

Joel Pearce

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A Politics of the People: Comparing the Use of Populist Discourse in the 2016 US Presidential Election

Joel Pearce London School of Economics and Political Science

1. Introduction

When Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders were called the “yin and yang of America’s present discontent” in Politico during the 2016 US primaries (Hirsh 2016), the phrase captured a zeitgeist amongst political commentators. They were widely described as “populists” and painted as the US expression of a wave of anti-establishment feeling spreading the West (Cassidy 2016; Lind 2016; Norris 2016). In a country supposedly more polarised than ever, two candidates running for the nominations of each of America’s major parties were here granted the same epithet. This was fuelled by a belief that they talked in a similar way, about similar policy positions, to target a similar demographic.

The potential puzzle of applying this label to such different politicians is tempered by the history of populism in the US. It has been a recurrent theme in the country’s politics, stretching back to the demands of the US Populist Party at the end of the 19th Century. Since then, there have been diverse accounts of populism, including Southern segregationist George Wallace’s in the 1960s, the New Left movement of the same era, and deficit hawk Ross Perot’s insurgency in the early 1990s (Kazin 1998). Populism therefore has a distinctive place in US politics, with its ideas permeating both left and right. Trump and Sanders provide a timely insight into how these traditions are expressed in contemporary politics.

However, it is important to treat populism in a precise way. In recent decades it has been the subject of a vast range of academic work, much of it centred on the apparent surge of left wing populism in Latin America and far right populism in Europe (eg. Hawkins 2009; Mudde 2004; Taggart 1995). This has been accompanied by what can be described as an ‘empirical turn’ in populist studies, with a growth in the use of textual analysis to measure the concept in practice (Jagers & Walgrave 2007; Pauwels 2011; Rooduijn & Pauwels 2011). The rigour of the discipline reflects the importance of using empirical evidence to support claims about the ideas that are being communicated in politics. Bearing this in mind, this project seeks to apply such

rigorous empirical analysis to the discourse of both candidates in order to examine widespread claims.

In doing so, it can contribute to the wider question of why populism has such different expressions. This has prompted one of the biggest theoretical disagreements in the study of populism: whether it is best understood as a thin-centred ideology (Mudde 2004) or a discursive frame (Aslanidis 2015). Much of the empirical research has failed to fully engage with this debate and the different forms populism can take. Scholars measure populist discourse to examine how far politicians are communicating a set of ideas (Jagers & Walgrave 2007, p.323). But once it is accepted that there are different varieties of populism then measuring it as a unified phenomenon overlooks the divergence in these ideas. There is therefore a need to reconcile the theoretical literature that highlights difference in populism and empirical research that largely focuses on its overarching themes. In response to this, this project employs computer-assisted thematic analysis. By looking at words in context rather than measuring them in isolation, this provides an alternative approach to previous studies of populist discourse. It allows for a comparison of the specific political issues and policy areas that are presented in populist terms, providing an insight into how forms of populism differ.

This project therefore has a dual purpose: (1) to compare the use of populist language by Trump and Sanders through empirically mapping out their discourse; and (2) to use this to engage with the debate about different varieties of populism. The findings give evidence that both candidates used populist discourse but in very different ways. Overall, their language had little overlap and there was a sharp division between their themes. Trump used populist frames in his discussion of immigration whilst Sanders used them in relation to economic inequality and campaign finance reform. When discussing the election process, Sanders made appeals to the American people to unite against elites whereas Trump presented the campaign as a battle between him and his opponents. Most notably, they did not discuss trade in the same terms: the largest share of Trump's discourse (31%) presented the issue in essentially nationalistic rather than populist terms. Whilst Trump gave a separate populist critique of trade deals, Sanders instead discussed it in terms of a broader theme of lost job opportunities. Altogether, the candidates' use of populist discourse is found to reflect a

nuanced combination of differences in ideology, individual style, and the political context.

The next section examines the existing literature on populism, with a focus on explanations of different forms of populism. Section three then explains the data used and gives an overview of the methodology of computer-assisted thematic analysis. Section four presents the results of the analysis, initially looking at an overall comparison of Trump and Sanders before examining each candidate in isolation. Following this, section five assesses this in relation to the literature on populism and discusses the limits of existing theoretical approaches, whilst six concludes with an acknowledgement of the limitations of this study and proposals for further research.

