between "the people" and some perceived "enemy" (Wodak 2015; Mudde 2004) paved the way for the emergence of a new

rhetoric based on "performative strategies" (Moffitt 2016), including increasingly polarising, emotionally charged language, and discriminatory overtones to serve covert political interests. For right-wing populists, cohesion across the electorate is achieved by strategically delegitimising antagonists in power positions and identifying outsider usurpers, typically immigrants, excluded from the "legitimate people" according to a nativist logic and scapegoated for all societal woes (Wodak 2015; van Dijk 2013).

A prototypical example of this *modus operandi* is represented by Donald J. Trump. Since his candidacy announcement in 2015, throughout his two electoral campaigns and his presidency, Trump contributed to polarising the political debate, claiming to speak for "the forgotten men and women of the country" and building his support through a counter-elite narrative (Ross and Rivers 2020; Kazin 2016). Moreover, with his mottos "Make America Great Again" and "America First," he singled out multiple enemies allegedly working against the wellbeing of "the people," namely, the Congress, the press, his Democratic opponents, and immigrants (Lorenzetti 2020; Heuman and González 2018).

As a way of doing politics, populism may be seen as the "antagonistic flaunting of the sociocultural low" (Ostiguy and Roberts 2016) to be contrasted with an anti-populist appeal favouring institutions, collective decisions, and procedures. Anti-populist politicians typically resort to different rhetorical strategies to build their electoral community by highlighting communal common ground in the form of shared values and cultural elements (Moffitt 2018; Stavrakakis, et al. 2018; Ostiguy and Roberts 2016; Stravakakis 2014).

Through the theoretical lens of critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2015; van Dijk 2013; van Leeuwen 2008; Chilton 2004) and combining insights from van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (van Dijk 2015a; 2013; 2006a; 2002) with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), this paper presents a comparative analysis of people-building discursive strategies in Donald Trump's rally speech prior to the Capitol Hill riots of January 6, 2021, and Joseph R. (Joe) Biden's Inaugural Address.

Not only do the two politicians have diverging political orientations and represent contrasting values and moral systems (Lakoff 1996), but it will be argued that they also embody two antagonistic political styles, namely the populist and the anti-populist (Moffitt 2018).

The two speeches are closely related in terms of temporal proximity and are both epideictic/consensus-building political speeches (Charteris-Black 2014). However, they differ in significant respects. Trump's speech attempts to build engaged followership and mobilise collective action by fomenting the people's rage and negative emotions based on manipulatory tactics (van Dijk 2006a), disinformation and conspiracism to delegitimise Biden's victory as

President (Pirro and Taggart 2022). Biden's Inaugural Address, on the other hand, is a speech directed to the entire American polity and, even if it offers a response to the Capitol Hill riots, it may be viewed as an attempt to reframe (Lakoff 2014) and restore the sense of national identity centred around the values of unity and cooperation.

This study aims to identify similarities and differences in people-building across populist and anti-populist discourse through discursive strategies and reliance on specific metaphorical mappings. Furthermore, it aims to evaluate to what extent populist and anti-populist discourses may be strategically employed to legitimise and promote democratic *versus* anti-democratic views of society.

Results confirm how the discursive realisation of ideological populism thinking through the appeal to specific emotions and values may be crucial in legitimising a specific model of collective behaviour. Furthermore, the study highlights how the populist/anti-populist frontier is not sharply defined and may shape different civic identities and ideals of democracy according to the ideology underpinning each politician's discourse.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 explores the notions of social identity and national identity construction. Then, in Section 3, the basic tenets of populism and anti-populism are introduced, justifying the inclusion of Trump and Biden in the two distinct categories. Next, Section 4 puts forward our theoretical background, while Section 5 introduces our data. Section 6 is the core of the paper, where the analysis is presented conveniently subdivided into two subsections. Finally, the conclusive section of the paper discusses the findings and reviews the major differences between Trump's and Biden's speeches regarding people-building strategies, political style and underlying ideological positioning.

2. National identity and the "building of the people"

Identity as a concept refers to the sense of the self, who we are, and where we belong and is highly salient for political discourse. In the modern understanding of the concept,[2] identity is viewed as constructed through discourse (Wodak, et al. 1999; Hall 1996) and possesses multiple layers, namely a personal and a collective one, which in discourse-analytical studies goes under the heading of social identity.

Personal identity may be described as the set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or values that make a person unique in socially relevant ways and that a person considers paramount to orient their behaviour, or could not change, even willingly. Social identity is, in turn, crucial in forming a

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[2] For an overview of the different conceptualisations of identity across historical periods and disciplines, see Sollberger (2013) and Wodak, et al. (1999).

person's self-concept. It pertains to group-based aspects of an individual's self-definition derived from membership in and identification with specific social groups. By the process of individuation, or identification, which is never completed but always in progress (Hall 1996) and based on the universal human need to be part of a group and define themselves and others, people describe themselves as belonging to specific entities (Castells 2001).

Therefore, social identity creation entails the marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of frontier effects, and an alterity to consolidate the process. In short, identities are constructed through difference and require a "constitutive outside" and the capacity to exclude to function as points of aggregation and attachment (Hall 1996).

Thus, identity cannot be conceived as a monolithic and immutable "container" to which people do or do not fit but is actively constructed by individuals and shaped by external factors through processes of social interaction over one's place within specific categories or groups. Moreover, it entails a continuum of "ingroupness" to "outgroupness" (Duszak 2002) in which everyone may take gradient positions. Hence, people may simultaneously combine multiple identities based on communal common ground and shared expertise with other individuals, and many such identities (like cultural communities) form nested sets (Clark 1996).

National identities are special forms of social identities that are discursively produced, reproduced, or even opposed through the figurative discourses of politicians and media people and disseminated through the system of education (De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999). They are "centred on people's strong bond and sense of community with their fellow group members, in this case, their compatriots" (Theiss-Morse 2009, 3), characterised by group commitment and setting boundaries.

The understanding of national identity as discursively constructed and based on a shared sense of belonging stems from Benedict Anderson's (1983) definition of nations as imagined political communities. Nations are not natural phenomena but rather social and political constructions represented in the minds of the nationalised subjects as sovereign and limited political units. They are imagined since it is impossible to have face-to-face interactions with all the fellow members of the community. They are limited because no nation encompasses all humankind. Moreover, nation-states are defined as sovereign, that is, free, and, as communities, because they are conceived as horizontal comradeships of equals (Anderson 1983, 6-7).

