

English Applied Linguistics PhD Program  
Graduate School in Linguistics  
University of Szeged

**The Representation of Covid-19 in Trumpian  
Political Discourse and Media Reports:  
The Ideology of Racism and Xenophobia**

PhD Dissertation  
**Chen Luyu**

Supervisor:  
**Dr. Erzsébet Barát**

Szeged

2025

## **Acknowledgements**

With profound gratitude and a heart overflowing with emotion, I wish to express my boundless appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Erzsébet Barát. Words alone cannot capture the transformative impact she has had on my life. She has not merely been a guide in my academic pursuits, but a beacon illuminating my entire existence. When darkness and uncertainty threatened to engulf me, her unwavering belief in my abilities acted as a lighthouse, guiding me safely to shore. Dr. Barát's patience, wisdom, and compassion have fundamentally changed how I view both scholarship and life itself. The intellectual and emotional support she provided transcends the traditional supervisor-student relationship—she has shaped my thinking, bolstered my confidence, and helped me discover strengths I never knew I possessed.

I extend my sincere thanks to the China Scholarship Council and the Tempus Public Foundation for the Stipendium Hungaricum Scholarship, whose generous financial support made it possible for me to pursue my doctoral studies in Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Szeged.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Milad Mehdizadkhani, whose collaboration has been invaluable throughout this process. As a senior scholar, his patience, encouragement, and guidance kept me moving forward even when I was ready to surrender. His willingness to stand by me during challenging times has been a true gift.

Special thanks go to Li Danyang for her patient companionship and assistance that made this journey less solitary and more meaningful.

Finally, my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude flows to my beloved parents, my mother Qian Yan and my father Chen Yong. Your unconditional love has been the foundation upon which I have built every dream and ambition. Through every triumph and setback, your faith in me has never faltered. You have always allowed me the freedom to chart my own course while ensuring I never walk alone. The sacrifices you made to support my studies in the UK and this doctoral journey reveal the boundless nature of your love. Thank you for listening to my fears, doubts, and hopes with such tenderness and understanding, for your endless patience and the love that has sustained and nourished me throughout my life.

## **Abstract**

This research explores the political media discourse surrounding the reception of the Covid-19 pandemic within the United States, concentrating specifically on the discursive strategies employed in the US president, Donald Trump's Tweets, their subsequent reconstruction and reiteration within news editorials of two major US news portals, CNN and Fox News, and the corresponding audience commentaries on their social media platforms. The study underscores the importance of digital platform mediation in structuring political discourse and influencing citizen participation in meaning-making processes, particularly during a period marked by significant public health concerns.

The context for this investigation is the first period of Donald Trump's presidency (2017-2021), the period coinciding with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The President's Tweets collected and analyzed fall between March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. Trump's presidency is characterized by his intensive use of social media, particularly Twitter, as a primary channel of political communication channel, and his rhetoric frequently drew criticism for employing hate speech. The objective of this study is to explore the intensification and propagation of this hate speech around the construction of the meaning of Covid-19 as "China/Chinese virus", targeting Asian American and, indirectly, Chinese citizens. The project goes beyond that and investigates further how the meaning associated with the term "China/Chinese virus" through the mediation of CNN and Fox News reports becomes a shaping force and gets perpetuated in the platform users' comments. While some research has examined the impact of Trump's rhetoric in the pandemic, this study addresses a gap by empirically investigating the ways his disposition could permeate the US media field. The analysis explores the role of digital news media in the articulation and perpetuation of the Trumpian rhetoric, and its normalization through its reconstruction and reiteration on news platforms and in citizen comments on social media.

The study seeks answers to three main research questions: (1) How did Donald Trump's Tweets about the virus function persuasively to produce racist and/or xenophobic meanings around the term 'China / Chinese virus'? (2) How were those ideologies sustained or challenged by CNN and Fox News in their reporting of Trump's pandemic-related communications? (3) How are discourses of racism and xenophobia reiterated or contested in citizen comments on the two news outlets' Facebook pages, contributing to the circulation and normalization of the president's hate propaganda? These questions collectively aim to show that the Trumpian discourse was not merely an individual peculiarity but became a dominant communicative mode in citizens' language use through the mediation of social media circulation.

Methodologically, this interpretative research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Martin, 2011) and Corpus Linguistics, namely keyword analysis, concordance lines and cluster analysis as developed by Baker (2004, 2006). It utilizes Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework (textual analysis, discursive practice, social practice) (Fairclough, 1995b) and the Appraisal Framework of SFL (analyzing attitude, graduation, and engagement) (Martin & White, 2005). For the third research question, it employs a Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA) approach, combining the methods of corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis to systematically investigate lexical choices and recurring phrase patterns (Subtirelu & Baker, 2018). The data comprises three distinct sets for the three research questions respectively, all collected between March 16, 2020 and January 20, 2021: (1) a corpus of 708 tweets by Trump containing the keywords 'Covid', 'Coronavirus', 'pandemic', 'Asian/Asia', and 'China/Chinese virus'; (2) news reports on these tweets from CNN and Fox News; and (3) audience comments on the corresponding Facebook pages of these two news outlets. The analysis focuses on intertextuality, examining both explicit references and implicit assumptions to understand how ideological meaning is constructed and spread across the textual chains on these platforms.

The key findings indicate that the Trumpian rhetoric is a strategically constructed

discourse with significant socio-political consequences. His tweets systematically employed geography- and ethnicity-based naming conventions (“China/Chinese virus”) as a strategy to racialize the pandemic, legitimize xenophobia, align audiences against the given ethnic group and divert criticism from his administration’s inadequate handling of the health crisis. Additionally, the study demonstrates that media outlets reports are not neutral accounts but active participants in constructing what counts as the reality of the pandemic. CNN and Fox News framed Trump’s rhetoric according to their respective ideological orientations. CNN often adopted a critical stance challenging the presidential rhetoric and emphasizing its racialization, positioning itself as a platform upholding progressive norms, while Fox News employed strategies that often justified the presidential nationalist sentiments, externalized blame towards China, and aligned with Trump’s “America First” narrative, thereby amplifying the Trumpian discourse of xenophobia and racism. The analysis of audience Facebook comments revealed distinct patterns reflecting the particular media outlets’ political leanings. CNN commenters tended to attribute responsibility domestically, often criticizing the Trump administration, whereas Fox News commenters, in agreement with the platform’s perspective, frequently externalized blame onto China, aligning with the Trumpian rhetoric. This tendency highlights the interactive nature of digital media, where audiences actively participate in meaning-making, reflecting and reinforcing partisan divides mediated by the platforms. Social media platforms facilitate a dynamic where users become co-creators of news, shaping and circulating political discourse in ways distinct from traditional media. The findings contribute significantly to understanding contemporary political communication in the digital space, the dynamics of hate speech in the digital age, and the active role of the media in amplifying or mitigating the polarization of political rhetoric.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	vi
List of Abbreviations .....	ix
List of Figures .....	x
List of Tables .....	x
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Context of the Study: The Emergence of the Anti-Chinese Hate Rhetoric in the USA .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problems and Objectives .....	2
1.3 Research Questions .....	5
1.4 Significance of the Study .....	6
1.5 Structure of the Thesis .....	6
Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks .....	9
2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis .....	9
2.1.1 Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model .....	14
2.1.2 Ruth Wodak's Discourse-historical Approach .....	16
2.1.3 CDA as Ideology Critique .....	17
2.2 Ideological Intersections: Xenophobia, Cyberhate and Trumpism .....	19
2.2.1 Historical Foundations of Othering in the U.S. ....	20
2.2.2 Hate Speech in the Political Context .....	24
2.2.3 Trumpism: From Hate Speech to Political Ideologies .....	27
2.3 Digital Democratization of Social Media .....	31
2.3.1 Legitimation of Trump's Personalized Political Discourse in Social Media .....	33
2.3.2 Political Engagement in Hate Crimes .....	37
Chapter 3: Analyzing Donald Trump's Messaging on Twitter .....	43
3.1 Introduction .....	43

3.2 Appraisal Framework and Data Collection .....	44
3.2.1 Twitter .....	46
3.2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics .....	49
3.2.3 Appraisal Theory .....	50
3.3 Results and Findings .....	54
3.3.1 Attitude Categories in Trump's Tweets: Quantitative Findings .....	56
3.3.2 Linguistic Patterns: A Collocation Analysis of Key Terms .....	60
3.3.3 Qualitative Elaboration of three Categories .....	63
3.3.4 Trumpology: Racist and Xenophobic Discourse .....	67
3.4 Discussion .....	71
3.4.1 Measuring Trump's Tweets: Personalized Racist Discourse .....	71
3.4.2 Hatred Aggregation via Anti-Asian Hashtag Engagement .....	73
3.5 Summary .....	75
Chapter 4: Ideology and Power in News Discourse: A Critical Analysis of Trump's Media Representation .....	77
4.1 Introduction .....	77
4.2 Method .....	77
4.2.1 US Right-wing and Left-wing Media .....	79
4.3 Analysis, Findings and Discussion .....	83
4.3.1 News as Polyvocal Text .....	85
4.3.2 First Level of Analysis: Description .....	86
4.3.3 Second Level of Analysis: Discursive Practice .....	94
4.3.4 Third Level of Analysis: Social Practice .....	108
4.4 Summary .....	112
Chapter 5: The Reiteration and Circulation of Xenophobic and Racist Discourses in Online News Comments .....	114
5.1 Introduction .....	114
5.2 Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis and Data Collection .....	116
5.3 Analysis, Findings and Discussion .....	118
5.3.1 Extracting Keywords .....	119

5.3.2 Qualitative Analysis Using CDA .....	125
5.4 Summary .....	139
Chapter 6: Conclusion .....	141
6.1 Major Findings .....	141
6.2 Theoretical Implication .....	144
6.3 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research .....	144
References .....	147
Appendices A: CNN Reports .....	147
Appendix 1: Trump’s malicious use of ‘Chinese virus’ .....	183
Appendix 2: Trump again defends use of the term ‘China virus’ .....	186
Appendix 3: Yes, of course Donald Trump is calling coronavirus the ‘China virus’ for political reasons .....	188
Appendix 4: Trump says he’s pulling back from calling novel coronavirus the ‘China virus’ .....	191
Appendix 5: Trump has repeatedly blamed China for a virus that now threatens his health. This will make Beijing nervous .....	193
Appendices B: Fox News Reports .....	197
Appendix 1: Trump defends use of phrase ‘China virus,’ despite demands from China to stop .....	197
Appendix 2: Trump doubles down on ‘China virus,’ demands to know who in White House used phrase ‘Kung Flu’ .....	199
Appendix 3: Jesse Watters: Trump uses ‘Chinese virus’ phrase to ‘make sure that there is a little bit of accountability’ .....	201
Appendix 4: Trump says he may stop calling coronavirus the ‘Chinese virus’ ..	203
Appendix 5: Trump tells UN to hold China accountable for coronavirus pandemic ‘The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,’ he said ...	204



## **List of Abbreviations**

CACDA	Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CL	Corpus Linguistics
CLS	Critical Linguistics Studies
CNN	Cable News Network
CNNCC	CNN Comments Corpus
Covid-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DHA	Discourse-historical Approach
FNCC	Fox News Comments Corpus
GOP	Grand Old Party/ Republican Party
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SNS	Social Networking Service
WHO	World Health Organization

## List of Figures

Figure 1 . Fairclough’s 3-dimensional model .....	15
Figure 2 . An overview of the appraisal system adopted from Martin and White (2005, p. 38).....	53
Figure 3 . Judgement and appreciation as institutionalized affect (Martin & White, 2005, p. 45).....	54
Figure 4 . The comparison of 19 shared keywords .....	123

## List of Tables

Table 1 . Distribution of Attitude resources in Trump’s Tweets (N=708) .....	57
Table 2 . Distribution of Affect Subtypes in Tweets Containing “China/Chinese Virus” Variants (N=112 tweets) .....	59
Table 3 . Alternative and Pejorative Terms for the Virus .....	60
Table 4 . Collocations with “China” and “Chinese” .....	62
Table 5 . CNN selected report .....	84
Table 6 . Fox News reports .....	84
Table 7 . Comparative Collocations with “Trump” in CNN and Fox News Corpora .	87
Table 8 . Comparative Collocations with “virus” in CNN and Fox News Corpora ....	88
Table 9 . Comparison of CNN and Fox News headlines .....	95
Table 10 . Attribution of others’ speech in CNN and Fox News .....	99
Table 11 . Social Actors other than Trump reported as sources .....	100
Table 12 . Top 40 high-frequency keywords in CNNCC and FNCC posts .....	119
Table 13 . Exclusive keywords in CNNCC and FNCC posts (marked with asterisks in Table 12).....	120
Table 14 . Concordance lines for ‘blame’ in the CNN comments corpus (order by value).....	126
Table 15 . Concordance lines for ‘blame’ in the Fox News comments corpus (order by value).....	127
Table 16 . Top three left-right clusters associated with the three selected keywords in	

CNNCC .....	132
Table 17 . Top three left-right clusters associated with the three selected keywords in	
FNCC .....	133
Table 18 . Themes and theme parameters .....	137

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this project, I study the political media discourse around the reception of the Covid-19 pandemic with a particular focus on the discourse strategies of Donald Trump's tweets as well as how they are reconstructed and reiterated both in news editorials on two US news portals and in the corresponding audience commentaries. The importance of the research, I believe, consists in pointing out the relevance of the mediation of digital platforms' political discourse in shaping citizens' participation in meaning-making.

## **1.1 Context of the Study: The Emergence of the Anti-Chinese Hate**

### **Rhetoric in the USA**

Donald Trump, who served as the 45th president of the United States in 2017-2021, the period during which the Covid-19 pandemic emerged (Owoye & Onafowora, 2022), is considered one of the most controversial and unconventional figures in US presidential history (Rehman, 2017; Gabriel et al., 2018). A major feature of his political communication is his intensive use of new social media, specifically Twitter (Enli, 2017; Kreis, 2017). His language use has received criticism with a particular focus on his use of hate-speech (Brown & Sinclair, 2019; Nacos et al., 2020).

His aggressive speech was mostly directed at racial and religious minorities, particular nations, journalists, and oppositional politicians (Gutsche, 2018; Harris & Steiner, 2018; Silva, 2019; Carlson et al., 2021). There is a growing body of research that explores his routine intimation of hate speech and how that may affect the lives of the enemies who suffer violent repercussions in the wake of the systematic rhetoric of hate-in Wodak's (2015) sense of the term. Researchers over the past five years have explored his fear-based political communication (Nai & Maier, 2018) from the perspective of the different targeted groups, and pointed out the narcissist (Ashcroft, 2016; McAdams, 2016) and populist specificities (White, 2016; Streeck,

2017; Babones, 2018; Wojczewski, 2020) of his political discourse. The existing research has also exposed his political discourse to be obsessed with stigmatizing his opponents as ‘liar’ (Reicher & Haslam, 2017; Kellner, 2018), while also demonstrating its racist (Huber, 2016; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2018) and isolationist (Cha, 2016; Blum & Parker, 2019) ideological effects. This political discourse of hate is asserted to call out conveniently an ‘enemy’ as a rhetoric strategy that is meant to divert the critical gaze of the citizens from actual social tensions. Within this existing order of political discourse, the figure of the Asian people’ emerges to be scapegoated as the alleged cause of the Covid-19 pandemic in the wake of the first reports of the Coronavirus coming from China (Chen et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2021).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problems and Objectives**

My objective in this research is to explore how this discourse of hate around the figure of the targeted people as if ‘containers of the China virus’ comes about over the whole period of the last year of Donald Trump’s presidency overlapping with the pandemic, and how that meaning goes viral through the mediation of new media communication around two news media platforms, CNN and Fox News. I shall situate the Trumpian speech in the context of the increase in the spate of deaths in the US, where blaming China for the pandemic raises not only political tension between the United States and China, but Trump’s repeated statements amplify xenophobia and a more general anti-Asian sentiment associated with the stigmatizing term “Chinese virus” amongst the citizens who support his stance, disregarding the World Health Organization’s (WHO) announcement of the official name, Covid-19, of the disease on 11 February 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020).<sup>1</sup>

As a more specific aim, I would like to explore the interplay between xenophobia and racism in the Trumpian anti-Asian rhetoric of hate, resulting even in psychological and physical harm caused to Asian American that was frequently

---

<sup>1</sup> See full statement by the WHO Director-General at: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---28-february-2020> (accessed 2 April 2020).

covered by news outlets. The frequency of anti-Asian incidents from insults to outright assaults has increased dramatically and women have been particularly targeted disproportionately (Jeung et al., 2021). Among all the Asian ethnic groups, members of the Chinese group suffered the greatest number of hate incidents (42.7%), followed by Koreans, Filipinos, Japanese, and Vietnamese (Jeung et al., 2021, p. 1). This correlation between the routine intimation of hate-speech by the President and its viral spread in the public discourse against the ‘Chinese’ and, by implication, other Asian-looking people, who come to be seen as the potential carriers of the virus, is similar to the emerging situation in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Back then, there was an increase in islamophobia, and in response to the anti-Muslim rhetoric there was an increase in actual hate crimes as well (Khamis, 2018; Konstantinos, 2021). On the basis of the results of these studies, I argue that the anti-Asian discourse of hate in the Trumpian rhetoric does not come from nowhere, it has its immediate legacy in the landscape of American racist discourses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In order to understand the power and appeal of Trump’s rhetoric for his political base, one of the frequently asked questions in the relevant research is what makes Trump’s rhetoric appealing to his supporters even if the Trumpian political discourse is highly contradictory and far from well-reasoned arguments (Boucher & Thies, 2019; Hidalgo-Tenorio & Benítez-Castro, 2022). Extensive research has compared Trump’s language with other presidential candidates’ rhetoric (Mohammadi & Javadi, 2017; Lee & Xu, 2018; Ross & Caldwell, 2020). However, there is only a paucity of literature examining the impact of the Trumpian discourse on Covid-19 on the portrayal of the virus across various media platforms and to see if it either strengthens or undermines the citizens’ participation in the presidential rhetoric. Whilst, some research has been carried out on analyzing the effect of his inflammatory phrase “Chinese virus”, there have been few empirical investigations into how the anti-Asian resentment creep across the media field of political communication in the USA, what roles the new media plays in its articulation and perpetuation, and how it attenuates or enhances the rhetoric of hate to the point of normalization when it is

taken up and reiterated by the individual comments of the citizens under the appropriate social media posts.

Given that I am concerned with how Trump responds to the Covid-19 crisis and what effects follow from his tweeting behavior, this project investigates what Trump does discursively in his mediated responses to the health crisis. The primary subject of this research is current political rhetoric in the United States, with a narrowed scope covering Donald Trump's presidency from January 20, 2017 to January 20, 2021. However, the actual data is concerned with the Covid-19 pandemic collected from March 16, 2020, its formal declaration in the US, to January 20, 2021, the end of Trump's presidency (Chen et al., 2022). The core concern in the analysis of political discourse pertains to "the question of action", "of what to do" for the consolidation of power (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013, p. 17). This project, therefore, investigates and evaluates of argumentation to analyze the racist and xenophobic ideologies at play in the Trumpian political discourse, specifically, in the Trump tweets responding to the emergence of the Covid-19 virus. In line with my understanding of the mediation of texts through the different institutions/platforms of media, I shall have three various sets of data: Trump's Tweets, the news report of them by CNN and Fox News, and the readers' comments on their Facebook accounts – all three from March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. Hence, the project may raise awareness of how (much) the Trumpian rhetoric can manipulate the public discourse and perpetuate dominant values of hate and self-serving ideologies. Consequently, the project also sheds light on how the Trumpian hate speech may act as a powerful device creating consent or acquiescence rather than exercising power through the coercion of physical force. Additionally, since I have chosen the two major US right- and left-leaning media platforms, Fox News and CNN, respectively (Blake, 2014; Rozado & Kaufmann, 2022), my project also investigates the influence of the USA media outlets in either amplifying or mitigating the rhetoric of hate, which is far from the usual, essentially ideological, assumptions and understanding of the political media to be a 'neutral' player who

only ‘reports’ on but should have no share in producing what it purports to ‘convey’, the “reality”, denying that it is but merely a particular, value saturated “representation of reality” (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 12).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

In this project, texts are seen as elements of social events, thus, they are not only the effects of language and orders of discourse but the effects of social structures and social institutions. Similarly, meaning making relies not only on what is explicitly said in the text but on what is implicit, that is, what is only assumed to be the case (Fairclough, 2003). He (2003) claims that it is imperative to identify the unsaid assumptions when doing analysis on the account that the explicitly said in the text always depends upon the network of implicit statements for its received meaning. This dynamic relationship between the said/unsaid constituent elements of a particular meaning, such as Covid-19 in the Trumpian rhetoric, is captured by his concept of intertextuality (Fairclough, 2003, p. 47). In its most obvious sense, intertextuality means elements of other texts in the form of quotations. However, there are implicit ways of integrating elements of other texts apart from quoting what has been said and written. Therefore, this study attempts to provide comprehensive answers to the following three research questions:

(1) How do the messages about the virus articulated in Donald Trump’s Tweets become a persuasive strategy of producing racist and/or xenophobic meanings around the concept ‘China virus’ – either explicitly named or implicated?

(2) What kind of ideologies are sustained or challenged in the process of reporting the President’s Tweets or answers at press conferences by the two main media platforms, Fox news and CNN?

(3) In what ways and how much are the discourses of racism and xenophobia reiterated in the individual citizen’s comments to the chosen news reports on the Facebook pages of the two media sites, and how does this online process contribute to circulating these discourses beyond digital platforms into everyday communication?



Question 2 and 3 are meant to explore and show that the Trumpian discourse is not an individual particularity – explored through Question 1 – but one that becomes a dominant mode of political communication through its mediation by the news platforms and its circulation on social media platforms.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This is an interpretative research project, applying systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis as an analytical resource for exploring the ideological features of Donald Trump’s political communication on Twitter about the Covid-19 pandemic. My major contribution to the existing research on Trump’s political rhetoric is the systematic and comprehensive analysis of the meaning of “China/Chinese virus” in the full corpus of his tweets between the emergence of the virus and the end of his presidential term, exposing the tweets’ ideological work of inculcating and sustaining racist and xenophobic ideologies.

In addition, this project goes beyond the analysis of the actual tweets and explores the influence of the media on the public discourse through what Fairclough (2003) calls “textual chain” (p. 38) that moves and circulates the particular ideologies in the genres of tweets through the CNN and Fox News news reports and into social media comments. Tracing down the recontextualization of the ideological meanings of ‘Covid-19’ in the various media genres (tweets, news reports, social media comments) through the analysis of their intertextuality, I can demonstrate how Trumpian rhetoric is disseminated and perpetuated by the social media platforms and their audiences who participate in the process of meaning-making.

## **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

Chapter 1 begins by articulating the scope and purpose of the study, establishing its academic significance, and delineating the relevance of the present research. It systematically presents the research questions that guide the inquiry. Finally, the chapter concludes by previewing the subsequent chapters, offering a structural map that guides the readers through the rational progression of the thesis and highlights the interconnections between its constituent parts.

Chapter 2 has three main parts. The first, theoretical part provides a comprehensive overview of CDA's theoretical foundations and methodological approaches, while the second begins by tracing the deep and intertwined roots of American xenophobia and anti-intellectualism. It then connects these historical traditions to the contemporary phenomena of political hate speech, particularly as manifested in the Trumpian rhetoric. The third part of the chapter shifts the focus to Donald Trump's rhetorical strategies and reflects on the implications of this discourse for citizens' political engagement and hate crimes.

Chapter 3 starts the actual data analysis of the research. It employs the Appraisal Framework, using three categories of analysis: attitude, graduation, and engagement, to examine Donald Trump's tweets during the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter focuses on a keyword-defined corpus of 708 tweets shared by the president between March 2020 and January 2021. The analysis specifically targets the tweets containing the selected keywords, namely 'Covid', 'Coronavirus', 'pandemic', 'Asian/Asia', and 'China/Chinese virus'. The analysis reveals how Trump's strategic deployment of evaluative language resources, particularly through geography- and ethnicity-based naming practices of the virus, integrates pandemic communication into his own pre-existing nationalist narratives. The results demonstrate how his language choices in the tweets construct binary oppositions between American institutions and racialized external threats, thereby effectively naturalizing anti-Asian sentiment.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis using Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 1995b). It focuses on how much CNN and Fox News have reiterated or deconstructed the ideological effects of Trump's naming of Covid-19 as the "China virus" or "Chinese virus". I examine if and how these news reports reflect and reinforce the established political stances of the two outlets — i.e. CNN's liberal framing and Fox News' conservative positioning. The analysis reveals that CNN and Fox News do more than report the news. They actively construct ideological narratives that resonate with and shape their readers' responses. CNN's critical stance on Trump's rhetoric and its emphasis on racial sensitivity positions the news platform as a defender of

progressive democratic norms. Fox News, on the other hand, uses a discursive strategy that justifies nationalist sentiments and aligns with Trump's "America First" rhetoric. Thus, both outlets reflect and reinforce the polarized media and political landscape in the United States.

Chapter 5, the last analytical chapter, investigates how online audiences respond to CNN and Fox News coverage of Trump's reflections on Covid-19 by analyzing their appropriate Facebook comment sections using Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA). It examines how discourses of racism, xenophobia, and blame are reiterated, challenged, or reframed by the platform users, highlighting differences in the ideological perspectives of their comments. By focusing on citizens' public political engagement on social media, this chapter reveals how audience responses reflect and reinforce the partisan leanings of their respective platforms, thereby demonstrating the interactive dynamic between media users and the political discourse that is framed and conveyed by the news media.

Chapter 6 concludes the study, drawing together the key findings of the research. It begins with a reflection on the ideological investments of the Trumpian rhetoric on Twitter, followed by a synthesis of the political stance of the two chosen media outlets—CNN and Fox News—when framing the Covid-19 discourse in their news reports. Finally, I point out the impact of these media reports on the audiences' responses to these narratives in their online comments. As an act of self-reflection, I offer some critical reflections on the broader implications of the study.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks**

This chapter is designed to move from broad analytical methods to the specific historical and digital contexts relevant to this study.

First, the chapter outlines comprehensive overview of CDA's theoretical foundations and methodological approaches. The theoretical section begins by tracing the intellectual lineage of CDA in critical linguistics and systemic functional linguistics. Then I examine the contributions of key CDA theorists, arguing that CDA is a tool for analyzing power structures and ideologies embedded within actual discourses.

Second, the chapter constructs the historical and ideological context for the analysis. This part begins by examining the historical foundations of xenophobia and anti-intellectualism in the United States, tracing their deep roots in the nation's political culture. The focus then narrows to discuss the function of hate speech in the contemporary political context.

Finally, the chapter situates the analysis within the contemporary digital landscape. It explores the role of social media as a platform for Trump's personalized political discourse, examining how it both legitimizes such rhetoric and connects to real-world outcomes like political engagement and hate crimes. By integrating these theoretical, methodological, historical, and digital frameworks, this chapter provides the comprehensive foundation necessary for the detailed analysis that follows.

### **2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

The concept of "discourse" was introduced by Michel Foucault (1972, 1994) who conceptualized "discourse" to "statements" shaped by relations of power in particular historical moments. He grasped its specificity by four characteristic features, that is, objects, enunciative modalities, concepts and strategies (Foucault, 1972, pp. 34-78). He succinctly exemplified madness and defined objects in isolation from 'the foundation of things' (p. 53), but only came into existence out of an elaborate framework of discourse. As opposed to literacy theory, various positions of speaking

subjectivity are regularly effect to the enunciative field. In other words, enunciative modalities can be conceptualized as institutional, academic or professional legitimacy that grants authority to certain speakers within a discourse. Again Foucault (1972) posited the formation of concepts at a ‘preconceptual level’ (p. 67), which allows a process that enables the formation of consistent patterns and rules within discourse, which in turn permits a heterogeneous multiplicity of ideas (Sarti et al., 2019). Strategy is central to Foucault’s (1972) understanding of power, which denotes the underlying rules and mechanisms governing the ‘appropriation of discourse’ (p. 75), including assumptions of agency, motives, and interests. Günther Kress (1985), one of the influential CDA scholars pulled these four elements together from the perspective of linguistic analysis of language use as follows: “discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (pp. 6-7). In fact, when Kress refers to discourses in the plural, he means actual, particular discourses. This distinction between the abstract, explanatory concept of “discourse” (instead of “language”) and the particular realizations of discourses is captured by James Paul Gee (1999) when he differentiates between Discourse with a capital letter “D” and discourse with a small “d”. The former encompasses the information that is generated and circulated through talk; the manner in which the world is viewed and behaved in; the values and behaviors that “constitute social practices” ; and the “system of thoughts”, assumptions and “talking patterns” that are prevalent in a specific area (pp. 26-27). The latter one traces the actual instances of language use, that is, text and talk within a given institution in a particular cultural and social context. This distinction is similar to language and languages, observes Paul Chilton (2004, pp. 9-14). Thus, the research in discourse studies to date has tended to focus on dynamic rather than static linguistic entities. Influenced by critical linguistics studies, critical discourse analysis, drawing on these Foucauldian observations, as developed by Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak (1997), understand that discourse creates and reproduces social power relations, which also underscores and normalize the reproduction of social power and dominant relation. As a result any discourse analytical project is to study the formation and

changes of the meaning of the key concepts used in a given situation and see if and how those meanings contribute to the reiteration of the given relations of power as commonsense ways of knowing the world. This objective is similar to that found in Fairclough (1989, p. 43) who proposed “power in discourse” and “power behind discourse”. The former shows how the given power relationship is reflected in the discourse, that is in the representation of the phenomenon under investigation, and more precisely, the formation and reiteration of dominance in the given interaction and how that may control the content of the other interactions beyond the immediate moment.

Critical discourse analysis, for its language analysis, is anchored within systemic-functional linguistics. Although CDA is an approach within linguistics, it incorporates research achievements from sociology, political science, and semiotics. Fairclough (1992) argues that his approach is “critical” and “non-critical”. This critique includes both in accordance with the critical linguistics studies (CLS) of Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Günther Kress and Tony Trew (1979), and the analytical methods derived from Michel Pêcheux (1982) and Louis Althusser’s (1970) theory of ideology. Fairclough (1995b) adopted the foundational view of language as social practice from critical linguistics (Fowler et al., 1979) and the Hallidayan functional approach to analyzing how ideological positions are embedded in texts through lexical choices, grammatical structures, transitivity, and modality. However, Fairclough significantly expanded this framework by developing a three-dimensional model (1989, 1995b), emphasizing intertextuality and orders of discourse, more explicitly integrating social theory from Foucault, and focusing on how discursive practices evolve alongside social change-ultimately transforming critical linguistics into a more comprehensive critical discourse analysis that better accounts for the relationship between language, power, and social structures. Fairclough also incorporates key analytical methods from Louis Althusser (1970) and Michel Pêcheux (1982) to deepen his approach to discourse and ideology. From Althusser, he adopted the concept of ideology as a material practice that interpellates individuals into specific subject positions, which informed his understanding of how discourse

naturalizes power relations. Pêcheux's influence is evident in Fairclough's approach to intertextuality and discourse reproduction, particularly in the way ideological formations are embedded in language and subject positioning. By integrating these perspectives, Fairclough extended Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) beyond textual analysis, emphasizing how discourse operates within broader socio-historical contexts to both reinforce and contest hegemonic structures.

Günther Kress and Robert Hodge (1979) are mentioned by Fairclough for their concept of linguistic practice that is adopted from Althusser, which demonstrated how ideology operates through specific linguistic mechanisms. Kress and Hodge (1979) established that grammatical structures like nominalization, passive voice, and transitivity patterns function that naturalize power relations and obscure agency. They provided the crucial bridge between Althusser's abstract theory of interpellation and concrete textual analysis, showing how seemingly neutral linguistic choices construct common sense understandings that maintain hegemony. While adopting this linguistic operationalization of ideology, Fairclough expanded it by emphasizing the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures and incorporating it into his three-dimensional model (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2017) that connected textual features to broader social contexts-moving beyond Kress and Hodge's primarily linguistic focus to develop a more comprehensive theory of discourse as both socially constitutive and socially determined. The socially specific use of language involves the production and reproduction of ideology and thus language use inevitably works as an intervention in the social and cultural order of life. CLS emphasizes the importance of linguistic analysis of the text that works as an ideological critique by pointing out the connection between language structure and social structure through the analysis of meaning making. Specifically, it renders transparent what is overt, implied by the given set of assumptions that keep the explicitly stated statements meaningful and, as if, inevitably meaningful only that way. Halliday (1978, p. 36) asserted that there language analysis works like some "instrumental linguistics" in that it wants to explore the social functions, the purposes and effects of using language according to one logic rather than another. Subsequently, critical linguistics

has emerged as a form of instrumental linguistics with fine-grained discussions of the complex relations of ideological effects of any instance of language use. In fact, critical linguistic understands language use as a form of “language as social semiotic” (Halliday, 1978) that aims to challenge what counts for the members of a given institution/society “common sense” that have been ingrained in language.

Critical discourse analysis, therefore, adheres to the core of “critical” in critical linguistics and is relevant to the sense of critique emphasized by critical social theory, especially the Frankfurt School that is concerned with a critique of unequal relations of power. A CDA analysis therefore is not restricted to the linguistic analysis of a text within its language boundaries, disconnected from its narrower (more immediate) and broader social and cultural contexts over time. In this sense, CDA focuses not only on the specific language features of discourse, but also on how the given perspective that is brought about textually reproduces in social practices what we understand as social facts of our everyday life; such as the understandings concerning the various South-Asian communities living in the USA during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since this subject compiles political and media study to explore how political discourse is related to social practices, specifically, in social media practice. In doing so, political discourse, here, is also a tool for constructing and maintaining social practices, as well as a means of interpreting and negotiating theme. In this regard, this study falls within the scope of Critical Discourse Analysis. Furthermore, more specifically, the study pays close attention to the language choices employed in Donald Trump’s text for that the discursive strategies of the Trump during his term of office in Covid-19 period within the context of his ideological and language background.

As I have argued, discourse involves a link between power relations, ideologies, and meaning in the use of language, and therefore discourse is where we can turn to explore the exercising of these power relations and the reproduction of the ideologies involved (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), such as the ideology of white supremacy, nationalism, and nationalism at play in the Trumpian discourse on the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is considerable difficulty in defining the theoretical basis of CDA in a consistent manner. CDA studies span a wide range of theoretical and

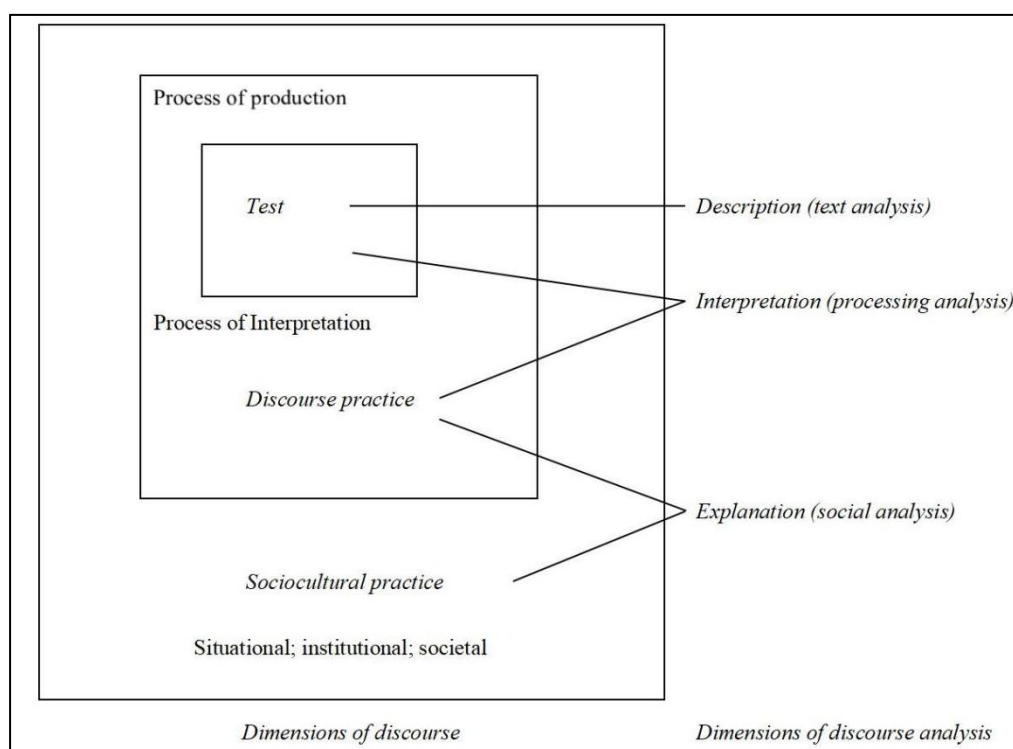


methodological perspectives and derive from many different theoretical backgrounds. Therefore, CDA includes diverse framework on a methodological level. As Meyer (2001) states, CDA has no consistent theoretical viewpoint, thus, explaining the different aspects emphasized by the various CDA representatives in their respective approaches. By focusing on different aspects, therefore, different CDA representatives discuss different theoretical and methodological steps with a view to presenting their respective contributions (see van Dijk, 1993a; Fairclough, 2000; Wodak, 2001). Therefore, my analysis is based upon a combination of three models in CDA. Mainly Fairclough's framework (1995b, 2003), which is a study of uncovered, implied statements and assumptions to see how they naturalize the ideological connections between discourses and social practices through making the meanings of key concepts 'common sense'. Secondly, Wodak's (1996) discourse historical method that, in addition to the Fairclough's concern with ideological effects of meaning, emphasizes that any discourse is a historical-related social event and therefore needs to be contextualized in the historical legacies of the current perspective. Finally, I shall draw on Teun van Dijk's (1993b) examination of power structures that are reflected in ideologically invested discourses.

### ***2.1.1 Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model***

Norman Fairclough is undoubtedly the most outstanding representative of the CDA framework developed at Lancaster University. Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen (2000, p. 449) acknowledges that "Fairclough successfully identifies large-scale hegemonic processes such as democratization, commodification, and technologization on the basis of heteroglossia constructions of text genres and styles".

To conceptualize and analyze discourse, Fairclough has outlined a three-dimensional model (Figure 1) (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 98).



**Figure 1.** Fairclough's 3-dimensional model

The first dimension of his model, discourse-as-text, is based on the study of language and concrete instances of discourse, which draws on a detailed micro-level analysis of the patterns of linguistic choices in lexicogrammar and in themes that are realized in some texts. This is grounded in Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics of the lexico-grammatical means of the ideational, relational, and textual elements of meanings with a focus on the grammatical means of transitivity, modality and coherence articulating them, respectively. The second dimension, "discourse-as-discursive practice", focuses on the specific ways the text is "produced, circulated, distributed and consumed" at a given moment of social life (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Along this second axis, it means that the analysis should focus on to the linguistic means that embed, or situate a given test within its context. The third axis inserts a text into its context are the linguistic categories of speech acts, rhetoric of argumentation for coherence building, and intertextuality. The third dimension, discourse as social practice, draws on the concepts of Althusser's ideology and Antonio Gramsci's (1971) hegemonic power, shedding light on the ideological effects of the meaning of a given concept as the outcome of the hegemonic processes of power that shape which actual discourse (textually produced perspective) comes to

emerge as the ‘obvious’, given representation of a social practice and its participants. He argues that there is an essentially ambivalent tendency to the socio-discursive practices of capitalism in the current phase of global capitalism (Fairclough, 1992). That ambivalence represents the phenomenon that the ideological mechanisms of late capitalism, wherein discourse is strategically used to normalize and legitimize free-market dynamics by framing them as self-evident and natural. This process simultaneously conceals the underlying power structures at play. Such insights underscore the necessity of fostering critical language awareness within educational contexts. Therefore, in this third dimension, the researcher is to analyze the specific texts of their data in the light of the broader relations of power and the struggle over the directions of social change. His work is of particular relevance in that it aims to explore and denaturalize, primarily our contemporary preoccupations with language and the importance of language in the processes of social change and social life about what counts as ‘legitimate’ meaning (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 47-55).

### ***2.1.2 Ruth Wodak’s Discourse-historical Approach***

The discourse-historical approach (DHA), which originates from Ruth Wodak’s research on Austrian social issues of exclusion, especially that of the history of racism, draws on Fairclough’s model but situates the particular choices of linguistic categories within their historical context. A major focus of Wodak and her research team’s studies is on Austrian politics as portrayed in the press, through the analysis of various media genres, including news reports, speeches by politicians, and government documents. There has been a considerable number of analyzes of the relevant genres in political discourse that draw on DHA, such as political press conference (Bhatia, 2006), or online political discussion (Kushin & Kitchener, 2009; Wojcieszak & Utz, 2009). By integrating the historical origins and context of the contemporary societal and political contexts in which discursive practice are situated, the discourse historical approach is able to examine political and historical topics and texts not only in substantial detail (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 22), but also build the external context of the chosen text and bring about the external validity of the claims made by the researcher (Tonkiss, 2004).

Comparing with Fairclough's framework, it emphasizes the importance of historical context for the changing meanings of a concept. It examines how language use has changed over time, and how this reflects broader shifts in social and political dynamics (Tenorio, 2011). DHA seeks to understand how language operates in social and political processes, including the construction of social identities, such as that of "Chinese virus" and the "Asian person" mediated by the former: the ways of the legitimization of what kind of power relations, and the reproduction of social norms and values (Wodak, 2020, p. 162). What is important for my study then to keep in mind is the setting of the time frame for the data collected and the legacy of meanings in question, investigating the ways in which the concepts of Trump's political discourse have undergone diachronic changes. I argue that these temporalities are captured by what Fairclough has called intertextuality and interdiscursivity, providing a perspective on the historical dimension of the Trumpian discursive strategies on Twitter.

### ***2.1.3 CDA as Ideology Critique***

CDA is not a homogeneous theoretical framework but, argues Teun A. van Dijk (1998), there are a few key principles that guide all variations of CDA research, including above all the ultimate aim to focus on the ways that language is used to create and maintain social inequalities. According to van Dijk (1995a), CDA analysis focuses primarily on the linguistic aspects of power abuse and the injustices and inequalities that arise from it, in order to try to promote positive social change. This interest in exploring ideological investments of meaning is Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (2009) define as the corollary principle shared by all CDA models is because for them ideology is the key element in establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. However, discourse is not only a means for enacting, legitimizing, and reinforcing dominant ideologies and power structures (Fairclough, 2006) but also their counter-discourses, challenging ideologically legitimized exclusions (Thompson, 2001). The latter point is important to keep in mind, even if such discourses are not in the focus of the current project. Van Dijk (1995a) notes that the exercise of power generally aims to control action, but is usually indirect and performed through

strategic language use, as opposed to immediate coercive influencing of intentions, plans, knowledge, beliefs, or opinions.

According to John B. Thompson (2013), ideology is conceptualized as a set of social forms and processes which provide the framework for the circulation of hegemonic symbolic forms both within and across societies as well as the context to facilitate this systematic movement, of meanings. According to van Dijk's (1995b), the concept of ideology is defined as "a collection of mental beliefs" held by a particular group of people or institution concerning a specific circumstance (van Dijk, 2006, p. 160). Therefore, ideology is a discursive representation of the socially constructed viewpoints. This is an ongoing, dynamic process as discourses articulate and reinforce particular ideologies, while a new discourse is created in response to changes in ideology and the ideologically mediated reality in question.

Essentially, CDA seeks to discover the interrelationship between discourse structures and ideological structures. This means it can analyze the ways in which language is used to promote certain ideologies and values rather than others. CDA can be used to uncover the power dynamics by looking at how certain voices are privileged and others are marginalized.

This project discusses how ideologies construct the discourse of the pandemic in the US and how discourse shapes ideologies of racism around the figure of the "Asian Migrant". Particularly, to see which types of ideologies are consolidated or challenged in the process of President Trump's tweets to the question in the news programs by the two main media platforms, Fox News and CNN. Ideologies, here, refer to "a set of mental beliefs" shared by a certain segment of society or an establishment relating to a specific occurrence or societal principle (van Dijk, 1995b, p. 245). The President was aware of how to make a spectacle and managed to gain the attention of the mass media through his actions (Azari, 2016). By using the power of the media, Trump was able to spread his narrative and invite the citizens to share ideologies of exclusion among his followers.