2. Theory

2.1 Conceptualising Populism

Populism is an extensively studied concept in political science and in recent years has been the subject of a wide range of empirical studies (eg. Hawkins 2009; Jagers & Walgrave 2007; Pauwels 2011; Rooduijn & Pauwels 2011; Taggart 1995) and theoretical work (eg. Aslanidis 2015; Halikiopoulou et al. 2013; Laclau 2005a; Mudde 2010; Müller 2016). This has led to a considerable amount of conceptual clarity, with broad agreement on its constitutive elements. Populism involves presenting ‘the people’ as a homogenous group in an antagonistic relationship with a similarly homogenous elite. This is a ‘Manichaeic divide’ – an unambiguous conflict between good and evil – in which the people are virtuous and the elite are corrupt. Given a belief that the people should be sovereign, there is a need to wrest power from the elite and return it to the masses (Aslanidis 2015, p.99; Mudde 2004, pp.543–4).

These core elements produce a number of secondary phenomena, which are often associated with populism but should not be seen as distinct components of it. Scholars point to the role of crises in generating populism (Mudde 2004, p.547; Panizza 2005, p.9). Such events are important for fuelling populism as they provide a focal point illustrating the problematic power of elites and how this works against the interests of the people. In this sense, crises are simply a manifestation of the other elements. Similarly, populism is often discussed in relation to its scepticism of, or even disregard for, liberal political institutions (Canovan 1999; Hawkins 2009). Though it

can be argued that the logical conclusion of anti-pluralism is a rejection of liberal democracy, it is not dismissed out of hand. Liberal institutions are criticised insofar as they are seen to inhibit the unrestricted power of the people (Hawkins 2009, p.1044). Crises and a rejection of liberal institutions are not distinct elements of populism in themselves.

2.2 Explaining Difference

Much of the literature focuses on the very broad range of expressions of these combined elements (Canovan 1981; Kazin 1998). Populism has been used to describe a number of movements in different contexts: the agrarian interests of the 19th Century US Populist Party; the rise of socialist leaders in Latin America at the turn of the millennium; and the anti-immigrant right of contemporary Europe. Reflecting this, one author presents a typology of no fewer than 24 types of populism, united in their core outlook but divided by their political, historical, and geographic context (Wiles 1969, p.166). But this fails to go to the heart of the question of whether a concept so diverse can have analytical utility: does identifying someone as a populist say anything meaningful about the ideas that they are communicating?

Scholars have responded to the problem of populist diversity in different ways. A key theoretical divide has emerged between those who understand populism as a discursive frame (Aslanidis 2015) and others who argue it is a ‘thin-centred ideology’ (Mudde 2004; Stanley 2008). Building on Freedman’s (1998) approach to ideology, Mudde argues that populism is thin-centred in the sense of offering an interpretation of the world, but not one that is comprehensive enough to provide answers to all political questions (2004, p.544). The diversity of populism reflects the need to ‘cohabit’ with other ideologies to provide these answers. In contrast, Aslanidis argues that populism is better seen as a discursive frame: a collection of linguistic tools rather than a set of ideas in itself (2015, pp.98–100). This follows Laclau’s theory of populist discourse, in which diversity is explained by the fact that any political demands can be articulated in populist terms (Laclau 2005b, p.44).

Much of this debate takes place at the theoretical level. However, these approaches to why populists differ in theory generate distinct expectations about how they will differ in practice. All are rooted in the idea that populists can have radically

different conceptions of the core elements of the people, the elite, and the divide between the two. The thin-centred ideology school suggests that leaders will communicate in different ways reflecting their primary ideological differences. For example, a Marxist populist may attack the capitalist economic elite whilst a right-wing reactionary populist focuses on the liberal social elite. The latter is developed in theories of right-wing populism, which have identified a distinct tradition that has emerged as a backlash against liberal reforms. Right-wing populists are also said to employ “conspiracism”, presenting the idea of a vast insidious plot by minorities against the unified people (Berlet & Lyons 2000, p.5).

By separating language from ideology, the discursive frame theory underpins approaches that highlight the strategic uses of populism. Scholars argue that populism is a pragmatic tool to attract supporters and win political power (Weyland et al. 2013, p.20). In terms of explaining difference, this suggests that forms of populism will not reflect ideology but political expediency. This is relevant to the debate about the presence of populism in the political mainstream. Some argue that populism is fundamentally incompatible with mainstream politics due to its radicalism and rejection of the establishment (Hawkins 2009, p.1058). However, others have found populist language to be used by politicians such as Tony Blair (Rooduijn & Pauwels 2011, p.1274) and George Bush (Panizza 2005, p.7). If populism is indeed a political tool with no underlying ideology then it follows that any actor can exploit it. This generates the expectation that actors will use populist discourse differently in accordance with their strategic needs.