The discursive construction of nations, national identities and "the people" always entails the construction of difference, distinctiveness, and uniqueness (Ricento 2003; De Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999). However, more importantly, no essentialist notion of national identity intrinsically applies to all contexts. On the contrary, national identity-construction varies

dynamically based on the contextual social setting, the political actors, and their orientation within the political spectrum (Theiss-Morse 2009; Smith 2001). Thus, people-building involves modification and revision of previously accepted senses of national identities while preserving vital interests and may be based on competing narratives.

National-identity construction is a vital part of the political process, as leaders try to maximise their electoral consensus, and to do so, they need to recruit forces and mobilise citizens endorsing their views. At the same time, through the creation of peoplehood, citizens feel more directly involved in the political process and, being committed to the group, may work towards their leader's vision.

Smith (2001) argues that national identity-construction accounts require narratives that inspire both trust and worth. The former is understood as the belief that the leaders and the members of a particular community are likely to seek to advance some of one's crucial moral values and interests. Conversely, worth refers to the belief that leaders and members can succeed in making people's interests and is based on economic gain. Such narratives of political community creation are, in turn, influenced by the political interests and orientation of the leaders and their political style. The following section explores the difference between populism and anti-populism in politics as vital in this respect.

3. Shaping the political space: Left *versus* right and populism *versus* anti-populism

The left *versus* right political division is the system universally employed for classifying political positions with an emphasis on issues of social equality and social hierarchy in democracies worldwide (Bobbio 1996). In the American context, and by admittedly operating a simplification for the sake of the present contribution, it can be argued that the left *versus* right dichotomy is essentially represented by the Democrat *versus* Republican cleavage.[3] According to George Lakoff (1996), politics is based on moral worldviews, and conservatives and progressives typically support opposite policies following their contrasting worldviews and notions of right and wrong. Developing a metaphorical understanding of the nation-as-a-family, he argues that this moral system informs the entire American political worldview. In his formulation, the Democrats' worldview centres on the Nurturant Father Morality model based on empathy and responsibility. For progressives, democracy has to do with citizens caring about each other and taking responsibility for themselves and their fellow citizens, fostering equality and a deeply

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[3] For a thorough introduction to American politics and the American political system, see Ginsberg et al. (2012).

held sense of community and the common good. In this view, the Government, as a nurturant parent, has the moral obligation to protect and guide citizens equally, empowering everyone.

The Conservative vision, on the contrary, is based on the Strict Father Morality model revolving around issues of authority and control, both self-control (discipline) and control over other people. In this view, inequality and hierarchy are natural features of a competitive society and are correlated with talent (i.e., higher social positions can be earned only through discipline and merit). Democracy is about liberty, individual responsibility, and self-reliance, that is, the freedom to pursue one's self-interest with minimal or no commitment to the wellbeing of others. Moreover, laws and moral standards should be followed strictly for the advancement of society (Lakoff and Wehling 2012; Lakoff 1996).

Considering the left-right political axis, populism cuts across electoral cleavages and, as a concept, is employed to describe the most diversified political outlets or actors in terms of electoral appeal or political trajectories. Populism has often been viewed as controversial and poorly understood (Panizza 2005; Taggart 2002), and in the last few decades, it has given rise to a proliferation of diverse scholarly definitions. More recently, however, a widespread academic consensus has emerged for the ideational approach (Hawkins et al. 2019; Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde 2004), which captures the essence of the phenomenon as a discourse or an ideology. Populism views society as based on a dualistic struggle between a reified people seen as the embodiment of democratic virtues, and a self-interested elite, coupled with the idea that politics should allow greater scope for the expression of the people's general will.

Based on Freeden's (1996) work on ideologies, Mudde (2004) argues that populism is a thin-centred ideology, that is, in contrast to full-fledged (thick) ideologies (like socialism, liberalism, nationalism), which offer a comprehensive view about all societal problems or aspects, it has an "identifiable morphology but […] a restricted one" (Freeden 1996, 98-100). This means that populism is unlikely to appear in its pure form but tends to rely on more substantive political ideologies.

Different types of populism emerge depending on a) the specific host ideology combined with the thin-centred one, b) the selection of a specific enemy (the Government, the economic elite, or immigrants), and c) the sense of "the people" placed in the foreground.

"The people" is inherently a construction, an empty signifier (Laclau 2005) that is addressed and rendered present in a performative fashion (Austin 1962) and by a strategic unification process operated by the political leader.

While usually referring to the polity as a whole, "the people" as an identifier has a constitutive

ambiguity[4] and strategically varies in size (Canovan 2005). It can be subsumed into three discursive frames, namely a) the citizenry as the totality of the political community, in either civic or ethnic terms, b) the (economic) underdog, disinherited and marginalised from political participation, and c) the ordinary people (Canovan 1999; 1984).

"The people" is thus simultaneously part and whole, as "it names both the constitutive political subject and the class de facto excluded from politics" (Stavrakakis 2014, 506).

Left-wing populism and right-wing populism emerge from the different interplay of these elements. Both are inherently anti-establishment and aim to exploit the gap between promise and performance constitutive of all liberal democracies to strengthen the right of the polity to exercise their power. However, they differ in significant ways. Left-wing populists fight against inequalities and aim to empower citizens and involve them in the political process (Stavrakakis 2014). They have a pyramidal view of society based on the UP/DOWN dimension, where "the people" as the underdog (DOWN) are pitted against some powerful antagonist at the TOP.

Conversely, right-wing populists stress a nuclear view of society primarily centred around the IN/OUT dimension, that is, 'true, legitimate' citizens against outsiders in a nativist sense (Lorenzetti 2018). Right-wing populists, who increased their political salience in the last two decades, when socio-cultural issues started to dominate the political debate with a focus on "identity politics" (Mudde 2019; Wodak 2015), tend to champion nativism and traditional body politics. Their defence of "the people" is constantly predicated on the exclusion and instrumentalisation of minority groups in an "us *versus* them" fashion (Mudde 2019; Wodak 2015).