It is not language by itself that is powerful, but the way it is used and the people who are authorized by discourse to shape that use that gives language its power

(Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 14). In order to produce and maintain unequal power relations, Trump wields hegemonic narratives of identity, or controls access to specific discourses and spheres for their influence (Homolar & Scholz, 2019).

As texts are seen to be heterogeneous, they draw on differing discourses and ideologies of a theme, competing for dominance, making discourses sites of controversy and power struggle. Texts are sites of social conflict in the sense that they often reveal traces of ideological struggles for dominance and hegemony. According to van Dijk, political discourse is a highly argumentative discourse. Its analysis is critical in that the aim of the researcher is to figure out “the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse” (van Dijk, 1997, p. 11). The focus in particular is on the discursive conditions under which such contestation emerge and turn out to be successful and the outcomes, the consequences of the political and social injustice brought about by the texts. The analysis is therefore concerned with the intertextuality (multiple discourses brought together) and the means of recontextualization of conflicting narratives across multiple public spaces that are seen to be the conflicts over dominance and influence.

Above all, CDA aims to analyze the interaction between “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1995, p. 204). For example, a significant amount of anti-Asian, misogynistic, and hate propaganda can be found in digital media, which is not usually expressed explicitly in overt value judgement. From this perspective, CDA aims to increase transparency and visibility of discourses, to expose power relations in modern societies. More specifically, critical approaches systematically examine the systems of belief and discourse through several analytical perspectives (van Dijk, 2005, p. 20), namely, social, cognitive and discourse analysis.

## **2.2 Ideological Intersections: Xenophobia, Cyberhate and Trumpism**

Donald Trump’s tenure as the 45th president of the United States spanned from 2017 to 2021, who is considered one of the most controversial and unconventional figures in US presidential history (Rehman, 2017; Gabriel et al., 2018). A major

feature of his political communication is his intensive use of new social media platforms, specifically Twitter (Ott, 2017; Stolee & Caton, 2018; Ross & Caldwell, 2020). His language has received much criticism with a particular focus on his use of hate-speech (Brown & Sinclair, 2019; Nacos et al., 2020). It is argued that the discursive field of the tweets by Donald Trump is permeated by stigmatization, by identity categories that are of linguistic slurs against a variety of racial, ethnic and religious groups, and even members of the middle class when found ‘disloyal’ to the President (Silva, 2019).

In fact, the heightened use of hate speech in Trump’s tweets is not exceptional. There has been a gradual rise in several studies of discriminatory rhetoric in the course of the abuse of social media by politicians. They make assumptions about the allegedly malicious intentions of ‘others’, and appeal to the emotion of fear that legitimizes their negative language against those ‘others’ in order to incite the public to take action (Vargo & Hopp, 2020). Wodak (2021, p. 6) defines hate speech as “shameless normalization” of violent exclusion manipulated by politicians on the populist far-right who violate conventional rules of adversarial but not hostile political communication. She argues that far-right populist leaders play a significant role in normalizing blatantly offensive language behavior in political discourse. Donald Trump’s far-right political discourse has been investigated in studies focusing on xenophobia (Parmar & Furse, 2023), islamophobia (Pertwee, 2020), racism (Silva, 2019).

### ***2.2.1 Historical Foundations of Othering in the U.S.***

To understand the resonance and impact of Trump’s anti-Asian rhetoric during the Covid-19 pandemic, one must recognize that it is not a new phenomenon but a potent manifestation of ideological frameworks deeply embedded in American history. The United States has a long and troubled history of xenophobia, defined by Erika Lee (2020) as both an ideology of fear toward foreigners and a system of power used to divide and control. This system is a core function of the American “racial state”, which actively engages in “racial projects” to create and reproduce structures of domination based on race (Wacquant, 2024). These projects have historically defined

who is truly “American”—often a narrow, white, Anglo-Saxon ideal—while casting other groups as foreign threats (Smith, 2000; Ambrosio, 2002). This ideology of a racial state did not remain abstract; it was put into practice through a series of legislative actions targeting those deemed outsiders. What began as broad political fears would eventually culminate in policies of explicitly race-based exclusion.

From its earliest days, America debated the role of foreigners. While the nation was built by immigrants, fear and suspicion quickly led to restrictive policies. In 1798, amid fears of radical ideas from the French Revolution, the Federalist-dominated Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, which allowed the president to expel any foreigner deemed dangerous (Pickus, 2009). However, early nativist undercurrents, the 19th century was a period of profound economic expansion for the United States, fueled significantly by immigrant labor. Throughout the antebellum period, particularly in the 1840s and 1850s, millions of immigrants, predominantly from Ireland and Germany, arrived and became integral to the nation’s industrial and infrastructural development (Ferrie, 1999). This influx of labor was the primary force behind the construction of critical transportation networks, including canals, turnpikes, and railroads, which were essential for westward expansion and market integration (Martin, 1992). However, the fundamental contradiction between the nation’s economic reliance on immigrants and the nativist sentiment challenging their place in the republic sharpened considerably around the 1890s, framing immigration as a national problem (Sanchez, 1997). The perception of a crisis gained federal legitimacy when President Theodore Roosevelt initiated a congressional commission to study the issue. This commission ultimately marshaled data to give a veneer of scientific authority to the prejudicial claim that recent immigrants were content with wages and conditions that native-born Americans found unacceptable, thereby formally codifying immigrants as a threat to the nation’s economic and social fabric (Weisberger, 1994).

The anti-immigrant sentiment of the early 20th century, which incorporated in law, represents the successful codification of a xenophobic ideology with deep historical roots. Following the revival of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915, this nativist



movement reached its legislative peak with the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 (Winter, 2018). This law was a direct manifestation of the Klan's theology, which blended Protestantism with pseudoscientific eugenics to justify a racial hierarchy. The KKK, a major proponent of the act, sought to preserve a mythical white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant America by legally enforcing its vision of racial purity (Heikkilä, 2021). The national origins quota system was the mechanism for this vision, designed to severely limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe by tying admission numbers to older, more "Nordic" population demographics (Mirel, 2020, pp. 39-42). This deliberately favored immigrants from Great Britain and Northern Europe while drastically cutting the numbers of Italians, Poles, and Russians, whom nativists and eugenicists deemed racially inferior.

In addition, this racist ideology was not confined to targeting European immigrants. The Klan's history also includes a legacy of anti-Asian racism, particularly in the American West, where it engaged in violent campaigns against Chinese residents and workers (Liu et al., 2024). Efforts like the "Truckee Method" were designed to violently expel Chinese people from local communities, demonstrating that the Klan's quest for a racially "pure" nation was built on the subjugation and exclusion of multiple non-white groups (Johnson, 2022). The institutionalized discrimination against Asians in the United States began with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first time in U.S. history a specific immigrant group was federally barred based on race and class (Das, 2018). The legislative debates surrounding the 1882 Act reveal a xenophobic ideology that would persist for generations, rooted in what became known as the "Yellow Peril" (Cho, 2022). This term was reinforced through popular culture and political rhetoric that accused the Chinese of spreading disease and immorality, all while undermining the wages of white laborers (Lyman, 2000). After Japan's military victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the focus of American fear simply shifted from the Chinese to the Japanese, with the same stereotypes of espionage and disloyalty being recycled (Witwer, 2015). Throughout the Cold War, the peril was linked to China and its allies in North Korea and Vietnam, briefly returned to an economically prosperous Japan in

the 1980s, and in the contemporary era, has once again centered on China. Therefore, the modern “Yellow Peril” narrative in the United States has a significant past; it did not arise in its full complexity all at once but developed partially through national policy and was powerfully reinforced by recurring economic anxieties, geopolitical conflicts, and organized nativist movements. As this racist discourse became embedded in America’s consciousness and sense of nationhood, its primary target showed remarkably flexible, shifting to align with the country’s anxieties.

Running parallel to the history of xenophobia is a potent tradition of anti-intellectualism, deeply intertwined with the growth of populist democracy in America (Cross, 1990). While the nation’s founders included formidable intellectuals, a suspicion of the ‘speculative’ mind quickly became a tool in political contests.

Even a figure as foundational as Thomas Jefferson was attacked by opponents for being a “man of letters” whose abstract thinking was deemed dangerous for governance (Lim, 2008, p. 27). Supporters of Andrew Jackson, however, celebrated his lack of formal schooling (Remini, 2008, pp. 7-8), framing his innate, practical wisdom as a more valuable presidential quality than the theoretical knowledge of elites (Kiewe, 2024). This established a durable American political playbook: positioning a candidate as an authentic man of the people against a supposedly out-of-touch, educated elite. Additionally, historically characterized by a populist resentment of experts and a desire for simple solutions over complex analysis, anti-intellectualism has evolved into a key feature of American history. For instance, During the Progressive Era, Theodore Roosevelt successfully contrasted his experiential education with that of the soft learning of intellectuals (Rigney, 1991). The trope was famously sharpened by George Wallace, who accused his opponents as “pointy-headed intellectuals” (Goldfarb, 1998, p. 20) and was later used by George H.W. Bush, who accused his rival of having a “fastidious disdain” for popular traditions (Bonikowski & Gidron, 2016). Donald Trump, therefore, did not invent this strategy but inherited and dramatically amplified it, with research showing a strong correlation between distrust of experts and support for his candidacy (Oliver & Rahn, 2016). Recent scholarship demonstrates that anti-science attitudes in particular are no

longer just a general cultural trend but have become a core component of conservative political identity, actively leveraged by politicians (Szabados, 2019; Oreskes & Conway, 2022). This mobilized skepticism creates a powerful receptivity to xenophobic scapegoating. When scientific explanations from expert bodies are framed as partisan and untrustworthy, it creates an ideological vacuum that can be filled with simplistic, racialized narratives that require no intellectual scrutiny (Caudill, 2023). Therefore, American political history reveals two deeply rooted and often intertwined forces: a xenophobic tradition of racializing and “othering” specific groups to create scapegoats, and a populist strain of anti-intellectualism, frequently mobilized within conservative politics, that champions resentment against experts and elites.

### ***2.2.2 Hate Speech in the Political Context***

Hate speech is commonly in the focus of analysis in the field of critical legal studies, devoted to presenting and critically evaluating arguments for and against the codification of hate speech as harmful conduct, such as defamation (Jones, 1998; Scharffs, 2013), regarding the right to freedom of speech (Flauss, 2009; Howie, 2018). Nonetheless, in terms of language or communication, Laura Leets and Howard Giles (1999) states that hate speech is passed off as the utterances that is intended to harm, or that is perceived to do harm, regardless of intent, by its receivers. It should be noted that such speech may result in a multitude of injuries on different levels, such as individual, group, and societal. To support it, Brink (2001) defines hate speech as expression of discriminatory attitudes that gives rise to a deeply offensive affront to its targets and produces and entrenches social divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ beyond resolution. Hate speech takes the form of expressing, advocating, encouraging, promoting, or inciting hatred toward individuals or groups distinguished by a particular quality, such as “gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation” (Carlson, 2021, p. 125), that is damaging for the speaker (and their collective), one that is seen not only different and alien from the position of the speaker but is implied to be dangerous and threatening. As a passive and covert or an active and overt declaration of war against someone or some collective, it implies rejection, hostility, harm or destruction toward that person or

group, and a desire for the targeted group to get out of one's way (Parekh, 2006). Cohen-Almagor (2011) overviews the definitions of hate crime mediated by speech in many European countries, especially the historical reasons for the criminalization of hate propaganda in Germany due to its history of Nazi rhetoric during World War 2.

Despite the fact that hate speech may seem less immediately harmful than other forms of violence or crime, individuals facing hate speech find it overwhelming, limiting their ability to figure out the various stresses of life or navigate their life as before (Leets, 2002). Laura Leets also adds that in most Western societies, such as the United States, hate speech is unlikely to be sanctioned legally. Attributed to a strong legal tradition of free speech granted by the First Amendment of the Constitution in the United States, the domain of hate speech is not constrained, free speech should prevail (Richard, 2016). According to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed without condition (Barendt, 2005). The judicial branch has historically upheld these rights in a tradition that is meant to prevent government attempts at censorship, thereby defending the media against allegations of libel and defamation (Sadurski, 1999). Even though a major reason for hate speech to occur may be the right to freedom of expression (Chetty & Alathur, 2018), the US Supreme Court has consistently upheld the importance of freedom of speech and expression and has defended the media from government interference, which would count as censorship. This strong legal tradition has been a cornerstone of US parliamentary democracy and has protected the press from attempts by the government to restrict the public's access to information. Historically, racial and status protections through hate crime laws have been an issue in American politics and jurisprudence (Levin, 2002). Yet, with the rise of social media communication, lines between freedom of expression and hate speech in contemporary democracies are blurred, it is often difficult to grant the equally important right to equal protection by the law, the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. Nevertheless, when these two constitutional rights are in conflict, freedom of speech under the First Amendment tends to prevail, as U.S. courts have historically prioritized the protection of free expression, even when it involves

offensive or harmful speech (Smolla, 2020). Besides, the marketplace of ideas doctrine, which originates from *Abrams v. United States* (1919) and has been reaffirmed in numerous decisions, supports the notion that the best way to counter harmful speech is not through government censorship but through more speech, debate, and public discourse (Dorsett, 1996). This principle is deeply ingrained in American political thought and legal tradition, reinforcing the preference for free speech over government-imposed restrictions (Weinstein, 2011).

Recent research mainly offers an adequate literature on hate speech in cyberterrorism (Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Kursuncu et al., 2019), and argues that hate speech in politics should be taken into account. As hate speech represents and reproduces the divisive qualities of a society rather than its unifying characteristics in common (Ezeibe & Ikeanyibe, 2017), it is easy to politicize particular social differences to the point of ‘fearing the other as enemy’ across various social groups in a democracy.

Undoubtedly, politicians’ narratives are widely viewed as legitimizing and inspiring hate crimes, and as soothing or escalating the tensions resulting from antecedent hate crimes (Murphy, 2021). Hate speech can function as an instrument of accessing and maintaining political power, conversely, the risk of being victimized by online hate speech has also been found to rise among politicians (Gorrell et al., 2020). Clearly, the practice of expressing hatred has become a routine tendency in right wing political communication, and Donald Trump has certainly been using it as a shortcut to gain instant popularity and thereby power by shifting the focus of his citizens on the “harmful aliens”, this way covering up the social problems his government is unable to tackle. Trump has demonstrated that it is possible to gain large followings by making controversial statements of hate speech (Fish, 2019). He has managed to tap into the emotions of those who feel alienated from and neglected by the political establishment and downplay the fact that he is the very center of the power. By creating an us-versus-them narrative, he has galvanized a large portion of the population who feel that their voices are not being heard.

The victims of hate speech may be harmed directly or indirectly. In the wake of Trump's demonization of certain groups and individuals, threats and actual violence against them have increased. In his verbal attacks, he has usually targeted racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, the media in general and journalistic individuals in particular, as well as famous politicians, mainly his opponents, the Democratic Party officials (Nacos et al., 2020). Hate speech victims are especially vulnerable when the "aggressive rhetoricians" are prominent figures in the public sphere who have a wide following (Nacos et al., 2020). For instance, under the Trump administration, far-right politics was mainstreamed in the White House through its foreign policy towards China and its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been argued that the murdering of eight individuals in the Atlanta shootings, including six Asian women, on March 16, 2020 indexes best the power of stigmatized racial statements made by Trump and shared by his supporters (Chan et al., 2021; Rubin & Wilson, 2021; Viladrich, 2021; Gao, 2022). In short, the stigma attached to such targeted groups can be used as a device of oppression and coercion.

### ***2.2.3 Trumpism: From Hate Speech to Political Ideologies***

Deborah Cameron (2008) states that the linguistic variations are more than just arbitrary changes. They are effects of the way people come to conceptualize their language, and that of the values resulting from those conceptions. It also means that our understanding of language and how it is used, including hate speech, are subject to or rather sites of ideological influences, and there is a complex relationship between beliefs about language and other things in the world. Thus, language (use) is conceived as an important tool for forming and circulating ideas. Cameron argues that members of the political class wielding power use words not only to explicitly present their stance but as much to conceal that they are positioned and authorized to set the terms of the meaning of given concepts, often by using ambiguous or open-ended meanings. Additionally, policy-makers reduce language to rules with the social and moral order in which laws are a means of preventing the threat of chaos and stifling dissent. Kathryn Ann Woolard and Bambi B. Schieffelin (1994) also state that language ideologies, that is ideologically invested meanings of language, such as the

meaning of hate speech as one form of free speech rather than an act of violating the rights of the targeted person or group to equal protection, can actively mediate and connect language to “identities, institutions and values in all societies”. This way any explicit or indirect statements on language or language use, including hate-speech, are going to be important aspects of my analysis.

Digital and social media have become an essential tool to disseminate ideology and attract the attention of a larger audience in Western societies where politicians with the help of digital and social media reinforce ideological narratives and manipulate political discourse (Bartlett, 2014). As a result, there is no doubt that ideology can be detrimental to society if it is created and pushed by an elite on these social media platforms to serve as a tool for controlling and manipulating members of society (Wallerstein, 1990; DeMarrais et al., 1996). Trump has exploited divisive social beliefs in pursuit of his political agenda that mainly originate from Right-wing authoritarian populism, extremism and white supremacy ideology (Campani et al., 2022). Typically, he has consistently used hate rhetoric to mobilize his political base and gain power, by demonizing immigrants, minorities, and political groups, and personalities in competition with him (Hodges, 2019). Edwards (2023) claims that the act of identification performed by hate speech constitutes in-group normalization, that is, by naturalizing the norms and traditions of the in-group as if universal and unproblematic. Each utterance of hate speech then counts as a habitual practice of verbally mediated violence practised by members of the group against members of what they have produced as an out-group. This means that the infraction, even though violating the standards of a democratic society, is identified with the communal worldview of the offenders’ in-group. Additionally, this normalization of the us-versus-them also influences in-group members’ attitudes and actions in moments of social conflicts. According to Charles S. Liebman (1983), extremism is “a desire to expand the scope, detail and strictness of religious law, social isolation and the rejection of the surrounding culture” (p.75). The term, extremism used to describe the policies and views of the Trump administration can be seen as extreme and divisive in this sense of the word, such as the attacks between those who sustained wearing

masks and those who had strong opposition to it during Covid-19. In addition to Althusser (2014), ideology encompasses the social structure in all its forms and penetrates the most fundamental and ordinary institutions, entities, and social relationships. In other words, ideology is evident in how individuals communicate and behave, along with their internal cognition and beliefs, which is a powerful force that shapes and influences our behaviors, beliefs, and values. The Trump administration's right-wing ideology is reflected in the policies they have implemented, such as the Muslim ban introduced in 2017 and their controversial stance on immigration, both as a matter of legislative and securitizing acts and as a hate rhetoric and messaging, which is often divisive and has stoked fear and hatred of certain social groups.

Kolin (2023) claims that Trumpist ideology is deeply embedded in racial violence, which is revealed in his endorsement of xenophobic political ideologies. Although Donald Trump's public expressions against ethnic minority groups as a candidate did not originate the white supremacist movement, they influenced existing white supremacist groups and led some of these leaders to publicly and more aggressively call for the elimination of non-White people in the United States. He argues that these external forces are a grave threat to America, and that decisive action must be taken to protect the nation and its citizens. Specifically, the immigration ban imposed by President Trump on seven Muslim-majority countries and his call for deportation of all undocumented immigrants and erecting a wall on the U.S.-Mexico boundary line (Kerwin, 2018; Pierce et al., 2018), and expressed a desire to attract more immigrants from Scandinavian countries, such as Norway (Villazor & Johnson, 2019). These speeches have caused a lot of controversy for their endorsement of xenophobic and discriminatory values but others, however, believe that they are necessary to protect the safety of the country and its citizens (Doherty, 2016). Consequently, the debate surrounding these policies has been heated and highly polarized. According to the former disposition, it is unquestionable, that Trump is a demagogue who, like all agitators, has distinguished between the loyal members of his in-group and the disloyal members of his out-group in his hate-rhetoric (Lajevardi & Oskooii, 2018). For instance, Trump's stance on wearing the mask was conveyed in a rhetoric which



has been used to divide the American people, normalizing inter-group hostility, as it pits those who support the wearing of masks against those who oppose it (Lang et al., 2021). This goal can be achieved through the intimation of hatred towards the targeted outgroup, which allows people who cannot unite around other political agendas that could actually make their life easier on the basis of a shared ‘enemy’. Trump and his extremist followers indeed have exploited this by demonizing immigrants, Muslims, and other minority groups in order to foster a sense of unity amongst his supporters (Finley & Esposito, 2020). It resonates Christian Fuch’s (2018, p. 179) conceptual term ‘political fetishism’ elucidates how right-wing nationalism, xenophobia, and racism function as ideological instruments to obscure class conflicts by redirecting societal frustrations towards constructed scapegoats. This process fetishises the nation to divert attention from power inequalities and reinforce a collective ‘we-identity’ through fabricated narratives.

Piazza (2020) has shown that political hate speech is consequential, it leads to a rise in domestic terrorism, while the effect operates indirectly, working through an increase in political polarization. Political polarization is a process by which individuals become increasingly divided and oppositional along political lines (Carothers & O’Donohue, 2019). This can lead to a situation where the ‘us’/‘them’ distinctions, the two sides of an issue become increasingly entrenched in their positions and are less likely to engage in debates and compromise. This heightened hate rhetoric can then lead to an increase in domestic terrorism, as individuals become more entrenched in their positions and more likely to commit acts of violence. Trump’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic is an example of the racial violence that is inherent in the Trumpist ideology: His refusal to take the necessary steps to protect the vulnerable populations, his refusal to wear a mask, and his public statements downplaying the threat of the virus all foreground the figure of the ‘alien Asian intruder’ (Factbased Videos, 2020; Keith & Gharib, 2020).

His speech has also been studied to expose his idiosyncratic motives and targets of violence during the Covid-19 pandemic, which invited voters who support an autocratic political system, that is anti-immigration and American-first nationalism

signaled the societal transition from liberal democratic of racial integration toward a hostility racial violence (Cooper-White, 2022). Although Trump enjoys mass rallies to display his divisive views and delight in the waves of applause of “his” followers, he also makes use of the most effective communication technologies in order to deliver their messages (Daniels, 2008).

Ott (2017) examined how well the Trumpist political communication is suited to social media interaction, finding that Trumpian public discourse can be characterized by the three features of “simplicity”, “impulsivity”, and “incivility”. Due to the new media platform’s capability to produce user-generated content with its characteristics including interactivity, hypertextuality, and virtuality (Joseph, 2012; Albu & Etter, 2016; Aleksić & Stamenković, 2018; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018). These technological features enable Trump to engage directly with the public, bypassing traditional media channels, which enhances his ability to spread messages quickly and to mobilize supporters. Such platforms also allow him to frame issues in ways that resonate with his base, fostering polarization and reinforcing ideologies. While Donald Trump was running for president and serving as president, political discourse in the United States grew more hateful and divisive at an unprecedented speed, due to the capabilities of the new social media channels of communication (Nacos et al., 2020).

## **2.3 Digital Democratization of Social Media**

As the research on Trump’s social media engagement for his political agenda demonstrated above, the new media platform of Twitter has suggested to be extremely effective for circulating hate speech and divisive politics in the US. Hence, initial enthusiasm about the rise of social media and the internet as a space that will inevitably make communication and political decisions more democratic has turned out to be utopistic.

It is through social media that citizens and politicians are able to engage in a more extensive dialogue. Thus, political actors who have not been (yet) recognized by traditional media can benefit greatly from social media by building their “political

brand” and improving their visibility (Bauschke & Jäckle, 2023, p. 224). However, in addition to revolutionizing communication and content publishing, social media sites, such as Twitter, and community forums are increasingly being exploited to disseminate hate speech and arrange hate-based activities (Burnap & Williams, 2015). This runs parallel with the possibility that social media can also provide a platform for criticizing, discrediting, and in some cases even threatening politicians, thus making them accountable or, in the latter case putting them at risk of being the target of hate speech. Therefore, political actors have been under pressure to administer and moderate online debates in order to prevent violent remarks in communicating on platforms, such as Facebook (Kalsnes & Ihlebæk, 2021). This pressure to moderate has highlighted the importance of constructive dialogue in the digital age, and the need for citizens to engage responsibly in public discourse.

However, in case of Trump, as much as he is noted for blustering, bluffing, shouting incoherently, and threatening in his speeches offline, he has also employed a hybrid media campaign strategy that engages in traditional press events as well as strategic use of online communication and non-traditional tactics like “tweet storms” to generate coverage for his campaign and to strengthen the sense of belonging among his followers as ‘us’ (Wells et al., 2020). This strategy has allowed his campaign to reach a broader audience and gain more visibility. He has been able to stay ahead of the competition and appeal to both traditional and modern audiences provided they went along with his hate rhetoric. Throughout his tenure, his style and strategy were consistent (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017).

In our digitally connected world, the dream of democratizing knowledge, ideas, and information flows seemed to be given. Undoubtedly, the internet has allowed people to access information more easily and quickly than ever before. Digital media has enabled greater political engagement, allowing citizens to be informed, participate in discussion, and hold their leaders accountable. Citizens are now able to engage in discussions with people from all over the world and have access to a variety of news sources, enabling them to form their own opinions and hold their leaders accountable. However, without learning how to read the sources critically, without acquiring some

critical literacy, they can be ever more exposed to and manipulated on social media platforms. A critical reminder has been raised in light of recent developments in this regard in CDA's application to digital media content where researchers adopting CDA aim to examine how discourse and power relations intersect in the context of ordinary citizens' daily use of social media (Bouvier & Machin, 2020).

It has become clear in the CDA research that one of the most common models for understanding the concept of power is to see that social power, increasingly exercised via language (Fairclough, 1989) is based on the privilege of entry into public discourse, for instance, via news outlets (van Dijk, 1996). Put differently, it shows that power is distributed through the communication process and that those who have access to certain communication channels can control the discourse and shape the opinions of others. Thus, those with access to more powerful forms of communication, such as corporate and political leaders, have the ability to influence public opinion. Some studies indicate that manipulation in online contexts sometimes occurs via illegitimate discourse control (van Dijk, 2006). This includes the use of inflammatory language, the suppression of dissent, and the censorship of criticism. Such manipulation can lead to a lack of trust in online discourse and can even lead to a de-legitimization of the platform itself. Thus, It is critical to consider accessibility to participation in online contexts given the interactivity of current online media (Gee, 2015).

### ***2.3.1 Legitimation of Trump's Personalized Political Discourse in Social Media***

Political communication practice and research have become increasingly reliant on social media. Due to the greater availability of direct channels of communication, politicians can now bypass traditional media connections and address issues directly to the public (Broersma & Graham, 2012). From websites to blogs and social media, they have been quick to adopt the various Internet platforms, particularly during elections (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2011; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Larsson & Ihlen, 2015; Skogerbø & Krumsvik, 2015; Stier et al., 2018). For instance, as part of their campaign strategies during the 2010 general election, Dutch politicians actively encouraged candidate use of social media, including Twitter (Graham et al., 2016). A common finding in research from the 2016 U.S. election is that Trump demonstrated

an unparalleled ability to permeate news coverage (Lawrence & Boydston, 2017). Additionally, scholars have observed that right-wing populists have quickly mastered the use of digital and social media to reach wider audiences and mobilize followers (Engesser et al., 2017; Krzyżanowski, 2017). As Wodak (2015) notes, the rhetoric of exclusion is a defining characteristic of such right-wing populist discourse. As Van Dijk (1993c) argues, by examining the political discourse on racism, it can gain a deeper understanding not only of how racism is discursively reproduced, but also of the wider political context in which such reproduction takes place in other areas of life, such as the social media in case of my research project.

It appears at first glance that Twitter is a genuinely democratic medium, promoting individualized expression, building up a virtual community of concerned citizens. The Trumpian personality-centered politics can be closely coupled with decentralized communication technologies, as a consequence, decentralization does not necessarily enhance democracy, argues Caprara (2007). Caprara points out that there has been a diversion from issue-centered politics to more individual-centered politics. In this regard, several researchers have pointed out before the advent of social media that a politician's personality or the manner in which they are presented via the media and perceived by the electorate is more important than the political platform that they (allegedly) advocate (Pierce, 1993; Jones & Hudson, 1996). In terms of contemporary politics, social fragmentation has aggravated individuation, which is the mode of social condition in informationalized democracies (Beck, 2006) – which is further enhanced by the dominance of political communication on social media platforms, such as Twitter. According to Micheletti (2003, p. 4), a collective political action is currently not a conventional social movement with leaders, organizations, and identity frames, but rather a form of “individualized collective action”, where individual action is grounded in consumers' emotional disposition. Besides, Kreis (2017) also finds that social media platforms in general provide a way to appear closer to the people through the possibility of using a more personal(ized) language that is characterized by the combination of directness and simplicity, which has helped formulate a rhetorical strategy of confrontation in the name of articulating

one's "straightforward thought". In this context, Donald Trump has turned out to be the politician who manipulates "fake news" as the counter strategy, who is credited with taking the discourse of "fake news" into the mainstream (Morgan, 2018). He has repeatedly ridiculed mainstream media on Twitter with attaching pejorative labels to it, such as "fake news" and "fake media". The effect of this discourse strategy is that he could refer himself as "reliable source of truth", deploying these labels effectively in an attempt to discourage the general populace from giving credence to the press (Ross & Rivers, 2018). According to a Gallup polling, Americans no longer trust or have faith in the press to provide unbiased and accurate information about the news (Swift, 2017). This claim has overwhelmed virtually the hard core of the conservative supporters in the U.S., gaining the beneficial effect simultaneously on right-wing media outlets that have gained power, making user-shared digital news more prevalent, particularly since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. So much so that some researchers and news reporters (Dice, 2017; Lee & Hosam, 2020) have asserted that for them there is no doubt that Trump's ongoing claim to main stream media's responsibility for "fake news", contributed significantly to his rival, Hillary Clinton's loss in the 2016 presidential elections (Cramer, 2016). Additionally, his "fake news" stories shared on Facebook or Twitter were not only more prevailing than real news stories before the election but created the crisis for traditional conservative media on both sides of the political spectrum, such as Fox News and CNN (Stelter, 2020). Therefore, in contemporary political struggles, the concept of "fake news", initially intended to describe disinformation, has quickly become a propaganda tool, winning Donald Trump the election as a result of this strategic referencing to unreality.

Twitter has become an integral part of Trump's strategy for legitimizing his own beliefs, values, and actions, and delegitimizing those of his opponents (Rivers & Ross, 2020). Legitimacy is a core concept and value of political discourse, referring to the perceived credibility of political actors and institutions (van Dijk, 1997; van Leeuwen, 2007). Given that the language and actions used in seeking legitimacy are intended to establish a positive image of oneself. Former President Trump often uses language and rhetoric in his speeches and public statements that are intended to reinforce his

legitimacy as the reliable leader who is the source of “truth”, making his agenda captured by his campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again” the legitimate objective without any further discussion or substantiation of its actual content.

Paul Chilton (2004) states that a common political rhetorical tactic is to appeal to the potential voter’s emotions, which involves feeling emotionally involved within the discourse itself as well as being manipulating to accept the potential consequences of the political agenda without any clarification. It can be seen that Trump is particularly effective at evoking collective emotions in his personalized political discourse, particularly fear. This is his major strategy when depicting another group performing actions that allegedly should elicit a fearful response by his audience. The establishment of the legitimacy of this prevalent hate speech is possible by the creation of the figure of an ‘enemy’ and the construction of ‘justice’ that is argued to consist in the prevention of the ‘attacks’ associated with that figure in his hate speech rhetoric. As an example, a tweet by Trump that depicts Asians negatively is a discourse of racism within a social media platform, but one that may also function as a form of hate crime or a means of reproducing racism at a macro level - in van Dijk’s (1998) sense of the concept. He argues that social acts performed by individual actors are part of a broader social process, such as news-making and the reproduction of racism and in this sense structural in nature. This type of discourse has the capacity to further marginalize and dehumanize the Asian-American community. It can also lead to an increase in hate crimes against Asian people, which are on the rise in some parts of the America (Gover et al., 2020). In doing so, the anti-Asian sentiment is further fueled by the rise in hate crimes against Asians in the US.

The new style of political rhetoric and communication of hate in the Trumpian discourse is characterized by informal and anti-intellectual speech (Kayam, 2018). In other words, Trump’s speech stands out from traditional formal, professionalized political language for its highly hatred rhetoric of exclusion. Davis (2021) bears out that those voicing extremist ideologies, such as white supremacy or misogyny, tend to engage in more personal attacks and use more inflammatory language in online discussion forums. This sort of narcissistic persona presented in Trump’s Tweets with

a strong tendency of politicizing, he calls on his supporters to fend off hecklers at his rallies or to disparage his opponents (Noguera, 2019). However, there has been a lack of attention paid by scholars to Trumpian rhetorical styles in Covid-19 that characterize personalized politics on the (radical) Right. The research to date has tended to focus on his amateurish practices during the 2016 election campaign (Bostdorff, 2017; Savoy, 2018; Ghazal Aswad, 2019) rather than on his consistent performance in the national health crisis. Thus, this study explores how President Donald Trump leverages his twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) as an instrument for disseminating his extremist discourse of racism, his hate speech targeted at the Asian-American collective through a strategy of power politics. The study examines how the tweets by Trump constructs and reinforces the concept of a homogeneous in-group people threatening ‘us’ at the axis of several dimensions of life.

### ***2.3.2 Political Engagement in Hate Crimes***

There has been a rapid change in the traditional ways in which individuals, groups and institutions interact with the emergence of the Internet. Many demographics no longer call or text as often as they used to, handwritten letters are becoming rarer, and email is not taken for granted as the first written communication choice anymore (Lenhart, 2012). Moreover, print newspapers are losing readers and their circulation is declining, even though large media organizations still exert considerable economic and political power but mostly in the wake of launching their online platforms (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012). That is, the advent of cyberspace and the evolution of computer-mediated communication have changed how people interact with the world and relate to each other. As a telling effect of these changes is the increase of hate speech in recent years due to the specific characteristics of online communication, including anonymity and mutual support among web users (Becker et al., 2021; Monnier et al., 2022).

Among the main features of the new media communication is the ability to create an interactive environment which encourages users to become active producers rather than passive consumers of information (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002). This allows users to engage with the content in meaningful ways, such as participating in discussions,



giving feedback, and even creating their own content. More and more citizens are using the Internet to learn about government policies, discuss issues, contact officials, and get voter registration information (Bimber, 2003, p. 166). Similarly, Landemore (2012) argues that it is imperative for an open society to enable everyone to participate in collective decision-making rather than restrict decision making to a small group of individuals. There is much more to social media than seeking information, using the internet as a tool, people can voice their discontent with the state by publishing comments on the social media accounts of politicians, forwarding e-mails, expressing opinions about current events and politics, and engaging in coordinated digital protests that target certain regulations (Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006). In 2008, over 35% of messages on Facebook, for instance, were concerned with economic, political, and social issues. In addition, 17% of the messages discussed campaign strategies. In 2012, 28% of the messages posted discussed substantive policy-related issues, as opposed to 37% discussing campaign strategy (Camaj & Santana, 2015). These tendencies have led to an increased awareness of the role of civic participation in the democratic process, inspiring citizens to become more engaged and involved in their local, state, and federal politics: the internet also provides opportunities for civic and political engagement, enabling users to become more informed and engaged citizens (Mitchell et al., 2015). Moreover, the Internet undeniably provides greater access to political knowledge and a variety of viewpoints, a development that supports the broader goals of a deliberative democracy (Dahlgren, 2005). This can take the form of online campaigns, petitions, or direct communication with government representatives. While retweeting messages from politicians or parties is considered a low-cost form of political engagement compared to other forms, research suggests that these “low-threshold activities” may be consequential as they align with the political interests of those involved (Halupka, 2014).

According to some of the arguments presented, internet access is likely to encourage a more diverse group of people to engage in the political process, and enhanced access to information could lessen the informational divide (Polat, 2005). Glan Vittorio Caprara and Philip G. Zimbardo (2004) reveal that those in favour of a

political party whose ideology matches their personality traits vote for candidates who are similar to them. Even though candidates' personalities dominate voters' attention, individual characteristics of voters, such as their characteristics and values, are decisive for their political choice. According to Gramsci, individuals may align their views with ideas they consider they can identify with through social interaction (Filippini & Barr, 2017, p. 8). Put differently, social media interaction can enable people to share and spread their beliefs, views, and ideologies with a wider audience, and to engage in dialogue with similar-minded peers in order to reinforce their own sense of identity. As a result, a space that is dominated by politically homogeneous group exchanges naturally emerges. According to this strand of research, the Internet has the potential to enhance public engagement by expanding the availability of civic knowledge, facilitating political discussions, and providing a new platform for political participation and expression, especially among previously uninvolved groups (Kreiss, 2015).

However, James Paul Gee (2005, pp. 10-13) underscores that there are underlying causes of inequality in society to be found in the way people may or may not have access to speaking in particular ways in a given institution, such as the Internet, linking them up with different statuses and social goods. In his formulation, the study of language use is therefore indicative of issues of social inequity, of the ways a particular argumentation of the Trumpian hate speech may produce the particular figures it is to target. Similarly, van Dijk (1997) defined political discourse that not only involves dominant actors, i.e., politicians, but also the citizens, who, as voters, may take part in the political process of engaging in hate-crime. Through his Twitter account, Donald Trump has been able to spread his far-right ideology unmediated as president, reaching a wide audience with his tweets (Lakoff, 2016). Donald Trump's personalized discourse of Twitter has brought attention to the effects of his incendiary rhetoric on public discourse. His posts have been met with criticism from both sides of the political aisle and have been used as a platform to spread disinformation and division. There has been even some observation that his hate speech fosters a more active and radical engagement on the part of citizens than imagined (Ginnie Logan et

al., 2017; Wray-Lake et al., 2018). It is obvious that an increase in racially motivated violence and harassment against Asian Americans has occurred in the wake of Covid-19's proliferation throughout the country (Gover, et al., 2020). In addition, there are 'other' minority Asian groups that are perceived as dangerous and are solely liable for causing and spreading Covid-19 outside the area where they belong (Grove & Zwi, 2006). As a consequence, Donald Trump's first publicly using the terms "Chinese virus" or "China virus" for Covid-19 on March 16, 2020 in his Tweet, disregarding the official categorization of the World Health Organization (2015), is pertinent to the stigmatization of East Asians throughout America (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). As a result of the adjective "Chinese" used in collocation with "virus", the "cause" of the infection is associated with that ethnicity (Jeung et al., 2021), which is also in accord with the anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy in his political rhetoric and agenda in the USA. According to Dugan and Chenoweth (2020), though, African Americans faced a higher risk of politically-inspired hate crimes between 1992 and 2012. Furthermore, Trump's presidency also saw a rise in hate crimes against other ethnic minorities. Consequently, it is not surprising that Trump's popularity correlates highly with a standard measure of contemporary racism in the US (Bobo, 2017).

Additionally, it is also important to note that, rather than being loyal to a specific political organization or a coherent ideology, Trump has fostered influence with his core followers that is founded on their personal allegiance to him (Messerschmidt, 2021). For instance, the anti-mask comments by Trump swiftly turned into a marker of male allegiance, a trend most noticeable in men, who were generally more reluctant to use face coverings than women because they perceived masks as uncool and a mark of fragility (Neville-Shepard, 2021). What is more, Trump incited his supporters at the Save America Rally, "fight like Hell" and "walk down to the Capitol" on January 6, 2021. After the rally, thousands of marchers congregated at the Capitol, where some managed to break into the building with the explicit purpose of interrupting the congressional proceedings underway. These proceedings were the constitutionally mandated count of electoral votes—the final, crucial step in formally certifying that

Donald Trump had lost the 2020 presidential election. In the light of his career, it can be seen that Trump has advanced a vision of the United States of violence with an increasing aggressiveness in his Tweets and speeches that demonstrates an alarming shift in his political communication from populism to authoritarianism (Shaw et al., 2021). Despite or perhaps precisely because of this, Trump's supporters have remained loyal, believing that his brand of authoritarianism is necessary to restore the "nation's greatness" and to protect their interests (Pettigrew, 2017).

Furlong and Cartmel (2012) also argue that political engagement is changing from a collective to an individualized form of engagement under conditions of social change, as a result of which there is a shift from collectives to individuals. Therefore, a regular citizen's participation in public discussions should not have been overlooked since encountering the demagogy of a violent political discourse, often via the social media, would likely affect an audience. As Fowler (1996) observes, the viewing reader is not a passive recipient but one who is discursively involved in the text, interpellated by the reader positions constructed to, ideally, go along with the meaning of the text but who could still work out alternative, critical dispositions towards the beliefs presented. Therefore, it is meaningful and important to investigate the individual citizens' comments on Trump's messages and on the chosen news reports uploaded on the two media sites. I have chosen Fox News and CNN.

According to the current research findings, I have summarized in this chapter, the so-called Trumpist effect may indeed be plausible, particularly when connected to the increase of hate crimes in U.S. as a result of Trump's hate speech against ethnic groups, other than the dominant white supremacist position. Nevertheless, there is considerable scope for further research in this study about particularly in examining the specific mechanisms through which political discourse fuels hate crimes, the role of media in amplifying such rhetoric, and the long-term social and psychological effects on the targeted communities. It is also essential to examine how the supporters of Trump's agenda though the adoption of his hate rhetoric evolved in the social media. Conversely, social media platforms were instrumental in spreading counter-narratives and showcasing oppositional technopolitics, an outcome likely

driven by the deep political engagement of young people throughout the movement (Kahn & Kellner, 2003). Although the manner in which platforms such as Twitter moderate debates and to what extent they can be held accountable for distributing hate speech has become an issue of serious concern in recent years (Gillespie, 2017), I think it should examine not only the extent to which social media are an all too easy space for spreading hate speech but also consider whether traditional media play an important role in iterating that hatred, we should see if they are reinforcing each other's messages. That is why I shall combine the analysis of two sets of data, one of social media (Twitter) and one of online streaming platforms of traditional television media (Fox News and CNN).

## **Chapter 3: Analyzing Donald Trump's Messaging on Twitter**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this project, texts are seen as elements of social events, thus, they are not only the effects of language, but the effects of social structures and social institutions. Similarly, meaning making relies not only on what is explicitly said in the text but what is implicit, that is, what is only assumed (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 39-44). Fairclough (2003) claims that it is imperative to identify the unsaid assumptions when analyzing texts because the explicitly said in the text always depends upon the network of implicit statements. This dynamic relationship between the said/unsaid is captured by his concept of intertextuality (p. 47). In its most obvious sense, intertextuality means that a text presents elements of other texts in the form of—quotation. However, there are implicit ways of integrating elements of other texts apart from quoting in various ways what has been said and written. In the analysis of the first set of my data, Donald Trump's Tweets I am going to answer my first Research Question: How do the messages about the virus articulated in Donald Trump's Tweets become a persuasive strategy of producing racist and/or xenophobic meanings around the concept 'China virus'—either explicitly named or implicated?

The corpus of my analysis of President Trump's Tweets is based on the key words 'Covid/Coronavirus', 'pandemic', 'Asian/Asia' and 'China/Chinese virus' occurring in his Tweets between the period of March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. As a US President who has earned the nick name of the so-called 'Twitter president' (Kreis, 2017; Ott & Dickinson, 2019), Trump is the first US president who have made a massive use and abuse of Twitter to make and distribute his own news, to do his election campaign, even to conduct diplomacy (Bayraktutan et al., 2013; Stier et al., 2018). Postill (2012) points out that it is now an inescapable tendency in political communication to draw on digital platforms, maximizing the political candidates'

campaigning potential via the internet. Similarly, the various digital platforms also change and lower the barriers to civic political engagement such as facilitating direct communication among citizens and between citizens and the candidates (Koc-Michalska et al., 2016). Analyzing Donald Trump's tweets is an indispensable part of this research that wants to explore his political communication during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **3.2 Appraisal Framework and Data Collection**

To address the first research question, the dataset analyzed in this study is a corpus of tweets collected using the Python Library for Twitter API to scrape all Trump's tweets containing the terms 'Covid/Coronavirus', 'pandemic', 'Asian/Asia' and 'China/Chinese virus' from Twitter between the period of March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. The size of the potential tweets on Donald Trump's account is 34692 words altogether. The Python Library is Tweepy, I had to make use of this platform because it enabled efficient and systematic retrieval of historical tweets directly from Donald Trump's official Twitter account. Notably, Trump's account was suspended by Twitter on January 8th, 2021, following the Capitol riot, due to repeated violations of the platform's policies regarding incitement to violence, tweets posted prior to the suspension remained accessible for research purposes through the API.