Both of these contrast with those emphasising the similarity between populists in the same national context. Canovan’s theory of the ‘shadow of democracy’ argues that populism develops in political contexts where democracy has failed to live up to its promise of bringing people together to achieve their collective aspirations (Canovan 1999, p.4). By regarding populism as a reaction to established power structures, this proposes that expressions of it may vary extensively across time and place but minimally within the same context.

Finally, there are additional theories about differences in populism resulting from individual attributes. These focus on political style over policy substance. A regular theme in studies of populism is the importance of charismatic leaders (Canovan

1981; Panizza 2005). Panizza (2005, p.18) argues that populist leaders are often the embodiment of the ideas they represent – they cultivate a direct relationship with the people in order to take on the elite by presenting themselves as “an ordinary person with extraordinary attributes” (Panizza 2005, p.21). However, it is widely accepted that this is not a universal theme and populist groups can mobilise without them (Mudde 2004, p.545; Pauwels 2011, p.99). Consequently, this suggests that populist discourse will differ between actors in the extent that they focus on themselves as individuals. This is a factor independent of ideology, strategy or political context, and instead reflects individual style.

2.3 Measuring Populist Discourse

Recent decades have seen a something of an ‘empirical turn’ in studies of populism. This has been accompanied by debates about how best to operationalise the concepts at the heart of it. Rooduijn and Pauwels (2011, p.1276) highlight the challenge of constructing valid measures. This is because terms expressing populist sentiment are highly ambiguous – it is not clear if words such as “we” and “they” are referring to a homogenous people or elite (Rooduijn & Pauwels 2011, p.1280). There is also the question of the intensity of populist themes. Whilst there is a division over whether populism is a dichotomous or continuous concept (Aslanidis 2015, p.93), both require a measure of intensity. In the former this is to assess whether someone has crossed the boundary and in the latter to judge their place on the scale. The focus on comparison of populist discourse means that this paper adopts a continuous approach: leaders can use more or less populist language.

Another disagreement relates to the use of computer-based techniques. Given the ambiguity of words associated with populism, it can only be established by analysing them in context. It is therefore argued that populism cannot be captured by automated analysis (Hawkins 2009, p.1048). Rooduijn and Pauwels resolve this by using a mixed method in their analysis of party manifestos in Western Europe, cross-referencing human coding with computer-based topic modelling (Rooduijn & Pauwels 2011). However, these critiques of computer-based techniques are not entirely convincing. First, ambiguity is a universal problem with measuring populism and any method, including human coding, struggles with the problem of misinterpretation.

Second, the issue of ignoring context is specific to topic modelling, a form of textual analysis where text is classified based on the proportion of words from a certain vocabulary. This does not apply to thematic quantitative content analysis, which looks at words in context and allows for human interpretation. It is the latter method that this project adopts.

Whilst a number of studies have already used automated techniques (eg. Armony & Armony 2005; Jagers & Walgrave 2007; Pauwels 2011), many of these have failed to engage with the question of varieties of populism and simply focused on assessing its overall presence. Pauwels has shed some light on this with his analysis of party manifestos in Belgium, which found a distinction between neoliberal populism and radical right populism in the ideas that they express (Pauwels 2011). Although this provided evidence for the thin-centred ideology theory, it only examined the difference in language in terms of broad outlook. Looking beyond studies of communication, others have compared how different kinds of populist parties act in legislatures (Otjes & Louwerse 2015; Stavrakakis & Katsambekis 2014). However, there remains a lack of empirical work comparing how populist discourse is used in relation to specific political issues and policy areas.

2.4 US Context

It is suggested that institutions and traditions make the US particularly susceptible to appeals to the masses. The primaries system is said to leave party elites unable to mediate between populist leaders and committed supporters (Pildes 2016). A tradition of populism is at the heart of Hofstadter's (1965) seminal theory of the 'paranoid style': the prevalence of a dual belief in the greatness of Americans and the risk of their persecution. Others highlight the recurrent theme of producerism, a discourse championing the so-called productive elements of society at the expense of economic elites (Berlet & Lyons 2000, p.8). Therefore, whilst recent work on populism has focused elsewhere, there is a long and winding history of populism in the US.