Concentrating on leadership personalisation, the increasingly mediatised characters of politics, and its performative aspects, Moffitt (2016) sees populism as a political style enacted across a variety of media contexts and thanks to a wide array of tools to emphasise the leader's role as an outsider. Combined with other typical traits of populism, one of the most prominent elements in Moffitt's framework is the emphasis on bad manners, to be understood as the use of coarse, politically incorrect language and the "disregard for 'appropriate' mode of acting in the political realm" (Moffitt 2016, 44). Ostiguy (2017; 2009) points out that populism may emerge in any position along the conventional left-right ideological divide. However, its dimension is the high-low axis dealing with ways of being and acting in politics. The high-low in politics, which consists of two subdimensions, namely the socio-cultural, encompassing manners, demeanours, ways of speaking and dressing, and word choice, and the politico-cultural related to forms of political

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[4] For an overview of the sense of "the people" with reference to the etymology of Latin *populus* and Greek *dēmos*, see Canovan (2005).

leadership and decision-making, Ostiguy (2017) argues, is pivotal to differentiate populism from anti-populism. Moreover, the populism-as-style approach presents populism as a gradational phenomenon rather than in binary terms, which allows us to consider a broader range of phenomena or leadership that, based on other approaches, would be included or excluded from the category *tout court*.

Populism, in this respect, may be socio-culturally viewed as "the antagonistic flaunting of the sociocultural low" (Ostiguy 2017, 73), characterised by bad manners and a lack of inhibition. By contrast, the high in politics, associated with the less widely studied phenomenon of anti-populism, is often conflated with the more normatively charged terms *elitism* or *pluralism* (Moffitt 2018; Stavrakakis 2014) and typically includes proper manners and multiculturalism. Moreover, from a socio-political point of view, populism grows around a personalistic and strong leadership, while the anti-populist high is linked with rationalism, institutional politics, and legalism. Stavrakakis (2014) argues that the populism-anti-populism divide is a dominant ideological cleavage that orients the discursive production of many political actors across Europe, while Ostiguy (2017) adds that this differentiation connects deeply with a society's history, existing group differences and identities.

Considering populism and anti-populism as categories that cut across the political space and can be found on both the left and the right of the political spectrum as gradational and nuanced terms, this paper will argue that, based on the analysis of their rhetoric, Trump and Biden overall fit this distinction and may be described as populist and anti-populist, respectively.

As a famous tycoon turned politician with experiences as a reality show host based on his life, Donald J. Trump presents the prototypical characteristics of a populist leader who prides himself in being a political outsider. Moreover, from the outset of his political campaign, he constantly relied on bad manners and inflammatory rhetoric, singling out several types of enemies both at home (the Congress, the Democratic opponents, the media termed *fake news media*, immigrants) and abroad (China, Mexico among the others), and using racially charged overtones. These features suggest that he perfectly fits the (right-wing) populist paradigm (Ross and Rivers 2020). Conversely, President Joe Biden represented Delaware in the US Senate for 36 years, served as Vice-President for two mandates (with President Obama) and played influential foreign and domestic roles in the Administration before becoming the current American President. Hence, he can hardly be considered a novice in politics. Moreover, he is experienced in institutional politics, often showing disdain for the over-the-top manners of his opponent, and embraces a diplomatic style focused on joint action and can thus be viewed as part of the anti-populist group.

4. Theoretical background

This study is grounded on the broad-ranging theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak 2015; van Dijk 2015a; 1993; van Leeuwen 2008; Chilton 2004) while also drawing extensively on the investigation of metaphorical mappings based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a perspective of multidisciplinary discourse studies primarily interested in the ways social power abuse, discrimination, and inequality are enacted and reproduced through text and talk in the social and political contexts (van Dijk 2015b; Wodak 2015; Chilton 2004). Despite their heterogeneity, CDA approaches commonly view language as a social practice and systematically investigate hidden power relations and ideologies embedded in discourse.

Van Dijk's (2013; 2006a) socio-cognitive approach primarily informs this research. This model focuses on the cognitive aspects of discourse production and comprehension, arguing that they are cognitively mediated through the mental representations of language users in their roles as individuals and social beings (van Dijk 2013; 2006a; 2002). Thus, linguistic structures of texts that contribute to their discursive component are analysed in terms of socially shared beliefs and ideologies, considering how they may influence or manipulate people's mental models (van Dijk 2013). Furthermore, the extent to which such discourses and their underlying cognitions are socially and politically functional in the (re)production and spread of ideological polarisation is investigated.

The overall strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is typical of biased accounts that aim to favour the speaker's own interests at the expense of some opponent or Other. Such Us *versus* Them polarisation in van Dijk's framework (2013) may be discursively enacted at various levels:

- At the macro-speech act level, implying Our positive acts and Their negative ones, i.e., through accusations, defence, blame;
- At the level of topic selection with an emphasis on the In-group positive acts and Their negative ones, while de-emphasising One's negative acts and the positive acts by Them. Moreover, other strategies, in this respect, have to do with providing many details about the negative acts of the opponent while being vague or imprecise about their positive aspects;
- At the lexical level, positively connoted words are employed for Us while negative ones are applied to talk about Them;

- At the syntactic level, active predicates and verbs of action are used to emphasise the agency of negative acts by the opponents, while passive structures are employed to deflect One's responsibility in the case of potentially damaging acts;
- At the rhetorical level, multiple rhetorical features, including hyperboles, metaphors, and metonymies, concur to highlighting one's positive qualities while stressing the negative attributes of the opponents.

In Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), metaphors are conceived as structuring principles of thought that organise most of our experiences through mappings,[5] creating ontological correspondences between entities from one familiar (source) domain and those from an unfamiliar (target) knowledge domain, and language presents evidence of the metaphorical nature of our conceptual system (Lakoff 2008; Lakoff, Johnson 1980).

Metaphor is the most widely employed trope in political discourse, where it is particularly effective. Not only is it used to simplify and make issues more intelligible, stir emotions and bridge the gap between the logical and the emotional, but, Charteris-Black (2011) argues, it is highly effective for its ability to resonate with latent symbolic representations at our unconscious level. In addition, metaphor tends to have an added pragmatic value to evaluate a topic, make a persuasive appeal or reassure the public that a given problem may be interpreted in terms of familiar experience patterns (Musolff 2016). Moreover, it frames the debate, thus setting the political agenda (Lakoff 2014), and contributes to the formation of covert ideologies through myth-making by offering persuasive representations of social groups and social issues.