The categories of analysis adopted to answer the first question is concerned with the production of interpersonal meaning, specifically appraisal analysis within the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985). Within Halliday's structure of systemic functional grammar (SFG) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), which outlines "three metafunctions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual" (Halliday, 2004) - this chapter focuses specifically on the interpersonal metafunction. While the ideational (such as transitivity) and the textual metafunction are also important in meaning-making, the choice to prioritize interpersonal meaning is driven by the aims of this study: to explore Donald Trump's language use in his tweets to construct evaluative stances, express (dis)alignment in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interpersonal metafunction is especially relevant here because it allows for the examination of how Trump encodes attitude, judgement, and affect in relation to the virus and those he holds responsible. Martin (1997) expands on Halliday's notion of interpersonal meaning by introducing the appraisal framework, which integrates systems of attitude, engagement, and graduation to reveal underlying social roles, identities, and power relations. Similarly, White (2015) emphasizes that appraisal, as part of the interpersonal system, provides tools for analyzing how speakers convey emotions, evaluations, and value positions with varying levels of intensity and directness. In this context, analyzing interpersonal meaning enables a systematic understanding of how Trump's evaluative language functions as political rhetoric—positioning blame, asserting authority, and mobilizing ideological support—in the discourse of the pandemic.

Therefore, within the framework of SFL, appraisal analysis also examines the ways in which speakers form identities and how they present themselves to the people with whom they communicate. Martin and White, along with their colleagues, are credited with developing the appraisal framework (Iedema et al., 1993; Martin & White, 2005), which was used in this project to examine language use in political discourse to examine Donald Trump's attitudes mediated by his tweets in terms of affect, judgement, and appreciation (Martin & White, 2005). Specifically, the mixed-methods research design was employed in which the data were examined using both statistical and interpretative analysis. In addition to the SFL analysis, the quantitative analysis was performed in order to show frequencies of the three types: affect, judgement, and appreciation.

My study explores the Trumpian personalized political discourse on the basis of his entire Twitter profile (i.e. aggregation of all tweets or status updates during the indicated period of the pandemic). The Twitter data that I searched for the chosen categories in relation to the pandemic contains altogether 708 tweets (34692 tokens). Each tweet contains information such as the date, time, and the text of each tweet as well as the number of retweets each tweet received. In this study, my aim is to explore a representative analysis of the perspective on the Corona virus in Trump's tweets. In



other words, I conducted a case study where the tweet topic is kept relatively constant in the domain of the “pandemic” so that the meaning-making and the ideological investments of the given categories can be investigated in detail. In conducting this study therefore I did not take into consideration how many people have retweeted a tweet or how many people have read the message and responded to a given tweet on the site. The importance of this study as a first step is understanding the characteristics of Donald Trump’s political discourse in relation to the pandemic and draw on it in future research that explores the its impact on political discourse through the analysis of the retweets and comments.

### ***3.2.1 Twitter***

The popular microblogging service called Twitter was particularly popular worldwide, with 95.4 million users in January 2023 (Statista, 2023). The name was changed to *X* on the 23rd of July 2023 by Elon Musk, who bought the platform in October 2022 and announced the change of name to *X* (Dang & Roumeliotis, 2022). However, the data is harvested from the archive of Donald Trump’s Twitter Account, which was suspended on 8th January 2021. The suspension occurred in response to concerns that his posts could potentially incite further violence, particularly in the aftermath of the Capitol riots on 6th January 2021. Consequently, in my study I use the former name, Twitter, and I refer to the posts as tweets.

The 2016 US presidential election, where Donald Trump turned out to be the winner, highlighted the pivotal role of Twitter in politics (Karami et.al, 2018; Grinberg et.al, 2019). It demonstrated that political messages can be widely and effectively disseminated via the Twitter platform. Despite the fact that tweets are limited to 280 characters (Gligorić et al., 2018), Twitter has become a platform for Donald Trump as presidential candidate to communicate with his followers, bypassing the mainstream news media. Due to Twitter’s character limitations, its users are encouraged to devise new strategies for conveying complex meaning in fewer words and making more use of unsaid, implied meanings. Furthermore, users do not build a full profile on Twitter, unlike on Facebook, which is a profile-based social networking service (SNS). This allows individuals to remain anonymous while

still able to view and interact with the tweets of others. In other words, Twitter is asymmetrical as opposed to other social networking services, as it allows users to subscribe to each other's feeds of posts without expecting reciprocity in return (Zappavigna, 2012, pp. 27-30). Making use of this unidirectional messaging, some politicians have chosen not to use Twitter as an interactive tool but rather as a one-way broadcasting platform (Wallsten, 2014). The one-way communication feature further allows users to follow people without the need for a reciprocal relationship, making it much easier for politicians to disseminate their messages by someone they are not necessarily connected to.

However, Twitter's ancillary conventions can compensate for the lack of interaction. Challenging the view of Twitter as merely a "microblogging" service, a study by Courtenay Honeycutt and Susan C. Herring (2009) reveal a surprising degree of conversationality on the platform. Their analysis shows that a significant portion of tweets are interactive, facilitated especially by the use of the '@' symbol as a "marker of addressivity" to direct messages to specific users. Deller (2011) has also pointed out that, in addition to posting status updates, politicians as an audience may also interact through retweeting a tweet, mentioning and giving credit or criticism to the original poster, their opponents. Several popular mainstream topics are often found in Twitter's trending topics, with hashtags # for categorizing messages and highlighting topics, or @ characters, @ username for sharing a post by attracting the attention of other users (Deller, 2011). Trump has also been found to use Twitter not only to disseminate his own opinions but also to strike back at his critics and to reach wider audiences with a number of tools available on the social media platform. More specifically, he typically uses retweeting and hashtag tools to convey his message (Pancer & Poole, 2016; Stolee & Caton, 2018).

Konnolly (2015) claims that while Twitter employs many different communication conventions, the hashtag is arguably its most powerful feature. It has become increasingly popular for users to use hashtags on Twitter as a means of communicating both personally and as a tool for building communities of followers (Saxton et al., 2015). Since hashtags are extensively used, it has become a

community-driven convention that is both expressive and well-accepted. Through the use of the hashtag, users are able to search the “Twittersphere” for specific topics of interest and follow certain discussion threads (Bruns & Highfield, 2015) – like in my case Covid-19. In part, as hashtags have become increasingly popular on Twitter, they are not only used to characterize discussion topics but also to predict user links and characterize communities of users as well as users themselves (Sheldon et al., 2020). Additionally, Twitter provides the users with real-time information about their interests as well as locating the public streams the users find most compelling. This sign therefore makes it possible for users to create and participate in information networks with people who share their viewpoints, which at the same time also restricts exposure to other perspectives, reinforcing existing views (Stewart et al., 2018), which is an extremely powerful effect to consider in political communication on digital platforms.

The other most popular communication convention for users to post content, in addition to the use of hashtags, is the text indication “RT” along with the original author’s @ formatted username (Deller, 2011). Retweeting will create a copy of the tweet that can be shared with your followers, crediting the source. One method of retweeting is to share the post completely, the other is to quote the post. The simple act of copying and rebroadcasting can sustain voices through a public interaction that creates a sense of shared conversation. When using quoted tweets, users can add their own comment or opinion to the original post, allowing for a more interactive experience. In other words, retweeting is a way of sharing the thought, or content of another user with your own followers. It is a way of spreading the idea to more people and increasing the reach of the original poster. As it is a simple yet powerful mechanism for the dissemination of information, Twitter provides users with an ideal platform for this purpose. It is therefore possible to disseminate political opinions as well. Additionally, tweets can be dramatically amplified when a user with a large following, such as a celebrity, retweets them (Zappavigna, 2012, pp. 35-36). In particular, President Trump has been known to use retweeting to recontextualize posts in order to promote his own political agenda, often using it to amplify his messages

and target his opponents (Gross & Johnson, 2016; Kreis, 2017).

Twitter not only offers compelling new forms of political communication and engagement, the research has confirmed that new media may undermine the authority of mainstream (traditional or digital) media since they provide new forms of political communication and engagement that seem to bypass more traditional hierarchies (Cheong et al., 2011). This effect has been amplified during the Trump administration, when the mainstream media were regularly criticized as “fake news” for their coverage, further legitimizing new media as if the inevitably “reliable” platform, disseminating the alternative perspectives in Trump’s Twitter posts as if the source of “truth”, supporting his views as objective reality (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

### ***3.2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics***

In my textual analysis, I am drawing on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), first developed by Michael Halliday (1978). My research takes into account the interplay between two fundamental aspects of language, its systematicity and its functionality that follows from seeing language as a socially regulated practice. The function of language use provides the motivation for its form and structure, and this is reflected in discourse through the internal grammatical structures within language (Martin, 1997). The objective of an SFL analysis is therefore to explore the systematic production of meaning through three structural layers of meaning: “ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunction” of language use (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The ideational meaning of a particular text refers to “the subject matter” of the text (Halliday & Hasen, 1976, p. 10); the interpersonal meaning entails the way in which language use facilitates communication between (actual and distant) people; and the textual meaning refers to the way information is organized into a coherent piece of text within the structural constraint of a particular genre (text type) (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Specifically, the three meanings are considered as “metafunctions” and associated with the three elements of register, which Halliday (1985, p. 29) describes as “a variety of language, corresponding to a variety of situation”, the functional variation of language, which in my case is the political use of language. The field of a text corresponds to the

conceptual or ideational meaning, the tenor or interactivity of a text is closely related to the interpersonal meaning, and the mode of a text is associated with the textual meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Of the three, the interpersonal metafunction is used to initiate or respond to interaction (face-to-face or at a distance mediated by the text, such as the tweets in my data) in which goods, services, or information is given or demanded (Bakuuro, 2017). In this regard, the interpersonal function plays a crucial part in the establishment and maintenance of social relationships and brings about and indicate the roles played by the participants (Halliday, 2002, p. 69). Alternatively, interpersonal meanings can be argued to pertain to social roles, relationships, and attitudes (Eggins, 2004, p. 14).

Martin (2016) also emphasizes that SFL is functional in the sense that language is used to accomplish social actions such as communication, providing information, and persuasion. Crucially for my study, making use of Halliday's understanding of meaning in terms of a text's metafunctions, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the interpersonal metafunction of language use and to examine the political register of the tweets shared by Donald Trump in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. This analysis examines the role of language in constructing and reinforcing what kind of relationships with the virus and what kind of relationship this perception of the virus implicates with his readers. Even though the actual tweets that Trump produced are limited, the meaning potential is unlimited as a text can be retweeted and so recontextualized and then produced in a way that highlights and accentuates key elements in his political discourse.

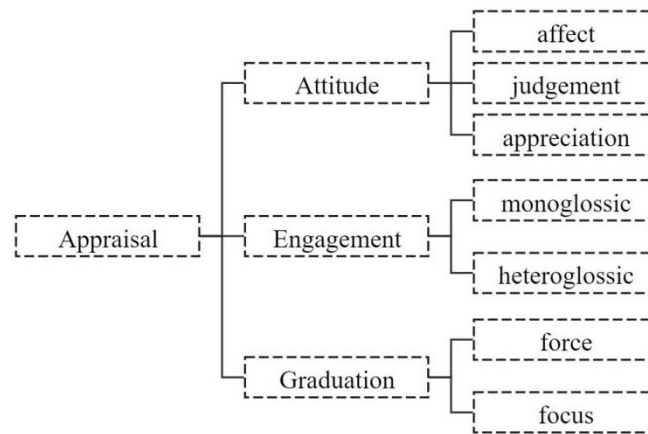
### ***3.2.3 Appraisal Theory***

Appraisal theory has been developed by Martin and White (2005), for assessing the use of language in articulating attitudes as a key element of producing interpersonal meaning. Appraisal as a category of textual analysis was developed by James Robert Martin and consists of three main components: attitude, engagement and graduation (Martin, 2003; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). In brief, attitude can be categorized into three elements: affect, i.e. emotions towards oneself and the other, judgement of behavior or evaluation of people and things, and

appreciation (Figure. 2). In my case study this may entail attitude, which is concerned with emotional responses, moral evaluations, and aesthetic assessments. This enables an exploration of how Trump's tweets encode evaluative meanings that reflect his emotional positioning and stance toward the virus and related social actors. Engagement refers to the linguistic resources used by text producers to orient themselves regarding the actual or potential perspectives within the conversation. It describes how heteroglossic diversity—multiple, often competing, viewpoints—is managed by either acknowledging, entertaining, endorsing, or rejecting alternative positions, thereby shaping the dialogic space of the text. This dialogic space can be either expansive or contractive, depending on whether alternative viewpoints are invited or excluded. In this regard, engagement resources are typically categorized as either monoglossic or heteroglossic (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 59). With monoglossic propositions, the propositions are stated as absolutely true; they do not express an explicit dialogic alternative. Heteroglossic propositions, by contrast, signal an awareness of other voices—through strategies such as attribution, modality, countering, or concessive framing—and allow for varying degrees of alignment or disalignment with these alternative positions. In my study, such engagement may be realized in Trump's tweets through choices such as who is retweeted, how possibilities are acknowledged, or how opposing claims like “fake news” are countered or dismissed. Graduation, the third element of the linguistic formation of appraisal, means that attitude and engagement can be graded in such a way that feelings are enhanced and categories are blurred, and the degree of evaluation is adjusted based on scale. It establishes distinct systems for adjusting boundaries (focus) and intensifying meaning (force) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 40). Force deals with scaling intensity or quantity, typically through intensifiers such as “very” or “slightly”, which can either amplify or diminish the strength of an evaluation. Notably, many intensifiers themselves carry attitudinal meaning, thus closely interlinking force and attitude (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 42). Focus, on the other hand, refers as grading experiential meanings that are not inherently scalable—such as categorical labels or membership in a social group. It involves sharpening or softening the boundaries

between categories, making something seem more prototypical or more marginal. For instance, in political discourse, labeling someone as a “true patriot” sharpens the category, while referring to someone as “sort of a patriot” softens it. These boundary adjustments—technically referred to as focus—do not increase or decrease intensity in the same way as force, but rather modulate how clearly or fuzzily something is positioned within a category. Thus, graduation not only amplifies emotional expression but also shapes how meanings are categorized, blurred, or emphasized in discourse.

Taken from Martin and White (2005, p. 38), figure 2 illustrates each element of appraisal in a systemic network. The network is a multidimensional system using a convention in which the initial letter of each path is capitalized to indicate the different meaning systems, and in which the lowercase letter indicates the features within a system. It shows that the appraisal system may explore the language of evaluation that allows for the analysis of interpersonal meanings communicated in and by the tweets. It is a system that grasp the linguistic negotiations of feelings, attitudes, and values which take place during the course of interaction. I am going to adopt the category of attitude in this chapter for analyzing Trump’s attitude (affect, judgement, and appreciation), namely the representation and evaluation of his own and others’ feelings, behavior, and the appreciation of the values attached to the representation of the virus and people implied during the pandemic. It will not be a comprehensive appraisal analysis as I am not going to include the analysis of engagement and graduation. This case deliberately focuses on the attitude component of the appraisal framework, as it is most pertinent to the investigation of the emotional and evaluative dimensions of Trump’s tweets about the Covid-19 pandemic. Although a comprehensive analysis of appraisal would encompass all three subsystems—engagement, graduation, and attitude—the decision to prioritize attitude analysis reflects its specific relevance in revealing the evaluative positioning within Trump’s pandemic discourse. This approach facilitates a more comprehensive and focused exploration of the affective, judgemental, and appreciative aspects of his language, providing insight into how he constructs emotional and ethical positions towards both the pandemic and key social actors.

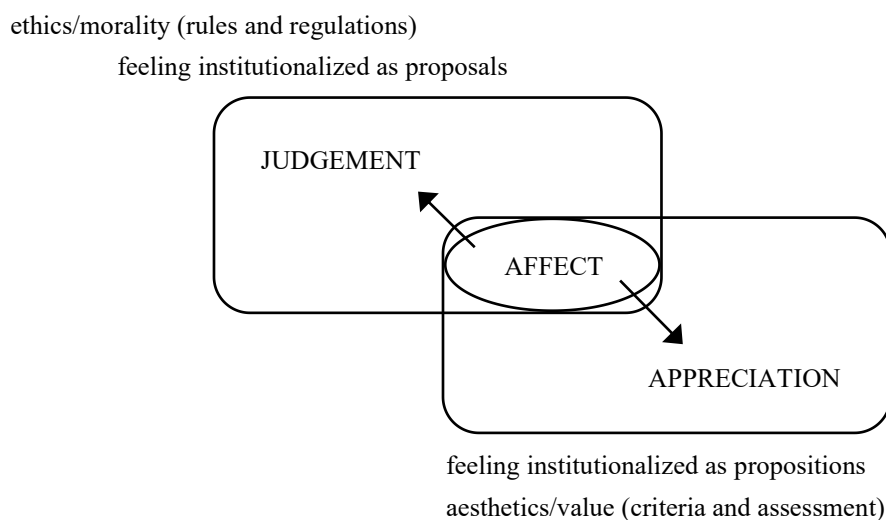


**Figure 2.** *An overview of the appraisal system adopted from Martin and White (2005, p. 38)*

Attitude, as a discourse semantic system, is analyzed by Martin and White (2005) in terms of three components. Affect refers to the linguistic tools that serve to build affective reactions, such as, “I become more and more angry at China”. In short, affect comprises resources for construing personal feelings. Unlike affect, judgement and appreciation are referred to as “institutionalized feelings, which take us out of our everyday common sense world into the uncommon sense worlds of shared community values” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 45). Those two subcategories highlight how these evaluative resources function beyond individual emotional reactions. In these terms, judgement and appreciation represent the formalization of feelings into socially established norms and values. See figure 3, judgement institutionalizes feelings in the realm of ethical assessments of human behavior, evaluating people against shared standards of social esteem (how capable, tenacious, or dependable someone is) and social rules or regulations. Thus, judgement refers to the resources deployed to create moral assessments of behavior and it is embodied as normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, or propriety. For example, I focus on veracity judgement— those concerned with honesty or truthfulness—as exemplified in Trump’s defensive assertion, “I never said the pandemic was a hoax!”, which serves to position himself as truthful and to counter accusations of disinformation. Similarly, appreciation institutionalizes feelings into aesthetic evaluations of things, processes, and phenomena according to collective standards of value and social significance. Within the Appraisal framework, appreciation institutionalizes feelings into evaluations of things, processes, and



phenomena according to collective standards of social value. A clear example can be found in the frequent use of the adjective “great” in Trump’s discourse, such as in the phrase, “I spoke with the great American”. This functions as positive appreciation because it offers a subjective appraisal of a person’s qualities and perceived worth. Crucially, this differs from judgement, which assesses behavior against moral or ethical norms, and from affect, which expresses a direct emotional reaction. Thus, when such terms of appreciation are used, speakers are not simply articulating personal preferences; they are invoking and reinforcing these collective community standards.



**Figure 3.** *Judgement and appreciation as institutionalized affect (Martin & White , 2005, p. 45)*

### 3.3 Results and Findings

According to some studies, the rise in anti-Asian incidents can be attributed to Trump’s use of stigmatizing language, such as the “Chinese Virus”, to describe the pandemic (Hswen et al., 2021; Rubin & Wilson, 2021; Cao et al., 2023). Public health experts have warned against using the term “Chinese virus” since Trump used the term for the first time in his tweet on March 16, 2020. The data collection period, therefore, for my study encompassed the interval from 16 March, 2020 to 20 January, 2021. This timeframe was purposefully delineated to capture pivotal moments in the evolution of Donald Trump’s pandemic-related discourse. The commencement date corresponds with Trump’s initial naming of the term “Chinese virus” in a tweet,

marking a significant rhetorical transition in the pandemic's discursive meaning making. This event constitutes a substantive starting point for analyzing evaluative stance and ideological positioning within official communications. The terminal date of the data collection coincides with the conclusion of Trump's presidential tenure on 20 January, 2021. Although his Twitter account underwent suspension on 8 January, 2021, the inclusion of the broader endpoint facilitates the examination of tweets that maintained currency in public and media discourse throughout the transition of executive authority. This period decision enhances analytical coherence and supports the subsequent investigation of media representation and audience reception patterns, both of which are fundamentally anchored in and responsive to the original discursive strategies employed in Trumpian speech. Between March 16, 2020 and January 20, 2021. The naming of the virus varies though, but all of them are possible to associate with China. On April 27, 2020, for instance, he tweeted about the "Wuhan virus", which name mentions the city in China where the beginning of the pandemic occurred (Zhu et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021). It appears that the metaphorical expressions "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus" evoke the threat in association with China. However, the point in my study I would show is that this association does not simply make it easier to understand something abstract and unfamiliar, namely the unknown virus, but the choice of using terms that represent ethnicity and nationality, Chinese or China and the big city in that country links the infection to a specific ethnicity, and invests the meaning of the terms with hostility. It evokes a group identity when using an explicitly medical term, 'virus'. The association of ethnic groups (or individuals) with non-human forms of life is a recognized form of othering (Fording & Schram, 2017; Schrock et al., 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). My hypothesis is that Trump's political discourse is oriented towards the emotions of hate during the pandemic. To comprehend the systemic patterns of his tweets, I shall draw on the category of Attitude, and within it the categories of attitude, engagement and graduation to explore the affect of hate at the core of the attitude in the tweets in the given period. I shall present my findings of the attitude element of interpersonal meaning in Table 1, whose division I have adopted from Martin and White's figures above (2005, p. 38).

### ***3.3.1 Attitude Categories in Trump's Tweets: Quantitative Findings***

This analysis investigates the use of evaluative language in Donald Trump's tweets pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic throughout his presidency. Table 1 presents a systematic categorization identified within an aggregation of 708 tweets collected between March 16, 2020 and January 20, 2021. The analysis employs Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework, specifically concentrating on the affect, judgement and appreciation element types of attitude that Trump displays in his tweets. As outlined in the theoretical framework section, affect concerns the expression of emotional responses and can be categorized into four more specific regions of meaning: dis/inclination (desire/fear), un/happiness (cheer, affection/misery, antipathy), in/security (confidence, trust/disquiet, surprise), and dis/satisfaction (interest, pleasure/ennui, displeasure) (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 49-51).

The coding process for this analysis was conducted manually by the researcher. Each of the 708 tweets in the corpus was systematically read and annotated for instances of evaluative language corresponding to Martin and White's (2005) Attitude system. To ensure a consistent analytical approach, detailed guidelines with clear definitions and examples for each subcategory were established based on the Appraisal framework. While these analytical guidelines provided a consistent framework, there were indeed instances where categorizing a tweet was not entirely straightforward. The interpretive nature of discourse analysis meant that ambiguities occasionally arose, especially where the tone was ambiguous or a rhetorical strategy overlapped multiple categories (e.g., distinguishing between negative judgement and negative appreciation). In such cases, I revisited the surrounding discourse and the broader context of the tweet to make an informed judgement. While a formal second coder was not employed, some of the more ambiguous cases were discussed with colleagues familiar with discourse analysis to test the reliability of my interpretations. This peer discussion helped clarify the rationale and maintain consistency in the coding process. This approach reflects the overall interpretive stance of this research,

which aims to balance theoretical guidance with a grounded understanding of the data and maintain transparency in reporting both patterns and exceptions in the data.

**Table 1.** *Distribution of Attitude resources in Trump ’ s Tweets (N=708)*

<i>Attitude System</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Subsystems</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Affect	Dis/inclination	Desire	52	-	7.3%
		Fear	-	338	47.7%
	Un/happiness	Cheer	49	-	6.9%
		Affection	37	-	5.2%
		Misery	-	61	8.6%
		Antipathy	-	256	36.2%
	In/security	Confidence	189	-	26.7%
		Trust	27	-	3.8%
		Disquiet	-	68	9.6%
		Surprise	-	46	6.5%
	Dis/satisfaction	Interest	14	-	2.0%
		Pleasure	173	-	24.4%
		Ennui	-	28	3.9%
		Displeasure	-	293	41.4%
	Subtotal Affect		544	1090	-
Judgement	Social Esteem	Normality	121	55	24.9%
		Capacity	208	92	42.4%
		Tenacity	41	19	8.5%
	Social Sanction	Veracity	42	369	58.1%
		Propriety	65	28	13.1%
	Subtotal Judgement		477	563	-
Appreciation	Reaction	Impact	109	74	25.8%
		Quality	43	89	18.6%
	Composition	Balance	33	12	6.4%
		Complexity	8	17	4.1%
	Valuation		163	217	53.7%
	Subtotal Appreciation		356	409	-
TOTAL ATTITUDE	-	-	1,377	2,062	-

*Note: Each tweet may contain multiple instances of attitude. Percentages represent proportion of attitude instances relative to the total number of attitude instances identified across the corpus.*

Table 1 provides the distribution of three categories of appraisal displayed on a

system network. The data demonstrate a pronounced preference for negative attitudinal resources (2,062) over positive expressions (1,377). Within the affect system, negative manifestations constituted the majority (1,090 compared to 544 positive occurrences), with fear (47.7%), displeasure (41.4%), and antipathy (36.2%) emerging as predominant subcategories. This result indicates a Trumpian speech that strategically utilized anxiety-inducing rhetoric and expressions of dissatisfaction with pandemic management. These language choices appear designed to frame the pandemic as an external threat, potentially serving to deflect criticism while reinforcing the political positioning during a national crisis. Additionally, positive affect resources, though less prevalent than negative, clustered around confidence (26.7%) and pleasure (24.4%), reflecting a Trump strategic emphasis on projecting control and assurance. These expressions likely aimed to convey that Trump's management of Covid-19 was effective, that his policies were steering the nation on the right track, and that the American people could trust in the administration's direction during the crisis. The judgement system displayed a relatively balanced distribution of negative (563) and positive (477) instances, with veracity under social sanction (58.1%) emerging as the predominant subcategory. This notable focus on truthfulness assessments underscores the contentious information environment surrounding virus, wherein Trump frequently contested scientific and media narratives regarding the pandemic. Likewise, the emphasis on capacity within social esteem (42.4%) highlights a persistent concern with evaluations of competence, likely reflecting efforts to counter widespread criticism of the administration's pandemic response. Within the appreciation system, valuation resources accounted for the majority (53.7%), followed by impact (25.8%) and quality (18.6%) under the reaction subcategory. This distribution suggests a rhetorical strategy that prioritized assessing the pandemic's significance and implications over engaging with its nuanced complexities.

To further investigate whether the use of explicit xenophobic discourse correlated with a more intense emotional framing, a specific sub-analysis was conducted. This analysis isolated the tweets within the corpus that use the phrases "China virus",

“Chinese virus”, and their equivalents (e.g., “Kung Flu”, “Wuhan virus”). Out of the full corpus of 708 tweets, 112 tweets were found to contain this explicit term. The distribution of affect subtypes within this specific subset reveals a highly concentrated use of negative emotional language.

**Table 2.** *Distribution of Affect Subtypes in Tweets Containing “China/Chinese Virus” Variants (N=112 tweets)*

<i>Affect Subsystem</i>	<i>Positive Instances</i>	<i>Negative Instances</i>	<i>Total Instances</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Dis/inclination	1	95	96	21.6%
Un/happiness	5	110	115	25.8%
In/security	45	35	80	18.0%
Dis/satisfaction	22	132	154	34.6%
TOTAL	73	372	445	100%

A more detailed comparative analysis reveals that the 112 tweets containing “China virus” variants are not just negative; they are disproportionately loaded with specific types of affect compared to the corpus as a whole. While negative affect instances make up 67% of all emotional expressions in the full corpus (Table 1), this figure jumps to a staggering 84% in the subset of tweets that use the explicit xenophobic term (Table 2).

This intensification of negative emotion is driven by two key subsystems: Dis/satisfaction (34.6%) and Un/happiness (25.8%). As a whole, these categories—primarily composed of expressions of Displeasure and Antipathy—account for over 60% of all emotional language in these specific tweets. This provides strong empirical evidence that the phrase “China virus” functions as a linguistic focal point for channeling blame and hostility. For example, in a tweet from April 27, 2020, the term “Wuhan Virus” is embedded within a torrent of negative judgement aimed at a political opponent (“...serial fraudster; generational corrupt to democrat Nancy Pelosi... She is a fraud...”). In this text, the xenophobic term is not just an evaluation of the virus but a tool used to amplify expressions of Antipathy and blame against domestic adversaries.

Furthermore, this analysis highlights a significant shift in the function of positive affect. While general expressions of pleasure diminish, feelings of confidence are often repurposed to exist alongside the xenophobic framing. For instance, a tweet from March 17, 2020, pairs the term “Chinese Virus” with a promise that “We will be stronger than ever before!”. Here, the positive affect (confidence) and positive judgement (capacity) are not used to create a positive sentiment overall, but to frame a narrative of national resilience in the face of a named foreign threat. The xenophobic term itself creates the crisis against which American strength can be projected. This demonstrates that the “China virus” rhetoric is a highly specialized tool within Trump’s discourse, deployed to amplify negative emotions of blame and antipathy, while repurposing positive emotions to project strength and control.

### ***3.3.2 Linguistic Patterns: A Collocation Analysis of Key Terms***

While the preceding section provides a quantitative overview of Attitude resources, a collocation analysis offers a more systematic insight into how these evaluative meanings are constructed through recurring linguistic patterns. A collocation is a sequence of words that co-occurs more often than would be expected by chance. This analysis, interpreted through the lens of the Appraisal framework, directly addresses how Trump’s discourse creates pejorative meanings and expresses attitude, moving beyond individual word choices to examine statistically significant word pairings.

Table 3 shows a collocation analysis of two-word phrases (bigrams) containing the word “virus” that immediately reveals the alternative, politicized names Trump frequently use.

***Table 3. Alternative and Pejorative Terms for the Virus***

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Collocation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Attitude Analysis</i>
1	China virus	98	Negative Appreciation: The virus itself is negatively evaluated by associating it with a specific nation, framing it as a foreign object.
2	Invisible enemy	25	Negative Affect (Insecurity): This personification

			generates fear and anxiety by framing the virus as a sentient, stealthy antagonist.
3	Chinese virus	8	Negative Appreciation: Similar to “China virus”, this explicitly links the virus to an ethnicity, intensifying the negative evaluation.

---

The most prominent finding is the high frequency of “China virus”, which functions as a form of negative appreciation. Rather than using the neutral term “COVID-19”, this choice evaluates the virus itself as inherently foreign and tied to a specific national entity. The term “invisible enemy” operates differently, functioning as a powerful deployment of affect. This personification of the virus is designed to provoke a fear response from the audience by framing the pandemic not as a public health crisis, but as a war against a sentient, stealthy antagonist. This militaristic framing is evident in tweets from the period, such as one from March 30, 2020, which states that Trump is “fighting a war against this crisis”. By constructing the virus as an “enemy”, the discourse shifts the required response from one of medical science to one of national security and conflict, positioning the president as a wartime leader. Besides, the “invisible enemy” metaphor often serves as a narrative bridge to assign geopolitical blame. This rhetorical strategy is clear in a tweet from April 17, 2020, where Trump writes: “China has just announced a doubling in the number of their deaths from the Invisible Enemy. It is far higher than that...”. As a result, the affect evoked by the “Invisible Enemy” is immediately linked to a negative judgement of China’s Veracity (truthfulness). The phrase creates a sense of a shared, mysterious threat, which is then immediately pinned on a specific, and allegedly deceitful, foreign actor. The term “invisible enemy” serves a dual function: it creates a domestic narrative of war to rally support and project strength, while simultaneously providing a rhetorical justification for directing blame and antipathy outward. Furthermore, Table 4 demonstrates that an analysis of words that collocate with “China” reveals a consistent pattern of blame and negative judgement.



**Table 4.** *Collocations with “China” and “Chinese”*

<i>Ranking</i>	<i>Collocation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
1	blame China	10	Negative Judgement (Propriety): Explicitly assigns fault and condemns China’s behavior as improper..
2	made in China	7	Negative Appreciation: Used in contexts of criticism to evaluate products or, by extension, the virus as a faulty or dangerous export.
3	Wuhan China	5	Negative Appreciation: Reinforces the specific geographic origin, grounding the negative evaluation in a particular place.

The most significant pattern here is the direct assignment of blame. Phrases like “blame China” are a clear expression of negative judgement (social sanction), specifically targeting China’s propriety and conduct. This linguistic choice moves beyond evaluating the virus and instead evaluates the nation-state, constructing it as a culpable actor. The term “Asian” appears low frequency in the corpus and does not form any statistically significant collocations, indicating that the rhetoric was narrowly and deliberately focused on “China”. Additionally, an analysis of the verbs that frequently collocate with the compound phrase “China virus” is particularly revealing of how Attitude is constructed. A primary linguistic pattern involves verbs of action and conflict, such as in the phrases “stop the China virus” and “fight the China virus”. Through the lens of the Appraisal framework, the use of this militaristic lexicon frames the pandemic not as a public health issue but as a war against a personified enemy. This strategy expresses a positive judgement of the administration’s own tenacity (portraying it as resolute) while simultaneously being designed to evoke affect in the audience, shifting their feelings from insecurity toward security by promising decisive action. A second significant pattern involves verbs of naming and assertion, found in phrases like “call it the China virus” and statements that it “came from China”. This pattern functions as a form of positive judgement of Trump’s own veracity. By repeatedly asserting the correctness of the name, the discourse defends its own truthfulness against critics, framing the act of using the xenophobic term as a display of honesty. Therefore, this collocation analysis provides empirical evidence that the choice to use terms like “China virus” and associated

collocations of conflict was a consistent linguistic strategy designed to construct the pandemic in xenophobic terms, assign blame to an external entity, and frame the response as a decisive, war-like effort.

### ***3.3.3 Qualitative Elaboration of three Categories***

As Table 1 shows, in terms of affect, the results indicate a notable prevalence of negative affect expressions, particularly within the categories of inclination (fear), unhappiness (antipathy), and dissatisfaction (displeasure). Positive affect was primarily expressed through satisfaction (pleasure) and security (confidence). The distribution of affect categories provides insight into the evaluative stance and emotional framing employed throughout Trump's pandemic communications.

In Tweet 1 from March 18, 2020, Trump expressed negative inclination through the marker “seriously,” suggesting fear, while simultaneously employing negative unhappiness through “disgraceful” (antipathy) and positive satisfaction through “good job” (pleasure), reflecting self-appraisal of his actions. Concurrently, he deploys the term “disgraceful” in reference to the media narrative, which functions as an instance of negative unhappiness, more precisely antipathy. Overall, the tweet demonstrates how Trump combines affect subcategories—including fear, pleasure, and antipathy—to simultaneously validate his own leadership and discredit dissenting voices, particularly those of the press.

Tweet 1:

I always treated the Chinese Virus very **seriously** and have done a very **good** job from the beginning including my very early decision to close the border from China against the wishes of almost all. Many lives were saved. The Fake News new narrative is **disgraceful** false! (2020-03-18 19:46)

This interplay pattern of contrasting positive self-evaluation with negative assessment of others remained consistent throughout the dataset. Similarly, in Tweet 2 below, it continues the discursive strategy in which Trump juxtaposes positive self-presentation with negative evaluation of others: “good” (cheer), contrasted with negative dissatisfaction through “no credit” (displeasure). Through this contrastive framing, Trump not only legitimizes his efforts but also elicits sympathy and loyalty

from his audience by portraying himself as underappreciated despite demonstrable achievements.

Tweet 2:

Great reviews on our handling of Covid 19 sometimes referred to as the China Virus. Ventilators Testing Medical Supply Distribution we made a lot of Governors look very **good** - And got **no credit** for so doing. Most importantly we helped a lot of great people! (2020-05-26 04:16)

The analysis also identified instances of insecurity, as evidenced in the Tweet 3, where Trump expressed negative dissatisfaction through “can’t stand” (displeasure) and positive satisfaction through “well” (pleasure). The tweet exemplifies a rhetorical strategy often observed in his political discourse: constructing a dichotomy in which the administration’s competence is set against the irrational and biased reactions of its detractors. This strategic use of affect serves both to affirm his authority and to delegitimize opposition, reinforcing an “us versus them” narrative consistent across the corpus.

Tweet 3:

Why does the Lamestream Fake News Media REFUSE to say that China Virus deaths are down 39% and that we now have the lowest Fatality (Mortality) Rate in the World. They just **can’t stand** that we are doing so **well** for our Country! (2020-05-26 04:16)

Further emerged in the Tweet 4 referring to the “Invisible China Virus” (Disquiet/insecurity), balanced with expressions of security through references to being “patriotic” (confidence) and satisfaction through “favorite” (pleasure).

Tweet 4:

We are United in our effort to defeat the **Invisible** China Virus and many people say that it is Patriotic to wear a face mask when you can’t socially distance. There is nobody more **Patriotic** than me your **favorite** President! (2020-07-21 03:43)

Tweet 5 maintained similar statements, the word “suffered” (fear) conveys a sense of fear or concern for the well-being of the American people, thereby falling

under the category of negative inclination. This is reinforced by the evaluative marker “enough” (displeasure), which signals discontent and displeasure with the level of government support provided at the time, thus indicating negative dissatisfaction.

Tweet 5:

\$2000 for our great people not \$600! They have **suffered enough** from the China Virus!!! (2020-12-29 21:46)

Tweet 6 presents a cluster of negative affect markers reflecting strong dissatisfaction and insecurity: “exaggerated” (Surprise), “ridiculous” (antipathy), and “inaccurately” (disquiet).

Tweet 6:

The number of cases and deaths of the China Virus is far **exaggerated** in the United States because of @CDCgovs **ridiculous** method of determination compared to other countries many of whom report purposely very **inaccurately** and low. When in doubt call it Covid? Fake News! (2021-01-03 21:14)

As can be seen in Tweets 1-6, Trump is usually inclined to devote the entirety of his post to explaining his current sentiment, offering the expression as a possible bond with his followers against ‘China Virus’. It also shows that Trump’s emotional expressions are very directly using more colloquial vocabulary, he is satisfied with his own work and unhappy with the that others in relation to dealing with the virus. Throughout his presidency, Trump consistently denied or rejected the death toll or the gloomy social picture in the wake of Covid-19 reported by the media. Specifically, in Tweet 3 and 6, he argues that the official figures have been exaggerated and that the situation is not as dire as portrayed. He instead chooses to focus on the positive aspects of the crisis, such as the government’s measures to contain the virus’s transmission. In addition, as Trump persisted in making remarks that were broadly perceived as racist, he first suggested that Chinese are ‘viruses’ and subsequently proposed a complete prohibition on Chinese individuals traveling to the U.S (see Tweet 1). This narrative was marked by a dual approach: emphasizing positive self-evaluation and critiquing perceived adversaries, while concurrently conveying

negative affective responses to the circumstances. This strategy not only reinforced his political stance but also resonated with his base, fostering a sense of solidarity and shared grievances. Specifically, by framing the pandemic in terms of fear and dissatisfaction, Trump effectively maintained control over the narrative, shaping public perception and deflecting criticism.

In addition to the analysis of affect, attitude subcategories involves two other systems of language use, judgement and appreciation. In Figure 3, the judgement aspect has to do with the attitude that is shown towards behavior, regardless whether we admire or condemn the behavior in question. It can be further specified into two main domains: social esteem and social sanction (see Table 1). Appreciation is evaluated based on semiotic and natural phenomena in order to identify how they are valued or not. It also can be further subcategorized into three subsystems: reaction, composition and valuation. Whether judging or appreciating, it is important to note that both are conceptualized as relational activities: we need to analyze not only the type of attitude expressed but also its source and target- where the attitude comes from (who judges and who appreciates) as well as what is being appraised (who is being judged and what is being appraised) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 71). In addition to naming-calling, such as ‘China/Chinese virus’, there are explicitly or implicitly evaluative terms in the tweets that can be used to amplify the negative or positive judgement.

The adjectives “very” and “well” in Tweet 1 and 3 are used to describe the positive judgement of the capacity of the government to respond to this issue which praises the ability of the Trump administration to deal with the situation during the recent pandemic. In Tweet 2, Trump simultaneously employed both judgement and appreciation to construct a positive self-image while discrediting others. the word “handling” functions as a positive social esteem indicator regarding capacity, constructing an institutional competence narrative. The verbal element “made” operates as an agentive marker suggesting transformative influence, while “helped” establishes positive social sanction through its moral propriety connotations. In the appreciation domain (evaluations of phenomena), the evaluative adjective “Great”

(occurring twice) serves as a positive reaction marker regarding quality, applied to both external assessments and beneficiaries of policy implementation. The intensifier “very” augments the positive appreciation. Finally, the compound nominal “China Virus” represents negative appreciation through provocative valuation, establishing geographical attribution as a defining characteristic of the origin in question. There is no doubt about the positive judgement of his ideational meanings, such as “patriotic” in Tweet 4, which is designed to evoke a sense of appreciation. This prosody of positive appreciation is developed first through the portrayal of patriotic people and subsequently through the depiction of a patriotic president. Within the appreciation domain, the adjective “Invisible” functions as a composition marker that adds an evaluative dimension regarding its elusive nature. In Tweet 5, the numerical figures “\$2000” and “\$600” function as contrastive appreciation markers of valuation regarding financial resources. In the judgement element (evaluations of character or human behavior and qualities), the adjective “great” serves as a positive judgement marker of social esteem regarding normality, attributing exceptional qualities to the referenced population. The quantifier “enough” functions as a negative judgement marker of social sanction regarding propriety, suggesting an ethical threshold of acceptable hardship has been exceeded. In Tweet 6, the institutional reference “@CDCgov” serves as the target of negative judgement regarding social esteem (capacity) and social sanction (veracity). The prepositional phrase “in the United States” establishes a geographical framework for the negative appreciation claims. In addition, The adverb “purposely” operates as a judgement marker of social sanction regarding propriety, suggesting deliberate action. Lastly, the exclamatory phrase “Fake News!” operates as both negative appreciation regarding valuation of information and negative judgement of social sanction concerning reporting institutions.

### ***3.3.4 Trumpology: Racist and Xenophobic Discourse***

In the preceding quantitative and qualitative analysis of attitudinal resources in Trump’s tweets, I employed the Attitude framework (affect, judgement and appreciation) (see Figure 2) to reveal patterns of emotional alignment, ethical

evaluation, and valuation within his tweets referencing “China/Chinese virus” or “Wuhan virus”. However, apart from the Trumpian attitudinal meaning of the metaphor terms that represent ethnicity and nationality, an important feature of this dataset was the usage of Trumpian hate speech and racial articulation. This observation echoes patterns already identified in Chapter 2, which examined Trump’s rhetorical strategies during his election campaign period, where similar discourse practices were used to mobilize nationalist and exclusionary sentiments. There is, however, something noteworthy about the consistency with which these discourse strategies are re-emerging in the context of pandemics. The argument I want to show here is that, observe how Trump’s language choices in naming and describing the virus but as evaluative acts that activate and reinforce particular ideological positions. Therefore, I broaden my inquiry by employing the Appraisal framework to examine how these evaluative resources are utilized to construct and reinforce his racist and xenophobic ideologies.

The political agenda of Donald Trump has been described as one articulating nationalistic and xenophobic ideologies (Edwards, 2018). The “Making America Great Again”, which is the slogan capturing domestic agenda of Trump is intertwined with his approach to global affairs, known as “America First”. The example I provide below (Tweet 7) make evident that during the epidemic, the president did not cease constructing structures composed of xenophobic and racist hierarchies, his tweets easily contextualized the statements on Covid-19 into the same discourse of racism. He employed the rhetoric of racial superiority to justify the policies that were implemented, such as travel bans targeting specific countries. He also used his references to Covid-19 to reinforce the existing structures of oppression between the US and China. He used the pandemic to further marginalize certain groups, namely Asian-Americans, furthering his agenda of racism and xenophobia. In Tweet 7, it reveals how the tweet strategically combines various evaluative resources to construct a narrative where the pandemic is framed as merely a temporary setback to Trump’s project of American greatness. The pronounced use of proclamation resources effectively restricts dialogic alternatives concerning the pandemic’s progression and

Trump's perceived ability to restore economic prosperity. In addition, the use of graduated language amplifies positive evaluations of Trump, while the targeted emphasis on specific qualities ("Great") reinforces the ideological framework that portrays him as singularly capable of national restoration. I am also providing the tweet with the appraisal coding in brackets:

Tweet 7:

RT@DonaldJTrumpJr: After the pandemic passes and we can fire up (appreciation: positive valuation) [graduation: force (intensification)] our [engagement: contact (proclaim)] economic engine, I'm truly (graduation: focus) looking forward to watching @realDonaldTrump Make America Great (appreciation: positive valuation) Again... Again!!! [graduation: force (intensification)] (2020-04-24 12:30)

In Tweet 8 below, we can see the polarity of the president's attitude. In the Tweet, followers appear to have acknowledged the effort of the Trump administration during the pandemic, which could be indicative of a positive effect. The tweet 8 employs positive self-representation ("I am ready") contrasted with negative other-representation ("DEMOCRATS ARE HOLDING THIS UP"), creating a moral dichotomy. Additionally, by using capital letters and the exclamation mark, a graduated sense of meaning is achieved.