Scholars identify divergent strands of this on left and right, with the former focused on demands for greater participation and attacks on corporate power (Mudde 2004, p.1179) and the latter on fighting liberal reforms with theories about minority conspiracies (Berlet & Lyons 2000, p.5). But whilst this provides a wealth of traditions

that Trump and Sanders could have drawn on, the question of whether they did so is yet to be sufficiently examined. Existing analyses of populist communication in the 2016 election have come to different conclusions. Kazin argues that both Trump and Sanders showed evidence of the influence of populism in their discourse but failed to present a clear conception of “the people” (2016, pp.4–5). He even suggests that homogenising the people may be impossible with the need to communicate to modern political coalitions (Kazin 2016, p.5). Others have found Trump to express elements of the ‘paranoid style’ (Pruessen 2016) and appeal to the people in anti-establishment terms (Serazio 2016). Whilst the latter comes closest to a systematic textual analysis of discourse, all of these studies rely solely on human interpretation and only examine a small selection of the candidates’ speeches.

Quantitative textual analysis has been used to examine the discursive themes of a number of recent US presidential candidates: the foreign policy of Bush and Kerry (Schonhardt-Bailey 2005); the optimism of Obama (Coe & Reitzes 2010); and the role of gender in Hillary Clinton’s communication (Bligh et al. 2010). The lack of empirical research into the 2016 election therefore stands in stark contrast to this. Whilst partly reflecting the fact that the election only took place a few months prior to the time of writing this paper (April 2017), it highlights a gap in the existing literature. Given the contradictory conclusions of existing studies, an empirical analysis of Trump and Sanders’ discourse can give more weight to judgements about their populism. In the process, comparing two supposed populists in the same context will foster a greater understanding of the concept.

3. Methodology

3.1 Computer-Assisted Thematic Analysis

This project employs Alceste, a piece of computer-assisted content analysis software. Starting from the assumption that words acquire meaning based on their context, Alceste analyses the co-occurrences of words. It uses these to form classes of words that are commonly associated with one another and rarely with the rest of the text (Illia et al. 2014, p.353). These classes can be said to have maximal internal similarity and maximal external difference. Alceste has the advantage of being highly reliable given that the software acts blind, providing an objective mapping of the language free of the

risks of human coder bias. Only after this does the researcher provide their interpretation of the output, bringing their knowledge of the subject to give the analysis meaning. Alceste can process a large amount of text quickly (Illia et al. 2014, p.356), allowing for an analysis of the entirety of the archive of speeches rather than a sample of them.

This method of thematic analysis offers specific advantages in the study of populist discourse. Scholars using topic analysis have been able to provide an overall judgement about the use of populism by assessing the frequency of words associated with the concept. However, Alceste's technique breaks the text down and thus facilitates an examination of the specific issues and policy areas that are presented in populist terms. It therefore provides a method for a close comparison of the use of discourse by the two candidates. As discussed, no method is able to fully overcome the problem of ambiguity in populist discourse and Alceste is no different. Despite this, looking at words in context overcomes the traditional problems of establishing meaning in automated analysis. As an illustration, finding repeated references to both the "people" and "elite" in combination would provide a stronger indication of populist framing that just an overall assessment of the number of references to each term. The role of the researcher in interpreting the output gives the opportunity to highlight and discuss any ambiguity in the use of words.

3.2 Data Selection and Modification

The corpus is comprised of transcripts of the candidates' speeches published in the Federal News Service (FNS) archive¹. This is the most comprehensive source of transcripts of campaign speeches available, including all of the speeches shown in full on major news channels. Ideally an analysis would include every speech delivered by each candidate but these records are not available. However, given that the corpuses include all speeches given significant broadcast media coverage, it reflects those that had a wide reach amongst the public. Whilst not giving a complete picture of the candidates' discourse, this gives a good indication of their discourse as seen by the vast majority of the electorate.

¹ I am very grateful to Professor John Woolley at UCSB for directing me towards this data.