5. Data and context presentation

American presidential elections are regulated by laws, rituals, and customs (Berkowitz and Walls 2022). They typically occur in November, and when the presidential nominee with most electoral votes is declared the winner, thus becoming the President-elect, it is customary for the defeated candidate to acknowledge defeat and congratulate the new President by delivering a concession speech. Despite not being constitutional, concession speeches foster a peaceful transition of power, displaying that once the contest is over, the country may unite behind the

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[5] An example of metaphorical mapping is LOVE IS A JOURNEY, which goes from the source domain JOURNEY to the more abstract target domain LOVE, introducing ontological correspondences between entities such as travellers, vehicles, or destinations with lovers, relationships, or relationship difficulties. Mappings in CMT are routinely written in capital letters with the mapping from source to target domain being presented in the reverse order, as TARGET IS SOURCE (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

elected candidate (Ginsberg, et al. 2012). Moreover, they facilitate acceptance of the results by the defeated candidates' supporters.

The 2020 Presidential Elections did not work this way. Not only did Donald J. Trump immediately start to challenge the outcome of the elections with false fraud allegations, but as an unprecedented act, he refused to concede. What is more, on January 6, 2021, when the US House of Representatives and Senate were scheduled to certify the results of the Electoral College, hence Joe Biden's victory, he urged his supporters to gather in Washington, DC, to attend a rally to "Stop the Steal." On that occasion, he delivered a very long speech (13,946 words) lasting around 70 minutes, asserting his victory and mobilising his audience to fight to reaffirm their rights.

Following Trump's speech, a mob of his supporters attacked the Capitol building in what is now considered one of the darkest days for American democracy. Accused of inciting an armed rebellion, Trump was impeached, although later cleared of the charge. While assessing whether Trump's words may have had a substantial role in inciting the insurrection falls beyond the scope of this study, the speech he gave on that day may be considered the first example of non-concession speech delivered at a symbolic venue and on a specific occasion.

Two weeks later, Joe Biden's Inauguration took place when he delivered an address (2,371 words) (Statista 2021) in which he spoke to the entire American polity, framing his idea of America and democracy and pledging unity and cooperation without explicitly mentioning the rioters or their political affiliation.

In the next section, a qualitative analysis of the two speeches is presented, focusing on the discursive strategies of people-building based on van Dijk's (2015b; 2013) socio-cognitive approach and CMT (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

6. Analysis

This section discusses people-building strategies and cohesion-creating appeals in Trump's January 6, 2021, rally speech and Biden's Inaugural Address. In what follows, it will be argued that, although the two leaders are prototypically associated with two antithetical political styles (Moffitt 2016), namely, the populist and the anti-populist, based on the socio-cultural and the politico-cultural dimensions outlined by Ostiguy (2017; 2009), such a division is not clear-cut.

All politicians, regardless of their political orientation, appeal to "the people," simplifying an inherently pluralistic reality as one political subject when speaking to the entire national community. However, while Trump represents the prototypical right-wing populist leader in his rhetorical appeal (Mudde 2019), it can be argued that for the simplification of the message and

the usage of non-technocratic language, even Biden, who is not a populist in terms of ideological positioning, at times resorts to elements of populist style (Moffitt 2016). What crucially differs is the way specific discursive appeals and strategies are employed and the image of the national/political identity that each politician tries to promote.

6.1 People-building strategies in Trump's January 6, 2021, rally speech

Trump's rally speech in Washington, DC, on January 6, 2021, was an attempt to build political consensus and foster a subversion of the political order through harshly polarising rhetoric and coarse language (Moffitt 2016). Its purpose was to challenge the result of the November 2020 elections by fomenting people's rage and resentment for allegedly being deprived of a "true" electoral victory. By rhetorically crafting a scenario where democracy and the will of "the people" have been jeopardised by the concurrent unlawful action of a series of self-interested enemies of the people, he projects a dichotomous view of society into Us *versus* Them (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde 2004). In this scenario, the "good people," as "the forgotten men and women of the country" that Trump had mentioned in his Inaugural Address in January 2017, arguing that his Administration would restore their central role as owners of democracy, are once again framed as victims deprived of their sovereign right.

Us *versus* Them polarisation typical of populist discourse (Mudde 2019; 2004; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; van Dijk 1997) is already evident from the relative frequency of the personal pronouns and adjectives in his speech (Table 1 below).

Personal Pronouns/ Adjectives in Trump's speech	No. of occurrences	Relative Frequency:
We	241	2.5%
Us	17	343 occurrences
Our	85	out of 13,948 tokens
They	251	2.3%
Them	55	326 occurrences
Their	20	out of 13,948 tokens

Tab.1 Personal Pronouns/Adjectives in Trump's Speech

As displayed in Table 1, Trump, in his rally speech, relies heavily on both *we* and *they*, with *they/them* exceeding *we/us* in the number of occurrences, which testifies to the profoundly divisive purpose of his message.

Moreover, his polarising rhetoric is apparent from the very beginning of the speech, where he singles out a series of self-interested enemies who stand in the way of "the people":

(1)   All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they're doing. And stolen by the fake news media. That's what they've done and what they're doing.

(2)   They've used the pandemic as a way of defrauding the people in a proper election.

(3)   We don't have a free and fair press […] It suppresses thought, it suppresses speech and it's become the enemy of the people. […] It's the biggest problem we have in this country.

By pitting Democrats against the American people, conceived as inherently good and honest through a stereotypical (and strategic) simplification (Wodak 2015), in excerpt (1), Trump exploits the common misperception that liberal politicians are an elitist, socio-culturally high out-group, distant from the people and their right to exert sovereignty (Ostiguy and Roberts 2016).

Moreover, another enemy is singled out in (1) and (3); namely, the media termed *fake news media* by Trump and accused of being biased and determined to thwart him. Negatively connoted action verbs such as *steal*, *defraud,* and *suppress* in fragments (1)-(3) contribute to framing these two out-groups as criminal actors (van Dijk 2013).

The negative portrayal of his political opponents is further developed in (4)-(6) through scapegoating tactics that work thanks to the asymmetrical nature of discourse (Wodak 2015; van Dijk 2006b).