Tweet 8:

I [engagement: contact (proclaim)] am ready [affect: inclination (positive desire)] to have @USTreasury and @SBA send additional [graduation: force (quantification)] PPP payments to small businesses that have been hurt (appreciation: negative valuation) by the China Virus (judgement: negative propriety). DEMOCRATS ARE HOLDING THIS UP! [graduation: force (intensification)] ( 2020-08-15 00:25)

Throughout his presidency, Trump consistently denied or rejected the death toll or the gloomy social picture in the wake of Covid-19 reported by the media. It also can be seen in item 3 and 6 in Table 1, He argues that the official figures have been exaggerated and that the situation is not as dire as portrayed. He instead chooses to



focus on the positive aspects of the crisis, such as the government's actions aimed at the propagation of the illness. As can be seen from the following two examples, Tweet 9 and 10, the health institutions in the US and particular people, such as American medical system claimed to be are judged 'great' in their fight with the so-called Chinese virus, suggesting that it is plausible and legitimate to express a hostile attitude and racial resentment against the 'source' of the pandemic. In addition, it represents a strategic deployment of evaluative language that connects pandemic response to nationalist discourse, reinforcing Trump's "America First" ideology, indirectly established logic voices a hierarchical racialized nationalism.

Tweet 9:

RT @WhiteHouse: Our great (appreciation: positive valuation) American medical system continues to [engagement: contact (proclaim)] go above and beyond [graduation: force (intensification)] the call of duty (judgement: positive tenacity). ( 2020-04-10 07:40 )

Tweet 10:

In light of the attack [engagement: contact (proclaim)] from the Invisible Enemy [appreciation: negative Reaction (impact)] [graduation: force (intensification)] as well as the need to protect (appreciation: positive valuation) the jobs of our GREAT [graduation: force (intensification)] American Citizens [judgement: positive social esteem (normality)] I will be signing [engagement: contact (proclaim)] an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States! (2020-04-21 10:06)

There has been an increase in racist and xenophobic expressions in the United States, where similar hate speech is directed toward migrants. They are accusations that take advantage of the momentum that can be provided by the economic and social situation arising from the pandemic (Gover et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2020; Rubin & Wilson, 2021). In Tweet 10, the discourse of anti-migration voices not only resonates but justifies the exclusionary statements in Trump's tweets during the pandemic. There is a parallel drawn between the dangers migrants could represent to the US citizens' health, the economy and security and the effects of the Covid-19 virus once

it is established as an ‘alien’ health hazard linked with ‘China’. It can be argued that the ‘great’ identity of the collective of US citizens merges domestic ethnic nationalism with a right-wing nationalist perspective on global affairs. The president’s unprecedented publicly voiced xenophobia against Asian Americans can be seen to be evidenced in his view of Covid-19 as a ‘China/ Chinese virus’. It is therefore also possible that the creation of a new anti-Asian discourse within this context of the COVID-19 pandemic may be embedded in future in discourses of anti-migration, where it could be used for legitimization of the hate rhetoric.

### **3.4 Discussion**

In this chapter I have provided insight into how Trump’s tweets from March 16, 2020 through January 20, 2021, which covered the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, while overlapping with the last year of his presidency, worked as a site for building his racist rhetoric. In particular, I examined how a xenophobic ideology against Asian Americans increased under the Trump administration partly by his use of the Twitter platform. I pointed out the discursive strategies that were used to unfairly blame Asian Americans for the Coronavirus transmission by linking the virus with China and calling any other opinion on the pandemic “fake news”. In the corpus, there is a tendency towards scaled-up negative evaluation, although this has not been quantified since it would require the manual annotation of a substantial sample of the corpus. The dataset for this study comprises 708 tweets that include specific keywords—such as ‘Covid’, ‘Coronavirus’, ‘pandemic’, ‘Asian/Asia’, and ‘China/Chinese virus’—identified using word count software. Within this keyword-defined corpus, a qualitative snapshot reveals a consistent pattern of negative attitudinal positioning, particularly toward China and domestic political opponents. These attitudinal resources were examined through lexical choices that convey evaluation, focusing on gradable lexicalization in line with the Appraisal framework.

#### ***3.4.1 Measuring Trump’s Tweets: Personalized Racist Discourse***

Scholars in crisis communication emphasize the significance of effective warning

strategies during pandemics (Ferguson et al., 2006; Guo & Comes, 2022). Trump's use of warning rhetoric aligns with the principles of crisis communication, wherein leaders are expected to inform and prepare the public for potential threats. It is evident from Trump's tweets that he is transferring the warning to beware of the new Covid-19 virus. However, the warning is to beware of races with Asian faces. He succeeded in finding a scapegoat for transferring the fear of invisible viruses in Asian Americans, specifically in those of Chinese descent or citizenship. Trump's portrayal of Covid-19 as an invisible enemy appeals to a fear rhetoric, wherein the expected emotional response generated by the fear can shape the reader's attitudes and behaviors. Political leaders are said to often utilize fear strategically to enhance their influence during times of crisis (Wodak, 2015). I have demonstrated through the analysis of Trump's tweets that anger and resentment are significant elements of his affective register. I suggest that Trump's hate speech represents a unique intersection of powerful sentiments, exclusionary political discourse of xenophobia and racism and feelings of fear of unknown viruses.

As a matter of fact, it is certain that prejudice against Asian Americans has been there since the beginning (Chen, 2000). However, after being stimulated by the Coronavirus and Trump's rhetoric, this prejudice has been exacerbated and has been brought out into the open to the public's attention (Min, 2006; Ono & Pham, 2009). In the chapter, I focused on the act of naming the Covid-19 virus and its association with the specific geographic location of Wuhan, China and explored how it was used systematically as a stigma and term of racist discrimination. Trump's naming of Covid-19 and its subsequent linking to China may have inadvertently fueled xenophobia and discrimination against Asian Americans. My analysis of his tweets showed that Trump's political communication in the social media serves to reinforce the emotional impact of hate. Additionally, he is able to deflect blame from his own policies by his other strategy of calling his opponents and critiques voicing "fake news" and thereby he may shift the blame onto others. He can mobilize his supporters while avoiding direct criticism of any particular his behavior.

Furthermore, according to the Tweet 1 to 10, the words he selected in his tweets are part of a rhetoric of de-intellectualization, in which words of formal registers are replaced by more colloquial expressions. As a result, the representation of the Covid-19 pandemic in Trump's tweets may have resulted in undermining the public trust in experts and in the scientific consensus about its treatment. It is important to point out that the Trumpian political rhetoric can have a very real impact on the health of the public, adversely affecting public health and safety. His discourse can cause confusion and a lack of trust in the medical and scientific community.

### ***3.4.2 Hatred Aggregation via Anti-Asian Hashtag Engagement***

Based on my analysis, I can contend that Trump actively contributed to anti-Asian sentiments through his use of the tools of digital communication, in particular the hashtag (#). Throughout his tweets, a stigmatized community was formed with use of the hashtag #ChinaVirus. He denigrated a particular group of people, particularly Chinese people and Asian Americans in general. This strategy of stigmatizing is the articulation of the ideology of xenophobia and racism towards people of Asian Americans as it created a routine association between the virus and those of Asian Americans. According to the existing research, in recent years, hashtags have become an integral part of language use in online social media. In the years since they were introduced on the Twitter platform, hashtags have evolved to become a tool with a multitude of applications (Yang et al., 2012). Despite the fact that hashtags were originally developed to catalog information, they can now serve as an effective means of rallying social movements (e.g. #metoo, the social movement against sexual abuse) and promoting communities (e.g. #TEAMSEAS, an international collaborative fundraiser for the ocean conservancy and cleanup). This type of connection was enabled by the use of hashtags in Trump's tweets as well.

This strategy of leveraging social media to foster division is not an isolated American phenomenon but reflects a broader trend in post-truth politics (Montgomery, 2017). The 2016 Brexit referendum provides a clear precedent, as the pro-Leave campaign successfully exploited social and racial divisions to its advantage. A primary example was the entirely false claim that Turkey and its citizens were on the

verge of joining the EU, a xenophobic narrative amplified by provocative posters depicting refugees with the slogan ‘Breaking Point’ (Gibbon, 2017). This campaign was notably internet-savvy, conducting highly specific and tailored digital outreach. By using voters’ data profiles, the Leave campaign could micro-target individuals with the specific message most likely to resonate with their personal concerns and biases, a level of digital targeting previously unseen in UK politics. The techniques honed during Brexit—fusing populist rhetoric with xenophobic messaging and leveraging the unregulated nature of social media—provided a clear playbook for the subsequent political discourse of Donald Trump (Ball, 2017).

Additionally, researchers have found that when individuals are faced with a political disagreement in social media communication, they may simply ban a person from their network in order to avoid future encounters with political dissidents (Bode, 2016; Barnidge, 2017; Neubaum et al., 2021). This option results in homogeneous interactions with others who hold the same opinion, for instance among the anti-Asian community. and the ban leads to actual individuals receiving information and encountering values that reinforce their sense of belonging to a group and polarize further their ideologies. My analysis has shown the working of such an intensified ideology propagated through Trump’s tweets that can homogenize his followers’ favorable attitude toward stigmatizing a particular group of people through linking the fearful Covid-19 virus to them by calling it ‘Chinese virus’.

Furthermore, Trump and his followers on Twitter can be seen as nodes in a network, interconnected by relationships through the tweets that provide information, emotional support, and values that create interpersonal connections. Donald Trump in his capacity as President of the US occupies a central position within this network, which allows him to dictate the interpretation of the virus and the pandemic. His tweets control the transmission of information and values and facilitate not only the transmission of hate as “natural” response to the virus but, more importantly, mitigates his accountability and responsibility for the measures introduced or the lack of them. In doing so, a hashtag #ChinaVirus has two primary purposes on digital microblogging sites. Initially, it functions to index anti-Asian material, grouping

together content on the same subject. Additionally, the hashtag becomes a sign of affiliation, which connects a digital group of its users and recruits them into an ardent group of Trump-followers at the expense of the Asian American citizens of the US. The least I can argue on the basis of my analysis is that Trump's Twitter activity systematically invited and naturalized the affect of hate and mobilized a discourse of anti-Asian sentiment, legitimizing very specific behaviors, such as hate speech as well as developing an integrated global system of polarized social media interaction via abusing his power as US President. My analysis also reinforces the initial findings of researching google that pointed out that there was a rise in hate-based offenses against Asians amid the global health crisis (Vachuska, 2020) and that it could be linked with hostility toward immigrants and widespread anti-foreigner sentiment in US political communication.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter presents a detailed, multi-layered linguistic analysis of Donald Trump's tweets during the pandemic, addressing the first research question concerning how his tweets produced racist and xenophobic meanings around the term 'China virus'. The analysis is grounded in a corpus of 708 tweets collected between March 2020 and January 2021. The chapter's investigation unfolds in three main stages: a broad quantitative overview of evaluative language, a systematic collocation analysis of key terms, and an in-depth qualitative discussion of the findings.

The primary methodological tool is the Attitude subsystems (affect, judgement, and appreciation) of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework. The initial quantitative findings reveal a discourse dominated by negative attitude, with expressions of fear, displeasure, and antipathy being the most prominent emotional resources. The analysis then deepens with a collocation analysis, which provides empirical evidence of recurring linguistic patterns. This reveals Trumpian rhetoric of pejorative terms like "China virus" and "invisible enemy", and demonstrates how these terms are consistently paired with verbs of conflict (e.g., "fight", "stop") and blame (e.g., "blame China").

The final discussion section synthesizes these findings, interpreting them through two main arguments. First, it examines how Trump’s rhetoric—characterized by fear, colloquial language, and accusations of “fake news”—functions as a personalized racist discourse that scapegoats Asian Americans and undermines scientific authority. Second, it analyzes how specific digital tools, particularly the #ChinaVirus hashtag, are used to aggregate hatred and build a virtual community founded on xenophobic sentiment. Ultimately, the chapter demonstrates that Trumpian rhetoric was a strategic deployment of evaluative language, using specific and recurring linguistic patterns to construct the pandemic in xenophobic terms, assign blame, and circulate a powerful anti-Asian ideology.

## **Chapter 4: Ideology and Power in News Discourse: A Critical Analysis of Trump's Media Representation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 4, I explored Donald Trump's positions on the pandemic. With the help of the categories of systemic functional grammar and appraisal theory, I analyzed the president's tweets to explore the textual formation of his xenophobic and racist stance. My analysis explored the value system presented in his tweets for his followers to identify with. To situate his attitude towards the Covid-19 virus, this chapter examines the wider social context by analyzing the political discourse on the pandemic in the US media surrounding Trump's presidency. The chapter explores the answer to the second research question, namely, what kind of existing ideologies are sustained or challenged in the process of reporting the President's Tweets by the two main media platforms, Fox news and CNN? The media platforms from where the data were selected by purposive sampling were chosen based on the political leaning of the given media institutions. I came up with CNN and Fox News as platforms that are perceived as the most influential outlets close to the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, respectively (Benkler et al., 2017; Motta et al., 2020; Bhat, 2022).

### **4.2 Method**

To address the second research question concerned with the media with political leaning frames Trumpian speech on the virus during the pandemic, this chapter adopts a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, an interpretive qualitative method. Drawing upon Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995b) three-dimensional model, I analyze textual data from the cable channels, Fox News and CNN, representative of the political spectrum. According to AllSides (2020), in September 2020, over 2200 people across the political spectrum were asked to rate the bias of CNN online news (not TV content) blindly. Over 80 percent of the respondents' thought, CNN was left-wing or leaning left. For this survey, they found CNN's fact-checking section to be highly anti-Donald Trump/anti-GOP. To see how (much) the values and ideologies



articulated in the tweets are framed according to this perception of CNN as left-leaning (and by implication that of Fox News as right-leaning), for this study, I have selected five reports from CNN and five reports from Fox News, focusing on their coverage of Donald Trump's tweets referring to COVID-19 as the "China virus" or "Chinese virus". The articles are from March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. These reports were chosen to represent a diverse range of perspectives and discursive practices used by each outlet, ensuring a comprehensive comparison of how both media platforms treat the same event while delivering contrasting political ideologies to their respective audiences.

This analysis aims to provide a detailed account of how the two cable channels report on President Trump's tweets concerning his naming of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). My objective is to see if their reports sustain or challenge the existing ideologies presented in the President's tweets. As a result, I can explore the dominant discourses and demonstrate if and how they naturalize or expose the ideologies in the presidential tweets. Consequently, I do not simply explore a particular user's individual meanings of the particular terms studied in Chapter 4, but can situate them in the broader context of the dominant mode of political communication in the media relative to their political stance. The examination of the ideological operation of the two media cable channels can reveal what values are circulated in relation to the pandemic, inviting their viewers to identify with them and perpetuate in their everyday communication.

In this study, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework will guide my analysis, focusing on how the two cable channels, CNN and Fox News report on Donald Trump's use of the terms, "China virus" or "Chinese virus". The CDA model operates at three interrelated levels: description, interpretation, and explanation, which are essential for recognizing the social function of language. As outlined in Figure 1 in Chapter 2, the first level, description, deals with the formal aspects of the text, corresponding to the textual dimension, the micro level, of the model. This stage of analysis examines features like lexical choices and grammatical structures to understand how language is used within the text. The second, meso level of

interpretation, aligns with the discursive practice dimension and views the text as a product of both production and consumption processes. This stage of analysis explores how the two media outlets, CNN and Fox News shape and present, i.e. interpret the actual tweet content to their audiences. Finally, the third, macro level of explanation, focuses on the social practice dimension, examining the relationship between the text and its broader social and ideological context. This stage investigates how language in the media interacts with power relations and ideologies in society, establishing how discourses of the pandemic influence and reflect wider societal structures of racial relations.

#### ***4.2.1 US Right-wing and Left-wing Media***

Recent years have seen the rise of new media is undermining the established authority of traditional news organizations. A 2014 survey found that CNN (16%) and Fox News (14%), were the two cable networks that respondents most frequently used to get news and information on government and politics (Pew Research Center, 2014). Furthermore, as a group, conservatives are much more oriented toward one particular outlet, Fox News than any other group. In fact, nearly half (47% of conservatives) rely on Fox News for government and political news as their primary source (Pew Research Center, 2014). However, the confidence in the media has plunged radically, from more two-thirds of the population in 1968 to slightly less than one-third of the population in 2016 (Jones, 2018). One of the main reasons behind the decline in media confidence is the rise of fake news and misinformation. The term “fake news” gained prominence during Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, who frequently used it to attack traditional news outlets and discredit their reporting – indirectly positioning his own social media platform on Twitter as the ‘reliable’ source (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). This constant barrage of accusations eroded public trust in the media and contributed to the decline in confidence. According to the previous section, Trump also employed the term fake news numerous times during the epidemic to criticize traditional media and his political opponents. For instance, Trump referred to report about the severity of the Covid-19 virus as “fake news” and dismissed the

accuracy of certain media outlets' coverage. As Hotez (2023) observes, Donald Trump also used the term to discredit claims made by experts and scientists regarding the effectiveness of certain treatments or preventive measures.

Given that a significant number of Americans still turn to cable news as their main source for political updates, this study focuses on CNN and Fox News as representative case studies. This selection is a methodologically deliberate choice grounded in their established dominance, clear ideological opposition, and, most importantly, their documented influence on the American political landscape. The justification for this selection is substantiated by a significant body of political science research demonstrating the causal effect of partisan cable news on the American electorate. The influence of Fox News, in particular, has been extensively documented. Martin and Yurukoglu (2017) isolated the causal effect of partisan media by exploiting variation in the channel position of Fox News on different cable systems—a factor that influences viewership but is independent of individual political preferences. Their model provides powerful empirical evidence that Fox News operates not merely as a news broadcaster but as a significant political actor. The result showed that the network's persuasive effect increases the total vote for Republican party by approximately 0.3 percent during every presidential election cycle since 2000, establishing its long-term impact on U.S. elections (Martin & Yurukoglu, 2017). This research establishes that Fox News functions not merely as a passive news source, but as a powerful political actor with a historical legacy of shaping voter preferences. Further scholarship confirms that the growth of partisan media like Fox News has significantly contributed to political polarization, influencing the attitudes and behaviors of its viewers (Hopkins & Ladd, 2014). Recent studies indicate that Fox News has exerted a substantial and increasing effect on U.S. politics in the last 20 years, which is further supported by evidence that a statistically significant change in its placement on the channel guide adds between 0.5 and 1.5 percentage points to the Republican party's vote total in the latest presidential, Senate, and gubernatorial elections (Ash et al., 2024).

CNN is chosen as the ideological counterpart to Fox News. The majority of American citizens stated that cable news provided the most useful information during the 2016 presidential election (Gottfried et al., 2016). Based on cell phone data during the start of the pandemic, Andersen (2020) finds that Fox News consumption negatively correlated with staying home, while CNN consumption positively correlated with staying home. In light of the fact that many Americans still rely on cable news as their principal outlet for information on public affairs, it is important to highlight the roles and impacts of CNN and Fox News in the United States. It is important to establish that news consumers receive very different information when it comes to the content provided by these two cable news networks (Stroud, 2011). This becomes particularly relevant in light of the opposing party preferences of the audiences and their various methods for obtaining information about current events. As mainstream media outlets, CNN and Fox News are highly influential in shaping the information the American public receives – the former from a liberal viewpoint, the latter with a conservative one. That said, it is important to point out that partisan leanings are a feature of news outlets regardless of their political affiliation, including, for instance, the cable news channel *Democracy Now*, as the most left-leaning news provider based in the US. In other words, there is a higher likelihood that those who identify with the Republicans will watch Fox News (Levendusky, 2013), while supporters of the Democrats will watch CNN (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012). As a legacy cable news network, it is widely perceived by the public and in media studies as the leading mainstream voice of the center-left. Its inclusion is therefore essential for a comparative analysis, allowing this study to examine how a specific political discourse is framed, amplified, or countered by the two most dominant and polarized players in the American cable news ecosystem. Therefore, this chapter seeks to study the reporting practices of these two sources of information when it comes to Trump's tweets on the pandemic to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the ideologies in circulation. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to probe for the racist ideological construction of the "China/Chinese virus" "Covid/ Coronavirus", "pandemic", "Asian/ Asia" imbricated within the structure of cable news reporting.

To substantiate the tenets of left- versus right-wing/leaning ideologies as used in this study, I argue that “the political left” stance fundamentally emphasizes principles of social equality, communal welfare, and progressive reform. The history of left-wing media originated in the early 20th century with the growth of labour movements and socialist publications, such as *The Masses*, which championed workers’ rights and critiqued capitalist structures (Gitlin, 1980; McChesney, 2004). Economically, these ideologies advocate for models such as socialism, wherein productive assets are under public ownership and control, with the goal of diminishing income inequality through comprehensive social welfare programs and rigorous regulatory frameworks (Piketty, 2014; Heywood, 2017). Socially, left-wing movements are characterized by their support for progressive reforms that encompass gender equality and environmental sustainability, seeking to address systemic injustices and promote inclusive development (Fraser, 1997; Giddens, 1998). Prominent left-wing media outlets in the US include CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times*, and NPR, known for their investigative journalism and in-depth analysis of policies from a liberal perspective (Nichols & McChesney, 2013; Starr, 2019). During the 2020 US presidential election, CNN provided extensive coverage and analysis of the race that aligned with left-wing perspectives (Hong et al., 2021). They focused on the candidates’ agenda regarding subjects such as racial justice and healthcare reform framing the election as a crucial moment for progressive change. Their reporting often highlighted the concerns of marginalized communities and emphasized the need for social and economic equality.

Right-wing ideologies are predicated on the values of individual liberty, personal responsibility, and the preservation of traditional societal structures. Economically, these ideologies champion capitalism and economic liberalism, advocating for private ownership, minimal governmental intervention in the marketplace, lower taxation, and deregulation as mechanisms for fostering economic growth and individual prosperity (Jacobs & Mazzucato, 2016). Socially, right-wing movements often espouse conservatism, which emphasizes the maintenance of established institutions, cultural norms, and sometimes nationalist sentiments, including stricter immigration

policies (O’Sullivan, 2003). The origins of right-wing media have their roots in the mid-20th century with the establishment of publications like the *National Review* by William F. Buckley Jr., which sought to unify various conservative factions and counteract the dominance of liberal media (Nash, 1976; Hemmer, 2016). Leading right-wing media outlets in the US include cable channel, Fox News and The Wall Street Journal which provide commentary and reporting aligned with conservative ideologies (Aday, 2010; Hemmer, 2016). During the 2020 U.S. presidential election, Fox News’s coverage demonstrated significant alignment with the perspectives and narratives of the Republican Party (GOP). The network extensively featured interviews and reports that underscored Donald Trump’s policies and campaign messages, emphasizing themes such as law and order, economic growth through deregulation, and criticisms of his Democratic opponents (Froehlich. 2020).

### **4.3 Analysis, Findings and Discussion**

This chapter aims to explore how media discourse produces and circulates public ideologies and shapes the construction of social and political reality of the pandemic when reporting Trump’s appropriate tweets. The analysis is divided into the three levels of Fairclough’s (1995b) framework to explore the ideological positioning and inclination of the two cable news channels. To ensure the transparency and validity of the analysis, Tables 5 and 6 below present a detailed list of the ten news articles selected for this study—five from CNN and five from Fox News. Each entry includes the full title, publication date, and a hyperlink to the original source. The reports were chosen for explicit reference to former President Donald Trump’s tweets, where he used the racially charged terms ‘China virus’ or ‘Chinese virus’. The compilation was based on an extensive dataset of news coverage, spanning the same period as Chapter 3, specifically from 16 March, 2020 to 20 January, 2021. The ten selected outlets were picked for their explicit engagement with the term in question and their relevance to the research focus on ideological framing. The decision to analyze an equal number of reports from each channel was a methodological choice aimed at facilitating a balanced comparison, rather than reflecting the overall volume of coverage.

**Table 5. CNN selected report**

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Author &amp; Published Date</i>	<i>Link</i>
1: Trump's malicious use of 'Chinese virus'	Jill Filipovic 18.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/18/opinions/trumps-malicious-use-of-chinese-virus-filipovic/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/18/opinions/trumps-malicious-use-of-chinese-virus-filipovic/index.html</a>
2: Trump again defends use of the term 'China virus'	Maegan Vazquez And Betsy Klein 19.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/17/politics/trump-china-coronavirus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/17/politics/trump-china-coronavirus/index.html</a>
3: Yes, of course Donald Trump is calling coronavirus the 'China virus' for political reasons	Chris Cillizza 20.03. 2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/20/politics/donald-trump-china-virus-coronavirus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/20/politics/donald-trump-china-virus-coronavirus/index.html</a>
4: Trump says he's pulling back from calling novel coronavirus the 'China virus'	Maegan Vazquez 24.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/24/politics/donald-trump-pull-back-coronavirus-chinese-virus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/24/politics/donald-trump-pull-back-coronavirus-chinese-virus/index.html</a>
5: Trump has repeatedly blamed China for a virus that now threatens his health. This will make Beijing nervous	James Griffiths 03.10.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/02/asia/trump-china-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/02/asia/trump-china-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html</a>

**Table 6. Fox News reports**

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Author &amp; Published Date</i>	<i>Link</i>
1: Trump defends use of phrase 'China virus,' despite demands from China to stop	Barnini Chakraborty 17.03.2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/world/trump-defends-use-of-phrase-china-virus-despite-demands-from-china-to-stop">https://www.foxnews.com/world/trump-defends-use-of-phrase-china-virus-despite-demands-from-china-to-stop</a>
2: Trump doubles down on 'China virus,' demands to know who in White House used phrase 'Kung Flu'	Barnini Chakraborty 18.03. 2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-china-virus-white-house-kung-flu">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-china-virus-white-house-kung-flu</a>
3: Jesse Watters: Trump uses 'Chinese virus' phrase to 'make sure that there is a little bit of accountability'	Yael Halon 19.03.2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/media/coronavirus-trump-chinese-virus-china-conspiracy-theory">https://www.foxnews.com/media/coronavirus-trump-chinese-virus-china-conspiracy-theory</a>
4: Trump says he may stop calling coronavirus the 'Chinese virus'	Morgan Phillips 26.03. 2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-may-stop-coronavirus-chinese-virus">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-may-stop-coronavirus-chinese-virus</a>
5: Trump tells UN to hold China	Adam Shaw	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-tells-un-to-hold-china">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-tells-un-to-hold-china</a>

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Author &amp; Published Date</i>	<i>Link</i>
accountable for coronavirus pandemic ‘The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,’ he said	22.09. 2020	mp-un-china-accountable-coronavirus-pandemic

#### ***4.3.1 News as Polyvocal Text***

Polyvocality is a concept developed by Mikhail Bakhtin (1986). He emphasizes the dialogical character of a statement: through its reiteration each statement evokes its previous and prospective enunciation, making its meaning flexible and organized out of the multiple meanings in those past and future contexts. His translator, Kristeva (1980) explains this polyvocality on the level of the text and introduced the concept of intertextuality to grasp it as a dialogue between a text and other texts that constitute the text’s ‘intertexts’. Similarly, Wetherell (2001) points out the repetition and variation of prior texts shaping new emerging contexts. They both acknowledge the influence of existing texts on shaping new ones. Still, Wetherell’s approach emphasizes the transformation and adaptation of texts, while Bakhtin’s approach highlights intertextuality’s interactive and dialogic nature. As Gray (2006) points out, methodologically it means that individual texts cannot be interpreted independently of other texts, in isolation. According to him, singular texts are nothing more than a “non-existent entity wished into creation by analysis” (pp. 3-4), thus emphasizing how the meaning of one text is intrinsically and inextricably linked to the meaning structures of other texts. This is an important claim, it legitimizes my methodological decision to see how the texts of the tweets come to assume their meaning when contextualized in the new text of the cable news reports. In addition, by recognizing the intertextuality of each genre, Bakhtin’s theory provides me with a framework for understanding how texts function and interact within the specific cultural context of the pandemic (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993). Thus, the fact that any text is inevitably shaped by the repertoire of other texts and text types, or genres available at a given moment in society. I can explore the ways Trump’s tweets come to be recontextualized in the two news channels through combining the genre of



conventional political news coverage with the genre of the social media posts of tweets, which are themselves combinations of everyday conversation and inspiration and political discourse. This two-way intertextuality is a prominent feature of news discourse.

It is also important to consider what news actors with their speech are deemed credible and important enough to be quoted in a news coverage – in my case president Trump’s stance in his tweets on the pandemic –, but also how journalists evaluate the opinions provided by quoted sources. Consequently, the analysis in this Chapter examines the various intertextual resources that are utilized in the ten news texts and how these intertextual relations are circulated and combined in particular ways to construct Right-leaning or Left-leaning understandings of the news actors as they relate to the global health problem of the Covid-19 pandemic in the US.

### ***4.3.2 First Level of Analysis: Description***

This section conducts the first of the three stages of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework: the description of the text. This stage involves a close examination of the formal linguistic properties of the news reports to uncover how their specific lexical and grammatical choices construct meaning.

To achieve this, the analysis will proceed in two parts. First, a collocation analysis, conducted using the freeware toolkit AntConc (ver. 4.3.1), will be employed to systematically identify recurring word pairings and reveal the divergent lexical framing used by CNN and Fox News. Second, a thematic and cohesion analysis will examine how sentence structures and vocabulary chains are used to build arguments and guide the reader toward a particular ideological interpretation. Together, these two approaches provide the empirical linguistic evidence necessary for the subsequent levels of interpretation (discursive practice) and explanation (social practice).

#### ***4.3.2.1 Collocation Analysis: Revealing Divergent Lexical Framing***

As a key component of the textual analysis, the first dimension of Fairclough’s model, a collocation analysis was conducted to provide systematic, data-driven insights into the lexical choices of each media outlet. After normalizing each corpus,

the freeware toolkit AntConc (ver. 4.3.1) was used to identify statistically significant word pairings. The analysis was performed using the search queries “Trump” (for Table 7) and “virus” (for Table 8) with a window span set to 2 words to the left and 2 to the right of the keyword, and a minimum co-occurrence frequency of 2 was required. This method reveals the underlying ideological assumptions and divergent narratives constructed by CNN and Fox News. The analysis begins by focusing on the keyword “Trump”, as his agency is central to the news event. Table 7 presents the resulting word pairings, which illustrate the distinct ideological framing employed by each network.

**Table 7.** *Comparative Collocations with “Trump” in CNN and Fox News Corpora*

Rank	Collocations in CNN’s Reports	Frequency	Collocations in Fox New’s Reports	Frequency
1	Donald Trump	7	President Trump	7
2	Trump’s diagnosis	6	Politics Trump	3
3	Trump’s rhetoric(al)	2	Trump tweeted	3
4	Politics Trump	2	Trump defends	2

A comparative collocation analysis of the CNN and Fox News corpora reveals divergent lexical patterns around the keyword “Trump”, illustrating the distinct framing strategies employed by each network. As presented in the table, while both outlets frequently mention the political context (Politics Trump), their primary framing choices differ significantly. The most frequent collocation in the Fox News corpus is “President Trump”, a title that formally recognizes and reinforces his institutional authority. This contrasts with CNN’s most frequent pairing, Donald Trump, a more neutral, journalistic naming convention. In addition, CNN’s reporting shows a specific focus on the content and nature of his speech, with “Trump’s rhetoric(al)” appearing as a key collocation. This positions his language itself as a central object of scrutiny. Another significant pairing in the CNN corpus is “Trump’s diagnosis”, which grounds the coverage in a specific, factual health event. In contrast, the Fox News corpus features collocations that frame Trump’s actions within a

context of political conflict. The pairing “Trump defends” constructs a narrative in which his statements are a justified response to external criticism. Similarly, “Trump tweeted” functions as a neutral descriptor of his action, reporting the event of his communication rather than analyzing its substance.

Therefore, The lexical patterns identified in the collocation analysis reveal the distinct ideology performed by each news network. CNN’s collocations construct a narrative that invites critical scrutiny of Donald Trump. By focusing on “Trump’s rhetoric” and “Trump’s diagnosis”, the network frames him as a political actor whose words and health are subjects for public analysis and concern. The choice to analyze his rhetoric specifically suggests a focus on his communication as a strategic, and potentially problematic performance.

Fox News, on the other hand, employs collocations that build a supportive, legitimizing frame. The consistent use of his formal title, “President Trump”, and the framing of his actions as defensive (Trump defends) construct a narrative of a legitimate leader under partisan and his opponents’ attack. This focus on political conflict, rather than the substance of his rhetoric, aligns with a pro-administration stance, encouraging the audience to view the situation as a political battle rather than a matter of public health or social responsibility. These divergent lexical choices are not accidental; they are key components of how each network guides its audience toward a particular ideological interpretation of the events.

**Table 8.** *Comparative Collocations with “virus” in CNN and Fox News Corpora*

Rank	Collocations in CNN’s Reports	Frequency	Collocations in Fox New’s Reports	Frequency
1	the virus	24	Chinese virus	13
2	China virus	10	the virus	12
3	Chinese virus	8	China virus	8
4	\	\	Virus despite demands	3

The comparative collocation analysis for the keyword “virus” reveals a clear and ideologically significant divergence in the terminological preferences of CNN and

Fox News. As shown in the Table 8, the two networks prioritize different ways of naming the pandemic. In the CNN corpus, the most frequent pairing by a significant margin is the neutral phrase the virus. While the politicized terms “China virus” and “Chinese virus” are present, they appear much less frequently than the standard, non-geographic descriptor. Crucially, when the politicized terms China virus or Chinese virus do appear in the CNN corpus, they are almost always presented as direct quotations clearly attributed to President Trump. This discursive practice of direct quotation frames the terms as controversial objects of analysis, distancing the network from the language itself and reinforcing a critical stance.

In contrast, Fox News’s prioritization of Chinese virus works to normalize and legitimize the politicized terminology. Rather than consistently using direct quotations, the network often adopts the phrase itself or employs indirect citation, embedding the term within the reporter’s own narration. This practice blurs the line between reporting on the Trumpian rhetoric and adopting them, which serves to legitimize the terminology for its audience. The collocation “virus despite demands” further reveals this ideological work, explicitly framing the use of the term as a deliberate act of defiance. This analysis demonstrates that the very act of naming the virus was a key site of ideological struggle, with CNN critiquing the politicized language and Fox News actively participating in its normalization.

#### *4.3.2.2 Thematic and Cohesion Analysis*

In this section, the focus of my analysis is on the textual level. I want to analyze the production of a cohesion and coherence in texts. In essence, cohesion refers to the internal connections that exist between clauses within a text (linking devices, derivatives, pronouns etc), while coherence refers to the connections between a text and the context in which it is written (Bublitz, 2011). I shall analyze the chains of words producing the ‘topic’ of the text and through the analysis of the theme of clauses as defined by Halliday’s systemic functional grammar, which Theme is “the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say” (Halliday, 1994, p. 36). The clause functions as a message through the thematic structures of Theme and Rheme based on their sequential positioning. Cohesion involves the repetition of words and

phrases to create a unified semantic field of meaning, in my case that of the meaning of the ‘virus’, while coherence refers to the logical flow and connection between different parts of the text through the changes to the ‘theme’ in the clauses.

Example 1 a and b are taken from CNN and Fox News website, respectively. The two texts are editorials and where they report on Trump’s response to Weijia Jiang, the CBS Inc. (Columbia Broadcasting System) commercial news channel correspondent’s tweet in which Jiang disclosed that an unidentified administration official had nicknamed Coronavirus “Kung-Flu”, her tweet shows below:

This morning a White House official referred to #Coronavirus as the “Kung-Flu” to my face. Makes me wonder what they’re calling it behind my back. (2020-03-17 3:35)

Examples 1 and 2 of two editorials from CNN and Fox News cover the same event: President Trump’s public reaction to CBS correspondent Weijia Jiang’s disclosure on Twitter that a member of the White House staff had used the term “Kung-Flu” for the Coronavirus. The term “Kung-Flu” is a pun on “Kung Fu” (功夫), a traditional Chinese martial art associated with discipline, self-control, and mental focus. By replacing “Fu” with “Flu,” the phrase creates a racially charged label for COVID-19 that not only mocks Chinese culture but also implies the virus is a kind of weapon from China. This pun distorts the original meaning of “Kung Fu” and contributes to a harmful stereotype, resulting in a distorted and offensive framing of both the virus and Chinese culture. Thus, the texts were selected for their direct engagement with Trump’s language choices and the broader discourse around racially charged virus-related naming. Both editorials address the same incident, but they adopt differing political stances, offering a meaningful basis for comparison. CNN’s report centers on Trump’s repeated racialized labeling of the virus that such “Kung-Flu” could fuel racism against Asian-Americans and critiques the administration’s broader communication strategy, whereas Fox News’s editorial presents the same incident with a different focus and tone. It emphasizes that Trump justified his defence of employing the phrase “China virus”, even as reporter Weijia Jiang questioned that White House official had used the controversial term “Kung-Flu”

when describing Covid-19. Despite mounting pressure to stop using such naming, Trump has doubled down on the phrase in public statements and social media, insisting that identifying the virus by its geographical origin is not discriminatory.

#### **Example 1a**

The Trump administration official who allegedly made a racist comment to a reporter isn't an anomaly; he or she is following the **contemptuous** example of a **bigoted** boss. That Jiang tweeted it is an act of **bravery, transparency** and **integrity**. In the midst of the crisis, we need more of what Jiang is bringing, and a whole lot less of the presidential **fecklessness** and Trump Team **racism** that puts us all at **greater risk**. (Jill Filipovic, CNN, March 18, 2020)

#### **Example 1b**

In the **bizarre exchange**, Trump asked Alcindor to repeat the phrase “Kung-Flu” and asked her directly which White House official had used the term. She said she **did not get a name**. Earlier in the day, White House advisor Kellyanne Conway took a more **combative tone** with reporters and though she said using the phrase “Kung-Flu” was wrong, she **refused to engage** in a “hypothetical” and **demanding to know** who in the White House had the exchange with Jiang. (Barnini Chakraborty, Fox News, March 18, 2020)

Vocabulary chain is constructed by the words and phrases that refer to the text's dominant topic, which is concerned with naming the virus, particularly through racially charged terms. In these texts, coherence is created through the repetition and variation of words and phrases such as “Kung-Flu”, “the virus”, “Coronavirus”, “the term” and references to Trump's or the White House's language choices, which maintain focus on the naming controversy and shape the ideological stance of each report. In CNN, it employs a range of terms to refer to the virus, including “coronavirus”, “Covid-19” and “Chinese virus”. However, Trump's labeling is presented in quotation marks or as direct speech to distance the author's voice from the language used. The writer also employs negative evaluative adjectives (e.g., “malicious”, “racist”, “dangerous”) to construct a critical stance.

In example 1a, the lexical items used to construct vocabulary chains are highlighted in bold. Throughout the discourse, references to Trump's administration and its autocratic nature, but Weijia Jiang's righteousness permeates the discourse. These references feature prominently in each of the paragraphs and serve as a mechanism for constructing cohesion by repeatedly using synonymous terms. It is references to Trump's team negative responses "contemptuous" and "bigoted", through constant in this text that the text constructs a perception of Trump's administration as "fecklessness" and "racism". And finally gave a author's concluding opinion, that is, this will cause "greater risk" which is due to the potential for manipulation of public opinion, which can lead to people making decisions based on flawed information. Instead, it is evident that the author agrees with Jiang's outspokenness and is indignant about Jiang's experience. The author uses three positive words in a row, which stands in sharp contrast with the author's evaluation of Trump and his party. This cohesive use of vocabulary highlights the author's stance and builds a clear dichotomy between the positive portrayal of Jiang and the negative depiction of Trump and his allies.

However, Fox News uses quotation marks around "Kung-Flu", indicating its reported nature, and avoids labeling the term as "racist". The virus itself is not as prominently lexicalized in terms of naming; instead, the focus shifts to Trump's questioning and Conway's interaction with reporters. In example 1b, the opening phrase "bizarre exchange" implies that the interaction is abnormal or out of the ordinary. It frames the event as something that deviates from standard expectations by implying a judgemental attitude toward the interaction, which prepares the reader to view what follows as unusual. The 'bizarre' part of the conversation can actually be determined from the following conversation: when asked which official used the term "Kung-Flu", Alcindor responded "did not get a name", which a layer of vagueness or uncertainty into the conversation. Alcindor's inability to provide a name weakens her position, which could reduce the force of her argument or claim. It also allows the possibility for Trump or others to question the credibility of her account. In this regard, it appears that White House advisor Kellyanne Conway used the phrase

“combative tone” in her engagement with news correspondents in a way that conveyed legitimate confrontation or aggressive behaviour. Due to the fact that it is a “hypothetical” charge, the word “combative” implies that she was not merely responding to questions but was actively resisting or fighting back against the line of questioning. After using the two phrases “refused to engage” and “demanded to know who said something”, Conway turns the conversation away from the content of what was said “Kung-Flu” and towards identifying the individual responsible. It is in this manner that attention is deflected from the morality of the phrase itself to a question of procedural logic. In doing so, responsibility is deflected from them and the onus is placed on reporters to provide information that they might not have, as well as making the reader doubt the validity of this accusation.

The analysis of lexical cohesion through vocabulary chains reveals how specific word choices contribute to ideological framing. The lexical pattern reinforces ideologies of blame and othering, particularly by framing the virus as a foreign threat linked to China or Chinese. While CNN uses these terms to critique the administration’s rhetoric, Fox News presents them with less critical distance, often echoing or neutralizing the controversial language. Thus, the chain of words not only provides textual cohesion but also reflects contrasting ideological stances in reporting.

‘Theme’ is a key component of cohesion, as it reveals the process by which these messages are comprised. There is a more specific function for it in the SFL, in which it refers to a word or phrase at the beginning of a clause, functioning as the ‘new element’ that focalizes the topic of the sentence: “Theme is the starting point of the message; it is what the clause will be about” (Halliday, 1994, p. 39). In addition, the first element in the clause is also defined as defined as the ‘representational meaning’ in a clause, its topic Martin, Matthiessen and Painter (1997, p. 24) the clause that signifies some sort of representation. Therefore, through examining the discourse motivations behind Theme as a paradigmatic choice in referring to clauses as messages, an emphasis is placed on how Theme shapes clause grammatical structure. In CNN, the thematic structure of text consistently foregrounds Trump as the Theme, “Trump used...”, placing him as the agent of discourse throughout. This reinforces his



central responsibility for the rhetoric being critiqued. The Rhemes that follow provide commentary or consequences of his linguistic choices, leading to a coherent argumentative structure that frames Trump's discourse as intentionally divisive. However, the Themes in Fox News shift from Trump to Conway to Alcindor, spreading the focus across different agency. This diffuses the sense of responsibility and subtly shifts the coherence pattern toward a narrative of dispute and defensiveness, rather than critique. The thematic progression contributes to a more neutral—or at least less judgemental—tone, aligning with the outlet's usual editorial stance. These two reports, thus, reflect opposing ideological alignments in their reporting of the same incident. While CNN constructs a critical, linear argument that links Trump's rhetoric with broader issues of racism and disinformation, Fox News constructs a fragmented narrative that centers more on the controversy than its implications. This is evident in both their lexical cohesion strategies and their thematic structures, which guide the reader toward different interpretations of the same event.

#### ***4.3.3 Second Level of Analysis: Discursive Practice***

During the first stage of the three-dimensional analysis, I have been able to present a comprehensive overview of the textual analysis of the extracts from both media outlets and present some well-informed arguments regarding the dominant ideological position of the report on this institutional action. The second stage of analysis, the level of discursive practice, focuses on the textually mediated processes involved in producing news discourse. Rather than simply expressing an author's viewpoint, media texts are manifestations of established institutional processes of editing (McGann, 2020, p. 27). The analysis that explores the editing practice includes the type of events that qualify as 'news' by the headline, the sources that are selected to contribute to what counts as 'newsworthy story' and the way their voices are presented (forms of reporting speech) and the intertextuality of a news report (allusion) (Bednarek a& Caple, 2017).