The combined corpus includes every speech in the archive delivered by each candidate between the announcement of their candidacy and their party convention. This is 36 by Trump between 16th June 2015 and 17th July 2016 and 24 by Sanders between 26th May 2015 and 24th July 2016 (a full list of these is given in Appendix 1). By including all available speeches made by both candidates over the same time period, this allows for a comparison of their discourse in the same context. It is worth noting that the primaries for each party took a different path. Trump was declared the presumptive nominee following the Indiana primaries at the beginning of May (Nussbaum 2016), whilst Sanders did not concede to Hillary Clinton until June (Sanders 2016). Nevertheless, this project examines the formal time period of the primaries. There is an argument that the de facto end of the primaries came before this. However, using an earlier cut-off date would require a contentious definition of this end, given that Trump was the only competitive candidate before he was declared the presumptive nominee. Furthermore, scholars argue that candidates ‘pivot’ to the general election campaign at the convention (Holbrook 1996, p.70), so it makes sense to use this as a focal point for determining different stages of the campaign.

The texts are direct transcripts of recordings of the speeches delivered by the candidates and the responses from crowds. Consequently, the corpus had to be modified to remove references to the crowd, such as applause or audience hecklers. A number of other modifications were made to facilitate the Alceste analysis: all words were made lowercase, uses of the dollar sign were replaced with “USD” (US dollars), and apostrophes were replaced with underscores. Alceste recognises words individually and without preconditions. Phrases were therefore altered to ensure accurate analysis (eg. “supreme_court” replaced “supreme court”) and multiple references to the same person or place were standardised. See Appendix 2 for details of these modifications.

Contextual tags known as “passive variables” were also added to each speech to facilitate later analysis. For example:

```
**** *name_trump *yr_2015 *yrmon_2015Jun *aud_dem
```

This indicates a unit of text spoken by Trump in June 2015 in a state that voted strongly Democrat in the general election, as further explained in Appendix 1.

3.3 The Model

Whilst acknowledging the ambiguity of populist language, it is important to set out what can be taken as evidence for its use. The exploratory and inductive nature of Alceste means that it does not start with a dictionary of words to test. However, certain terms would indicate populist discourse in the American context, for example: *people, workers, elite, establishment, Wall Street, American, corrupt, threat*. Their presence alone is not sufficient, but the combined use of a number of these could indicate a populist theme. Following a continuous approach to populism, the consistent use of such a frame to present political issues will be taken as evidence that a candidate is to some extent populist.

The theories discussed in the previous section generate different expectations about how this populist discourse will compare between Trump and Sanders. The national context approach suggests that they will use similar discourse as they are both responding to the same crisis and set of elites. Populism as a thin-centred ideology indicates that it will be very different. Contrasting issues and policy areas will be presented in populist terms, reflecting the divergent political ideologies that populism is cohabiting with. The strategic discourse approach also predicts difference, but that this will depend on when populist language can be used for political gain. Finally, the literature on leaders suggests that the candidates' discourse may differ dependent on the extent to which they focus on themselves as individuals.

4. Results

4.1 Overall Comparison of Discourse

Table 1 (below) gives a basic summary of the statistics from the combined analysis of all speeches by Trump and Sanders. The corpus included a total word count of 254, 539 across 60 'Initial Context Units' (ICUs). These are the pre-existing divisions of text as inputted by the researcher. Here, each ICU corresponds to one speech. More speeches were analysed by Trump than Sanders, reflecting the distribution of the Federal New Service transcripts. The 25 passive variables (contextual tags) include the candidates' name along with information about the date and location of where speeches were delivered, although not all of these gave results significant enough to discuss in detail.

Alceste breaks down the original ICUs into ‘Elementary Context Units’ (ECUs): short passages of text that become the focus of the classification process. Two analyses are conducted with different lengths of ECUs and the one that successfully classifies the highest proportion of ECUs is used. The classification rate is 78%, which is above the 70% rate that is deemed desirable (Illia et al. 2014, p.360).

Table 1: Basic Statistics for Trump and Sanders’ Combined Discourse

The final rows of the table outline the classes that Alceste has identified, their

Combined (C): Trump and Sanders	
Total word count	254,539
Unique words analysed	7,646
I.C.U.s (= number of speeches)	60
- Trump	36
- Sanders	24
Passive variables (tagged indicators)	25
Classified E.C.U.s	4,650 (=78% of the retained ECU)
Number of lexical classes	5
Distribution of classes (%) and discursive content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (26%) US global position (trade and borders) 2. (21%) Economic inequality and its effects 3. (20%) Campaign finance and the “political revolution” 4. (22%) Trump vs. opponents and the press 5. (11%) Campaign strength

size in terms of the proportion of ECUs classified within them, and their discursive content. Five classes are identified in this analysis. It is important to note that these content labels are not assigned by the program but by the researcher, who qualitatively analyses the most characteristic words and ECUs within each class in order to establish meaning. These interpretations are of course subjective, so a detailed justification of them is provided below. *Table 2* (below) presents the top 12 most characteristic words for each class along with their phi value, a measure of the strength of association where a higher value indicates a higher association with the class. It also shows the three most characteristic ECUs for each class and the contextual tags for candidates that were associated with them.