(4)   In every single swing State, local officials, State officials, almost all Democrats, made illegal and unconstitutional changes to election procedures […].

(5)   We won this election and we won it by a landslide.

(6)   The only way this can be explained is if tens of thousands of illegitimate votes were added to the tally. That's the only way you could explain it.

In (4), a victimisation strategy is enacted by Trump to demonise anti-democratic action and justify his electoral defeat. By leveraging discrediting techniques counteracted by positive self-presentation, he casts doubt on his enemies' integrity, thus simplifying political confrontation as a dichotomous struggle of "good" *versus* "evil" and "honest" *versus* "criminal." In (5), he also asserts his victory, referring to the logical impossibility of an electoral defeat, whereas in (6), he

claims that fraudulent conduct is the only plausible explanation for such a negative outcome (Reyes 2011).

Through his victimisation strategy, he aims to unveil alleged hoaxes created to hide the fraud perpetrated by his opponents. Moreover, he attempts to present himself as a defender of the truth and goodwill of the socio-cultural low (Ostiguy 2017; 2009). Finally, to bestow credibility to his assumptions, he provides evidence of his (allegedly) stolen victory by strategically mixing precision indicators, such as numbers and opinions of experts (Reyes 2011, 800), with the so-called "numbers-game" (van Dijk 2018; 2000). The latter refers to the use of unspecified plural numbers like *thousands* or *hundreds* that have a special rhetorical power of simultaneously conveying quantity and quality, which may magnify the extent of a problem.

In (7), employing governmental *we*, a self-promotional strategy is enacted by listing and magnifying his Administration's positive accomplishments in his typically bombastic style:

(7)   We've created the greatest economy in history. We rebuilt our military. We get you the biggest tax cuts in history. Right? We got you the biggest regulation cuts. There's no president, whether it's four years, eight years or in one case more, who got anywhere near the regulation cuts.

(8)   Democrats enacted policies that chipped away our jobs, weakened our military, threw open our borders and put America last.

Positive action and accomplishment verbs (Levin 1993), such as *create*, *rebuild*, and *get*, referencing the metaphorical mapping NATION IS A BUILDING, support this process. Moreover, they activate a sharp contrast with excerpt (8), where a series of negatively connoted verbs, such as *chip away*, *weaken*, and *throw open,* refer to the actions of Democrats in Congress, framed as an elite working to the detriment of the people, who turned "America first" into "America last" by fighting against the main pillars of Trump's political agenda.

Such strategy is functional to portray Democrats as criminal actors for jeopardising the election result through illegal anti-democratic procedures and causing the entire country's collapse, thus displaying an Anti-American stance. This activates the metonymic chain CRIMINALS FOR DEMOCRATS.

The manipulation of individuals' beliefs and emotions for self-serving agendas in Trump's rally speech is also achieved through figurative language, which is often key to socio-political processes of conceptualisation of reality (Musolff 2004; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Metaphors and similes, in this respect, are highly effective in framing one's message and preventing acceptance of alternative views (Lakoff 2014; 1996; Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

In particular, the inclusion of specific implications deriving from the meaning of the source concept transferred to the target domain to shape an ideologically biased view of reality, and the exclusion of others, create a scenario exploited to confer credibility to biased presuppositions as argumentative warrants (Musolff 2004).

A case in point is represented by a demeaning simile introduced in (9), which compares Democrats to animals:

(9)   They're all running around like chickens with their heads cut off with boxes. Nobody knows what the hell is going on.

This dehumanising comparison realised through the mapping DEMOCRATS ARE ANIMALS (an entailment of the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS mapping) aims to belittle the Democrats' competence, framing them as unfit to solve the 'chaos' they have caused through fraudulent and disorganised elections. Furthermore, this metaphorical mapping activates the following implications (following Musolff 2004, 18):

- People acting like animals are by nature irrational;
- People acting like animals are driven by their emotions and cannot act on behalf/in the interest of others;
- People acting like animals need to be governed, not govern.

The dehumanisation and discrediting of the out-group fit the dichotomous right-wing populist perspective and construct the perceived enemies as irrational, thus "making" them inferior and less worthy of attention (Wodak 2015).

A powerful unifying narrative in Trump's speech is American exceptionalism (Ricento 2003; Lipset 1996), based on the idea that the US is both destined and entitled to play an outstanding and leading role on the world stage (10).

(10)   We are the greatest country on Earth and we are headed and were headed in the right direction.

(11)   You could take third-world countries. Their elections are more honest than what we've been going through in this country. It's a disgrace.

Such a trope, which also activates a frontier between in-groups and out-groups, i.e., typically non-natives (Wodak 2015), is accompanied by a metaphorical mapping conveying the idea that national progress is a movement forward (NATION IS A JOURNEY). However, American

exceptionalism is here exploited to highlight the negative acts of Trump's opponents, Democrats and "weak Republicans," who, out of their own inefficiency, allowed a corrupt election and led to the destruction of the country's greatness and values (11).

The negative representation of his opponents as Them is countered by the positive framing of "the people" in (12) and (13).

(12)   It's just a great honor to have this kind of crowd and to be before you and hundreds of thousands of American patriots who are committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious republic.

(13)   You're stronger, you're smarter, you've got more going than anybody. And they try and demean everybody having to do with us. And you're the real people, you're the people that built this nation. You're not the people that tore down our nation.

In (12), the audience gathered at the rally, namely Trump's supporters, hence not the entire American policy, is compared to patriots endowed with honesty and integrity, 'real' American Republican values. In (13), a crucial distinction is made between real and fake people. In Trump's narrative, victimhood proves to be a potent tool of mobilisation, as the "real people" are again framed as underdogs (Canovan 1999; 1984) deprived of their sovereign rights, while the leader as a guiding father based on the Strict Father Morality model (Lakoff 1996) reassures them of their identity and role. They are described as those who created the Nation, which, as a building, collapsed due to the selfishness and inability of Congress elites, based on the NATION IS A BUILDING metaphorical mapping.

Through references to national identity symbols, such as the Constitution, the American republic, and an endangered democracy to boost a sense of urgent mobilisation, Trump strategically humanises abstract concepts, as in (14):

(14)   We're gathered together in the heart of our nation's capital for one very, very basic and simple reason: To save our democracy.