##### ***4.3.3.1. Headlines: Newsworthiness and Selectivity***

It is logical to begin an analysis of a news text by considering the headline of an article. Bell (1991) defines headlines as part of a rhetoric that aims to attract the

reader's attention. In a similar vein, Dor (2003) points out that headlines serve the dual purpose of efficiently guiding readers to the most important points in a story, making it easier for them to decide whether to continue reading it or not, as well as they play a strategic role in engaging and directing reader attention effectively. In doing so, headlines serve two purposes: a semantic one that clarifies the text's topic, and a pragmatic one that shapes the perspective of its target reader (Khranchenko, 2023). This also means that the process of producing headlines is a highly ideological practice. Headlines are crafted to capture attention and shape public perception of what counts as 'news', reflecting the biases and priorities of the media outlet. The choice of words, their emphasis on certain aspects of a story rather than on others, and the overall framing are influenced by the underlying political, cultural, or economic ideologies at play. This can lead to headlines that either subtly or overtly push a particular agenda or perspective. As Table 9 shows below, the headlines of the selected texts-presented in chronological order – are all centered around President Trump's role in naming the virus as 'China virus'. Both news platforms equally see the president's terminology for naming Covid-19 newsworthy. Thus, the temporal distribution of the selected texts warrants methodological justification. The predominance of March 2020 outlets coincides with President Trump's initial public deployment of the term "China virus" (commencing March 16th), constituting a critical discursive moment that generated substantial media coverage as this term was being introduced and legitimized within public discourse. Further, by including later reports from September and October, it demonstrates that Trump continued using this controversial naming over time, showing persistence rather than an isolated incident.

**Table 9.** *Comparison of CNN and Fox News headlines*

#	<i>CNN Headlines</i>	<i>Fox News Headlines</i>
1	Trump's <u>malicious use</u> of 'Chinese virus'. (18.03.2020)	Trump <u>defends</u> use of phrase 'China virus,' <u>despite demands</u> from China to stop. (17.03.2020)
2	Trump again defends use of the term 'China virus'. (19.03.2020)	Trump doubles down on 'China virus,' demands to know who in White House used phrase 'Kung Flu'. (18.03.2020)
3	Yes, of course, Donald Trump is calling	Jesse Watters: Trump uses 'Chinese virus' phrase

#	<i>CNN Headlines</i>	<i>Fox News Headlines</i>
	coronavirus the ‘China virus’ <u>for political reasons</u> . (20.03.2020)	to ‘make sure that there is a little bit of <u>accountability</u> ’. (19.03.2020)
4	Trump says he’s pulling back from calling novel coronavirus the ‘China virus’. (24.03.2020)	Trump says he may stop calling coronavirus the ‘Chinese virus’. (26.03.2020)
5	Trump has repeatedly <u>blamed</u> China for a virus that now threatens his health. This will make Beijing nervous. (03.10.2020)	Trump <u>tells UN to hold China accountable</u> for coronavirus pandemic. <i>‘The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,’ he said.</i> (22.09.2020)

However, CNN and Fox News headlines present this ‘news’ from different perspectives. In general, CNN uses inverted commas to distance itself from the phrase ‘China virus’ or ‘Chinese virus’, signaling its disapproval or rejection of the term, thereby framing it as controversial and problematic. There is a tendency for CNN not only to attribute the phrase directly to Trump, but also using terms that associate the choice of the term with negative connotations attributed to the president (underlined terms in the headlines), implicating that it is his language and implying that they do not endorse the term in question. In contrast, Fox News utilizes inverted commas in a more neutral or even supportive manner, framing Trump’s use of the term without critiquing it, often mirroring Trump’s language without questioning its implications. For instance, in the first headline the CNN editor used a highly charged adjective “malicious” unlike Fox News, whose editor used a reporting verb “defend”, describing how the president responded to the criticism of his use of the term. However, this option over the possibility of indirect criticism, like in the case of CNN, implicates Fox News in agreement with the president’s stance. As a result the act of using inverted commas in case of CNN conveys a critical tone, emphasizing that CNN does not endorse the phrase and that they consider its use problematic. In contrast, Fox’s use of “defends” minimizes any potentially harmful connotation, indirectly implicating the president’s opponents with ‘attacks’, and so the inverted commas around the phrase “China virus” are viewed as factual rather than problematic. This difference between the two news sites is more apparent in the third headlines. CNN’s headline states forthrightly that Trump’s use of the term is politically motivated. “For

political reasons” implies the administration’s manipulation regarding the cause of the epidemic, which indirectly reinforces the idea that the Trump’s administration is not to blame for the situation in the country. Fox News, on the other hand, combines the term ‘China virus’ with “accountability”, which to demonstrate that Trump’s language serves a justified purpose, namely holding China accountable. Consequently, CNN’s consideration of Trumpian speech as a politically calculated move highlights the implications of his words in terms of racial and political division. Fox News, however, presents the epidemic as a matter of China’s accountability, dismissing the racial implications of the language and supporting Trump’s stance against China.

It is CNN’s consistent position that Trump’s use of ‘China virus’ or ‘Chinese virus’ is divisive and damaging, especially in terms of international diplomacy and race relations. A crucial aspect of CNN’s political ideology is its alignment with liberal or progressive values, including sensitivity to racial issues, diplomatic procedures, and the negative effects of nationalistic rhetoric on society. By quoting “China virus” or “Chinese virus”, Fox News presents Trump’s use of the term in a more neutral or even favourable light, focusing on Trump’s defence of the term rather than criticizing it. As such, this aligns with conservative values, particularly the defence of Trump’s rhetoric as part of a broader nationalist agenda of “defence”, framing China as the hostile enemy responsible for spreading the pandemic and so legitimizing the US demand of the UN to blame the virus on China.

#### *4.3.3.2 Speaking Voices: Direct Speech and Indirect Speech*

In order to demonstrate the credibility and authority of their news report, editorial boards are to establish the validity of the ‘news’ by their systematic use of ‘sources’ of the information, which are called social actor (Manning, 2001). News media often use reported speech selectively to achieve this purpose. As the headlines commit themselves to reporting on president Trump’s application of the label ‘China virus’ for naming Covid-19, it is important to see if the two news channels are different in their use of reporting Trump’s voice (Table 9) as well as the distribution of other social actors as sources of the reported events (Table 10). As can be seen from Table 9, the direct or reported speech of the social actor (Trump) is used, and in most cases, names

are also mentioned, increasing the authenticity of the news. However, headlines are not only characterized by intertextuality, but news discourse also have this characteristic. Reporters use a great deal of other's discourse to add credibility to their news reports and demonstrate their objective nature. As a result, direct or indirect speech is the predominant manifestation of specific intertextuality in news discourse. As Tables 9 and 10 show how CNN and Fox News attribute Donald Trump's and others' speech in their articles, differentiating between direct and indirect speech.

**Table 9.** *Attribution of Trump's speech in CNN and Fox News*

<i>Types of reporting speech</i>	<i>Article</i>					<i>Total</i>
	1	2	3	4	5	
CNN-Trump's Direct Speech	3	6	4	5	9	27
CNN- Trump's Indirect Speech	1	0	4	2	0	7
Fox News-Trump's Direct Speech	4	2	2	1	5	14
Fox News-Trump's Indirect Speech	2	2	1	1	5	11

As results show, CNN uses direct speech to insert Trump's voice directly nearly twice as often as Fox News does: 27 compared to 14. Taken together with the results of the headlines, this difference suggests that CNN tends to repeat Trump's statements verbatim more frequently possibly in order to expose his rhetoric verbatim that the journalist is to analyze and critique. In case of Fox News, the tendency that it does not quote Trump's statements directly, in line with their headline strategies, it is possible they are more selective about presenting Trump's statements word-for-word as a result of a desire to protect Trump from possible criticism that direct quotes may provoke and also to frame his statements in a more favourable light. This is why Fox News uses more indirect speech, 11 compared to 7 in CNN, indicating a preference for summarizing or paraphrasing Trump's statements in order to soften or contextualize them. While CNN uses indirect speech sparingly. They would rather allow for Trump's words to speak for themselves rather than paraphrase them, which would modulate the coercive force of his words.

The following quotes of direct and indirect quotes should represent this systematic difference:

Examples 2a

Pressed on Wednesday about the shift and how it was perceived as potentially

playing on xenophobic and racist tropes, Trump responded this way:

“It’s not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that’s why. I want to be accurate. ... I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know China tried to say at one point ... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can’t happen, it’s not gonna happen, not as long as I’m president. It comes from China.” (Chris Cillizza, CNN, March 20, 2020)

#### Example 2b

President Trump on Tuesday further angered China by referring to COVID-19, which has killed more than 7,000 people worldwide, as the “China virus,” despite being asked repeatedly to stop.

Trump said during a national televised press conference that he is using the phrase as a response to China spreading conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus. (Barnini Chakraborty, Fox News, March 17, 2020)

In Table 10 I have summarized the choices of sources other than Trump and the distribution of reporting them directly and indirectly.

**Table 10.** *Attribution of others’ speech in CNN and Fox News*

Attribute	Article					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
CNN- Others’ Direct Speech	2	2	0	0	6	10
CNN- Others’ Indirect Speech	1	2	0	1	2	6
Fox News- Others’ Direct Speech	2	2	4	1	0	9
Fox News- Others’ Indirect Speech	3	3	3	0	0	9

The distribution of direct and indirect speech of social actors, other than Trump, in CNN and Fox News articles, reveals notable patterns in how these networks incorporate external voices in their reporting on Trump’s use of the term ‘China/Chinese virus’. What stands out is the uneven distribution across individual articles. CNN’s coverage shows minimal attribution in articles 3 and 4 (with zero direct speech instances) but a significant concentration in article 5 (6 instances of direct speech). This suggests that CNN’s editorial approach to incorporating external voices varied considerably depending on the specific angle of each article. Fox News demonstrates a more consistent use of attribution in articles 1-3, but notably drops off in articles 4-5, with no speech attribution recorded in article 5. Thus, I have

summarized them (together with the actors reported indirectly) in Table 11.

**Table 11.** *Social Actors other than Trump reported as sources*

<i>News Source</i>	<i>Social Actor</i>	<i>Role/Affiliation</i>	<i>Type of Speech</i>	<i>Stance Toward Trump</i>
CNN	World Health Organization (WHO)	International Health Organization	Indirect	Opposing
CNN	Weijia Jiang	CBS reporter	Direct	Opposing
CNN	A reporter	-	Indirect	Critical
CNN	Medical experts	-	Indirect	Opposing
CNN	Mike Ryan	executive director of WHO health emergencies program	Direct	Opposing
CNN	Experts	contacted by CNN	Indirect	Opposing
CNN	Chinese government	Chinese Government Official	Indirect	Neutral
CNN	Chinese commentators	Chinese social media	Direct and Indirect	Critical
CNN	Hu Xijin	editor of Global Times	Direct	Critical
CNN	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Chinese government	Direct	Neutral
CNN	Chinese media and top officials	Chinese Government	Direct	Neutral
CNN	Sen. Kelly Loeffler	Republican	Direct	Supportive
CNN	Blair Brandt	Trump campaign fundraiser	Direct	Supportive
CNN	Mark Walker	ranking Republican member on the House Subcommittee for Intelligence and Counterterrorism	Direct	Supportive
CNN	Cui Tiankai	China's ambassador	Direct	Neutral

<i>News Source</i>	<i>Social Actor</i>	<i>Role/Affiliation</i>	<i>Type of Speech</i>	<i>Stance Toward Trump</i>
		to the US		
Fox News	Andrew Cuomo	New York Gov.	Direct	Opposing
Fox News	Geng Shuang	spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Direct and Indirect	Opposing
Fox News	Mike Pompeo	Secretary of States	Indirect	Supportive
Fox News	China's foreign ministry	-	Indirect	opposing
Fox News	Weijia Jiang	CBS reporter	Direct and Indirect	opposing
Fox News	Yamiche Alcindor	PBS White House correspondent	Indirect	Opposing
Fox News	Kellyanne Conway	White House advisor	Direct and Indirect	Supportive
Fox News	Dana Perino	The Five (US Chat Show)	Direct	Supportive
Fox News	Zhao Lijian	Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson	Direct	Opposing
Fox News	Jesse Watters	The Five co-host	Direct and Indirect	Supportive
Fox News	Juan Williams	The Five co-host	Indirect	Supportive
Fox News	Greg Gutfeld	The Five co-host	Direct	Supportive
Fox News	Mike Pompeo	Secretary of States	Indirect	Supportive
Fox News	Zhao Lijian	Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson	Direct	opposing

The distribution patterns in Tables 10 and 11 reveal substantive differences in how CNN and Fox News frame the 'Chinese virus' controversy through other's speech attribution. CNN's strategies favors institutional voices and international perspectives, with the sources expressing opposition to Trump's term, creating a narrative framework that positions the President's language choice as problematic by



international standards. The attributed preference for direct speech (10:6 ratio) when presenting opposing viewpoints gives these perspectives additional weight through verbatim quotation. In contrast, Fox News demonstrates a more balanced approach between direct and indirect attribution (9:9 ratio) and features a wider range of supportive voices, particularly from its own administration and commentators.

Example 3, for instance introduces Dr. Mike Ryan, “the executive director of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) health emergencies program”, which lends credibility and authority to the statement refuting Trump’s use of the term ‘China virus’:

#### Example 3

“Viruses know no borders and they don’t care about your ethnicity or the color of your skin or how much money you have in the bank,” said **Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization health emergencies program**. “It’s really important that we be careful in the language we use.”

(Maegan Vazquez and Betsy Klein, CNN, March 19, 2020)

As a result of CNN’s choice to directly quote an authoritative figure from the World Health Organization (WHO), the authority of the expert positions CNN as aligned with an objective, scientific perspective, implicitly in contrast with Trump’s political agenda of a nationalistic and racist perspective. Furthermore, using this particular direct quote, CNN underscores it’s the validity of its own critique of Trump’s rhetoric, providing a global perspective in contrast to the heavily politicized ‘local’, namely US portrayal of the virus as having a Chinese origin.

Notably, a striking parallel emerges in the complete absence of external attribution in CNN’s article 3 and Fox News’ article 5, revealing a shared journalistic strategy despite divergent ideological positions. Both articles exclusively focus on Trump’s speech without incorporating other voices, but deploy this strategy toward opposing ends. CNN’s article 3 presents Trump’s naming as potentially xenophobic without external validation: “What appears to be up for some debate is whether or not Trump’s rhetorical change reflects him simply using proper geographic labeling...or whether it is part of a broader attempt to drive xenophobic sentiment toward China”.

Fox News' article 5 employs the identical strategy but in reverse, synchronously expanding criticism to Chinese environmental policies and WHO ignorance. The strategic deployment of framing in these specific articles illustrates how news organizations can construct ideologically-charged narratives that appear factual rather than interpretive. These contrasting approaches reflect each outlet ideological positioning and demonstrate how other social actors' voices other than Trump as journalistic convention but as discursive tools that naturalize political perspectives.

#### *4.3.3.3 Intertextuality of News Report: Allusion*

The term "allusion" is widely used in news reporting (Lennon, 2004). It consists of indirect references to texts, events, or social actors to allow journalists to draw on knowledge they assume to share with their audience. Pasco (1994) defines an allusion as a metaphorical juxtaposition between a target text and a source text that is integrated metaphorically into the new media text of reporting. Similarly, Gale (2000) describes allusion within media productions as an echoic reference between one language unit within the target text and another within the source text. In other words, the allusion, as with other types of intertexts, leaves an inference in the allusive text that evokes the source text and facilitates the decoding of the allusive message while enhancing the target text's meaning or effects on the reader. According to Fairclough (1995b), allusion serves as a rhetorical strategy that allows journalists to establish connections between current events and past occurrences, which can invoke associations and emotions in their audience, expected to result in their identification with the stance of the news media. On the other hand, Irwin (2001) states that allusion seems to be more directly associated with the concept of authorial intention since it implies that the author is referring to the subject matter, hoping to provoke a specific emotional response, which may be missed on the reader. Ricks (2002) has also argued that allusion is more of an indicator of the author's intention. It has been argued, however, that the allusion producer merely raised the convergence of the minds of the source text and the target text, and that an allusion requires the recipient to infer the intertextual relationship since it is not explicitly stated (Wodak, 2002; Caple, 2010). Therefore, to some extent, it circumvents the authorial intent, and the reader is left to

identify and interpret any intertextual similarities in order to activate the allusion and appreciate it. Furthermore, it has also been contended that there is a fair degree of overlap among the authors and readers as a result of what Fairclough (2001, p. 20) refers to as “members resources”, i.e. a sufficient degree of shared knowledge.

CNN used allusion in two of the five articles chosen (Article 1, 3) , whereas Fox News used this intertextual device only once, in Article 4. The allusions used by CNN are the yellow peril, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the 2017 travel ban for Muslims (Article 1); owing to the Black Death that massacred European Jews and HIV blamed on gay men (Article 1); H1N1 flu blamed on Obama administration (Article 3). Fox News, on the other hand, quoted directly Trump’s tweet in which he explains that using the “China/Chinese virus” is motivated by the same reason as the one for using the ‘Ebola virus’ for geographical identification. In the metaphor of ‘yellow peril’ originating in the late 1800s and becoming more widespread in the early 1900s, which demonstrates the longstanding anti-Asian sentiment in the United States (Wu, 2014, p. 11). The yellow peril metaphor has been circulated to portray Asian people as dangerous foreigners who will threaten Western society with their mere existence (Kawai, 2005). In this CNN Article 1, the reference to the historical metaphor of the “yellow peril” is not a quotation from Trump himself, but rather a rhetorical device employed by the journalist. It serves to contextualize and critique Trump’s use of the phrase “Chinese virus” by linking it to a broader historical narrative of anti-Asian xenophobia. The metaphor, thus used by the editor to frame Trump’s language as part of a recurring pattern of racialized discourse, rather than to support it.

#### Example 4

It’s an intentional bit of provocation and racism that evokes the turn-of-the-century “yellow peril”, when Americans and Europeans fear-mongered about allegedly dangerous East Asians. (Jill Filipovic, CNN, March 18, 2020)

In Example 4, the historical concept of “yellow peril” is being placed within a new context that does not simply describe the current events of the pandemic but

places them within a historical continuum of racist discourse. This intertextualization serves to highlight the persistence of the racial stereotype and the ways in which historical concepts are recycled and are repurposed in the contemporary media narratives. The allusion to “yellow peril” highlights the racist undertones of the “China virus” term. By making this connection, CNN is aligning itself against the racialization of Covid-19, positioning the media outlet as a critical voice against xenophobic or racially charged rhetoric by Trump and his followers, including Fox News. This stance suggests of CNN’s identification with inclusivity and resistance to racial scapegoating. The fact that CNN makes this explicit connection works as an act of encouraging their readers to recognize the parallel between the historical fear of East Asians and the current rhetoric used and endorsed during the Covid-19 pandemic. The mention of “yellow peril” in the Trump rhetoric adds further layers to the historical significance of anti-Asian racism, reinforcing the findings of the literature (Dhanani & Franz, 2020), and the CNN coverage accentuates the link between the current use of “yellow peril” and the legacy of the racist narratives of threat associated with foreignness. The critical stance is to expose the ideological naturalization of believing that “foreignness” should necessarily and naturally evoke fears around China and the “China virus” as a continuation of an alleged history of malicious intentions.

#### Example 5

European Jews were blamed for the Black Death and massacred..... HIV was initially blamed on gay men.... (Jill Filipovic, CNN, March 18, 2020)

In Example 5, similarly, the editorial establishes connections between Trump’s rhetoric and other historical instances of xenophobic scapegoating, including the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the 2017 Muslim travel ban, the scapegoating of European Jews during the Black Death, and the stigmatization of gay men related to HIV. These references act as historical metaphors, framing Trump’ naming of “Chinese virus” within a broader tradition of discriminatory public discourse. It underscores how the racialization and politicization of disease have historically reinforced harmful stereotypes and legitimized exclusionary policies. These historical metaphors are not

neutral; they serve to critique Trumpian speech, illustrating the damaging effects such discourses have had on marginalized communities. In contrast, In Article 3, Trump's reference of the "H1N1 flu" operates as a strategic metaphor designed to deflect criticism and shift blame. This rhetorical not only redirects attention away from the xenophobic implications of labeling Covid-19 as the "Chinese virus" but also portrays him as a more competent leader by comparison. Thus, Trump avoids addressing the problematic nature of his rhetoric, instead minimizing his accountability and reinforcing partisan narratives.

#### Example 6

"If you look at Ebola, right, if you look at Lyme in Connecticut, you look at all these different horrible diseases, they seem to come with a name with a location," he said. "I don't have to say it if they feel so strongly about it, we'll see". (Morgan Phillips, Fox News, March 26, 2020)

The Example 6 is taken from Fox News Article 4. It provides an insightful comparison of the use of allusions to similar pandemics in US history by CNN and Fox News. Both examples use intertextual references to historical diseases and societal reactions, which also creates a network of meaning that connects past events to current circumstances. As Example 5 shows, CNN's allusions to Black Death (the deadly plague led to scapegoating, especially against Jews), and HIV draw parallels between the hate speech against Asian people during Covid-19 and the historical pandemics like Black Death mobilizing anti-Semitism and the homophobic meaning of HIV as if a "gay disease", threatening the population from within. These historical examples serve as references to how US society has frequently blamed marginalized groups during times of crisis – victimizing a particular group as if the "carrier of a contagious disease". This pattern is brought into the contemporary context of Covid-19 to emphasize and point out that blaming outsiders or minorities from within, in this case in the group of East Asians, where temporary visitors and numbers of the US diaspora are conveniently collapsed, are presented as a recurring, dangerous figure of a historical trend. CNN's use of the allusions is this way rooted in the values of social justice and anti-discrimination. By highlighting how past diseases were

wrongly and maliciously attributed to marginalized groups, CNN is positioning itself against the current xenophobic narratives on Covid-19 blaming China for spearing it as a hideous ‘weapon’ against the US. The reference to past prejudices is meant to critique current efforts to racialize the virus and expose the broader strategy to scapegoat during times of fear. In contrast, Fox News used allusion, as Example 6 shows, to evoke previous naming of contagious diseases that have similarly been geographically associated with locations, i.e. Ebola linked with regions in Africa. This reference is meant to justify or normalize naming Covid-19 after China, which aligns with Donald Trump’s racist employment of the phrase “China virus”. The allusion to a similar pandemic in the past suggests that it’s not unusual for diseases to carry geographical identifiers. This act frames Trump’s rhetoric as consistent with past practices and as such only “reasonable” to do so again. This agreement subtly deflects any criticism of Trump’s employment of the term “China virus”. It is framed as a matter of tradition or historical precedent rather than xenophobia targeted against Asian people.

Although Wodak (2002) considers allusion ambiguous in that the take-up, or interpretation of the meaning of what is produced depends on the recipients, i.e. the readers, rooted in the shared culture of the community that produces the allusion. This inevitable discrepancy between producer and reader of a text may also be made use of by the journalist and result in their renouncing responsibility for the racist meaning as if misunderstood. However, if and how this strategy is made use of – realistically by Fox News – is outside the scope of this research. But I can argue that as the examples show, CNN does not opt for indirect ways of associating Covid-19 and the history of pandemics but expose Trump’s rhetoric and thereby spell out their stance of disagreement. Allusion by Fox News, on the other hand, is non-ambiguous for an oppositional reason: to conceal and naturalize xenophobia as historical lived experience of global threat of health. Additionally, the reporters made sure to use allusions that are likely to be understood by as many readers as possible and not limited to number of readers who possess specialized knowledge of a particular aspect of the text (Shie, 2016). The extracts indicate that both CNN and Fox News use

intertextual allusions, but their ideological objectives are quite different. By exposing the strategic reinvestment of past prejudice in the Trump rhetoric of presenting health hazards that is blamed on a given ‘alien minority’, CNN’s use of allusions critique xenophobia and advocate social justice. Fox News, on the other hand, uses similar allusions - even if to a lesser extent - to maintain the status quo of naming diseases after geopolitical locations, supporting a nationalist framework that refuses to accept criticism of racially charged terminology.

#### ***4.3.4 Third Level of Analysis: Social Practice***

The third step of analysis, concerned with social practice, explores the social context of the news texts and examines the broader societal effects of the linguistic structures of the reports. I analyzed these structures in Section 4.3.2 showing how collocations, cohesion, coherence and theme are constructed in editorial texts and in 4.3.3 showing how the two news media platforms made use of intertextuality when selecting particular allusions. However, it is essential to acknowledge the effect of social practices that are part of the linguistic structures, the media institutions of text production, and the system of values that permeate and organize journalism (Richardson, 2007, p. 114). It is the third point that I am doing in this section. In other words, no matter how much attention is paid to the journalists or the news organizations, it must not treat them in isolation from the broader social system (Shoemaker, 1991). I am going to focus on the the reporter’s role in spreading and promoting social values, as well as the relationship between these social values and the wider structural inequalities across different social groups of people as suggested by Golding and Murdock (1979). Therefore, the third step of analysis consists of tying together these findings by situating them in the broader US social context and explaining how they are representative of particular values and ideologies underlying the news discourse, which may have a significant impact on the values and practices not only of their readers but that of the media itself, if they come across as the “left-leaning” or the “right-leaning” platforms in the eyes of their readers. This involves explaining how the identified reporting patterns are representative of particular values and ideologies underlying the news discourse. As Bennett (1995)

suggests, as the news market becomes increasingly competitive, journalists and editors are driven to create content that captures and retains their readers' interest. News framing often incorporates an emotional angle (Neuman et al., 1992), in my case, which reflects a political stance in the presentation of Trump's naming of Covid-19. Thus, framing news to align with readers' interests becomes a strategy where editorials personalize, emotionalize, or politicize the news to capture and maintain audience engagement. The new production potentially has a dual impact, stemming from the reporters' role in selecting and framing social actors and information (Golding & Murdock, 1979). On one hand, it can solidify a platform's perceived identity, such as being seen as 'left-leaning' or 'right-leaning' (Louw, 2005). On the other hand, it can impact the values and practices of readers who consume the news, but it also shapes their media choices: readers may continue to engage with outlets that align with their pre-existing views or actively turn to alternative sources if the dominant values and ideologies presented clash with their own (Devereux, 2013).

In the case of this Chapter, CNN consistently frames the pandemic, criticizing the Trump's rhetoric, particularly its use of the term "China/Chinese virus", which aligns with liberal democratic values and anti-racist stances. Through such framing choices, CNN reinforces its ideological identity as a progressive or liberal outlet that champions inclusivity, multiculturalism, and governmental accountability. As has been pointed out already, the five CNN reports frame Trump's employment of the "China/Chinese virus" as xenophobic and divisive, both of which are presented as threats to the values of social justice and stability. This ideological positioning in actual fact serves to construct Trump as a political figure of ultimate authority who uses populist and racialized rhetoric to deflect readers' attention from his administration's handling of the pandemic. Additionally, CNN's critique of Trump's rhetoric tends to situate that rhetoric within broader societal issues, particularly the surge in anti-Asian hate crimes and the dangers of scapegoating specific ethnic groups during the global crisis of Covid-19. As numerous studies confirmed a significant and alarming increase in anti-Asian hate incidents, especially during the early stages of



the pandemic (Gover et al., 2020; Han et al., 2023). It highlights not only a spike in reported hate crimes against Asian Americans but also explores how the pandemic conditions and associated discourse contributed to the reproduction of inequality and prejudice against this group. By doing so, CNN reinforces an image of itself as a defender of liberal democratic values, pushing back against the Trumpian rhetoric that exploits racial divisions for political gain.

In contrast, Fox News tends to either neutralize or support Trumpian speech, often downplaying the racial implications of the term and instead redirecting attention toward geopolitical blame and national strength. By amplifying narratives that emphasize Chinese governmental responsibility and protecting American people, Fox News reinforces its identity as a conservative platform aligned with nationalist and populist ideologies. These consistent patterns of framing not only reaffirm each outlet's existing ideological stance but also contribute to shaping the expectations and interpretive frameworks of their audiences, readers who may already self-select into ideologically compatible media spaces. As the previous analysis shows, Fox News' coverage reflects a conservative and nationalist political ideology, which often defends Trump's rhetoric and legitimizes it with an appeal to the value of people's interests and national security. For example in Fox News Article 5, "However, Trump tapped into many of the same themes he has touched on in past addresses, including America's successes under his administration, and repeated his call for countries to put their own people first". In addition, Fox News justifies Trump's use of the "China virus" by drawing on geographical naming conventions for diseases (Ebola), normalizing the association between Covid-19 and China. This aligns with a right-wing populist discourse that resists political correctness and prioritizes Trump's America-first policies.

Specifically, it taps into a broader resistance against perceived 'political correctness', a recurring theme in contemporary US political debates. Some researches have examined how arguments against 'political correctness'—sometimes labeled 'wokism'—often invoke the constitutional protection of free speech to defend language deemed offensive or exclusionary by critics, a dynamic particularly notable

during the Trump era (Zick, 2019). In this case, this normalization of the term within the Fox News discourse resonates with the prioritization of Trump's "America First" policies. This political framework, emphasizing nationalism and prioritizing domestic interests often in opposition to global cooperation or perceived foreign threats (MacDonald, 2018). By framing the "China virus" terminology as both a defense of free speech against political correctness and implicitly aligning with an "America First" worldview, it reinforces key tenets of contemporary right-wing populism. This discourse also serves to mask and play down the failures of the Trump administration in handling the pandemic, while positioning Trump as a leader who is standing up for American values. Thus, the news discourse not only reflects societal values but actively participates in shaping both media norms and audience reception within the broader socio-political landscape.

Through the repeated use of language, media outlets like CNN and Fox News contribute to the normalization of specific beliefs and values, which in turn perpetuates power imbalances and reinforces existing social hierarchies. By framing particular ideas—whether progressive or conservative—as natural or self-evident, these media discourses help establish ideological positions that become accepted as the standard or norm within society. Both CNN and Fox News play active roles in reproducing power relations through their reporting. CNN's critical stance on Trump's rhetoric reinforces liberal power structures that emphasize multiculturalism and anti-racism, challenging Trump's authority by framing his language as damaging and out of step with progressive societal values. On the other hand, Fox News supports a conservative power structure, reinforcing Trump's authority by presenting his rhetoric as aligned with common sense, traditional values, and a protective national stance. These media discourses contribute to shaping societal attitudes, particularly with regard to race, nationalism, and political accountability. It highlights Fox News' tendency to serve as a legitimizing platform for right-wing populist discourse. Similarly, Peck (2019) clarifies "Fox populism" details how the Fox News strategically brands conservatism, framing it in populist terms designed to appeal particularly to working-class sensibilities, even while bolstering established

conservative power structures. Presenting Trump's rhetoric as embodying "common sense" or reflecting a strong, protective national interest, as seen in the analyzed reports, can thus be understood as fitting within this larger strategic framework of populist conservative branding. In doing so, Fox news contributes significantly to shaping societal attitudes, particularly regarding race, nationalism, and political accountability.

While Fox News amplifies a narrative that justifies defensive nationalism and American sovereignty, CNN's discourse helps construct a critical view of populist politics, warning against the dangers of racializing global crises. This approach is consistent with broader ideological strategies identified in previous research, which suggests that CNN seeks to position itself favorably with audiences by aligning with liberal democratic values and established norms in order to gain public support for its framing of events (Al-Radhi, 2020). Constructing a critical perspective on Trump's populist rhetoric and the racialization of the Covid-19 crisis thus aligns with CNN's wider discursive efforts to shape audience perception and maintain its ideological stance. The selected CNN reports employ rhetorical strategies, including specific quotation patterns, lexical choices, and intertextual metaphors to public health experts and civil rights concerns, to portray Trumpian speech as harmful and irresponsible. CNN's reporting reflects an ideological stance aimed at influencing audience perception and securing support for its framing of events. By framing Trumpian speech as detrimental, the network reinforces its commitment to advocating for marginalized communities and opposing divisive rhetoric. Consequently, the CNN's coverage of Trump's employment of the phrase "China virus" is not merely an editorial decision but part of a broader discursive strategy to challenge right-wing populism and affirm its politically liberal identity.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter investigates how the two dominant U.S. media outlets, CNN and Fox News, represented Donald Trump's "China virus" tweets during the pandemic. It seeks to answer the second research question: what existing ideologies were sustained

or challenged by the reporting practices of these two ideologically opposed media platforms? To do so, the chapter conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of ten news reports (five from each network), applying Fairclough's three-dimensional framework. The analysis systematically proceeds through Fairclough's three levels: a description of the texts' linguistic features, an interpretation of the networks' discursive practices, and an explanation of the broader social practices at play.

At the textual level, the analysis reveals divergent framing strategies through a collocation analysis and an examination of thematic structure. The collocation analysis shows CNN consistently pairs "Trump" with terms of critique, while Fox News pairs him with terms of political conflict. Similarly, CNN's thematic structure consistently positions Trump as the central, responsible agent, whereas Fox News diffuses agency across multiple actors to create a narrative of dispute. At the level of discursive practice, the study examines attribution and intertextual allusion. CNN is shown to use direct quotes from authoritative sources, like the WHO, and alludes to historical instances of racist scapegoating (e.g., "yellow peril") to frame Trump's rhetoric as dangerous. In contrast, Fox News uses allusions to other geographically named diseases (e.g., Ebola) to normalize and justify his terminology. Finally, at the level of social practice, the chapter explains how these discursive choices reinforce each network's ideological identity. CNN's framing aligns with liberal, anti-racist values and challenges populist authority. Fox News's framing supports a conservative, nationalist worldview by legitimizing Trump's rhetoric as "common sense" and a defense against "political correctness".

## **Chapter 5: The Reiteration and Circulation of Xenophobic and Racist Discourses in Online News Comments**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters have analyzed Donald Trump's tweets on his Twitter account from March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021 to establish the specificities of his discourse on the Covid-19 virus (Chapter 3) and the CNN and Fox News reports on those tweets to establish the political stance of the two news sites (Chapter 4). They have provided a comprehensive analysis of the Trumpian articulation of xenophobic and racist meanings around the category "China/ Chinese virus". The current chapter, will focus on the analysis of social media comments of citizens, specifically the attitudes, ideological leanings, and discursive strategies of social media users when interacting with media reports of the Trumpian rhetoric. My hypothesis here is that while CNN and Fox News represented the Trumpian rhetoric in accordance with their different political-leanings, their audiences may have responded differently, reflecting more diverse ideological perspectives. Although Trump's rhetoric is portrayed in the two chosen news media CNN and Fox News, in accordance with their political polarization, their ideological framing of the pandemic may invite some comments in disagreement with the existing biases and shape public perceptions of the pandemic in a more complicated manner. In other words, if citizens engage with media reports in a way that align with the ideological framing of the news media platforms' ideological leanings, they may become more entrenched in their views, further deepening societal polarization (Garrett, 2009; Entman, 2010), while the diversity of their responses can index a tendency to speak across those divides. To some extent, the ideological division between CNN and Fox News not only affects how people interpret Covid-19 information but also impacts their trust in media sources and governmental responses – which in the particular case of the virus, may ultimately shape the broader issue of how citizens would relate to public health outcomes.

While existing research has explored political candidates' engagement on social media (Kümpel et al., 2015), populist communication in digitized environments (de

Vreese et al., 2018), cross-platform comparisons of citizen political engagement (Sahly et al., 2019), and the dynamics of online community mobilization (Flores-Saviaga et al., 2018), many of these studies focus on the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, studies have tended to focus on how Trump framed the crisis through his rhetoric, particularly on Twitter, rather than on how audiences responded to this rhetoric on social media. Additionally, less attention has been given to the discursive responses of ordinary online users to mediated political rhetoric across platforms with ideological leanings. This chapter, thus, fills the gap in the existing research by examining the attitudes, ideological leanings, and discursive strategies employed by ordinary social media users in their reactions to the mediation of Trump's rhetoric on the oppositional political-leaning media organizations. In particular, it investigates the extent to which the logic of Trump's tweets is reiterated, challenged, or reframed by media audiences, emphasizing that the reactions of media audiences can significantly shape public discourse.

To investigate the reiteration, challenge, or reframing of discourses of racism and xenophobia by individual citizens, I employ Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA) as presented by Partington (2004, 2006) to explore how racist and xenophobic discourses are circulated, reinforced, or contested in everyday digital interactions. By combining quantitative corpus-linguistic methods with CDA, researchers can make deeper and more objective observations than using qualitative or quantitative analysis methods on their own (Kim, 2014; Bevitori, 2010, 2015; Partington, 2004, 2015). I process the datasets using the freeware toolkit, AntConc (ver. 4.3.1), to elicit the keywords, and analyze the frequencies, shared keywords and clusters as ways of the prerequisite for identifying public discourse in political contexts. Additionally, I employ CDA to examine the engagement of online audiences with the reports of Trumpian speeches on CNN and Fox News' Facebook accounts. The analysis, thus, centers on users' comments in response to Facebook posts that include links or excerpts from the news reports selected and analyzed in Chapter 5. By concentrating on comments related to these specific posts, the study ensures that

audience reactions are directly linked to the actual media narratives constructed by CNN and Fox News selected in Chapter 5.

## **5.2 Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis and Data Collection**

Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) was conceptualized by a group led by Alan Partington. It leverages computational techniques such as keyword analysis, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis to uncover recurring linguistic patterns that might not be immediately observable through qualitative methods alone (Partington et al., 2013, pp. 1-24). However, several authors propose that while corpus linguistic methods can allow researchers to analyze a considerable amount of textual data systematically the emerging results should be explored in more detail by CDA studies (Baker et al. 2008; Brigadir et al., 2015; Mautner, 2016). The integration of corpus linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), known as Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA), has been introduced for the purpose of providing more reliable qualitative research that relies for its interpretation not only upon a small set of texts (Subtirelu & Baker, 2018, p. 107). This synergy approach to CACDS was adopted by Baker et al. (2008), who incorporated Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) version of CDA called Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) into corpus analysis and investigated the representation of immigration based on a corpus of 140 million words in the UK press that served for their critical assessment of the ideological underpinnings of discourse, highlighting patterns of dominance and resistance. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, to some extent, reduce subjectivity and the reliance on the researcher's limited interpretation and judgements (Baker, 2006; Marchi & Taylor, 2009) and generates more reliable results since the corpus studied is designed based on specific criteria that ensure valid generalizations (McEnery & Wilson, 2001). Thus, CACDS enhances the empirical rigour of CDA while preserving its interpretative depth (Baker et al., 2008). The first stage of my analysis therefore adopts the corpus linguistic approach, focusing on individual word choices and phrases to uncover with the help of CDA hidden assumptions, implications, and ideological positions expressed by online users.

To analyze public reactions to the media's mediation of Trump's rhetoric, this study focuses on user comments posted on Facebook. The Facebook pages of CNN and Fox News were selected because these two news outlets represent contrasting political orientations and have large, active online audiences. Additionally, Facebook was chosen over Twitter since it generally generates a higher volume of user comments and provides clearer access to public discussions directly linked to specific news articles, which correspond with the ten editorials (five from CNN and five from Fox News) previously analyzed in Chapter 4. In particular, Fox News's Facebook page contains significantly more relevant posts than its official Twitter account, making Facebook a more suitable platform for accumulating a consistent dataset. Thus, the dataset of users' comments is extracted from CNN and Fox News Facebook posts discussing Trump's rhetoric on China during the pandemic. The dataset of user comments was extracted from Facebook posts that shared or employed the same statements from the ten news reports analyzed in Chapter 4. To obtain a relevant sample and ensure consistency between the media discourse and audience responses, I manually searched the official Facebook pages of CNN and Fox News to locate posts that linked to these exact ten articles and I selected the first-level comments from Facebook. In this study, first-level comments refer to user responses made directly under the original Facebook post by the media outlet. Replies to these comments (i.e., second-level or nested comments) are excluded, in order to focus on users' immediate and individual reactions to the media's framing of Trump's rhetoric. The corpus was compiled from 1,106 comments totaling 21,893 tokens from CNN comments and 1,178 comments totaling 26,790 tokens from Fox News comments. The CNN comments corpus (hereinafter referred to as CNNCC) and Fox News comments corpus (hereinafter referred to as FNCC) analyzed in this chapter reflects the moment in which the comments were collected on December 20, 2024. Comments may differ since their posting since any reply can be added as long as the original post remains visible and, on the other hand, comments may also have been deleted. Unlike Twitter, Facebook does not provide specified data on the location and participant characteristics of commenters. Furthermore, the corpus was additionally adjusted to



remove foreign-script words since the language of discussion in relation to the chosen posts is English. Also, a manual scan of frequency lists and conversations was carried out to reduce the number of repeated messages.

Love and Baker (2015) found that an analysis of keywords can produce a comprehensive and profound understanding of nuanced language use. CL methods, such as keyword and collocation analysis, are well suited for analyzing public discourse since they detect quantitative regularities at the linguistic surface that provide the vantage points for studying ideologies present within a society. Before generating the keyword list for my study, all words were examined, and emojis and function words—such as prepositions, auxiliary verbs, and conjunctions—were removed. Once the corpus was refined, a keyword list was generated along with its frequency, serving as the foundation for the second stage of my analysis, a qualitative investigation of the rhetorical and strategic argumentation in the online comments. The qualitative interpretation is based on CDA. As a result, I could reconstruct the ideologies behind the key words of the corpus analysis.

### **5.3 Analysis, Findings and Discussion**

This section presents and discusses the core findings derived from the analysis of citizens' comments on the selected news reports. In the first stage, I identified the prominent themes through keyword extraction (5.3.1). It is followed by a detailed analysis employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (5.3.2) examines the data more closely. This in-depth analysis specifically investigates the portrayal and blaming dynamics among major social actors (5.3.2.1) and explores how political stance manifests within the observed interactions (5.3.2.2). The discussion (5.3.3) integrates these findings to address the third research question concerning the reiteration and circulation of xenophobic and racist discourse in online comments.

### 5.3.1 Extracting Keywords

Keywords serve metaphorically as a mechanism for revealing or obscuring particular aspects of discourse in user communication, shaping what is emphasized and what remains less visible in user interactions through keyword search and frequency count (Knoblock, 2017). Incorporating the frequency of certain words into corpora can reveal much about the prominence of specific lexicons and themes across genres, modes of communication, and particular groups, as well as the priorities and concerns within the discourse community. By examining the frequency and distribution of key terms in CNNCC and FNCC, this analysis uncovers how language choices reflect broader sociopolitical perspectives, shaping how users engage with Trump's rhetoric during the pandemic. Thus, a comparison between the two corpora can result in an ordered list, which was used to identify the highest-frequency words within the corpus. To generate the two keyword lists, AntConc (ver.4.3.1), a corpus analytical tool was employed to systematically identify and extract the most frequently occurring words in each dataset. Table 12 contains the filtered top 40 high-frequency content words (excluding function words) in CNNCC and FNCC user comments on each platform, respectively. Asterisks indicate that the actual keyword appears exclusively in one dataset, rather than appearing on both platforms.

**Table 12.** Top 40 high-frequency keywords in CNNCC and FNCC posts

Number	CNN		Fox News	
	Key Word	Frequency	Key Word	Frequency
1	China	249	People	235
2	Trump	218	President	230
3	virus	190	Trump	215
4	Chinese	86	China	187
5	people	77	Virus	155
6	racist*	66	Country	107
7	president	62	God	60
8	America	43	Joe Biden*	60
9	news	42	America	51
10	Coronavirus*	40	Americans	50
11	Trumpvirus*	40	Job	50
12	country	38	News	48
13	flu	32	democrats*	48
14	pandemic*	30	Media	43
15	Americans	29	deaths*	41

Number	CNN		Fox News	
	Key Word	Frequency	Key Word	Frequency
16	blame	27	polls*	35
17	fake*	24	Control	33
18	Wuhan	24	trust*	29
19	handling*	21	Flu	28
20	Kung*	21	Covid-19	27
21	lying*	19	fear*	26
22	media	18	love*	25
23	dangerous*	18	Wuhan	25
24	hoax*	18	Chinese	24
25	USA*	17	vote*	23
26	Covid-19	16	political*	23
27	responsible*	16	truth*	21
28	job	16	day*	21
29	focus*	16	guy*	21
30	spread*	16	united*	19
31	control	15	hate*	18
32	stupid*	15	bless*	18
33	fault*	14	Crisis	17
34	God	14	leader*	17
35	lie*	14	hard*	16
36	crisis	14	situation*	15
37	Asian*	14	money*	14
38	propaganda*	13	communist*	14
39	war*	13	medical*	13
40	idiot*	12	Blame	12

The analysis of high-frequency content words in user comments on CNN and Fox News platforms reveals distinct linguistic patterns and ideological divergences in audience responses to discussions surrounding the pandemic and former President Trump's rhetoric. Notably, some keywords appear exclusively in one dataset, indicating discourse asymmetries between the two platforms.