By referring to the gathering in the "heart" of the nation (the US Capitol), he compares the nation to a living entity through the NATION IS A BODY metaphorical mapping, while democracy at risk is also framed as a living entity (DEMOCRACY IS A LIVING ENTITY mapping).

These metaphorical mappings activate the following implications:

- The Nation (as an institution) is a person;
- An institution has a life cycle that lasts from birth to death (Musolff 2004, 90);

- An institution has a body made of parts and organs with different functions (Musolff 2004, 90);
- An institution can be in an ill state (Musolff 2004, 90);
- The Nation has a beating heart through which life flows;
- A Nation does what it can to fight an infection/disease and survive.

The reference to the heart as a source concept plays several roles in Trump's discourse. First, it is a metonymic meaning cluster that may figuratively represent both the centre of some entity and the seat of emotions (Musolff 2004, 102-103), thus fostering a sense of pride and courage to take decisions and act. By putting himself and the crowd in the nation's emotional and "biological" centre, Trump also wishes to confer to his supporters a sense of responsibility to act when an infection deteriorates the organism. Otherwise, the organism will decay, and the nation will not survive (Musolff 2004). It may be argued that Trump exploits these implications to build a scenario of illness (Musolff 2004) and potential recovery through physical and emotional responses. Finally, the nativist protection of the heartland (Mudde 2004; Taggart 2000) against dangerous outsiders is, again, part of his right-wing populist agenda (Ostiguy and Roberts 2016; Wodak 2015) and consists in fighting against an election result that he refuses to accept and frames as detrimental to the people (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017, 62).

The metaphorical conceptualisation of Republicans as the heart of the nation and democracy, which makes them responsible for pumping blood and allowing life to flow, inevitably leads to argumentative conclusions and responses that correlate with a responsibility to mobilise and an urge to act in a warlike scenario (ELECTION IS WAR).

This warlike polarised scenario allows Trump to project himself as the defender of democracy and the American Constitution while mobilising his supporters against an unlawful election. Moreover, the fact that he represents the True American interests as opposed to self-interested and greedy Democrats, who are (supposedly) Anti-American and against the interest of the people, is exploited by Trump to buttress the argument that his electoral defeat cannot be legitimate and that the will of the people must be restored.

(15)   We must stop the steal and then we must ensure that such outrageous election fraud never happens again, can never be allowed to happen again.

(16)   We will never give up, we will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved.

His effort to make a shared social identity salient is evident in the multiple references to the in-

group (seen in 340 joint occurrences of *we*, *us*, and *our* as displayed in Table 1) and in the usage of action verbs such as *stop* (15), *never give up*, and *never concede* (16). Through these word choices, Trump explicitly asserts that, as the defender of the people and democratic ideals, he will not accept Biden's victory as unlawful and immoral.

As can be observed, patriotic action and restoring the *status quo* play a crucial role in Trump's speech, as they are evoked by the chicken simile and chaos scenario and reinforced by conferring an active and central role to the audience gathered in the heart of the nation.

Such metaphorical mappings combine to subtly shape a reality in which an enemy is responsible for a negative outcome and legitimise an urgent (unspecified) action to restore an 'ordered' state of affairs (Musolff 2004, 32; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 58). Through the recurrence of this framing strategy, individuals may be misled into believing a fabricated view of reality and commit to acting. The potentially significant impact of these discourse devices on people's minds is one of the reasons why metaphors are also called self-fulfilling prophecies (Musolff 2004), thus confirming Trump's intent to divide his nation only to justify his political defeat and legitimise a subversion of power.

6.2 People-building strategies in Biden's Inaugural Address

President Biden's Inaugural Address, held only two weeks after the Capitol Hill riots, may be viewed as a celebration of moral and traditional values and a promotion of positive thinking to instil a sense of democratic cooperation in the Nation.

In terms of ideological positioning, Biden's speech may be considered anti-populist (Ostiguy 2017; Ostiguy and Roberts 2016; Stavrakakis 2014) due to his socio-cultural and political high status as a leader endorsing pluralism and liberalism, including minority rights (Moffit 2016; Wodak 2015; Ostiguy 2009). However, in terms of addressing "the people," his narrative at times shifts from "part" to "whole" (Stavrakakis 2014; Canovan 2005), that is, from the entire polity to the underdogs, thus displaying elements of populist style (Moffitt 2016; Ostiguy and Roberts 2016).

All politicians of different political orientations, populists, and non-populists, speak to "the people" to maximise their consensus. Moreover, addressing the entire polity and claiming to speak to the multiple souls of the country is constitutive of American presidential rhetoric during Inaugurals (Charteris-Black 2014; Ginsberg et al. 2012).

Unlike Trump, Biden employs inclusive and non-discriminatory language, never presenting a dichotomous view of society as Us *versus* Them (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde 2004). Conversely, through accessible, non-technocratic language, he promotes legalism,

multiculturalism and a view of democracy based on the joint effort of the entire polity with appeals to traditional American values and positive emotions (Moffit 2016).

Concerning the usage of personal pronouns and adjectives, Biden, in his Inaugural Address, relies primarily on *we*, which suggests a more inclusive attitude as he addresses the entire American polity promoting a unifying message that cuts across different factions of "the people" or electoral divides; he also rarely focuses on *them/they*. The data reported in Table 2, thus, reveal a striking difference from Trump (Table 1), confirming the presence of opposite people-building strategies and ideological positioning.

Personal Pronouns/Adjectives in Biden's speech	No. of occurrences	Relative Frequency:
We	91	5.7%
Us	27	161 occurrences out
Our	43	of 2,823 tokens
They	8	0.7%
Them	3	19 occurrences out
Their	8	of 2,923 tokens

Tab.2 Personal Pronouns/Adjectives in Biden's Speeche

Biden's inclusive and broad-ranging rhetoric that defines him as an anti-populist in terms of ideological positioning is apparent from the beginning of his speech:

(17)   This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope. Of renewal and resolve. […]. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The will of the people has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded.

(18)   I will be a President for all Americans.

(19)   I have just taken the sacred oath each of these patriots took—an oath first sworn by George Washington.[…] But the American story depends on all of us. On "We the People" who seek a more perfect Union. This is a great nation and we are a good people. […] we still have far to go.

Excerpts (17) - (19) frame Biden's victory as a joint triumph of democracy and the concretisation of the will of "the people," intended in both a civic and a national sense (Canovan 1999; 1984). The pronoun *we* is strategically employed to unite American citizens under shared national values. Moreover, in (18), Biden displays his intention to overcome divisions through his sense

of responsibility for the future of America as a Nurturant Father (Lakoff 1996), thus boosting his credibility as a newly elected president. Only through trust can the main aims of his speech be effectively fulfilled (Ostiguy 2009), creating a political community and civic identity based on mutual respect, which may promote cooperation and progress.

References to democracy and unity as shared values that need to be preserved are strategically highlighted throughout the speech, together with symbolic elements that feature an emotional appeal and foster (communal) common ground (Clark 1996) for their connection with the history of the national and democratic process (patriots, George Washington). Democracy and nation-building are framed as ongoing processes and patterns, activating the metaphorical mapping NATION IS A JOURNEY.

Furthermore, through an indirect reference to the Capitol Hill riots of January 06, 2021, democracy as the expression of the will of the American people is represented as fragile (20) and under attack (22), highlighting its status as a living entity (DEMOCRACY IS A LIVING ENTITY).

(20) We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile.

(21) A cry for survival comes from the planet itself […] And now, a rise in political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat. […] to restore the soul and to secure the future of America—requires more than words.

(22) We face an attack on democracy and truth. A raging virus. Growing inequity. The sting of systemic racism. A climate in crisis […] I ask every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the common foes we face: Anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness.

Likewise, the nation's status as a (group of) person(s), an imagined community (Anderson 1983) but with a body and soul, is emphasised (NATION IS A PERSON/GROUP OF PEOPLE). Assigning a soul to the nation activates a sense of empathy and shapes a scenario of cooperation. The metaphorical implications of this metaphorical mapping are the following:

- A Nation is a (group of) person(s);
- A Nation has a life cycle that lasts from birth to death;
- A Nation has a body that comprises various parts and organs;
- A Nation can be in a more or less healthy/ill state;
- A Nation has a soul and conscience discriminating between right and wrong and feeling emotions;

- A Nation is also a group of people who share values, traits, duties, and responsibilities in order to survive and live together;
- When they suffer, all the organs of the Nation must jointly act to restore their health and moral standards.

By focusing on what can be done to prevent harm to the future and soul of America, and in an attempt to disempower right-wing populist divisive rhetoric (Wodak 2015), in (21) and (22), Biden does not explicitly mention those who caused harm to the nation with the Capitol Hill attack, nor does he refer to their political affiliation. On the contrary, he only shapes a series of common, "abstract" enemies (Wodak 2015), going, to some extent, against the populist concept of homogeneity of the in-group.

As a leader, Biden defines his political community. Not only does he emphasise what stands in the people's way, as in (22), but he also shapes their collective identity and objectives (Wodak, et al. 1999):

(23) We look ahead in our uniquely American way—restless, bold, optimistic—and set our sights on the nation we know we can be and we must be.

(24) What are the common objects we love that define us as Americans? I think I know. Opportunity. Security. Liberty. Dignity. Respect. Honor. And, yes, the truth.

Specifically, in (23), he references the stereotypical trope of American exceptionalism, also exploited by Trump in (10), to boost people's confidence. Such an idea may also be associated with the American Dream trope, arguing that equal opportunities are available to any American regardless of origin and social background (Charteris-Black 2011). Moreover, in (24), based on his idea of national identity, Biden establishes its founding values, which are highly abstract and general, and may be embraced by the entire American polity.

These are the premises for Biden to put forward his ideal of unity:

(25) The American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us.

(26) And each of us has a duty and responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders—leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our nation — to defend the truth and to defeat the lies.

Embracing a view of society that promotes equality and human rights, in (25) and (26), Biden affirms his founding values, which derive from the Nurturant Father Morality model, suggesting that citizens as a community must be responsible for the wellbeing of others as well

(Lakoff 1996) (NATION IS A FAMILY).

Moreover, rejecting the idea of the political debate as an arena of harsh confrontation (POLITICS IS WAR), which is the view endorsed by his opponent, in (27) and (28), he pledges cooperation and unity across divisions, thus recognising that "the people" is not a homogeneous entity but instead represents a multitude of differences and peculiarities.

(27) Politics need not be a raging fire destroying everything in its path.

(28) I ask every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the common foes we face. […] With unity, we can do great things, important things.

However, it is only by cooperating that the democratic process can move forward (NATION IS A JOURNEY and a LONGTERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY according to the metaphorical mapping MOVEMENT-PATH-JOURNEY) (Musolff 2004, 43-44). The implications for this metaphorical mapping are the following:

- A political process is a journey that proceeds from a departure point towards a goal along a specific path;
- The participants in a political process are travelling along one common path or several paths moving forward.

In this case, the forces that push the participants are the values of empathy, hope and unity, i.e. the shared effort that will allow the nation to survive and democracy to be restored. In line with the metaphorical mappings of movement metaphors for political processes, the whole speech may lead to the following implications (Musolff 2004):

- Unity, hope, and peace allow democracy to proceed and, therefore, they symbolise progress;
- Democracy is union, hope and peace, which contrasts with Trump's view of democracy as war and division.

Biden's speech is a discourse of genuine empowerment aimed at actively engaging the American people, who for the past few years had been divided by the polarising rhetoric of a right-wing populist President.

While Trump heavily relies on divisive rhetoric, coarse language, and bad manners for self-legitimation purposes and to discredit opponents in multiple ways, Biden's rhetoric only occasionally recurs to populist overtones. As it is customary in Presidential addresses to provide

a new vision of America, also by delineating how the newly elected President sees the national community and the foundational values of national identity, Biden recurs to the simplification of the identity of his community, repeatedly using the identifier "the people" as if the latter was endowed with a unique will regardless of its pluralities (Canovan 2005; 1999). Moreover, he employs accessible and non-technocratic language and simplifies the measures to be implemented to overcome difficulties by referring to abstract and general concepts (unity, hope). However, his reliance on populist overtones is designed to celebrate the value of democracy and promote cooperation across the political community.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of Trump's and Biden's people-building strategies has revealed that, as scholarly literature has repeatedly pointed out (Lorenzetti 2018; Moffitt 2016; Panizza 2005; Taggart 2000), populism represents an elusive phenomenon with fuzzy boundaries. Whilst useful to characterise political ideologies (Freeden 1996) in terms of their rhetorical appeal and identify populist leaders when they display prototypical populist traits (Hawkins and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Mudde 2004; Taggart 2000), the populism/anti-populism (Moffitt 2018; Ostiguy 2017; 2009; Ostiguy and Roberts 2016; Stavrakakis 2014) distinction is still underdeveloped. Populism-as-style approaches as those put forward by Moffitt (2016) and Ostiguy (2017; 2009), however, emphasise the non-binary character of the populism/anti-populism divide, suggesting the possibility of gradient variants.