**Table 13.** Exclusive keywords in CNNCC and FNCC posts (marked with asterisks in Table 12)

Number	CNN		Fox News	
	Key Word	Frequency	Key Word	Frequency
1	racist*	66	Joe Biden*	60
2	Coronavirus*	40	democrats*	48
3	Trumpvirus*	40	deaths*	41
4	pandemic*	30	polls*	35
5	fake*	24	control	33
6	handling*	21	trust*	29

<i>Number</i>	<i>CNN</i>		<i>Fox News</i>	
	<i>Key Word</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Key Word</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
7	Kung*	21	fear*	26
8	lying*	19	love*	25
9	dangerous*	18	vote*	23
10	hoax*	18	political*	23
11	USA*	17	truth*	21
12	responsible*	16	day*	21
13	focus*	16	guy*	21
14	spread*	16	united*	19
15	stupid*	15	hate*	18
16	fault*	14	bless*	18
17	lie*	14	leader*	17
18	Asian*	14	hard*	16
19	propaganda*	13	situation*	15
20	war*	13	money*	14
21	idiot*	12	communist*	14
22			medical*	13

Table 12 and Table 13 show that the lexical choices in user comments across CNN and Fox News Facebook posts to identify patterns of discourse surrounding Trump’s rhetoric on virus during the pandemic. By comparing the frequency of keywords in both comment sets, with particular attention to their presence or absence across platforms, I identify the distinct framing strategies and ideological positions of each audience. The analysis will first explore terms that appear exclusively in one dataset before examining words that shared in both comment sets. The keywords that appear exclusively in one dataset provide crucial insight into the divergent framing strategies employed by commenters on each platform. Words marked with asterisks in Table 12 and compiled in Table 13 indicate terms that appear exclusively in either CNN or Fox News comments.

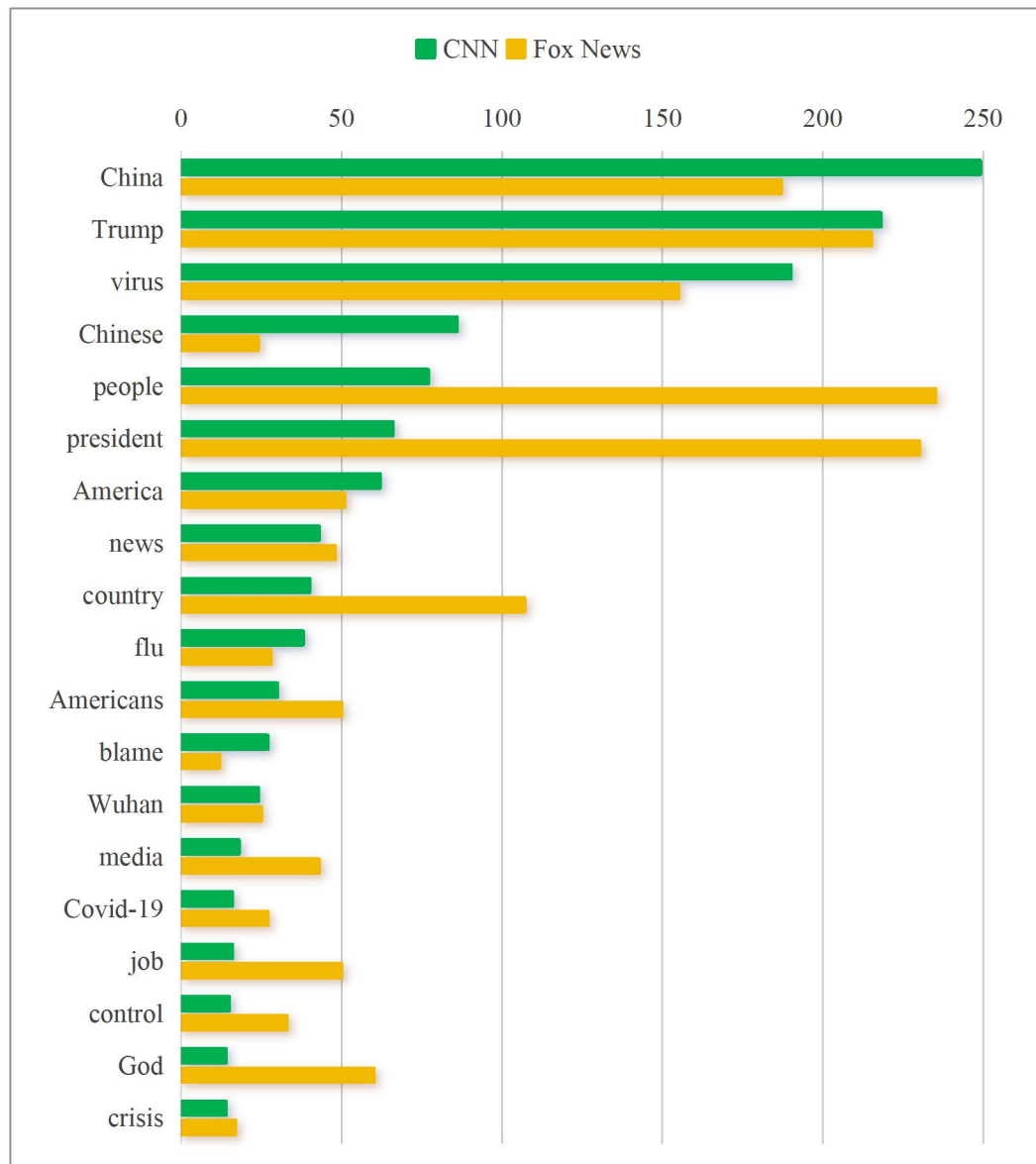
Regarding the lexical patterns of the comments on the CNN Facebook page, the most important difference can be seen in the frequency of use of the term ‘racist’, which is used exclusively in the CNNCC dataset with 66 instances, coming six on the frequency list, whereas it is absent from Fox News comments altogether, suggesting the users’ divergent focus. The prevalence of ‘racist’ in the CNN comments indicates a strong emphasis on discussions related to racial implications, in response to the reported terminology of the Trump rhetoric, such as ‘China virus’ or ‘Chinese virus’,

which, as we could see in Chapter 4 were widely criticized as racially insensitive by the CNN coverage. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting CNN's audience's engagement with racial justice and sociopolitical critiques (Calhoun, 2016).

The other telling difference between the two sites is the terms 'Coronavirus' and 'Trumpvirus' that appear 40 times, each, within the CNN comments, coming tenth on the frequency list, whereas Fox News comments feature neither. The term 'Trumpvirus' originates from the political rhetoric, particularly from the Democrats' House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, who recounted that should Trump have encouraged mask-wearing and social distancing at the beginning instead of holding election rallies, more people would have followed his guidance, potentially reducing the severity of the pandemic (Cranley, 2020; Duster, 2020; Robertson, 2020). She attributed the nation's suffering to Trump's actions, labeling the virus the 'Trump virus'. The presence of this term in CNN comments suggests a strong association between Trump's handling of the pandemic and CNN's audience dissatisfaction regarding his policies. This divergence in term between the two news platform comments highlights the contrasting focus of audience reactions. CNN's recipients tend to engage more with critiques of Trump's rhetoric and policies, reflecting concerns about racial justice and the impact of his responses to the pandemic. In contrast, the absence of terms like 'racist' and 'Trumpvirus' in Fox News comments suggests a different narrative focus, emphasizing support for Trump's policies and/or downplaying criticisms related to his handling of the pandemic and his racializing of the pandemic.

Conversely, Fox News comments exhibit a different lexical pattern, with keywords such as 'Joe Biden' (60 times), coming eighth on the frequency list, and 'democrats' (48 times), the thirteenth most frequent term, appearing exclusively in their dataset. In particular, the presence of 'Joe Biden' is noteworthy since he is Donald Trump's main political rival in the upcoming election as the representative of the Democratic Party, both Biden and the party representatives frequently criticizing Trump's handling of the pandemic. Further, in combination with this difference, the occurrence of the word 'trust' (29 times), eighteenth on the frequency list, reflects

Fox News recipients' disposition in political discussions regarding credibility and authority in politics. Compared to CNN's audiences, Fox News commenters seem to express greater scepticism toward political institutions and adopt a perspective more aligned with Trump's rhetoric.



**Figure 4.** *The comparison of 19 shared keywords*

The comparative bar chart (Figure 4) serves as a visual representation to enhance the clarity of the comparison between the two media platforms, illustrating the frequencies of shared keywords across both corpora. The purpose of this bar chart is to provide a clearer depiction of how frequently certain terms appear in both CNN and Fox News comments, making it easier to identify linguistic overlaps and divergences. By presenting this data graphically, the figure enables a more intuitive analysis of

shared discourse, as well as the distinct thematic and ideological patterns that emerge in each media audiences' engagement with Trump's rhetoric.

The frequency of shared keywords in the Facebook comments of the two news platforms provides insight into the differences in the narratives around the Covid-19 pandemic and shows the differential emphasis within the online communities of these two major news outlets. Several keywords show relatively similar frequencies across both platforms, including 'China', 'virus', 'Wuhan', 'Covid-19' and 'crisis'. As indicated by these terms, both parties are concerned with fundamental aspects of the pandemic, including its origins, the virus itself, global impacts, and the subsequent crisis. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 4, 'Trump' (CNN: 218, Fox News: 215) appears at similar frequencies, indicating that both CNN and Fox News commentators focus equally on his leadership and statements. Considering the close alignment in keyword frequency, it is likely that Trump's role in managing the pandemic and his rhetoric surrounding Covid-19 were widely debated across the ideological sphere, making him a central figure in audience engagement on both platforms. Other keywords that are used with relative frequency include 'America', 'News' and 'Flu'. The similarity in frequency suggests that despite ideological differences, both media audiences prioritize discussions about China and Trump's association with Covid-19. These elements remain focal points in the overall discourse, underscoring their centrality in shaping online debates and reinforcing key thematic concerns across the two platforms.

However, notable disparities emerge in the frequency of other keywords, reflecting potential differences in framing and audience engagement. The most striking difference is with Fox News comments containing the word 'people' over three times more often than CNN comments (235 versus 77). The results of Chapter 4 indicated that the frequent use of the word 'people' aligns with a common tactic in populist discourse, and that Trump, as a far-right populist, is particularly fond of this word. Trump frequently uses the term 'we people' to create a sense of shared identity, which positions himself as a champion of the common person against perceived elites or external threats. Thus, this disparity can be linked to Trump's extreme populist

rhetoric. The elevated shared keyword of ‘people’ in Fox News comments suggests that Trump’s rhetorical style has not only influenced political discourse but has also been adopted by his audience, shaping their communicative patterns. The frequent use of this term within Fox News comments contributes to the construction of an in-group identity, framing the audience as a collective entity aligned with Trump’s populist messaging, in contrast to the more policy-focused or issue-specific discourse found in CNN comments.

### ***5.3.2 Qualitative Analysis Using CDA***

Assigning keywords to categories can provide insights into broader meaning making trends, but it may also mischaracterize keywords, making generalizations from frequency trends inaccurate (Baker, 2004; Clarke et al., 2021). Consequently, the presence of keywords in a text does not necessarily map onto discourses directly. It needs to be analyzed and interpreted within a wider textual context in order to determine whether or not the keywords contribute to the discourse. A closer, qualitative analysis of keyword usage can support observations of public discourse and the prevalent narratives shared in the two online communities. That is, the results of investigating the similarities and differences across the keywords’ frequencies in the CNN and Fox News comments offer an entry point rather than a readily interpretative set of findings. Therefore now I apply qualitative analysis on the basis of two datasets to provide more evidence for the generalizations I make.

#### ***5.3.2.1 Analysis of major social actors: Who blames Whom***

Attributing blame in political discourse in the quest for identifying the ‘responsible actor’ is not merely a reflection of factual assessments but rather a complex ideological construction that is shaped by and reinforces broader social and political narratives. The question of accountability in the context of the global health crisis of Covid-19 implicates various social actors, including individuals, organizations, and institutions on several levels. Typically, state apparatuses are assigned principal agency in crisis response, positioning the public as passive recipients of state action. Nevertheless, this framework overlooks the essential role of civil society. The mandate for democratic oversight and the assurance of policy



implementation is a foundational responsibility of the citizenry itself. Thus, the salient term ‘blame’ in both datasets is in the focus of my analysis. Below, I examine the concordance lines for ‘blame’ in Table 14 (CNN comments) and Table 15 (Fox News comments), which sort to the right with context size 12 tokens maximum.

**Table 14.** *Concordance lines for ‘blame’ in the CNN comments corpus (order by value)*

#			
1	Don't	blame	anyone too fast without a scientific proof. The coronavirus may NOT
2		Blame	the foreigners, it always works!
3	Trump is always trying to	blame	others for his incompetence. Three weeks ago trump and fake fox
4	Trump ALWAYS has to	BLAME	SOMEONE...ALWAYS!!! Trump is such a CHILD!
5	If I was you Trumpy I would resign. You are ultimately to	blame	for not responding soon enough to deal with this situation. You
6	screwed up royally, and he OWNS this	BLAME	on anyone else. The buck stops with HIM.HE needs to
7	mess. He cannot put the and then fly back to their home	blame,	period. #ChinaLiedPeopleDied
8	countries? China. China is to China is to	blame.	Wake up, CNN. You're supposed to be a news network.
9	will never have the first inkling of what leadership demands.	blame	shifting help no one but himself in the narrowest sense. Lead
10	effective results. Trump criticized China now because he must find others	blame	
11	fire, the feel is different, cheap praise can not help now but	blame	may cover up his incompetence.
12	Trump just cannot help himself but to	BLAME	China so HE, himself, doesn't look as bad. Too late...
13	How can he	blame	them when he knew it was a pandemic from the beginning?
14	make up his mind on who to blame. He just needs to	blame	someone for everything.
15	A virus is a virus and it is too late to place	blame	it is the opposite of helpful at this point. Work together
16	Instead of playing a	blame	game with China (they need to learn huge biosecurity lessons) how
17	Trump cant make up his mind on who to	blame.	He just needs to blame someone for everything.
18	All trump know is to place others at	blame	for he lack of ability to deal with a problem.

#			
19	Racists and Ultra-Nationalists always	blame,	fear and hate. That is how they motivate the
20	need to have a scapegoat. Someone to		sheep in
21	Virus may come from China but we	blame	it on China like as if China carry the virus
22	simply can't just		n
23	shows he was not on top of the	blame	to reflect his inaction.
24	situation so he casts		
25	If Trump blames China, then	blame	TRUMP for mishandling America!!!
26	Americans must		
27	to please his racist base AND his own	blame	blames China for his delayed, incompetent
28	satisfaction as he		response to the Coronavirus in
29	masks, gowns, ventilators, and more	blame	because you aren't doing your job. This is
30	test kits. Stop trying to shift the		tired and
31	society will create disaster from the	blame	on China for their mistakes... Or the evil
32	virus and prefer to flip the		communist China did
33	In order to shift the contradiction,	blame	on China.
34	Trump put the		
35	Great. Let's worry about the	blame	game and now the exploding cases in the
36			US and inability

**Table 15.** Concordance lines for 'blame' in the Fox News comments corpus (order by value)

#			
1	And some Americans	blame	Mr. Trump.....why aren't they angry with China. I hope
2	in China is nothing else but a self	blame	on some one else. China thinks that the
3	inflicted wound to apportion		rest of the
4	solution. If you are seeing this pandemic	blame	and hate, YOU are the problem. Now is
5	as an opportunity to cast		not the time.
6	The socialist and communist narrative	Blame	the others of what you are guilty of.
7	and strategy.		
8	Pudgy governor didn't have anything to	blamed	the US Army for the Coronavirus
9	say when official Chinese		outbreak. Only Trump has
10	Don't	blame	our government officials from trying to
11			save a lot of people
12	So all aboard the	blame	train every time you turn around they
13			blame Trump
14	Typical dictatorship of China to not own	blame	us!
15	up and then		
16	virus. They also praised Xi for how he	blame	the US. Rewriting history thanks to us
17	handled and now they		media's fake news.
18	So all aboard the blame train every time	blame	Trump
19	you turn around they		



I take two complete extracts from each database to produce a more meaningful comparison (Example 1a/1b and Example 2a/2b).

Example. 1a CNNCC-5

If I was you, Trump I would resign. You are **ultimately to blame** for not responding soon enough to deal with this situation. You might be a shrewd businessman but no doubt a rubbish politician.

Example. 1b FNCC-5

Pudgy governor didn't have anything to say when official **Chinese communications blamed the US Army** for the Coronavirus outbreak. Only Trump has the spine to respond to them. Much of the **American media and the Democrats** wiped it off and pulled up their pants to get back to criticizing Trump.

In Example 1a, the commenter explicitly blames Donald Trump for the inadequate handling of the pandemic, citing his delayed response to support the validity of the accusation. This sentiment is reflective of a prevalent narrative among CNN audiences, who frequently hold Trump in the function of the US president personally accountable for the crisis. The use of the phrase ‘ultimately to blame’ underscores a strong attribution of responsibility to Trump’s leadership, reinforcing the commenter’s perception of governmental incompetence.

In contrast, Example 1b deflects blame away from Trump and redirects it towards social actors, other the president: externally China, and internally the Democratic Party and the American media showing a favourable stance in regard of the Democrats. The reference to ‘Chinese communications blaming the US Army’ is employed to justify Trump’s response, portraying him as the sole leader courageous enough to counteract foreign accusations. This comment further exemplifies how Fox News audiences frame the pandemic not merely as a public health crisis but much more as a politically charged event. The attribution of blame to both external actors, i.e. China and its political media, and domestic actors, i.e. the media and the Democrats, reveals a broader and disrespectful scepticism towards institutions that challenge Trump’s leadership (‘pulling up their pants’). This discourse reflects a

populist worldview, in which distrust in elites—whether political (Democrats) or informational (the media)—is a central theme. It also underscores the narrative that Trump is unfairly targeted, reinforcing the notion that criticism of his handling of the pandemic is not based on objective failures but rather on partisan hostility.

Similarly, in Example 2a, the commenter critiques Trump's use of the term 'Chinese virus' contending that it is a racially charged strategy designed to appeal to his voter base. The comment implies that Trump uses racist rhetoric to deflect blame for his administration's shortcomings onto China. The comment also expresses disdain for Trump's supporters, describing them as uncritical and easily manipulated. According to CNN audiences, Trump's language choices are often associated with racial division and ineffective governance issues.

Example. 2a CNNCC-23

Trump calls it 'Chinese virus' to please his racist base AND his own satisfaction as he **blames China for his delayed**, incompetent response to the Coronavirus in the USA. Then Trump **blames the media** for labelling him racist and xenophobic, which his low IQ MAGA base also loves!

Example. 2b FNCC-12

The **anti-American hypocrisy** is going to be our downfall. Every virus is named from where it started. German measles, Spanish flu, MEARS, Hong Kong flu, West Nile virus and so on. Stop the hate. Be incredibly grateful that you live in America. China covered up what was happening then tried to **blame** our military. Our own senators covered it up so they could sell everything they owned to make money. But Trump being pissed is our worst nightmare? A whole lot of stupid Americans had better wake up and wake up fast!

Example 2b presents a contrast which defends Trump's racist term, asserting that it is simply historical precedent to name viruses after their point of origin, similarly to Donald Trump's strategic defence of himself that I pointed out in Chapter 3. Furthermore, the comment exhibits a strong nationalistic sentiment, highlighting 'anti-American hypocrisy' as a significant concern about the 'nation'. It criticizes

what it perceives as ‘anti-American hypocrisy’ and accuses both China and the oppositional U.S. politicians of concealing crucial information, i.e. the ‘origin’ while deflecting blame onto Trump. The comment, therefore, argues that Trump’s anger is justified, portraying him as a leader in combating misinformation and political corruption. This perspective aligns with the nationalist rhetoric and skepticism of foreign and domestic political opposition commonly found among Fox News audiences.

Both Tables reveal that blame is not an objective evaluation but an ideologically imbued discourse, situated within broader conflicts over national identity, political legitimacy, and media influence. These findings underscore the media’s role in exacerbating political polarization through a discursively constructed blame. These blame narratives, to some extent, contribute to broader ideological struggles within American society. Instead of merely mirroring opinions, CNN and Fox News audiences actively mould the public discourse on Covid-19, establishing the ideological frameworks that indicate how audiences perceive events. The comments in relation to CNN’s discussion of the pandemic aligns with liberal democratic values. The discourse emphasizes institutional accountability, media scrutiny, and the rejection of Trump’s nationalist blame rhetoric at the expense of ‘China’. This perspective assumes that governmental failures, rather than foreign adversaries, should be the primary focus of public critique for the US health crisis. In contrast, Fox News commentators’ discourse resonates with right-wing populism, constructing nationalist blame narratives to reinforce political legitimacy. The positioning of China as a central antagonist deflects criticism from the U.S. government while legitimizing anti-globalist and anti-elite sentiments. From van Dijk’s (2008) perspective, these ideological constructions are not merely rhetorical but function as mechanisms of power, shaping public perceptions and reinforcing the US political polarization at the expense of ‘Chinese people’.

#### *5.3.2.2 Analysis of interaction: political stance*

The detailed analysis of the use of blame demonstrated that the two media audiences engage with the pandemic discourse in ideologically driven narratives,

assigning responsibility in ways that correspond to their political preferences. To further explore how these narratives manifest linguistically, a clustering analysis was conducted on three highly frequent and contextually significant keywords: ‘virus’, ‘Trump’ and ‘China’.

The pivotal word ‘virus’ represents the core topic of the online discussion and serves as a site of argument regarding responsibility, severity, and misinformation. The way audiences frame the virus—whether linking it to China, questioning its legitimacy as a threat, or discussing government control over its spread—reflects the influence of media narratives on public perception. Similarly, ‘Trump’ was chosen as a central political figure in the discourse, serving as both the most powerful decision-maker in handling the pandemic and the politician who coined and promoted the term ‘Chinese virus’. His leadership, rhetoric, and policy decisions became key points of contention between different ideological camps, shaping how audiences attributed blame and responsibility in the pandemic. Therefore, the keywords ‘virus’, ‘Trump’ and ‘China’ were selected for clustering in both CNN and Fox News audience comments corpora. These terms are pivotal to the political discourse and the ideological stance surrounding Covid-19, as they encapsulate significant argumentative discourse about the origin and nature of the virus, the political leadership and their response, and the geopolitical consequences of the pandemic. By setting a minimum frequency of two and defining a cluster window of three words to the left (3L) and three words to the right (3R), the results are presented in Tables 16 and 17.

**Table 16.** *Top three left-right clusters associated with the three selected keywords in CNNCC*

<i>Word</i>	<i>Cluster Left</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Cluster Right</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Virus	virus under control	7	of the virus	8
	virus came from	4	about the virus	7
	virus it will	3	a Chinese virus	5
	virus started in	2	control the virus	4
	virus that was	2	the China virus	4
	virus months before	2	the corona virus	4

<i>Word</i>	<i>Cluster Left</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Cluster Right</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
			the Wuhan virus	2
			getting the virus	2
			is a virus	2
	---	---	---	---
China	China China is	4	away from China	5
	China virus china	3	dependent on China	4
	China for their	3	came from China	4
	China is to	3	a nationality China	3
	China lied and	2	China virus China	3
	China's propaganda	2	coming from China	2
	China is responsible for	2	a fact China	2
	China am I	2		
	---	---	---	---
Trump	Trump is doing	8	called the Trump	4
	Trump is the	7	a president Trump	4
	Trump has never	4	about president Trump	3
	Trump needs to	2	all people Trump	3
	Trump is killing	2	asking why Trump	2
	Trump after lying	2	as scumbag Trump	2
	Trump again failing	2	and lie Trump	2
	---	---	---	---
WHO	WHO and he	3	American pockets WHO	3
	WHO s budget	3	but the WHO	3
	WHO is supposed	2	head of WHO	2
	WHO needs new	2	they notified WHO	2
			viruses else WHO	2

**Table 17.** Top three left-right clusters associated with the three selected keywords in FNCC

<i>Word</i>	<i>Cluster Left</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Cluster Right</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Virus	virus China virus	8	the Chinese virus	10
	virus came from	7	virus Chinese virus	7
	virus is still	7	it Chinese virus	7
	virus originated in	6	of the virus	6
	virus a hoax	4	spread of virus	3



<i>Word</i>	<i>Cluster Left</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Cluster Right</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
	virus is a	3	that the virus	2
	virus is not	2	about the virus	2
	virus is still	2	fight the virus	2
	virus in the	2	did the virus	2
	---	---	---	---
China	China virus China	4	Started in China	7
	China is responsible	3	came from China	6
	China is to	3	originated in China	4
	China lied and	3	China virus China	4
	China's propaganda	2	blame on China	2
	China was lying	2	from wuhan China	2
	China it is	2	is from China	2
	China for their	2		
	---	---	---	---
Trump	Trump is a	6	you president Trump	12
	Trump and his	4	for president Trump	7
	Trump for his	3	mr president Trump	4
	Trump is the	2	what president Trump	3
	Trump administration is	2	a big Trump	2
			about the Trump	2
			all president Trump	2
			America president Trump	2
	---	---	---	---
WHO	WHO China are	4	I remember WHO	2
	WHO wins on	3	and the WHO	2
	WHO and China	3	the fact WHO	2
	WHO did the	2		

Throughout the CNN audiences' comments on the virus, a general theme is the discussion of the government responses and crisis management. The commenters' focus here is on how the virus was handled rather than on its origins, which is apparent in clusters such as 'virus under control' (7), 'control the virus' (4), and 'virus it will' (3). In some instances, there is reference to the virus's connection to China, such as 'a Chinese virus' (5), 'the China virus' (4), but these instances are relatively

limited number and occur alongside neutral or critical discussions of the US pandemic response. In contrast, Fox News audience comments overwhelmingly associate the virus with China. It appears that Fox audiences place a great deal of emphasis on the connection between China and the virus as evidenced by clusters like ‘virus China virus’ (8), ‘the Chinese virus’ (10), and ‘virus originated in’ (6). It is clear from the terms used in the comments that they are aligned with the rhetoric of Donald Trump, reinforcing a narrative that externalizes blame and portrays the pandemic from a xenophobic perspective.

In terms of the keyword ‘China’, on the CNN Facebook page visitors’ comments about China present a mix of critical and neutral frames. Several clusters such as ‘China is to blame for’ (2), ‘China lied and’ (2), and ‘China’s propaganda’ (2) suggest some degree of blame, but these are offset by more neutral references such as ‘China for their’ (3), ‘China am I’ (2), and ‘China is a fact’ (2). Despite the fact that some CNN commentators hold China accountable for the emergence of the virus, the discourse is not overwhelmingly accusatory and tends to include elements of skepticism, suggesting a more complex or nuanced outlook. Fox News audience comments, on the other hand, present a much more direct and aggressive blame attribution toward China: the dominant stance is evident through clusters such as ‘China is responsible’ (3), ‘China lied’ (3), ‘blame on China’ (2), and ‘China was lying’ (2). Interestingly, the cluster ‘China’s propaganda’ appears both in CNN and Fox News audience comments and with the same frequency (2), suggesting that distrust in China’s distribution of information is shared, although the degree of hostility varies. Unlike CNN’s recipients, Fox’s audiences do not engage in much skepticism or alternative framing; instead, China is depicted as the primary offender, reinforcing the Trumpian racist and xenophobic discourse.

Regarding the mention of ‘Trump’, CNN audience comments predominantly frame the Trump trope in negative terms. There is widespread criticism of Trump’s handling of the pandemic, as evidenced by clusters such as ‘Trump is killing’ (2), ‘Trump after lying’ (2), and ‘Trump needs to’ (2). A noteworthy point is that when I was checking the context of the phrase ‘Trump is killing’ (2), the object of the activity

is the personal pronoun ‘us’, which refers to the American people. CNN’s recipients primarily holds Trump responsible for the pandemic’s lethal effects as a result of this strong accusation, emphasizing the perception that he is not only an inadequate political leader but an active force for harm. This reinforces the perception that CNN’s audience holds Trump accountable for the spread of the pandemic. According to data from *The COVID Tracking Project* — a volunteer-driven initiative that systematically collected and published pandemic-related statistics across 56 U.S. states and territories—the impact of Covid-19 in the United States escalated rapidly during 2020. On March 16, 2020, the total number of confirmed and probable deaths attributed to Covid-19 was recorded at 106, with a daily increase of approximately 20 deaths. However, by April 1, 2020, the daily death toll surpassed 1,000 for the first time, indicating a sharp surge in mortality. This upward trajectory continued throughout the year. By January 20, 2021, the cumulative number of confirmed and probable deaths had reached 396,837, with the daily increase peaking at approximately 4,000.<sup>2</sup>

Fox News audience comments, however, demonstrate a dramatic disparity in Trump’s portrayal. While some negative mentions exist, the dominant framing of his figure is neutral or even reverential. Clusters such as ‘Mr. President Trump’ (4), ‘you President Trump’ (12), ‘for President Trump’ (7), and ‘America President Trump’ (2) indicate that Fox audiences generally afford Trump a level of respect and legitimacy that is absent in CNN’s audience comments. Contrary to CNN, where Trump is frequently criticized and is even depicted as a potential threat to the American people, Fox’s audience emphasizes external threats, particularly those posed by China, indirectly exempting the president from any responsibility. The divergence between the representations of Trump highlights the ideological gap between CNN’s discourse and Fox’s discourse. While CNN frames Trump as the central figure of blame, Fox maintains a protective or deferential stance, aligned with broader patterns of conservative media support for right-wing leaders.

---

<sup>2</sup> National data: Deaths. <https://covidtracking.com/data/national/deaths>

The WHO-related clusters reveal both converging and diverging patterns in how CNN and Fox News audiences perceived international health governance during the pandemic. On both platforms, there is clear scepticism towards the WHO, as reflected in clusters such as ‘WHO’s budget’, ‘head of WHO’, and ‘WHO is supposed’ from CNNCC, and ‘WHO China are’, ‘WHO and China’, and ‘WHO did the’ from FNCC. However, the degree and nature of that scepticism diverge significantly. CNN audience comments tend to frame the WHO in terms of institutional shortcomings or inefficiencies, questioning its accountability and financial independence, but stopping short of alleging malice or collusion. In contrast, Fox News audience comments adopt a far more accusatory and conspiratorial tone, portraying the WHO as being under China’s influence and even complicit in covering up the virus’s origin. This stronger framing aligns closely with Trump’s rhetoric, as discussed in Chapter 3, where he depicted the WHO as biased towards China and untrustworthy. The discourse among the Fox audience mirrors this narrative, amplifying themes of national betrayal and international conspiracy. Thus, while both audiences express distrust towards the WHO, CNN’s scepticism is critical, whereas Fox News is ideologically charged and conspiratorial, reflecting deeper distrust shaped by partisan narratives.

On the basis of the analysis of the clusters around the three keywords, I have inferred three dominant themes from the results, presented in Table 18. The themes reveal that there is a considerable overlap and interconnection between them, rendering them into a logical pattern.

**Table 18.** *Themes and theme parameters*

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Theme Parameters</i>	<i>CNNCC</i>	<i>FNCC</i>
Faith/Trust in Government and Institutions	Trust in leadership (Trump, government agencies)- Confidence in pandemic response	Low trust in Trump’s leadership and U.S. government’s handling of the crisis (e.g., “Trump is failing,” “Trump needs to act”)	Higher trust in Trump’s leadership but skepticism toward international institutions like WHO (e.g., “Trump is doing,” “blame on China”)
Conspiracy and Disinformation	Perceived intentionality of pandemic- Framing of	Some discussion of government failures but less emphasis on intentional deception (e.g.,	Stronger conspiracy-oriented framing, particularly blaming China for hiding the virus (e.g., “China lied,” “virus

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Theme Parameters</i>	<i>CNNCC</i>	<i>FNCC</i>
	deception and cover-ups	“China’s propaganda,” “Trump is lying”)	originated in China”)
Personal Ideology and Political Identity	Media influence on worldview-Ideological positioning on national vs. global responsibility	Liberal-leaning discourse critical of nationalism, emphasizing government accountability and transparency (e.g., “Trump needs to be held responsible,” “China is not the only issue”)	Conservative-leaning discourse focused on external threats, nationalism, and protectionism (e.g., “China caused this,” “Trump is defending America”)

The analysis of audience discourse from CNN and Fox News comments reveals distinct ideological and rhetorical patterns in their attributions of blame, trust in leadership, and interpretations of the pandemic’s origins. The three emergent themes—(1) faith/trust in government and institutions, (2) conspiracy and disinformation, and (3) personal ideology and political identity—highlight how media audiences engage with the crisis through their respective ideological lenses that correlate with that of the news platforms they visit and comment on.

Trust in leadership and confidence in the pandemic response vary significantly between the two media audiences. CNN audience comments exhibit a general lack of trust in Trump’s leadership and the U.S. government’s handling of the health crisis, as indicated by clusters such as ‘Trump is failing’ and ‘Trump needs to’. These comments suggest frustration and skepticism toward domestic governance, aligning with CNN’s more critical stance toward the Trump administration. In contrast, Fox News audience’s stance reflects a higher degree of trust in Trump’s leadership while displaying skepticism toward international institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Clusters such as ‘Trump is doing’ and ‘blame on China’ indicate that Fox News audiences attribute responsibility primarily to external entities rather than to domestic leadership, reinforcing a nationalist perspective united against a ‘hostile external power, China’.

The presence of conspiracy-oriented reasoning in the argumentation is a conspicuous distinguishing feature between the two media audiences. CNN audience

comments occasionally reference government deception, as seen in phrases like ‘China’s propaganda’ and ‘Trump lying’, but do not heavily emphasize deliberate disinformation. Instead, the focus remains on policy failures rather than personal intentional concealment. Conversely, Fox News audience argumentation exhibits an overt tendency toward conspiracy-laden interpretations of the origin of the pandemic. The frequent occurrence of phrases such as ‘China lied’ and ‘virus originated in China’ suggests that Fox News commenters tend to perceive the pandemic as the result of deliberate and hostile actions by China. This pattern aligns with the perspective of Fox News’ coverage, which often frames China as a deceptive global social actor responsible for the emergence and global spread of the virus.

Further, the argumentation reveals how political identifications and ideological leanings shape the perceptions of the pandemic. The discourse articulated by the CNN audience leans toward a more liberal perspective, characterized by critiques of nationalism and an emphasis on government accountability. CNN audience believes that multiple actors, including domestic leadership, are accountable for the crisis, above all president Donald Trump. In contrast, Fox News’ recipients are more conservative and nationalistic, articulating a xenophobic and racist protectionist rhetoric. Clusters in context, such as ‘China caused this’ and ‘Trump is defending America’ suggest that Fox audiences align with narratives that prioritize national sovereignty and external blame over internal governmental critique. This systematic ideological divergence between the discourses by CNN and Fox News audiences underscores how much media framing influences the audience interpretations of the global health crises.

## **5.4 Summary**

A comparative analysis of two news comment corpora highlights fundamentally different frameworks for interpreting the Covid-19 crisis. This chapter employed Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA) to investigate how racist and xenophobic narratives were reinforced or contested in online discussions. The findings indicate that CNN commenters typically attributed responsibility to President

Trump and other domestic figures, deeming their actions inadequate. Conversely, Fox News commenters deflected blame outward, focusing on China as the main perpetrator and thereby sustaining a positive or neutral stance toward the president.

The analysis also reveals a polarized digital public sphere, where a news platform's ideological leanings profoundly shape how its audience interprets events. Social media transforms the one-way dissemination of traditional news into a dynamic, participatory arena. Here, users are not merely consumers but co-creators of meaning, actively reframing political narratives through their engagement. This co-creation is starkly divided along partisan lines. The Fox News comment sections demonstrated a tendency to embrace populist worldviews, while CNN's cultivated a critical discourse focused on state accountability. The findings suggest that these media platforms function as distinct ideological ecosystems where users' beliefs are not only reflected but amplified, solidifying their perceptions of crisis events like the pandemic.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **6.1 Major Findings**

This project aimed at systematically analyzing the Trumpian rhetoric and its impact on media discourses and their audience's reactions during the pandemic, more specifically during the final year of Donald Trump's presidency, between the period of March 16, 2020 to January 20, 2021. The analysis particularly centered on the term "China/Chinese virus" to explore the formulation and reiteration of the racist and xenophobic meanings of 'Covid-19'. That is, the most important contribution of this project is its demonstration that the Trumpian rhetoric was not merely an isolated and individual expression but a strategically constructed discourse with significant social and political consequences. The central argument is that Trump actively utilized the social media platform, Twitter, to frame and name the Covid-19 virus in racialized terms, reorienting citizens' criticism from the government's mismanagement of the health crisis at the expense of a particular ethnic group.

To answer the first research question, this research has demonstrated how Trump's Tweets systematically constructed and reinforced xenophobic ideologies through the strategic employment of evaluative language. Regarding the second question, the study has shown how news discourse is used to either undermine or enhance Trump's power by challenging or sustaining the perspectives in his tweets. Finally, in relation to the third question, the analysis of Facebook users' comments serves as a basis for future research on the impact of political rhetoric across various media platforms.

The analysis affirms that the frequent use of geographical and ethnic markers in naming the Covid-19 virus ("China virus", "Wuhan virus") was not incidental but ideologically motivated. The persistent use of the stigmatizing term "Chinese virus", contrary to the WHO's official assessment and categorization, served as a deliberate rhetorical strategy that effectively legitimized xenophobic sentiments by establishing a direct association between the virus and a specific nationality and ethnicity. This



study demonstrates how Trump's use of diverse rhetorical strategies serves as a mechanism for community building. His tweets are crafted to invite agreement from his readers, a persuasive process that ultimately forges a political base. This community is not just political, but affective, united by a common system of values and emotional responses.

Furthermore, the findings also reveal that media coverage was crucial in magnifying the ideological impact of Trump's rhetoric, significantly shaping both its influence and its reach. It critically analyzes a selection of news reports through Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to identify how a particular media discourse either legitimizes or challenges Trump's authority by endorsing or resisting the perspectives embedded in his tweets. By examining two prominent news outlets — CNN and Fox News — the research traced down how Trump's statements were reported, framed, and recontextualized. The results show that both CNN and Fox News reframed their coverage of Trump's tweets in ways that reflect their respective political orientations. This result underscores that media organizations are not neutral transmitters of information; rather, they actively participate in the construction of social reality by employing selective emphasis and framing strategies. As a result, I can contend that the potency and dissemination of the Trumpian discourse were significantly amplified by Fox News and undermined by CNN through the two media platforms' respective strategies of mediation. These platforms, representing divergent ideological standpoints, played a pivotal role in either reinforcing or contesting the racist and xenophobic ideologies embedded in the Trumpian rhetoric, thereby influencing its circulation within the broader public sphere.

Finally, the comparison of the two comment corpora revealed striking differences in the ways in which different media consumers interpret and discuss the Covid-19 crisis. Generally, CNN commenters attribute responsibility for the health crisis to domestic political actors, above all to President Trump, portraying his response as insufficient and harmful. Fox News audiences, by contrast, in agreement with the Trumpian rhetoric, externalize the blame, focusing on China as the primary perpetrator of the US system, indirectly accusing China of instrumentalizing the virus

as a biological weapon, while maintaining a positive or neutral attitude toward President Trump.

Situating these findings within a broader context reveals that this dissertation's case study is a contemporary manifestation of a long-standing and recurring pattern in American political discourse. As established in the historical framework of this study, the scapegoating of groups seen as foreign is a durable populist strategy, deeply rooted in a history of xenophobia that has often targeted the "perpetual foreigner". The anti-Asian rhetoric amplified by Trump during the pandemic is a modern iteration of the same script that was used to demonize Irish and Italian immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and that has been more recently deployed against individuals of Middle Eastern descent in the post-9/11 era. This pattern continues in the present, for example, in the populist discourse aimed at (potential) Latin American newcomers, who are often framed as an invading threat to national security and cultural integrity. Trump's "China virus" rhetoric, therefore, was not an anomaly but a classic application of this xenophobic playbook, adapted for the digital age and a specific global health crisis.

The findings demonstrate how partisan media consumption creates polarized interpretations of national crises. Through an analysis of online news comments, this study shows that audiences are not passive recipients but active participants in shaping political discourse. This dynamic is clearly illustrated by the distinct patterns of blame following the COVID-19 outbreak: Fox News viewers consistently externalized blame onto China, while CNN commenters focused on domestic leadership and policy failures. This contrast reveals that social media does more than transmit news; it creates ideological feedback loops where users engage with content in ways that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs. Ultimately, the traditional top-down model of media influence has been replaced by a more complex, interactive system where citizen engagement is pivotal in both reinforcing and challenging dominant narratives.

## **6.2 Theoretical Implication**

This research offers a nuanced model of how ideologies circulate in polarized digital environments. By empirically tracing the “textual chain” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 38) of the phrase “China/Chinese virus” — from Trump’s Twitter to news outlets and finally to audience comments—the study highlights a complex process of negotiation rather than simple transmission. It challenges reductive theories of media influence by showing that audiences are not passive. Instead, their reception and reinterpretation of political messages are profoundly shaped by their own ideological leanings and the specific media platforms they inhabit. The analysis of CNN and Fox News comments makes this clear, demonstrating that meaning is actively co-created in ways that often reinforce the very partisan divides that define contemporary political discourse.

Finally and equally importantly, this research directly confronts a common methodological challenge in discourse studies: the difficulty of scaling up close-reading analysis. By integrating computational tools with traditional qualitative inquiry, this study pioneers a more robust approach. While manual analysis of select texts remains crucial, computer-assisted corpus analysis allows us to examine vast datasets, revealing large-scale patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed. This quantitative dimension strengthens the validity of our findings and helps mitigate researcher bias — a crucial advantage when working with the immense and often unwieldy data from social media.

## **6.3 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further**

### **Research**

This study’s conclusions are shaped by a limitation inherent to its core methodologies: the interpretive nature of CDA and SFL. While these frameworks provide analytical rigor, the final identification of ideologies and persuasive meanings is not a purely objective process. It is inevitably filtered through the researcher’s own perspective and background. Consequently, even when following the same protocols, different analysts might reasonably weigh linguistic evidence differently or draw contrasting conclusions about a text’s intent and impact.

Furthermore, the study's reliance on specific textual data sources—namely Trump's tweets, selected news reports from CNN and Fox News, and user comments based on those reports—introduces limitations related to scope and representativeness. The findings derived from the Corpus-assisted Critical Discourse Analysis (CACDA) are contingent on the specific corpora compiled; they may not fully capture the entire spectrum of Trump's speech on the topic, the full range of media coverage across all outlets, or the diversity of public opinion beyond those who chose to comment on these specific platforms. Consequently, while the study effectively traces a significant textual chain, generalizing the findings to all political media or all public discourse requires caution.

A primary area for future research, I think, may involve broadening the scope of the media platforms and sources analyzed. This study concentrated on Twitter, CNN, and Fox News; subsequent research could investigate how the anti-Asian rhetoric related to Covid-19 was constructed and circulated on other major social media platforms (like Reddit), or within different communication modalities, such as visual signification (emojis, news photos, videos). This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the media ecosystem surrounding the issue.

Additionally, future studies could delve deeper into audience reception and the real-world impact of the Trumpian discourse using methodologies beyond textual analysis of comments. Employing qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviews, focus groups, or ethnographic observation could offer richer insights into how individuals from various backgrounds (including the comparisons of different Asian ethnic groups and non-Asian groups) interpreted the Trumpian rhetoric and media coverage, the specific psychological effects experienced, and how these discourses influenced their daily lives, social interactions, or political views. Longitudinal studies tracking the persistence and evolution of these narratives and their effects over a longer period, extending beyond Trump's presidency, into his current, second period, would also significantly add to the knowledge base.