This enables us to observe that many political actors, firmly anti-populist in their ideological stance, sometimes rely on populist overtones depending on the context or to legitimise specific messages. A case in point is Joe Biden, who displays a coherent vision of society and the American Nation without pitting the people against the elite nor Democrats against Republicans. However, he spreads his message in a simple non-technocratic language that may speak to "the socio-cultural low" (Ostiguy 2009), overcoming and simplifying differences across the population. Such a strategy enables him to promote a national identity based on union and cooperation.

On the other hand, Trump recurs to the prototypical polarising right-wing populist rhetoric imbued with nativism and nationalism (Mudde 2019; Wodak 2015). Since his candidacy in 2015 and throughout his presidency and the extremely harsh 2020 electoral campaign, he emphasised the existence of a fragmented society by pitting the people against the elite. This rhetoric, apparent in his tackling of different problems in society, such as immigration (Lorenzetti 2020), and even the COVID-19 pandemic (Lorenzetti 2022), also resounds in his

January 6, 2021 rally speech. In the latter, which may be viewed as a non-concession speech,[6] Trump tries to enact a shared sense of social identity and ingroupness by fostering divisions. Moreover, the anger and resentment that he tries to activate and unleash when speaking about electoral fraud and corrupt elections are functional to building his community, delineating a series of alleged enemies who work against the people (Democrats, some Republicans, and the media termed *fake news media*).

In terms of discursive strategies employed by the two leaders, both Trump and Biden focus on positive self-presentation and the positive presentation of the audience. However, Biden avoids highlighting tensions and factions in society by not mentioning the Capitol Hill assailants explicitly and instead presents a series of abstract enemies (*violence*, *inequality*, *racism*, and *white suprematism,* among others). In addition, he promotes cohesion by communal common ground symbols (Clark 1996) of national pride and democracy (the Constitution, the Founding Fathers) and puts forward his vision of democracy based on the Nurturant Father Morality model endorsed by his party, which suggests that citizens are responsible also for the wellbeing of others in society and must act accordingly.

Instead, Trump relies on positive self-presentation and victimisation with false fraud allegations. Moreover, he strongly resorts to the negative portrayal of elites in American institutions, Democrats in Congress, some Republicans, and the media, highlighting their negative actions against "the people" in many respects.

In the political discourse of the two politicians, metaphor plays a paramount role, as it frames the message, fostering understanding. Moreover, it adds a strongly emotional component (Musolff 2016; 2004; Charteris-Black 2011) to their vision. Significantly, the two leaders often rely on similar metaphorical mappings (see Table 3 below) to put forward their message but exploit them for opposite ends.

Metaphorical Mappings in Trump's Speech	Metaphorical Mappings in Biden's Speech
NATION IS A PERSON	NATION IS A PERSON/GROUP OF PEOPLE
NATION IS A JOURNEY	NATION IS A JOURNEY
DEMOCRACY IS A LIVING ENTITY	DEMOCRACY IS A LIVING ENTITY

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[6] In the aftermath of the Capitol Hill attack, Trump released a short video on YouTube where he grudgingly spoke of "a new Administration" that would be inaugurated in the following weeks. However, he never gave any official concession speech.

NATION IS A BUILDING	NATION IS A FAMILY
ELECTION IS WAR an entailment of POLITICS IS WAR	POLITICS IS WAR
DEMOCRATS ARE ANIMALS an entailment of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS	

Tab. 3: Metaphorical mappings in Trump's and Biden's speeches

As can be seen from the table, the Nation appears to be the most fruitful target domain used by both leaders in several metaphorical mappings, including NATION IS A JOURNEY, which highlights the historical process that led to the creation of the USA as a country, and NATION IS A PERSON/GROUP OF PEOPLE. Trump uses the latter metaphorical mapping to indicate that his supporters and him are at the centre of the democratic and national process and will behave accordingly to preserve democracy. On the other hand, Biden relies on metaphorical mappings of the same metaphor to promote national cohesion and unity, indirectly referencing Anderson's (1983) concept of imagined community. Moreover, for both leaders, democracy is an accomplishment and a living entity which must be preserved and protected (DEMOCRACY IS A LIVING ENTITY). However, Trump puts forward the idea that democracy has been jeopardised by fraudulent conduct, while Biden uses this mapping to refer to the Capitol Hill assault as an attack on democracy itself. Furthermore, both politicians employ the metaphorical mapping POLITICS IS WAR. Trump relies on it to legitimise his idea of a deeply polarised country, while Biden reframes the debate and points to the inadequacy of this metaphorical mapping.

A metaphorical mapping exclusively used by Trump is NATION IS A BUILDING, designed to highlight the difference between "the good American people" as underdogs (Canovan 2005) and the Democrats as a selfish elite that destroyed everything. His political opponents also feature in the metaphorical mapping DEMOCRATS ARE ANIMALS designed to stress their inadequacy as leaders. Conversely, Biden resorts to the unifying metaphorical mapping NATION IS A FAMILY, which becomes instrumental in putting forward his people-building message based on the Nurturant Father Morality model and on responsible citizens.

Overall, it can be argued that what crucially differs in the usage of elements of populist style by the two politicians is their intention. Firmly positioned in the right-wing populist domain, Trump fosters societal divisions in all respects. By contrast, Biden resorts to highly emotional, sometimes oversimplifying elements of populist style to promote unity and remove power

asymmetries, thus attempting to make both majorities and minorities understand, through compelling and down-to-earth language, that they may feel included and play a prominent role in the democratic process (Ostiguy 2009).

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