This future direction of comparing Chinese and other audiences of Asian descent may aim to explore the psychological, social, and political implications of mediated

discourse, capturing how these narratives are internalized, negotiated, or resisted in the users' everyday life. In addition, longitudinal studies may be essential in tracing the durability and transformation of these discourses over time, especially in relation to political transitions and global events. Notably, as Donald Trump began his second term in office this year, in my opinion it becomes increasingly important to examine whether his rhetoric has evolved or remains consistent with that of his first presidency. Particular attention should be paid to whether his racist discourse continues to target China and in what ways, for what political purposes. If at all, his communicative strategies have shifted either in tone, focus, or ideological framing. Investigating these changes will provide valuable insights into the coherence and adaptability of political discourse, as well as its implications for international relations, racialized narratives, and domestic political polarization.

## References

- Aday, S. (2010). Leading the charge: Media, elites, and the use of emotion in stimulating rally effects in wartime. *Journal of Communication*, 60(3), 440–465. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01489.x>
- Albu, O. B., & Etter, M. (2016). Hypertextuality and social media: A study of the constitutive and paradoxical implications of organizational Twitter use. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 30(1), 5-31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189156011>
- Aleksić, D., & Stamenković, I. (2018). The language of media in the digital age. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 12, 101-113.
- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211>
- Al-Radhi, H. (2020). Strategic functions in CNN's media discourse an ideological strategy to win people's support: A critical discourse analysis study. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 9(3), 43-54.
- AllSides. (2020, November). *Rating the Media Bias of CNN, Fox News, New York Post, Politico & Reuters: November 2020*. <https://www.allsides.com/blind-survey/november-2020>
- Althusser L. (1970): *Reading capital*. NLB.
- Althusser, L. (2014). *On the reproduction of capitalism: Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*. Verso Books.
- Ambrosio, T. (2002). *Ethnic identity groups and US foreign policy*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Andersen, M. (2020). Early evidence on social distancing in response to COVID-19 in the United States. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3569368>.

- Ashcroft, A. (2016). Donald Trump: Narcissist, psychopath or representative of the people? *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 14(3), 217-222. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ppi.1395>
- Ash, E., Galletta, S., Pinna, M., & Warshaw, C. S. (2024). From viewers to voters: Tracing Fox News' impact on American democracy. *Journal of Public Economics*, 240, 105256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105256>
- Azari, J. R. (2016). How the news media helped to nominate Trump. *Political Communication*, 33(4), 677-680. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1224417>
- Babones, S. (2018). *The new authoritarianism: Trump, populism, and the tyranny of experts*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Baker, P. (2004). Querying keywords: Questions of difference, frequency, and sense in keywords analysis. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 32(4), 346–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424204269894>
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. Continuum.
- Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Khosravinik, M., Krzyżanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & society*, 19(3), 273-306. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926508088962>
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. University of Texas Press.
- Bakuuro, J. (2017). Demystifying Halliday's metafunctions of language. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(2), 211-217. <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v5n2a21>
- Ball, J. (2017). *Post-truth: How bullshit conquered the world*. Biteback Publishing.
- Barendt, E. M. (2005). *Freedom of speech*. Oxford University Press.
- Barnidge, M. (2017). Exposure to political disagreement in social media versus face-to-face and anonymous online settings. *Political Communication*, 34(2), 302–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1235639>

- Bartlett, J. (2014). Populism, social media and democratic strain. In S. Clara (Eds.), *European populism and winning the immigration debate* (pp. 99-116). European Liberal Forum.
- Bauschke, R., & Jäckle, S. (2023). Hate speech on social media against German mayors: Extent of the phenomenon, reactions, and implications. *Policy & Internet*, 15(2), 223-242. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.335>
- Bayraktutan, G. B., Binark, M., Çomu, T., Doğu, B., İslamoğlu, G., & Telli Aydemir, A. (2013). The role of social media in political communication: Use of Twitter in the 2011 General Elections in Turkey. *MediAnali*, 7(13), 1-18.
- Beck, U. (2006). *Power in the global age: A new global political economy*. Polity.
- Becker, M. J., Troschke, H., & Allington, D. (2021). Decoding antisemitism: An AI-driven study on hate speech and imagery online. First Discourse Report. Technische Universität Berlin: Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung. <https://decoding-antisemitism.eu/publications/first-discourse-report/>
- Bednarek, M., & Caple, H. (2017). *The discourse of news values: How news organizations create newsworthiness*. Oxford University Press.
- Bell, A. (1991). *The Language of News Media*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., Roberts, H. & Zuckerman, E. (2017, March 3). Study: Breitbart-led right-wing media ecosystem altered broader media agenda. *Columbia Journalism Review*. [www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbartmedia-trump-harvard-study.php](http://www.cjr.org/analysis/breitbartmedia-trump-harvard-study.php) .
- Bennett, W. L. (1995). *News: The politics of illusion*. Longman.
- Berkenkotter, C., & Huckin, T. N. (1993). Rethinking Genre from a Sociocognitive Perspective. *Written Communication*, 10(4), 475-509.
- Bevitori, C. (2010). *Representations of climate change: News and opinion discourse in UK and US quality press: A corpus-assisted discourse study*. Bologna University Press.
- Bevitori, C. (2015). Discursive construction of the environment in American presidential speeches 1960–2013: A diachronic corpus-assisted discourse study. In Baker, P. & McEnery T. (Eds). *Corpora and Discourse Studies: Integrating*



- Discourse and Corpora*, (pp. 110–133). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bhat P. (2022). “Counter-net of Tomorrow?: Right-wing responses to deplatforming Trump”. In: R.E. Gutsche Jr. (Ed.). *The Future of the Presidency, Journalism, and Democracy*, (pp. 107–126). Routledge.
- Bhatia, A. (2006). Critical discourse analysis of political press conferences. *Discourse & Society*, 17(2), 173-203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926506058057>
- Bimber, B. (2003). *Information and American democracy: Technology in the evolution of political power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Blake, A. (2014). Ranking the media from liberal to conservative, based on their audiences. Retrieved May 14, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2014/10/21/lets-rank-the-media-from-liberal-to-conservative-based-on-their-audiences/>.
- Blommaert, J., & Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical discourse analysis. *Annual review of Anthropology*, 29(1), 447-466.
- Bobo, L. D. (2017). Racism in Trump’s America: Reflections on culture, sociology, and the 2016 US presidential election. *The British journal of sociology*, 68 (1), 85-104. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12324>
- Bode, L. (2016). Pruning the news feed: Unfriending and unfollowing political content on social media. *Research & Politics*, 3(3), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168016661873>
- Bonikowski B., Gidron N. (2016). The populist style in American politics: Presidential campaign discourse, 1952-1996. *Social Forces*, 94, 1593-1621. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov120>
- Bostdorff, D. M. (2017). Obama, Trump, and reflections on the rhetoric of political change. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 20(4), 695-706. <https://doi.org/10.14321/rhetpublaffa.20.4.0695>
- Boucher, J. C., & Thies, C. G. (2019). “I am a tariff man”: The power of populist foreign policy rhetoric under President Trump. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(2), 712-722.

- Bouvier, G., & Machin, D. (2020). Critical discourse analysis and the challenges and opportunities of social media. *Critical discourse studies and/in communication*, 39-53.
- Brigadir, I., Greene, D., & Cunningham, P. (2015). Analyzing discourse communities with distributional semantic models. *Proceedings of the ACM Web Science Conference. UK*, 27, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2786451.2786470>
- Brink, D. O. (2001). Millian principles, freedom of expression, and hate speech. *Legal Theory*, 7(2), 119-157. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352325201072019>
- Broersma, M., & Todd, G. (2012). Social Media As Beat: Tweets As News Source during the 2010 British and Dutch Elections. *Journalism Practice* 6 (3): 403-419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.663626>
- Brown, A., & Sinclair, A. (2019). *The politics of hate speech laws*. Routledge.
- Bruns A. & Highfield T. (2015) Is Habermas on Twitter? Social media and the public sphere. In *The Routledge Companion to social media and politics*. Routledge.
- Bublitz, W. (2011). Cohesion and coherence. In J. Zienkowski, J. Östman, & J. Verschueren (Eds.), *Discursive pragmatics* (pp. 37–49). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Burnap, P., & Williams, M. L. (2015). Cyber hate speech on twitter: An application of machine classification and statistical modeling for policy and decision making. *Policy & internet*, 7(2), 223-242. <https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.85>
- Calhoun, K. N. (2016). “*What, a Black man can’t have a TV?*”: *Vine Racial Comedy as a Sociopolitical Discourse Genre*. Santa Barbara.
- Camaj, L., & Santana, A. D. (2015). Political deliberation on Facebook during electoral campaigns: Exploring the relevance of moderator’s technical role and political ideology. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 12(4), 325-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2015.1100224>
- Cameron, D. (2008). Gender and the English language. In B. Aarts & A. McMahon (Eds.), *The handbook of English linguistics* (pp. 724-741). Chichester: Blackwell.
- Campani, G., Fabelo Concepción, S., Rodríguez Soler, A., & Sánchez Savín, C.

- (2022). The rise of Donald Trump right-wing Populism in the United States: Middle American radicalism and anti-immigration discourse. *Societies*, 12(6), 154. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc12060154>
- Cao, A., Lindo, J. M., & Zhong, J. (2023). Can social media rhetoric incite hate incidents? Evidence from Trump's "Chinese Virus" tweets. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 137, 103590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jue.2023.103590>
- Caple, H. (2010). Doubling-up: Allusion and bonding in multi-semiotic news stories. In J. R. Martin & M. Bednarek (Eds.). *New discourse on language: Functional perspectives on multimodality, identity, and affiliation*, (pp.111-133). Continuum.
- Caprara, G. V., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2004). Personalizing politics: a congruency model of political preference. *American psychologist*, 59(7), 581-594.
- Caprara, G. V. (2007). The personalization of modern politics. *European review*, 15(2), 151-164. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1062798707000178>
- Carlson, C. R. (2021). *Hate speech*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Carlson, M., Robinson, S., & Lewis, S. C. (2021). Digital press criticism: The symbolic dimensions of Donald Trump's assault on US journalists as the "enemy of the people". *Digital Journalism*, 9(6), 737-754. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1836981>
- Carothers, T., & O'Donohue, A. (Eds.). (2019). *Democracies divided: The global challenge of political polarization*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Caudill, D. S. (2023). *Expertise in crisis: The ideological contours of public scientific controversies*. Policy Press.
- Cha, T. (2016). The return of Jacksonianism: The international implications of the Trump phenomenon. *The Washington Quarterly*, 39(4), 83-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2016.1261562>
- Chan, H. W., Wang, X., Zuo, S. J., Chiu, C. P. Y., Liu, L., Yiu, D. W., & Hong, Y. Y. (2021). War against COVID-19: How is national identification linked with the adoption of disease-preventive behaviors in China and the United States?. *Political Psychology*, 42(5), 767-793.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12752>

- Chen, E., Deb, A., & Ferrara, E. (2022). # Election2020: the first public Twitter dataset on the 2020 US Presidential election. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 5(1), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-021-00117-9>
- Chen, J. A., Zhang, E., & Liu, C. H. (2020). Potential impact of COVID-19–related racial discrimination on the health of Asian Americans. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110(11), 1624-1627.
- Chen, T. Y (Ed.). (2000). Hate violence as border patrol: An Asian American theory of hate violence. *Asian American Law Journal*, 7(1), 69–101.  
<https://doi.org/10.15779/Z38VP22>
- Cheng, H. L., Wong, Y. J., Li, P. J., & McDermott, R. C. (2021). COVID-19 racism, anxiety, and racial/ethnic attitudes among Asian American college students. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 897-920.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2021.1988514>
- Cheong, P.H., Huang, S. & Poon, J. P. H. (2011). Religious Communication and Epistemic: Authority of Leaders in Wired Faith Organizations. *Journal of Communication*, 61, 938–958. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01579.x>
- Chetty, N., & Alathur, S. (2018). Hate speech review in the context of online social networks. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 40, 108-118.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.05.003>
- Chilton, P. (2004). *Analysing political discours: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Cho, E. D. (2022). From the yellow peril to the model minority and back again: Unraveling the orientalist representations of Asian Americans in the age of Covid-19. In Lee K. S and Gibson, D.G. (Eds.), *Justice matters* (pp. 102-119). Routledge.
- Clarke, I., McEnery, T., & Brookes, G. (2021). Multiple correspondence analysis, newspaper discourse and subregister: A case study of discourses of Islam in the British press. *Register Studies*, 3(1), 144–171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/rs.20024.cla>
- Cohen-Almagor, R. (2011). Fighting hate and bigotry on the Internet. *Policy &*

- Internet*, 3(3), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1944-2866.1059>
- Cooper-White, P. (2022). *The psychology of Christian nationalism: Why people are drawn in and how to talk across the divide*. Fortress Press.
- Cramer, K. (2016). *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Cranley, E. (2020). *Real men wear masks': Nancy Pelosi says Trump should' be an example to the country*. Business Insider.  
<https://www.businessinsider.com/nancy-pelosi-nationwide-face-mask-mandate-is-long-overdue-2020-6>
- Cross, R. D. (1990). The historical development of anti-intellectualism in American society: Implications for the schooling of African Americans. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 59(1), 19-28.
- Dahlgren, P. (2005). The Internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation. *Political communication*, 22(2), 147-162.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600590933160>
- Dang, S. & Roumeliotis, G. (October 23, 2022). *Musk begins his Twitter ownership with firings, declares the "bird is freed"*. Reuters.  
<https://www.reuters.com/markets/deals/elon-musk-completes-44-bln-acquisition-on-twitter-2022-10-28/>
- Daniels, J. (2008). Race, civil rights, and hate speech in the digital era. In *John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning* (pp.129-154).
- Darling-Hammond, S., Michaels, E. K., Allen, A. M., Chae, D. H., Thomas, M. D., Nguyen, T. T., ... & Johnson, R. C. (2020). After "The China Virus" Went Viral: Racially Charged Coronavirus Coverage and Trends in Bias Against Asian Americans. *Health Education & Behavior*, 47(6), 870-879.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198120957949>
- Das, A. (2018). Inclusive immigrant justice: Racial animus and the origins of crime-based deportation. *UC Davis L. Rev.*, 52, 171.

- Davis, M. (2021). The online anti-public sphere. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(1), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549420902799>
- Deller, R. (2011). Twittering on: Audience research and participation using Twitter. *Participations*, 8 (1), 216-45.
- DeMarrais, E., Castillo, L. J., & Earle, T. (1996). Ideology, materialization, and power strategies. *Current anthropology*, 37(1), 15-31.
- Devereux, E. (2013). *Understanding the media* (3rd ed).
- Sage de Vreese, C. H., Esser, F., Aalberg, T., Reinemann, C., & Stanyer, J. (2018). Populism as an expression of political communication content and style: A new perspective. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 23, 423–438. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161218790035>
- Dhanani, L. Y., & Franz, B. (2020). Unexpected public health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic: A national survey examining anti-Asian attitudes in the USA. *International Journal of Public Health*, 65, 747–754. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00038-020-01440-0>
- Di Gennaro, C., & Dutton, W. (2006). The internet and the public: Online and offline political participation in the United Kingdom. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 59(2), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsl004>
- Dice, M. (2017). *The true story of fake news: How mainstream media manipulates millions*. Mark Dice.
- Doherty, M. (2016). Through the looking glass: Brexit, free movement and the future. *King's Law Journal*, 27(3), 375-386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09615768.2016.1250463>
- Dombrowski, P., & Reich, S. (2017). Does Donald Trump have a grand strategy?. *International affairs*, 93(5), 1013-1037. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iix161>
- Dor, D. (2003). On newspaper headlines as relevance optimizers. *Journal of pragmatics*, 35(5), 695-721. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(02\)00134-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00134-0)
- Dorsett, D. M. (1996). Hate speech debate and free expression. *S. Cal. Interdisc. LJ*, 5, 259.

- Dugan, L., & Chenoweth, E. (2020). Threat, emboldenment, or both? The effects of political power on violent hate crimes. *Criminology*, 58(4), 714-746.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9125.12259>
- Duster, C. (2020). *Pelosi calls Trump public mask wearing 'an admission' that it can stop spread of coronavirus*. CNN.  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/12/politics/nancy-pelosi-donald-trump-mask-wearing-cnntv/index.html>
- Edwards, E. L. (2023). *Digital Islamophobia: Tracking a Far-Right Crisis* (Vol. 21). Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG.
- Edwards, J. A. (2018). Make America great again: Donald Trump and redefining the US role in the world. *Communication Quarterly*, 66(2), 176-195.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2018.1438485>
- Egins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Engesser, S., Fawzi, N., & Larsson, A. O. (2017). Populist online communication: Introduction to the special issue. *Information, communication & society*, 20(9), 1279-1292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1328525>
- Enli, G. (2017). Twitter as arena for the authentic outsider: exploring the social media campaigns of Trump and Clinton in the 2016 US presidential election. *European journal of communication*, 32(1), 50-61.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116682802>
- Enli, G. S., & Skogerbø, E. (2013). Personalized campaigns in party-centred politics: Twitter and Facebook as arenas for political communication. *Information, communication & society*, 16(5), 757-774.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2013.782330>
- Entman, R. M. (2010). Framing media power. In *Doing news framing analysis* (pp. 347–371). Routledge.
- Ezeibe, C. C., & Ikeanyibe, O. M. (2017). Ethnic politics, hate speech, and access to political power in Nigeria. *Africa Today*, 63(4), 65-83.  
<https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.63.4.04>

- Factbased Videos. (2020b, February 2). Interview: Sean Hannity interviews Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago—Part 1. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjrqd7xt2Xk>
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. L. (1995a). *Media discourse*. Hodder Arnold Publication.
- Fairclough, N. (1995b). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T.A. van Dijk. *Discourse as Social Interaction* (1st ed., pp. 258–284). Sage.
- Fairclough, N. (2000). *New labour, new language?*. Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research..* Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (2006). Genres in political discourse. *JL Mey, concise encyclopedia of pragmatics*, 293-298.
- Fairclough, I., & Fairclough, N. (2013). *Political discourse analysis: A method for advanced students*. Routledge.
- Ferguson, N. M., Cummings, D. A., Fraser, C., Cajka, J. C., Cooley, P. C., & Burke, D. S. (2006). Strategies for mitigating an influenza pandemic. *Nature*, 442, 448-452.
- Ferrie, J. P. (1999). *Yankeys now: Immigrants in the antebellum US 1840-1860*. Oxford University Press.
- Filippini, M., & Barr, P. J. (2017). The individual. *PJ Barr (Trans.), Using Gramsci: A new approach*, 24-42.
- Finley, L., & Esposito, L. (2020). The immigrant as bogeyman: Examining Donald Trump and the right's anti-immigrant, anti-PC rhetoric. *Humanity & Society*, 44(2), 178-197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0160597619832627>
- Fish, S. (2019). *The first: How to think about hate speech, campus speech, religious speech, fake news, post-truth, and Donald Trump*. Simon and Schuster.



- Flauss, J. F. (2009). The European Court of Human Rights and the freedom of expression. *Ind. LJ*, 84, 809.
- Flores-Saviaga, C., Keegan, B., & Savage, S. (2018, June). Mobilizing the trump train: Understanding collective action in a political trolling community. In *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media, New York*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v12i1.15024>
- Flowerdew, J. & John E., R. (2017). Introduction. In Flowerdew, J. & John E., R (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp.1–10). London: Routledge.
- Fording, R. C., & Schram, S. F. (2017). The cognitive and emotional sources of Trump support: The case of low-information voters. *New Political Science*, 39(4), 670-686. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2017.1378295>
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1969)
- Foucault, M. (1994). An Interview with Michel Foucault. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power* (Vol. 3, pp. 239-297). The New Press.
- Fowler, R., Hodge, B., Kress, G. & Trew, T. (1979) *Language and Control*. Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1996). On Critical Linguistics. In Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard and Maccolm Coulthard (ed.). *Text and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the “Postsocialist” Condition*. Routledge.
- Froehlich, T. (2020). A disinformation-misinformation ecology: The case of Trump. In J. Višňovský, & J. Radošinská (Eds.), *Fake news is bad news-Hoaxes, half-truths, and the nature of today’s journalism*. Intechopen. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.95000>
- Fuchs, C. (2018) *Digital demagogue. Authoritarian capitalism in the age of Trump and Twitter*. Pluto Press.

- Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (2012). Social change and political engagement among young people: Generation and the 2009/2010 British election survey. *Parliamentary affairs*, 65(1), 13-28. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/psr045>
- Gabriel, S., Paravati, E., Green, M. C., & Flomsbee, J. (2018). From apprentice to president: The role of parasocial connection in the election of Donald Trump. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9(3), 299-307. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617722835>
- Gale, M.R. (2000). *Virgil on the nature of things: The Georgics, Lucretius and the didactic tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gao, Z. (2022). Sinophobia during the Covid-19 pandemic: Identity, belonging, and international politics. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, 56(2), 472-490. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-021-09659-z>
- Garrett, R. K. (2009). Echo chambers online?: Politically motivated selective exposure among Internet news users. *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 14(2), 265-285. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01440.x>
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2015). Three paradigms in reading (really literacy) research and digital media. In *Reading at a Crossroads?* (pp. 35-44). Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2005). *Why video games are good for your soul: Pleasure and learning*. Common Ground.
- Ghazal Aswad, N. (2019). Exploring charismatic leadership: A comparative analysis of the rhetoric of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election. *Presidential studies quarterly*, 49(1), 56-74. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12490>
- Gibbon, G. (2017). *Breaking Point: The UK Referendum on the EU and Its Aftermath*. Haus Publishing.
- Gibson, R., & Cantijoch, M. (2011). Comparing online elections in Australia and the UK: Did 2010 finally produce ‘the’ internet election?. *Communication*,

*politics & culture*, 44(2), 4-17.

<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/ielapa.626957512319800>

- Giddens, A. (1998). *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Polity Press.
- Gil de Zúñiga, H., T. Correa, and S. Valenzuela. (2012). Selective exposure to cable news and immigration in the U.S.: The relationship between Fox News, CNN, and attitudes toward Mexican immigrants. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 56, 597–615. <https://doi.org/0.1080/08838151.2012.732138>.
- Gillespie, T. (2017). Platforms are not intermediaries. *Geo. L. Tech. Rev.*, 2, 198.
- Ginnie Logan, L., Brian A. Lightfoot, L., & Ana Contreras, C. (2017). Black and brown millennial activism on a PWI campus in the era of Trump. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 86(3), 252–268.  
<https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.86.3.0252>
- Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. University of California Press.
- Gligorić, K., Anderson, A., & West, R. (2018). How constraints affect content: The case of Twitter's switch from 140 to 280 characters. In *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 12(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v12i1.15079>
- Goldfarb, J. C. (1998). *Civility and subversion: The intellectual in democratic society*. Cambridge University Press.
- Golding, P. & Murdock, G. (1979). Ideology and the mass media. In M. Barrett, P. Corrigan, A. Kun and J. Wolff (Eds.), *Ideology and cultural production* (pp. 198-224). Croom Helm Ltd.
- Gorrell, G., Bakir, M. E., Roberts, I., Greenwood, M. A., & Bontcheva, K. (2020). Which politicians receive abuse? Four factors illuminated in the UK general election 2019. *EPJ Data Science*, 9(1), 18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1140/epjds/s13688-020-00236-9>
- Gottfried, J., Barthel, M., Shearer, E. & Mitchell, A. (2016). The 2016 Presidential Campaign –a News Event That's Hard to Miss. *Pew Research Center*.  
<http://goo.gl/cSEzMN>

- Gover, A. R., Harper, S. B., & Langton, L. (2020). Anti-Asian hate crime during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring the reproduction of inequality. *American journal of criminal justice*, 45(4), 647-667.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-020-09545-1>
- Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci, edited and translated by Q. Hoare and G.N.Smith. International Publishers. (Quaderni del Carcere, 6 vols. Romen: Editori Riuniti).
- Gray J. (2006). *Watching with The Simpsons*. Routledge.
- Grinberg, N., Joseph, K., Friedland, L., Swire-Thompson, B., & Lazer, D. (2019). Fake news on Twitter during the 2016 US presidential election. *Science*, 363(6425), 374-378.  
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aau2706>
- Gross, J. H., & Johnson, K. T. (2016). Twitter taunts and tirades: Negative campaigning in the age of Trump. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 49(4), 748-754. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516001700>
- Grove, N. J., & Zwi, A. B. (2006). Our health and theirs: Forced migration, othering, and public health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 62(8), 1931–1942.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.08.061>
- Guo, Y., An, S., & Comes, T. (2022). From warning messages to preparedness behavior: The role of risk perception and information interaction in the Covid-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 73, 102871. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2022.102871>
- Gutsche Jr., R. E., (Ed.) (2018). *The Trump presidency, journalism, and democracy*. Routledge.
- Halliday, M.A. K., & Hasen, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1st ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.

- Halliday, M. A. K. (2002). *On Language and linguistics*. Continuum.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2013). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar*. Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. (2014). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Halupka, M. (2014). Clicktivism: A systematic heuristic. *Policy & Internet*, 6(2), 115-132. <https://doi.org/10.1002/1944-2866.POI355>
- Harris, T. M., & Steiner, R. J. (2018). Beyond the veil: A critique of white christian rhetoric and racism in the age of Trump. *Journal of Communication & Religion*, 41(1), 33–45.
- Heikkilä, N. (2021). Racial Myths and the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan. *American Studies in Scandinavia*, 53(1), 21-41.
- Hemmer, N. (2016). *Messengers of the right: Conservative media and the transformation of American politics*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Han, S., Riddell, J. R., & Piquero, A. R. (2023). Anti-Asian American hate crimes spike during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 38(3-4), 3513-3533. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221107056>
- Heywood, A. (2017). *Political ideologies: An introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hidalgo-Tenorio, E., & Benítez-Castro, M. Á. (2022). Trump's populist discourse and affective politics, or on how to move 'the People' through emotion. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 20(2), 86-109.
- Hodges, A. (2019). *When words trump politics: Resisting a hostile regime of language*. Stanford University Press.
- Homolar, A., & Scholz, R. (2019). The power of Trump-speak: Populist crisis narratives and ontological security. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32(3), 344-364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1575796>

- Honeycutt, C., & Herring, S. C. (2009, January). Beyond microblogging: Conversation and collaboration via Twitter. In *2009 42nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 1-10). Ieee.
- Hong, J., Crichton, W., Zhang, H., Fu, D. Y., Ritchie, J., Barenholtz, J., ... & Fatahalian, K. (2021, August). Analysis of faces in a decade of us cable tv news. In *KDD'21: Proceedings of the 27th ACM SIGKDD Conference on Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining*, 3011-3021.
- Hooghe, M., & Dassonneville, R. (2018). Explaining the Trump vote: The effect of racist resentment and anti-immigrant sentiments. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(3), 528-534.
- Hopkins, D. J., & Ladd, J. M. (2013). The consequences of broader media choice: Evidence from the expansion of Fox News. *Available at SSRN 2070596*.
- Hotez, P. J. (2023). *The deadly rise of anti-science: a scientist's warning*. JHU Press.
- Howie, E. (2018). Protecting the human right to freedom of expression in international law. *International journal of speech-language pathology*, 20(1), 12-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2018.1392612>
- Hswen, Y., Xu, X., Hing, A., Hawkins, J. B., Brownstein, J. S., & Gee, G. C. (2021). Association of “# covid19” versus “# chinesevirus” with anti-Asian sentiments on Twitter: March 9–23, 2020. *American Journal of Public Health*, 111(5), 956-964.
- Huber, L. P. (2016). Make America great again: Donald Trump, racist nativism and the virulent adherence to white supremacy amid US demographic change. *Charleston L. Rev.*, 10, 215-249.
- Iedema, R., Feez, S., & White, P. R. R. (1993). *Media literacy, Disadvantaged Schools Program*. NSW Department of School Education.
- Irwin, W. (2001), ‘What is an allusion?’ *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59(3), 287–297. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432325>
- Jacobs, M. & Mazzucato, M. (2016). *Rethinking Capitalism: Economics and Policy or Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*. Wiley.

- Jeung, R., Horse, A. J. Y., Cayanan, C.(2021). Stop AAPI hate national report. *Stop AAPI Hate*. Retrieved April 27, 2022.  
<https://naswcanews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-210506.pdf>.
- Johnson K, R. (2022). Systemic racism in the US immigration laws. *Ind. LJ* 97: 1455.
- Jones, J. M. 2018. *U.S. Media Trust Continues to Recover from 2016 Low*.  
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/243665/mediatrust-continues-recover-2016-low.aspx>.
- Jones. P and J. Hudson (1996) The quality of political leadership: A case study of John Mayor. *British Journal of Political Science*, 26, 229–244.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2020.07.020>
- Jones, T. D. (1998). *Human Rights: Group Defamation, Freedom of Expression, and the Law of Nations* (Vol. 33). Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Joseph, S. (2012). Social media, political change, and human rights. *BC Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.*, 35, 145.
- Kahn, R. & Kellner, D. (2003). New media, Internet activism, and blogging. In D. Muggleton (ed.), *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (pp. 299–314). Berg.
- Kalsnes, B., & Ihlebæk, K. A. (2021). Hiding hate speech: Political moderation on Facebook. *Media, Culture & Society*, 43(2), 326-342.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443720957562>
- Karami, A., Bennett, L. S., & He, X. (2018). Mining public opinion about economic issues: Twitter and the us presidential election. *International Journal of Strategic Decision Sciences (IJSDS)*, 9(1), 18-28.  
<https://doi.org/10.4018/IJSDS.2018010102>
- Kawai, Y. (2005). Stereotyping Asian Americans: The dialectic of the model minority and the yellow peril. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 16(2), 109–130.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10646170590948974>
- Kayam, O. (2018). The readability and simplicity of Donald Trump's language. *Political Studies Review*, 16(1), 73-88.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929917706844>

Keith, T., & Gharib, M. (2020, April 15). A timeline of coronavirus comments from President Trump and WHO. NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/15/835011346/a-timeline-of-coronavirus-comments-from-president-trumpand-who>

Kellner, D. (2018). Donald Trump and the politics of lying. In M.A. Peters, S. Rider, M. Hyvönen, & T. Besley (Eds), *Post-Truth, Fake News* (pp. 89-100). Springer.

Kerwin, D. (2018). From IIRIRA to Trump: Connecting the dots to the current US immigration policy crisis. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 6(3), 192-204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2331502418786718>

Khramchenko, D. S. (2023). How headlines communicate: A functional-pragmatic analysis of small-format texts in English-language mass media. *TLC Journal*, 7(2), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2521-442X-2023-7-2-30-38>

Kiewe, A. (2024). *Andrew Jackson: A rhetorical portrayal of presidential leadership*. University of Tennessee Press.

Kim, K. H. (2014). Examining US news media discourses about North Korea: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 25(2), 221–244. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926513516043>

Knoblock, N. (2017). Xenophobic Trumpeters: A corpus-assisted discourse study of Donald Trump's Facebook conversations. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 5(2), 295-322. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.5.2.07kno>

Koc-Michalska, K., Lilleker, D. G., & Vedel, T. (2016). Civic political engagement and social change in the new digital age. *New Media & Society*, 18(9), 1807-1816. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815616218>

Kolin, A. (2023). *Trump and Trumpism: The Destructive Politics of American Fascism*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Konnolly, A. (2015). # Activism: Identity, affiliation, and political discourse-making on Twitter. *The Arbutus Review*, 6(1), 1-16.



<https://doi.org/10.18357/ar.konnellya.612015>

- Konstantinos, S. (2021). Raising awareness against fake news to protect democracy: the myth of Islamophobia in Trump's speech. *Social Semiotics*, 1-17. 10.1080/10350330.2021.1929147.
- Khamis, S. (2018). American –Muslims ' E –Jihad: Trumping Islamophobia in the Trump Era. *CyberOrient*, 12(1), 87-94. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11040167>
- Kreis, R. (2017). The “tweet politics” of President Trump. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4), 607–618. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.17032.kre>
- Kreiss, D. (2015). The problem of citizens: E-democracy for actually existing democracy. *Social Media+ Society*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115616151>
- Kress, G. & Hodge, R. (1979). *Language as Ideology*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kress, G. (1985). *Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice*. Deakin University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1980). Word, Dialogue and Novel. In L. S. Roudiez (Ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (pp. 64-91). Colombia University Press.
- Krzyżanowski, M. (2017). Discursive shifts in ethno-nationalist politics: “On politicisation and mediatization of the ‘Refugee Crisis’ in Poland”. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 16 (1–2): 76–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1317897>
- Kümpel, A. S., Karnowski, V., & Keyling, T. (2015). News sharing in social media: A review of current research on news sharing users, content, and networks. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115610141>
- Kursuncu, U., Gaur, M., Castillo, C., Alambo, A., Thirunarayan, K., Shalin, V. & Sheth, A. (2019). Modeling Islamist extremist communications on social media using contextual dimensions: religion, ideology, and hate. *Proceedings of the ACM on human-computer interaction*, 3(CSCW), 1-22.

- Kushin, M. J., & Kitchener, K. (2009). Getting political on social network sites: Exploring online political discourse on Facebook. *First Monday* 14(11). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v14i11.2645>
- Lajevardi, N., & Oskooii, K. A. (2018). Old-fashioned racism, contemporary islamophobia, and the isolation of Muslim Americans in the age of Trump. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics*, 3(1), 112-152. <https://doi.org/10.1017/rep.2017.37>
- Lakoff, G. (2016). Why Trump?. *Huffington Post blog*, March, 3. <https://georgelakoff.com/2016/03/02/why-trump/>
- Landemore, H. (2012). *Democratic reason: Politics, collective intelligence, and the rule of the many*. Princeton University Press.
- Lang, J., Erickson, W. W., & Jing-Schmidt, Z. (2021). # MaskOn!# MaskOff! Digital polarization of mask-wearing in the United States during COVID-19. *PloS one*, 16(4), e0250817. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0250817>
- Larsson, A. O., & Ihlen, Ø. (2015). Birds of a feather flock together? Party leaders on Twitter during the 2013 Norwegian elections. *European journal of communication*, 30(6), 666-681. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323115595525>
- Lawrence, R. G., & Boydston, A. E. (2017). What we should really be asking about media attention to Trump. *Political Communication*, 34(1), 150-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1262700>
- Lee, E. (2020). America first, immigrants last: American xenophobia then and now. *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 19(1), 3-18.
- Lee, J., & Xu, W. (2018). The more attacks, the more retweets: Trump's and Clinton's agenda setting on Twitter. *Public Relations Review*, 44(2), 201-213.
- Lee, T., & Hosam, C. (2020, September). Fake news is real: The significance and sources of disbelief in mainstream media in Trump's America. *Sociological Forum*, 35(1), 996-1018. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12603>
- Leets, L., & Giles, H. (1999). Harmful speech in intergroup encounters: An organizational framework for communication research. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 22(1), 91-137.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.1999.11678960>
- Leets, L. (2002). Experiencing hate speech: Perceptions and responses to anti-semitism and antigay speech. *Journal of social issues*, 58(2), 341-361.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4560.00264>
- Lenhart, A. (2012). *Teens, smartphones & texting*. The Pew Research Center Internet & American Life Project.
- Lennon, P. (2004). *Allusions in the press: An applied linguistic study*. Mouton De Gruyter.
- Levendusky, M. (2013). Partisan Media Exposure and Attitudes toward the Opposition. *Political Communication*, 30 (4), 565- 581.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.737435>
- Levin, B. (2002). From slavery to hate crime laws: The emergence of race and status-based protection in American criminal law. *Journal of Social Issues* , 245-227 ,(2)58. <https://doi.org/4560.00258-1540/10.1111>
- Li R. Y. M, Yue X. G, & Crabbe M. J. C. (2021). COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: Pressing realities and city management. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.596913>
- Liebman, C. S. (1983). Extremism as a religious norm. *Journal for the scientific study of religion*, 22 (1), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1385593>
- Lim, E. T. (2008). *The anti-intellectual presidency: The decline of presidential rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush*. Oxford University Press.
- Liu, M., Lee, N., Si, Z., & Aquino, O. (2024). The history of anti-Asian racism and violence in the United States. *Addressing anti-Asian racism with social work advocacy and action*, 1, 3-23.
- Louw, E. (2005). *The media and political process*. Sage.
- Love, R. & Baker, P. (2015). The hate that dare not speak its name?. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 3(1): 57–86.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.3.1.03lov>
- Lyman, S. M. (2000). The“ yellow peril” mystique: Origins and vicissitudes of a racist

- discourse. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 683-747.
- MacDonald, P. K. (2018). America first? Explaining continuity and change in Trump's foreign policy. *Political Science Quarterly*, 133(3), 401-434.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12804>
- Manning, P. (2001). *News and news sources: A critical introduction*. Sage.
- Martin, A. (1992). *Railroads triumphant: the growth, rejection, and rebirth of a vital American force*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, G. J., & Yurukoglu, A. (2017). Bias in cable news: Persuasion and polarization. *American Economic Review*, 107(9), 2565-2599.  
<https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20160812>
- Martin, J. R. (1997). Analysing genre: Functional parameters. In F. Christie & J. R. Martin (Eds.), *Genres and institutions: Social processes in the workplace and school* (pp. 3–39). Cassell.
- Martin, J.R., Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. & Painter, C. (1997) *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Martin, J. R. (2003). Introduction, special issue on Appraisal. *Text*, 23(2), 171-181.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. Continuum.
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The Language of Evaluation*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, J. R. (2011). Systemic Functional Linguistics. In K. Hyland & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *The Continuum Companion to Discourse Analysis* (pp. 101–119). Continuum.
- Martin, J. R. (2016). Meaning matters: A short history of systemic functional linguistics. *Word*, 62(1), 35-58.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.2016.1141939>
- Marchi, A., & Taylor, C. (2009). If on a winter's night two researchers : A challenge to assumptions of soundness of interpretation. *CADAAD Journal [Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines]*, 3(1), 1–20.

- Mautner, G. (2016). Checks and balances: How corpus linguistics can contribute to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed., pp. 155–179). London: Sage.
- McAdams, D. P. (2016). The mind of Donald Trump. *The Atlantic*, Retrieved April 27, 2022.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/06/the-mind-of-donald-trump/p/480771/>
- McChesney, R. W. (2004). *The problem of the media: U.S. communication politics in the twenty-first century*. Monthly Review Press.
- McEnery, T., & Wilson, A. (2001). *Corpus linguistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- McGann, J. J. (2020). *The textual condition*. Princeton: University Press.
- Messerschmidt, J. W. (2021). Donald Trump, dominating masculine necropolitics, and COVID-19. *Men and Masculinities*, 24(1), 189-194.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X20984816>
- Meyer, M. (2001). Between theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to CDA. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (eds., pp. 14–31). London: Sage.
- Micheletti, M. (2003). Why political consumerism?. In *Political virtue and shopping: Individuals, consumerism, and collective action* (pp. 1-36). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Min, P. G. (Ed.). (2006). *Asian Americans: Contemporary trends and issues*. Pine Forge Press.
- Mirel, J. (2010). *Patriotic pluralism: Americanization education and European immigrants*. Harvard University Press.
- Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., & Matsa, K. E. (2015). Millennials and political news. *Pew research center*, 1.
- Mohammadi, M., & Javadi, J. (2017). A critical discourse analysis of Donald Trump's language use in US presidential campaign, 2016. *International journal of applied linguistics and English literature*, 6(5), 1-10.
- Monnier, A., Boursier, A., & Seoane, A. (2022). Anti-migrant hate speech as a

- symptom of a representation crisis. In *Cyberhate in the Context of Migrations* (pp. 1-17). Springer International Publishing.
- Montgomery, M. (2017). Post-truth politics? Authenticity, populism and the electoral discourses of Donald Trump. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 16(4), 619-639. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.17023.mon>
- Morgan, S. (2018). Fake news, disinformation, manipulation and online tactics to undermine democracy. *Journal of cyber policy*, 3(1), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2018.1462395>
- Motta, M., Stecula, D., & Farhart, C. (2020). How right-leaning media coverage of COVID-19 facilitated the spread of misinformation in the early stages of the pandemic in the US. *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, 53(2), 335-342. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423920000396>
- Murphy, A. (2021). Political rhetoric and hate speech in the case of Shamima Begum. *Religions*, 12(10), 834. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12100834>
- Nacos, B. L., Shapiro, R. Y., & Bloch-Elkon, Y. (2020). Donald Trump. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 14(5), 2-25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26940036>
- Nai, A., & Maier, J. (2018). Perceived personality and campaign style of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 121, 80-83.
- Nash, G. H. (1976). *The conservative intellectual movement in America since 1945*. Basic Books.
- Neubaum, G., Cargnino, M., & Maleszka, J. (2021). How Facebook users experience political disagreements and make decisions about the political homogenization of their online network. *International Journal of Communication*, 15, 187-206.
- Neuman, W. R., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*. University of Chicago Press.
- Neville-Shepard, M. (2021). Masks and Emasculation: Populist Crisis Rhetoric and the 2020 Presidential Election. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 68(1), 97-111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642211011223> (Original work published 2024)

- Nguyen, T. T., Criss, S., Dwivedi, P., Huang, D., Keralis, J., Hsu, E., ... & Nguyen, Q. C. (2020). Exploring US shifts in anti-Asian sentiment with the emergence of COVID-19. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(19), 7032. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17197032>
- Nichols, J., & McChesney, R. W. (2013). *Dollarocracy: How the money and media election complex is destroying America*. Nation Books.
- Noguera, P. (2019). School of Trump. In *Antidemocracy in America: Truth, Power, and the Republic at Risk* (pp. 77-82). Columbia University Press.
- Oliver, J. E., & Rahn, W. M. (2016). Rise of the Trumpenvolk: Populism in the 2016 Election. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 667(1), 189-206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716216662639>
- Ono, K. A., & Pham, V. N. (2009). *Asian Americans and the media* (Vol. 2). Polity.
- Oreskes, N., & Conway, E. M. (2022). From anti-government to anti-science: Why conservatives have turned against science. *Daedalus*, 151(4), 98-123. [https://doi.org/10.1162/daed\\_a\\_01946](https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01946)
- O'Sullivan, N. (2003). *Conservatism*. Oxford University Press.
- Ott, B. L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical studies in media communication*, 34(1), 59-68.
- Ott, B. L., & Dickinson, G. (2019). *The Twitter presidency: Donald J. Trump and the politics of white rage*. Routledge.
- Owoye, O., & Onafowora, O. A. (2022). The massive spreads and fatalities of COVID-19 pandemic in the USA: symptoms of leadership failure. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 18(2), 134-150. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPL-08-2021-0048>
- Pancer, E., & Poole, M. (2016). The popularity and virality of political social media: hashtags, mentions, and links predict likes and retweets of 2016 US presidential nominees' tweets. *Social Influence*, 11(4), 259-270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2016.1265582>
- Parekh, B. (2006). Hate speech. *Public policy research*, 12(4), 213-223. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1070-3535.2005.00405.x>

- Parmar, I., & Furse, T. (2023). The Trump administration, the far-right and world politics. *Globalizations*, 20(5), 799-813.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1991660>
- Partington, A. (2004). Corpora and discourse, a most congruous beast. In A. Partington, J. Morley, & L. Haarman (Eds.), *Corpora and discourse* (pp. 11–20). Peter Lang.
- Partington, A. (2006). Metaphors, motifs and similes across discourse types: Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) at work. In A. Stefanowitsch & S. Gries (Eds.), *Corpus-based approaches to metaphor and metonymy* (pp. 267–304). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Partington, A., Duguid, A. and Taylor, C. (2013). *Patterns and meanings in discourse: Theory and practice in corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS)*. John Benjamins.
- Partington, A. (2015). Corpus-assisted comparative case studies of representations of the Arab world. In Baker, P. & McEnery, T. (Eds). *Corpora and discourse studies: Integrating discourse and corpora* (pp. 220–243). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pasco, A. H. (1994). *Novel configurations: A study of French fiction*. Summa Publications.
- Pêcheux M. (1982): *Language: Semantics and Ideology*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Peck, R. (2019). *Fox populism: Branding conservatism as working class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pertwee, E. (2020). Donald Trump, the anti-Muslim far right and the new conservative revolution. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 43(16), 211-230.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (2017). Social psychological perspectives on Trump supporters. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 5(1), 107-116.  
<https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v5i1.750>
- Pew research center (2014).  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2014/10/21/section-1-media-sources-distinct-favorites-emerge-on-the-left-and-right/>



- Piazza, J. A. (2020). Politician hate speech and domestic terrorism. *International Interactions*, 46(3), 431-453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2020.1739033>
- Pickus, N. (2009). *True faith and allegiance: Immigration and American civic nationalism*. Princeton University Press.
- Pierce, P. (1993) Political sophistication and the use of candidate traits in campaign evaluation. *Political Psychology*, 14(1), 21–35.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3791391>
- Pierce, S., Bolter, J., & Selee, A. (2018). US immigration policy under Trump: Deep changes and lasting impacts. *A Project of the Migration Policy Institute*, 1-24.
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first Century*. Harvard University Press.
- Polat, R. K. (2005). The Internet and political participation: Exploring the explanatory links. *European journal of communication*, 20(4), 435-459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323105058251>
- Postill, J. (2012) “Digital Politics and Political Engagement.” In H. Horst & D. Miller (Eds.) *Digital Anthropology*, (pp.165–184). Berg.
- Ramaswamy, V., & Ozcan, K. (2018). Offerings as digitalized interactive platforms: A conceptual framework and implications. *Journal of Marketing*, 82(4), 19-31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0365>
- Rehman, I. (2017). Rise of the Reactionaries: The American Far Right and US Foreign Policy. *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(4), 29-48.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2017.1406706>
- Reicher, S. D., & Haslam, S. A. (2017). How trump won. *Scientific American Mind*, 28(2), 42-51.
- Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. (2009) The Discourse-Historical Approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of CDA*, (pp. 87–121). Sage.
- Remini, R. V. (2008). *Andrew Jackson: Lessons in Leadership*. St. Martin’s Press.
- Richard, W. (2016) “Americans more tolerant of offensive speech than others in the world,” Pew Research Center,  
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/12/americans-more-tolerant-of-offensive-speech-than-others-in-theworld/>.

- Richardson, J. E. (2007). *Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ricks, C. (2002). *Allusion to the poets*. Oxford University Press.
- Rigney D. (1991). Three kinds of anti-intellectualism: Rethinking Hofstadter. *Sociological Inquiry*, 61, 434-451.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1991.tb00172.x>
- Rivers, D. J., & Ross, A. S. (2020). Authority (de) legitimization in the border wall Twitter discourse of President Trump. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 19(5), 831-856. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.19105.riv>
- Robertson, N. (2020). *Pelosi says federal mandate on masks is 'long overdue'*.  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/28/politics/pelosi-masks-federal-mandate/index.html>
- Ross, A. S., & Caldwell, D. (2020). 'Going negative': An appraisal analysis of the rhetoric of Donald Trump on Twitter. *Language & communication*, 70, 13-27.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2019.09.003>
- Ross, A. S., & Rivers, D. J. (2018). Discursive deflection: Accusation of "fake news" and the spread of mis-and disinformation in the tweets of President Trump. *Social media+ society*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118776010>
- Rozado, D. & Kaufmann, E. (2022). The increasing frequency of terms denoting political extremism in U.S. and U.K. news media. *Social Sciences*, 11(4), 167-179.
- Rubin, D. I., & Wilson, F. A. (2021). Blame China: Trump and anti-Asian sentiment during COVID-19. In *A time of covidioy: Media, politics, and social upheaval* (pp.10-31). Brill.
- Sadurski, W. (1999). *Freedom of speech and its limits*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Sahly, A., Shao, C., & Kwon, K. H. (2019). Social media for political campaigns: An examination of Trump's and Clinton's frame building and its effect on audience engagement. *Social Media + Society*, 5(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119855141>

- Sanchez, G. J. (1997). Face the nation: Race, immigration, and the rise of nativism in late twentieth century America. *International migration review*, 31(4), 1009-1030.
- Sarti, A., Citti, G., & Piotrowski, D. (2019). Differential heterogenesis and the emergence of semiotic function. *Semiotica*, 2019(230), 1-34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2018-0109>
- Savoy, J. (2018). Trump's and Clinton's style and rhetoric during the 2016 presidential election. *Journal of Quantitative Linguistics*, 25(2), 168-189.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09296174.2017.1349358>
- Saxton, G. D., Niyirora, J., Guo, C., & Waters, R. (2015). # AdvocatingForChange: The strategic use of hashtags in social media advocacy. *Advances in Social Work*, 16(1), 154-169. <https://doi.org/10.18060/17952>
- Scharffs, B. G. (2013). International law and the defamation of religion conundrum. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 11(1), 66-75.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2012.760979>
- Schrock, D., Dowd-Arrow, B., Erichsen, K., Gentile, H., & Dignam, P. (2017). The emotional politics of making America great again: Trump's working class appeals. *Journal of Working-Class Studies*, 2(1), 5-22.  
<https://doi.org/10.13001/jwcs.v2i1.6039>
- Shaw, J., Eisler, J., Havercroft, J., Wiener, A., & Napoleon, V. (2021). After Trump. *Global Constitutionalism*, 10(1), 1-9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045381721000022>
- Sheldon, P., Herzfeldt, E., & Rauschnabel, P. A. (2020). Culture and social media: the relationship between cultural values and hashtagging styles. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 39(7), 758-770.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2019.1611923>
- Shie, J. S. (2016). Variations in the use of intertexts at the macro-contextual level: The case of English press news. *Language and Literature*, 25(2), 95-112.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947015623614>
- Shoemaker, P. (1991) *Gatekeeping*. Sage.

- Siles, I., & Boczkowski, P. (2012). At the intersection of content and materiality: A texto-material perspective on the use of media technologies. *Communication Theory*, 22(3), 227-249. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2012.01408.x>
- Silva, E. O. (2019). Accounting for Trump: The neutralization of claims of racism in the early stages of the 2016 presidential campaign. In N. K. Denzin (Eds.), *The interaction order* (pp. 197-216). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Silva, E. O. (2019). Donald Trump's discursive field: A juncture of stigma contests over race, gender, religion, and democracy. *Sociology Compass*, 13(12), 1-13.
- Silva, G. J. (2019). *Racism as self-love*. Radical Philosophy Review.
- Skogerbø, E., & Krumsvik, A. H. (2015). Newspapers, Facebook and Twitter: Intermedial agenda setting in local election campaigns. *Journalism Practice*, 9(3), 350-366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2014.950471>
- Smith, T. (2000). *Foreign attachments: The power of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy*. Harvard University Press.
- Smolla, R. A. (2020). *Confessions of a free speech lawyer: Charlottesville and the politics of hate*. Cornell University Press.
- Starr, P. (2019). *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications*. Basic Books.
- Statista. 2023. Leading countries based on number of X (formerly Twitter) users as of January 2023 (in millions). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/242606/number-of-active-twitter-users-in-elected-countries/> September 13, 2023.
- Stelter, B. (2020). *Hoax: Donald Trump, Fox News, and the dangerous distortion of truth*. Simon and Schuster.
- Stewart, D. W., & Pavlou, P. A. (2002). From consumer response to active consumer: Measuring the effectiveness of interactive media. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 30(4), 376-396. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009207002236912>
- Stewart, L. G., Arif, A., & Starbird, K. (2018, February). Examining trolls and polarization with a retweet network. In *Proc. ACM WSDM, workshop on misinformation and misbehavior mining on the web* (Vol. 70).

- Stier, S., Bleier, A., Lietz, H., & Strohmaier, M. (2018). Election campaigning on social media: Politicians, audiences, and the mediation of political communication on Facebook and Twitter. *Political communication*, 35(1), 50-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1334728>
- Stolee, G., & Caton, S. (2018). Twitter, Trump, and the base: a shift to a new form of presidential talk?. *Signs and society*, 6(1), 147-165.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/694755>
- Streeck, W. (2017). Trump and the Trumpists. *Inference*, 3(1). Retrieved April 27, 2022.  
<https://inference-review.com/article/trump-and-the-trumpists>.
- Stroud, N. J. (2011). *Niche news: The politics of news choice*. Oxford.
- Subtirelu, N. C., & Baker, P. (2018). Corpus-based approaches. In J. Flowerdew & J. E. Richardson (Eds), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 106-119). Routledge.
- Swift, A. (2017, September 21). Democrats' Confidence in Mass Media Rises Sharply From 2016. Gallup Poll News Service.  
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A510349591/AONE?u=anon~74a35951&sid=googleScholar&xid=4b8f8782>
- Szabados, K. (2019). Can we win the war on science? Understanding the link between political populism and anti-science politics. *Populism*, 2(2), 207-236.  
<https://doi.org/10.1163/25888072-02021028>
- Tenorio, E. H. (2011). Critical discourse analysis, an overview. *Nordic journal of English studies*, 10(1), 183-210. <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.247>
- Thompson, D. (2001). *Radical Feminism Today*. Sage Publications.
- Thompson, J. B. (2013). *Ideology and modern culture: Critical social theory in the era of mass communication*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Tonkiss, F. (2004). Analysing text and speech: content and discourse analysis. *Researching society and culture*, 2, 367-382.

- Vachuska, K. F. (2020). Initial effects of the coronavirus pandemic on racial prejudice in the United States: Evidence from Google trends. *SocArXiv Papers*.  
<https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/bgpk3>
- Van Bavel, J. J., Yang, L., Sun, T., Zhang, M., & Mei, Q. (2012). We know what@you# tag: does the dual role affect hashtag adoption? *Proceedings of the 21st international conference on World Wide Web*, 261–270.  
<https://doi.org/10.1145/2187836.2187872>
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993a) Discourse and cognition in society. In D. Crowley & D. Mitchell (Eds.), *Communication theory today* (pp. 104–26). Pergamon.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993b). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage Publications.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993c). Stories and racism. In K.M. Dennis (Eds), *Narrative and social control* (pp. 121-142). Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995a). Aims of critical discourse analysis. *Japanese discourse*, 1(1), 17-27.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1995b). Discourse semantics and ideology. *Discourse & society*, 6(2), 243-289.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1996). *Discourse, racism and ideology*. La Laguna.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is political discourse analysis. *Belgian journal of linguistics*, 11(1), 11-52.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2005). Discourse analysis as ideology analysis. In C. Schaffner & L. W. Anita (Eds.), *Language and Peace* (pp. 41-58). Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse, context and cognition. *Discourse studies*, 8(1), 159-177.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445606059565>
- Van Dijk, T.A. (2008). *Discourse and context: A sociocognitive approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. *Discourse and Communication*, 1 (1), 91–112.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986>
- Vargo, C. J., & Hopp, T. (2020). Fear, anger, and political advertisement engagement:

- A computational case study of Russian-linked Facebook and Instagram content. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 97(3), 743-761.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020911884>
- Viladrich, A. (2021). Sinophobic stigma going viral: Addressing the social impact of COVID-19 in a globalized world. *American Journal of Public Health*, 111(5), 876-880. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306201>
- Villazor, R. C., & Johnson, K. R. (2019). The Trump administration and the war on immigration diversity. *Wake Forest Law Review*, 54 (2), 575-616.
- Wacquant, L. (2024). *Racial domination*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2019). Creating an emotional community: The negotiation of anger and resistance to Donald Trump. In A.Graefer, *Media and the Politics of Offence* (pp. 47-63). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wallerstein, I. (1990). Culture as the ideological battleground of the modern world-system. *Theory, culture & society*, 7(2-3), 31-55.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007002003>
- Wallsten, K. (2014). Microblogging and the news: political elites and the ultimate retweet. In J.Bishop & A. M. G. Solo. *Political campaigning in the information age* (eds., pp. 128-147). Springer.
- Weinstein, J. (2011). Participatory democracy as the central value of American free speech doctrine. *Virginia Law Review*, 97(3), 491-514.
- Weisberger, B. A. (1994). A nation of immigrants. *American Heritage*, 45(1), 75-91.
- Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (2003). Introduction: Theory, interdisciplinarity and critical discourse analysis. In G.Weiss & R. Wodak (eds., pp.1-32), *Critical discourse analysis: Theory and interdisciplinarity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wells, C., Shah, D., Lukito, J., Pelled, A., Pevehouse, J. C. & Yang, J. (2020). Trump, Twitter, and news media responsiveness: A media systems approach. *New media & society*, 22(4), 659-682.
- Wetherell M. (2001). *Discourse as data: A guide for analysis*. Sage.
- White, J. K. (2016). Donald Trump and the scourge of populism. *The Forum*, 14(3), 265-279.

- White P. R. R.(2015). Appraisal theory. K. Tracy, C. Ilie & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Winter, A. (2018). The Klan is history: A historical perspective on the revival of the far-right in ‘post-racial’ America. In Windle. J, Morrison. J, Winter. A and Silke. A (Eds.), *Historical perspectives on organized crime and terrorism* (pp. 109-132). Routledge.
- Witwer, L. K. (2015). Constructing the Yellow Peril: East Asia as the Enemy in American Discourse and Political Rhetoric. *East Asian Studies Honors Papers*. 1.[https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/eastasia\\_hon/1](https://digitalcommons.ursinus.edu/eastasia_hon/1)
- Wodak R. (1995). Critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis. Verschueren et al 1995, pp. 204–10. <https://doi.org/10.1075/hoph.8.04wod>
- Wodak, R. (1996). *Disorders of discourse*. Longman.
- Wodak, R. (2001). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer, *Methods of CDA* (eds., pp. 81–115). Sage.
- Wodak, R. (2002). Friend or foe: The defamation or legitimate and necessary criticism? Reflections on recent political discourse in Austria’, *Language & Communication* 22, 495–517. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309\(02\)00022-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0271-5309(02)00022-8)
- Wodak, R. and Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory, and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer, *Methods of CDA* (eds., pp. 1–33) Sage.
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446270073>
- Wodak, R. (2020). The language of walls: inclusion, exclusion, and the racialization of space. In S. John, *Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Racisms* (ed., pp. 160-177). Routledge.
- Wodak, R. (2021). *The Politics of Fear. The Shameless Normalization of Far-right Discourse* (2nd revised & extended edition). Sage.
- Wojcieszak, M. E., & Mutz, D. C. (2009). Online groups and political discourse: Do online discussion spaces facilitate exposure to political disagreement? *Journal*



- of Communication*, 59(1), 40-56.
- <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01403.x>
- Wojczewski, T. (2020). Trump, populism, and American foreign policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(3), 292-311.
- Woolard, K. A., & Schieffelin, B. B. (1994). *Language ideology. Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23(1), 55–82.
- <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.23.100194.000415>
- World Health Organization. (2015, May 8). WHO issues best practices for naming new human infectious diseases.
- <https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2015/naming-new-diseases/en/>
- Wray-Lake, L., Wells, R., Alvis, L., Delgado, S., Syvertsen, A. K., & Metzger, A. (2018). Being a Latinx adolescent under a Trump presidency: Analysis of Latinx youth's reactions to immigration politics. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 87, 192–204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.02.032>
- Wu, E. D. (2014). *The color of success: Asian Americans and the origins of the model minority*. Princeton University Press.
- Zappavigna, M. (2012). *Discourse of Twitter and social media: How we use language to create affiliation on the web*. Continuum.
- Zhu, H., Wei, L. & Niu, P. (2020). The novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. *Global Health Research and Policy*, 5(6), 1-3.
- <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41256-020-00135-6>
- Zick, T. (2019). *The first amendment in the Trump era*. Oxford University Press.

## **Appendices A: CNN Reports**

### **Appendix 1: Trump's malicious use of 'Chinese virus'**

When Donald Trump wants to rally his base and distract from his many screw-ups, he falls back on one thing: xenophobic racism.

It looks like members of his administration have picked up this dirty trick.

Earlier this week, CBS reporter Weijia Jiang (disclosure: she is a friend) tweeted that a member of the Trump administration had called the coronavirus "Kung-Flu" when talking to her. She is Chinese American. "Makes me wonder what they're calling it behind my back," she wrote.

Trump himself sent out a tweet Monday calling Covid-19 "the Chinese virus," and then repeated it Wednesday as he began a televised news conference in which he invoked the Defense Production Act. It's an intentional bit of provocation and racism that evokes the turn-of-the-century "yellow peril," when Americans and Europeans fear-mongered about allegedly dangerous East Asians.

In 1882, the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese immigrants from coming to the country – not so very different from Trump's own racist and fear-mongering 2017 travel ban that predominantly targets Muslim-majority countries.

Reactionary media, self-interested political figures and racist whites portrayed East Asians as dangerous "others" back then, and blamed Chinese people for taking "white jobs." (Is any of this sounding familiar yet?) The result? Decades of discriminatory immigration policies, discrimination in housing and education and violence against Asian people, including mass atrocities.

Pandemics are frightening because you can't see a virus. Throughout human history, rampaging illnesses have regularly been blamed on some outside force, from God sending down a pestilence, to – more often – unfamiliar outsiders or unpopular minorities allegedly bringing in disease, along with other traditions and practices that

the dominant group is quick to deem dirty or morally wrong. European Jews were blamed for the Black Death and massacred.

People living in rural areas have blamed city dwellers for polio; HIV was initially blamed on gay men. Scapegoats and new diseases have often gone together, often to lift blame from the people in charge.

When there's a lack of information, you understand why everyday people grasp at the nearest possible explanation. But the President of the United States? There's no excuse. The President's indirection and obfuscation in the face of scientific evidence has put citizens at risk, as he invites them to think of the disease as "Chinese" and not a wholly American crisis sweeping our nation.

This President isn't acting out of ignorance; he's acting out of malice. He has screwed up the coronavirus response royally, downplaying the threat with ludicrous pronouncements in front of TV cameras, while his health care officials issued grave warnings. He said it will pass soon, that warm weather will help and other nonsense. On January 30, he said, "We only have five people. Hopefully, everything's going to be great."

On February 2, he told Sean Hannity of Fox News: "Well, we pretty much shut it down coming in from China. ... We've offered China help, but we can't have thousands of people coming in who may have this problem, the coronavirus."

Americans are sick and dying – and it's going to get worse, in large part because of the administration has been slow to make testing available. For this, he said in a recent news conference, "I don't take responsibility at all." But he knows someone has to shoulder the blame.

So he blames a "Chinese virus." A reporter asked him Wednesday why he keeps calling it this. He replied, "Cause it comes from China. It's not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that's why. I want to be accurate."

He added – making plain that even in a national emergency, it was revenge, not accuracy or the safety and well-being of citizens that was on his mind – "I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know, China tried to say at one point ... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can't happen, it's not going to

happen, not as long as I'm President. It comes from China."

And, of course, China being an authoritarian state hasn't helped. As much as some are trumpeting the ability of the Chinese to quickly lock down millions, the real story is that the Chinese government did as authoritarians do: They misled, withholding information from the public until the crisis was at full tilt. Anyone in the chain of command who thought this was the wrong thing could not, or did not, speak out. (A Chinese official did indeed blame the presence of the virus in Wuhan on the US military.)

It's that strategy that Trump, troublingly, is adopting, as he also falls back on his usual tactic of blaming someone else.

The Trump administration official who allegedly made a racist comment to a reporter isn't an anomaly; he or she is following the contemptuous example of a bigoted boss. That Jiang tweeted it is an act of bravery, transparency and integrity.

In the midst of the crisis, we need more of what Jiang is bringing, and a whole lot less of the presidential fecklessness and Trump Team racism that puts us all at greater risk.

Hunker down; the worst is yet to come.

## **Appendix 2: Trump again defends use of the term ‘China virus’**

President Donald Trump was pressed for the second straight day on why he is calling the coronavirus the “Chinese virus,” amid instances of bigotry against Asian Americans.

After consulting with medical experts, and receiving guidance from the World Health Organization, CNN has determined that that name is both inaccurate and is considered stigmatizing.

Trump claimed that he is using the term because China tried to blame the virus on US soldiers.

“Cause it comes from China. It’s not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that’s why. I want to be accurate,” Trump said on Wednesday.

Pressed again, he said: “I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know China tried to say at one point ... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can’t happen. It’s not gonna happen, not as long as I’m President. It comes from China.”

He also denied that it was a racist term to use.

CNN previously reported that a prominent Chinese official has promoted a conspiracy theory that the US military could have brought the novel coronavirus to China – and it did not originate in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

Parts of Chinese social media, and even the country’s government, appear to have launched a concerted campaign to question the origin of the novel coronavirus, which has infected more than 170,000 people globally as of Tuesday midday, according to CNN’s case tracker.

The first reported cases of the virus were in Wuhan, and scenes from the city on lockdown shocked the world. The lockdown gave an early indication for how seriously global authorities would need to combat the fast-spreading virus.

“Viruses know no borders and they don’t care about your ethnicity or the color of your skin or how much money you have in the bank,” said Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization health emergencies program. “It’s really

important that we be careful in the language we use.”

Ryan added that this is “a time for solidarity. This is a time for facts. This is a time to move forward together.”

On Tuesday, the President had similarly defended his use of the term “China virus.”

“China was putting out information, which was false, that our military gave this to them. That was false. And rather than having an argument, I said I had to call it where it came from. It did come from China. So, I think it’s a very accurate term,” he said.

The President also pushed back at suggestions that using the term creates a stigma.

“I don’t think so. I think saying that our military gave it to them creates a stigma,” Trump said.

### **Appendix 3: Yes, of course Donald Trump is calling coronavirus the ‘China virus’ for political reasons**

Trump has, quite clearly, crossed out “corona” before “virus” and replaced it with the word “Chinese.” That edit is part of a concerted effort by the President and some in his administration to change the public understanding of this as a global pandemic that’s every nation’s responsibility to: China did this.

That attempted narrative shift is beyond question. What appears to be up for some debate is whether or not Trump’s rhetorical change reflects him simply using proper geographic labeling – the coronavirus did emerge from the Wuhan province – or whether it is part of a broader attempt to drive xenophobic sentiment toward China and, by so doing, avoid taking the blame for his own administration’s struggles to deal with the virus.

Given Trump’s past history of a) weaponizing bigotry and stereotypes to benefit him politically and b) attempting to shirk any blame or responsibility for mistakes made by him or his administration, it’s very hard to conclude that the President is simply trying to be geographically accurate in his recent shift to labeling the coronavirus the “China virus.” Side note: as the virus spreads in communities around the world this shift is also inaccurate and stigmatizing according to experts contacted by CNN.

Pressed on Wednesday about the shift and how it was perceived as potentially playing on xenophobic and racist tropes, Trump responded this way:

“It’s not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that’s why. I want to be accurate. ... I have great love for all of the people from our country, but as you know China tried to say at one point ... that it was caused by American soldiers. That can’t happen, it’s not gonna happen, not as long as I’m president. It comes from China.”

As CNN has previously reported, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman has publicly pushed a conspiracy theory that the US military could have brought the coronavirus to China. And some elements of the Chinese media – including its

government – appear to be involved in an effort to raise questions about the origin of the virus.

The previous day, Trump was asked about an administration official using the phrase “Kung-Flu” to describe the coronavirus in a conversation with CBS News correspondent Weijia Jiang. Pressed on whether that term might be offensive to Asian-Americans and to Asians more generally-Trump dodged, saying only that “I think they probably would agree with it 100% it comes from China.”

The problem for people defending Trump’s “China virus” rhetoric is, well, history. This is a President who regularly traffics in racist language and images to denigrate his political rivals and distract from his own actions.

To wit:

Trump described the late Democratic Rep. ‘Elijah Cummings’ majority-minority Baltimore congressional district as “a disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess,” adding: “If he spent more time in Baltimore, maybe he could help clean up this very dangerous & filthy place.”

Trump mocked the intelligence of LeBron James and CNN’s Don Lemon in this tweet: “Lebron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made Lebron look smart, which isn’t easy to do. I like Mike!”

Trump urged Reps. Ilhan Omar (Minnesota), Rashida Tlaib (Michigan), Ayanna Pressley (Massachusetts) and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York) to “go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came” even though three of the four were born in the United States and the other, Omar, is a naturalized American citizen.

Reportedly Trump, in a private meeting with senators, complained about “all these people from ‘shithole countries’ coming here” – in reference to immigrants from Haiti and Africa.

There’s lots (and lots) more examples. But the point is clear: This is a President who, at best, uses racialized language and stereotypes to placate supporters and, at worst, holds what are racist and xenophobic views.

All of which brings me back to the whole “China virus” thing.



Trump has spent the better part of the last week working to deflect any sort of blame for the current pandemic and the way in which his administration has handled it amid spiking cases, a worrying economic picture and warnings of shortages of vital medical supplies. “No, I don’t take responsibility at all,” Trump responded when asked if he took responsibility for the lag in necessary coronavirus testing while speaking to reporters gathered in the Rose Garden last week.

He has also invested considerable time in scapegoating everyone from the nation’s governors, who he claimed aren’t doing enough to combat the virus, to the Obama administration for their handling of the H1N1 flu back in 2009.

And now Trump has turned to China, knowing that, among his base, the country is reviled. If China did this, and they didn’t tell us everything we need to know about the virus, then how can he be blamed for anything?

“It would have been much better if we had known about this a number of months earlier,” Trump said on Thursday, ignoring the fact that he was asked about the virus as far as back as January. “It could have been contained to that one area in China where it started. And certainly the world is paying a big price for what they did.”

Now, none of the above is to suggest that China isn’t an authoritarian regime responsible for mismanagement of its own. Or that it has America’s best interests in mind. It is and it doesn’t.

What it is to say is that Trump knows exactly what he is doing here. He is using entrenched stereotypes and fear of the other to cast off any blame that might fall on him from this crisis.

## **Appendix 4: Trump says he's pulling back from calling novel coronavirus the 'China virus'**

President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he has decided to pull back from associating the novel coronavirus with China, which he had previously done by calling it the “China virus” or the “Chinese virus.”

After consulting with medical experts, and receiving guidance from the World Health Organization, CNN has determined that that name is both inaccurate and is considered stigmatizing.

“Look, everyone knows it came out of China, but I decided we shouldn’t make any more of a big deal out of it,” Trump told Fox News. “I think I’ve made a big deal. I think people understand it.”

### **Ad Feedback**

The President said he didn’t regret using the terms to describe the virus and defended his past adoption of the terms by referencing other infectious diseases that are named after where they originate.

“It came from China,” he said.

The President also reiterated that he began using the term after Chinese media accused American soldiers of spreading the virus. He called the media organization which spread the information “a paper that’s an organ for pretty much the top people” in the Chinese government.

CNN previously reported that a prominent Chinese official has promoted a conspiracy theory that the US military could have brought the novel coronavirus to China – and it did not originate in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

Parts of Chinese social media, and even the country’s government, appear to have launched a concerted campaign to question the origin of the novel coronavirus.

Trump’s change comes a day after he tweeted that the spread of the novel coronavirus in the US is not the fault of Asian-Americans, a group that has been the target of a growing number of racist and xenophobic attacks related to the virus.

He also denied last week that “Chinese virus” or “China virus” was a racist term

to use.

“It’s not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that’s why. I want to be accurate,” Trump said at the time.

A photograph taken last week of Trump’s notes during a press briefing showed someone crossed out the word “Corona” in coronavirus and replaced it with the word “Chinese.

## **Appendix 5: Trump has repeatedly blamed China for a virus that now threatens his health. This will make Beijing nervous**

In his first presidential debate against Joe Biden, Donald Trump made clear who he blames for the coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s China’s fault, it should never have happened,” the President said, before referring to the virus as the “China plague.”

For months now, he has consistently played up initial failures by Beijing in controlling the pandemic to blame China for the global repercussions – particularly the catastrophic effects the virus has had in the United States, where it has killed more than 200,000 people and infected upwards of 7.3 million, including the President himself.

Trump’s rhetoric has angered Beijing, which has in turn highlighted Washington’s own mishandling of the virus through state media and in official comments. Many countries closer to China and exposed to the virus earlier have nevertheless handled it far better than the US, and most experts are critical of how Trump has responded to the pandemic.

China is currently celebrating “golden week,” an eight-day holiday to mark both Chinese national day on October 1, and the Mid-Autumn Festival. Hundreds of millions of Chinese are expected to travel during this period, evidence of how the country has largely recovered from the virus.

Initially, some Chinese commentators crowed about Trump’s diagnosis, seeing it as karmic after his repeated scapegoating of China-something which has harmed bilateral relations and, at times, put Chinese-Americans at risk. On Weibo, China’s tightly censored, Twitter-like platform, the news initially attracted millions of comments, with some joking it was a “gift for China’s National Day.”

On Twitter, Hu Xijin, editor of the state-backed tabloid Global Times, wrote that the President and first lady Melania Trump, who also tested positive, “have paid the price for his gamble to play down COVID-19.”

Hu, who has close ties to the Chinese leadership, soon deleted that post, though it

remains unclear whether that was a personal decision or a directive from above. His comments were reported widely in English-language media before their deletion.

Regardless, there is evidence that Beijing is now controlling the internal narrative around Trump's diagnosis. The story is not in a prominent position on most state media websites, even as it dominates news around the world. On Weibo, major Chinese publications – including state broadcaster CCTV and newspaper People's Daily – have now turned off comments on posts about Trump, a sure sign of nervousness among censors.

Though China's government is largely closed for the holiday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a short statement noting “relevant reports” and wishing “Mr. and Mrs. Trump a speedy recovery.”

Beijing has good reason to be nervous about Trump's diagnosis. Chinese media and top officials have long complained about the way the country has been, in their words, “scapegoated” for the pandemic's effects in the US, and Beijing is decidedly unhappy with being a major topic in the US election.

Yet that seems unlikely to change. Trump could now take an even harder line on China, further leaning into the narrative he has already established that Beijing is ultimately to blame.

Some on the US right are already using Trump's diagnosis to do just that. Republican Sen. Kelly Loeffler tweeted Friday that “China gave this virus to our President,” adding “WE MUST HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE.” Blair Brandt, a Trump campaign fundraiser, claimed the “Chinese Communist Party has biologically attacked our President,” while US Rep. Mark Walker, ranking Republican member on the House Subcommittee for Intelligence and Counterterrorism, asked “is it fair to make the assessment that China has now officially interfered with our election?”

Prior to Trump's diagnosis, China's ambassador to the US, Cui Tiankai, tweeted that a sound and stable relationship “is in the interests of both countries, and it is needed for achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”

Beijing has always valued stability above all else. However, Trump's diagnosis – whatever the outcome – threatens that stability, setting the stage for an uneasy golden

week for China's top leaders.

<i>Appendices A: CNN Reports</i>		
<i>Appendices</i>	<i>Author &amp; Published Date</i>	<i>Link</i>
Appendix 1: Trump's malicious use of 'Chinese virus'	Jill Filipovic 18.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/18/opinions/trumps-malicious-use-of-chinese-virus-filipovic/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/18/opinions/trumps-malicious-use-of-chinese-virus-filipovic/index.html</a>
Appendix 2: Trump again defends use of the term 'China virus'	Maegan Vazquez And Betsy Klein 19.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/17/politics/trump-china-coronavirus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/17/politics/trump-china-coronavirus/index.html</a>
Appendix 3: Yes, of course Donald Trump is calling coronavirus the 'China virus' for political reasons	Chris Cillizza 20.03. 2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/20/politics/donald-trump-china-virus-coronavirus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/20/politics/donald-trump-china-virus-coronavirus/index.html</a>
Appendix 4: Trump says he's pulling back from calling novel coronavirus the 'China virus'	Maegan Vazquez 24.03.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/24/politics/donald-trump-pull-back-coronavirus-chinese-virus/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/24/politics/donald-trump-pull-back-coronavirus-chinese-virus/index.html</a>
Appendix 5: Trump has repeatedly blamed China for a virus that now threatens his health. This will make Beijing nervous	James Griffiths 03.10.2020	<a href="https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/02/asia/trump-china-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html">https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/02/asia/trump-china-coronavirus-intl-hnk/index.html</a>

## **Appendices B: Fox News Reports**

### **Appendix 1: Trump defends use of phrase ‘China virus,’ despite demands from China to stop**

President Trump on Tuesday further angered China by referring to COVID-19, which has killed more than 7,000 people worldwide, as the “China virus,” despite being asked repeatedly to stop.

Trump said during a national televised press conference that he is using the phrase as a response to China spreading conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus.

“Rather than having an argument, I said, I have to call it where it came from. It did come from China.” — President Trump

On Monday, Trump tweeted: “The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries, like Airlines and others, that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus. We will be stronger than ever before!”

He used the phrase again Tuesday morning when tweeting about New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Ironically, Trump's tweet criticized Cuomo for trying to politicize the coronavirus.

“Cuomo wants “all states to be treated the same.” But all states aren’t the same. Some are being hit hard by the Chinese Virus, some are being hit practically not at all. New York is a very big “hotspot,” West Virginia has, thus far, zero cases. Andrew, keep politics out of it....”

The United States currently has 5,068 confirmed coronavirus cases, stretching across 49 states and the District of Columbia. There have been 91 U.S. deaths linked to the virus so far, with Washington state at the top of the list with 48 deaths, followed by New York and California.

In China, there have been 81,058 cases reported. Their death toll stands at 3,230.

China has been widely accused of suppressing vital facts about the virus,



including when it surfaced and how quickly it spread.

Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has upped his rhetoric about the virus and accused Trump of deliberately trying to "smear" China's reputation, demanding the U.S. find better a better way to refer to COVID-19.

"Some politicians in the U.S. associated the coronavirus with China, and smeared China. China expresses its strong anger and opposition to that," he said. "We call on the U.S. to stop finger-pointing at China. The utmost priority is for the international community to cooperate on fighting the virus."

"We call on the U.S. to top finger pointing at China." — Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

He wrapped up his comments by telling the U.S. to butt out of China's business.

"The U.S. should focus on its top priority, and play a constructive role in international cooperation on health security," he said.

The coronavirus was first reported late last year in Wuhan, China, and has now spread to more than 130 countries.

Last week. Chinese officials came after people like Secretary of States Mike Pompeo, who deliberately referred to COVID-19 as the "Wuhan virus" after China's foreign ministry called it "highly irresponsible" to do so. Other Republicans who came under scrutiny include House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, of California, and Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton.

China has spread rumors that a U.S. military member might have smuggled the virus into Wuhan.

## **Appendix 2: Trump doubles down on ‘China virus,’ demands to know who in White House used phrase ‘Kung Flu’**

President Trump on Wednesday continued to call COVID-19, the “China virus,” and said he doesn’t think labeling the novel coronavirus is racist or puts Asian-Americans at risk.

“No, not at all,” Trump said during the noon press conference. “I think they probably would agree with it, 100 percent. It comes from China.”

Trump has been under pressure from China as well as some Democrats to stop using the term “China virus” or “Wuhan virus.” They believe the term stigmatizes China and borders on being racist. But instead of stopping, Trump has upped his use.

“I always treated the Chinese Virus very seriously,” Trump tweeted Wednesday morning, commenting on news coverage about his response to the global pandemic that’s killed 7,374 people so far. Trump’s tweet was one of three he sent out Wednesday morning where he referred to COVID-19 the “Chinese Virus.”

His refusal to change his wording comes as tensions rise between the United States and China over the origin of the virus as well as China’s handling of the crisis.

On Tuesday, CBS reporter Weijia Jiang claimed in a tweet that an unnamed White House official had called the deadly virus the “Kung-Flu” to her face.

“This morning a White House official referred to #Coronavirus as the “Kung-Flu” to my face. Makes me wonder what they’re calling it behind my back,” she tweeted.

During Wednesday’s briefing, PBS White House correspondent Yamiche Alcindor pressed Trump about someone in his administration using the phrase “Kung-Flu.”

In the bizarre exchange, Trump asked Alcindor to repeat the phrase “Kung-Flu” and asked her directly which White House official had used the term. She said she did not get a name.

Earlier in the day, White House advisor Kellyanne Conway took a more combative tone with reporters and though she said using the phrase “Kung-Flu” was wrong, she refused to engage in a “hypothetical” and demanded to know who in the

White House had the exchange with Jiang.

At one point, Conway turned around and said, “Weijia, who was it? Tell us!”

Jiang said, “I think you understand how these conversations go,” to which Conway replied, “No, I don’t know how these conversations go and that is highly offensive so you should tell us all who it is.”

### **Appendix 3: Jesse Watters: Trump uses ‘Chinese virus’ phrase to ‘make sure that there is a little bit of accountability’**

“The Five” hosts praised President Trump on Thursday after he sought to refocus blame on China for its failure to contain the coronavirus before it morphed into a global pandemic—pushing back on propaganda efforts by the Communist Chinese government to blame the U.S.

“If we don’t hold China accountable for this now, you know it’s going to happen again—and it could be worse next time.” — Dana Perino, ‘The Five’

Trump has ramped up his targeting of the Chinese government since it began an effort to try and pass the blame onto the U.S. by propagating conspiracy theories online. Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian wrote on Twitter last week: “When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals?” and suggested that it “might be [the] US [sic] army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan.”

Trump said the virus “could have been contained to that one area in China where it started,” and added that “certainly, the world is paying a big price for what they did.”

Co-host Jesse Watters outlined China’s lack of transparency and cover-up attempts surrounding the outbreak, which reports indicate began as early as this past November.

“The first case of coronavirus surfaced in mid-November, that’s four months ago. And when the scientists identified the virus, the Chinese government told them to destroy the samples and they gaged the scientists and told them to lie about it,” he began.

“Then, they allow these wet markets where the contamination started to remain open, told the World Health Organization that it was not contagious human-to-human, they allowed the New Year’s celebration in Wuhan [attended by] 11 million people to go on ... and that was a colossal mistake,” Watters went on.

Once the virus was already discovered, the Chinese government allowed

thousands of citizens to fly all over the country and the world, Watters explained, emphasizing that Beijing had “dragged its feet in releasing data to the rest of the world” on their medical findings.

“So,” he concluded, “when they say the U.S. military were the ones that planted the virus in Wuhan and we are going to withhold drugs from the United States during the pandemic, that’s just crazy and the fact that the president calls it the Chinese virus, he just wants to make sure that there is a little bit of accountability and truth to what happened.”

Co-host Juan Williams called for a “9/11 commission-style review” to get to the bottom of where the novel virus originated, but Greg Gutfeld said the government’s focus should be on the health and wellness of the American people until the virus is contained.

“We need to turn our focus away from blaming people and make a list of the people who need to pay ... and six months from now we go back and look at the list,” Gutfeld explained.

“Right now, I want to get people well, I want to find the treatment and do all the good stuff ... and screw the Chinese government, we will deal with them later.”

A day earlier, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned on “Hannity” that the pandemic could be “repeatable” if China persists with what he called their “disinformation campaign.”

## **Appendix 4: Trump says he may stop calling coronavirus the**

### **‘Chinese virus’**

President Trump said at a briefing Thursday he may stop referring to coronavirus as “Chinese virus” if it bothered the Chinese community.

Although he said he would consider nixing the term, he didn’t think there was anything wrong with it.

Trump began calling COVID-19 “Chinese Virus” soon after rumors began circulating among Chinese officials that coronavirus found its origin in the U.S. Army, and he rejected objections from the media that the term might be “racist.” However, he said that if China continues to protest the name he might stop using it.

“If you look at Ebola, right, if you look at Lyme in Connecticut, you look at all these different horrible diseases, they seem to come with a name with a location,” he said. “I don’t have to say it if they feel so strongly about it, we’ll see.”

President Trump told reporters that he had a call scheduled with Chinese leader Xi Jinping Thursday night, which he said would be a “fruitful call.”

Trump banned travel from China in late January to slow the spread of the virus. But on Thursday, the U.S. surpassed China in the number of confirmed coronavirus cases-82,404.

On Wednesday, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Zhao Lijian said on Twitter the world “explicitly opposes linking #COVID19 with any specific country or region. It is not the time to blame one another with terms like ‘Chinese Virus.’”

Zhao said it was the U.S. that started the argument over the origins of the virus. “Shouting ‘Chinese virus’ or ‘Wuhan virus’ will not help with their own or international efforts against #COVID19. U.S. should keep their own house in order, & contribute to global fight against the virus,” Zhao added.

But on March 12, Zhao had touted the U.S. Army conspiracy.

“It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!” he tweeted.

## **Appendix 5: Trump tells UN to hold China accountable for coronavirus pandemic ‘The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,’ he said**

President Trump on Tuesday told the United Nations that it must hold China accountable for its failure to contain the coronavirus in the early days of the pandemic -and declared the World Health Organization “controlled” by Beijing.

“The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,” Trump told the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, separately calling the virus “The China Virus.”

The administration has long blamed Beijing for its botched handling of the virus, which originated in Wuhan, China before becoming a worldwide pandemic, and has called on the international community to join in its own efforts to investigate China’s actions.

“In the earliest days of the virus, China locked down travel domestically while allowing flights to leave China and infect the world,” Trump said, noting also its opposition to the travel restrictions he placed on China.

The World Health Organization, from which the U.S. has begun withdrawing, was also under fire from the president for allegedly echoing talking points from the Chinese government-information that turned out to be false.

“The Chinese government, and the World Health Organization-which is virtually controlled by China-falsely declared that there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission,” he said. “Later, they falsely said people without symptoms would not spread the disease.”

He also contrasted China’s handling with that of America, who he said is leading the charge to find a vaccine and end the pandemic.

“We pioneered lifesaving treatments, reducing our fatality rate 85 percent since April. Thanks to our efforts, three vaccines are in the final stage of clinical trials,” he said. “We are mass-producing them in advance so they can be delivered immediately. Upon arrival, we will distribute the vaccine.”

Beyond the pandemic, he also called on the U.N. and others to focus on the “real problems” in the world and stop criticizing America on issues such as the environment. He said China’s carbon emissions are twice as high as the U.S. and accused it of dumping tons of plastic into the ocean and overfishing.

“Those who attack America’s exceptional environmental record while ignoring China’s rampant pollution are not interested in the environment,” he said. “They only want to punish America. And I will not stand for it.”

“If the United Nations is to be an effective organization, it must focus on the real problems of the world. This includes terrorism, the oppression of women, forced labor, drug trafficking, human and sex trafficking, religious persecution and the ethnic cleansing of religious minorities,” he said.

He also touted the recent peace agreements brokered by the U.S. in the Balkans and the Middle East. Recently there have been agreements between Serbia and Kosovo, the United Arab Emirates and Israel, and Bahrain and Israel. Trump promised that his administration would deliver more deals “shortly.”

He attributed the deals to his administration “taking a different approach” and said that as a result, it has achieved “superior outcomes.”

Trump’s pre-recorded speech, less than 10 minutes, is in contrast to the much longer addresses he has given at the world body in the past—where world leaders gather in person to meet, discuss and speak in the large General Assembly Hall. But the General Assembly is largely virtual this year due to the coronavirus restrictions.

However, Trump tapped into many of the same themes he has touched on in past addresses, including America’s successes under his administration, and repeated his call for countries to put their own people first.

“For decades, the same tired voices propose the same failed solutions, pursuing global ambitions at the expense of their own people, but only when you take care of your own citizens will you find a true basis for cooperation,” he said. “As president, I have rejected the failed approaches of the past and I am proudly putting America first. Just as you should be putting your countries first.”



---

*Appendices B: Fox News Reports*

---

<i>Appendices</i>	<i>Author &amp; Published Date</i>	<i>Link</i>
Appendix 1: Trump defends use of phrase ‘China virus,’ despite demands from China to stop	Barnini Chakraborty 17.03.2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/world/trump-defends-use-of-phrase-china-virus-despite-demands-from-china-to-stop">https://www.foxnews.com/world/trump-defends-use-of-phrase-china-virus-despite-demands-from-china-to-stop</a>
Appendix 2: Trump doubles down on ‘China virus,’ demands to know who in White House used phrase ‘Kung Flu’	Barnini Chakraborty 18.03. 2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-china-virus-white-house-kung-flu">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-china-virus-white-house-kung-flu</a>
Appendix 3: Jesse Watters: Trump uses ‘Chinese virus’ phrase to ‘make sure that there is a little bit of accountability’	Yael Halon 19.03.2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/media/coronavirus-trump-chinese-virus-china-conspiracy-theory">https://www.foxnews.com/media/coronavirus-trump-chinese-virus-china-conspiracy-theory</a>
Appendix 4: Trump says he may stop calling coronavirus the ‘Chinese virus’	Morgan Phillips 26.03. 2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-may-stop-coronavirus-chinese-virus">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-may-stop-coronavirus-chinese-virus</a>
Appendix 5: Trump tells UN to hold China accountable for coronavirus pandemic ‘The United Nations must hold China accountable for their actions,’ he said	Adam Shaw 22.09. 2020	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-un-china-accountable-coronavirus-pandemic">https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-un-china-accountable-coronavirus-pandemic</a>

---