Table 2: Characteristic Words and Phrases for Trump and Sanders’ Combined Discourse

Class (Size) Tag (<i>phi</i> value)	Top words (<i>phi</i> value)	Top 3 characteristic phrases (E.C.U.s) (Characteristic words in bold)
C1: US global position (trade and borders) (26%) <i>Trump (.46)</i>	mexico+ (.24) build+ (.24) deal+ (.23) china+ (.20) trade+ (.20) iran+ (.19) border+ (.17) japan+ (.17) iraq (.15) take+ (.15) oil+ (.15) wall+ (.15)	barack_obama is a disaster . and you look take a look at our trade deals . these are deals that are the worst . we_re going to lose USD 500 billion , trade deficits , with china . and you look at what they_re doing not only on the border , but with trade . nabisco , from chicago no more oreos , folks nabisco is moving to they_re moving their big plant from chicago , they_re moving it to mexico . you look at countries like mexico , where they_re killing us on the border , absolutely destroying us on the border . they_re destroying us in terms of economic development. companies like carrier air conditioner just moving into mexico . ford , moving into mexico . nabisco , closing up shop in chicago and moving into mexico .
C2: Economic inequality and its effects (21%) <i>Sanders (.58)</i>	income+ (.28) healthcare (.23) pay+ (.22) wealth+ (.22) kid+ (.21) wage+ (.21) work+ (.21) educat+ (.21) high+ (.19) percent+ (.18) earth+ (.18) college (.18)	so you ready for a radical idea? why not . what about creating an economy that works for working families and not for the one percent? but when we talk about the economy , it is not only the grotesque level , and it is a grotesque level of income and wealth inequality , it is also about jobs . we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on earth . today in america , 29 million americans have no health insurance and even more are under insured with outrageously high co_payments and deductibles . we should not have women earning 79 cents on the dollar . we should not have young people leaving school USD 50,000, USD 100,000 in debt . we should not have a crumbling infrastructure . we should not be the only major country on earth that does not guarantee healthcare to all or paid family and medical leave .
C3: Campaign finance and the “political revolution” (20%) <i>Sanders (.44)</i>	campaign+ (.25) political+ (.23) democrac+ (.20) american+ (.19) climate_change (.18) democrat+ (.17) voter+ (.17) gay+ (.16) together (.16) fossil_fuel+ (.16) billionaire+ (.16) communit+ (.15)	what this campaign is about is bringing people together with the understanding that if we do not allow ourselves to be divided , if we stand together as black and white and hispanic, native american, men and women, straight and gay , is that we can no longer continue to have a campaign_finances system in which wall_street and the billionaire class are able to buy elections . americans , no matter what their political view may be , understand that that is not what democracy is about. that is what oligarchy is about, and we will not allow that to continue . the united states must lead the world in combating climate_change and transforming our energy system away from fossil_fuels and to energy efficiency and sustainable energy . republicans must start worrying about the planet that they will leave to their kids and their grandchildren, and worry less about the campaign contributions they may lose from the koch brothers and the fossil_fuel industry.

C4: Trump vs. opponents and the press (22%)	say+ (.28) guy+ (.24) donald_trump+ (.22) know+ (.22) nice+ (.17) thing+ (.15) press+ (.15) call+ (.15) true (.14) speech (.12) i_ve (.12) ok (.12)	<p>i think he_s probably a nice guy but he_s been so nasty. i watch him, i say, man, does he hate donald_trump. and i watch him and, you know, if you think about it, every single person that_s attacked me has gone down, ok? i don_t want to mention names.</p> <p>so do you think they were there for jeb_bush or rand_paul? rand_paul, i_ve had you up to hear. it is funny though because rand_paul sit down i_ll ask you a question.</p> <p>you_re fabulous, ok? but politicians are all talk and no action. it_s true. they_re tired. you know i_ve been watching jeb_bush on the border. he_s in a seersucker suit. he_s talking about yes, oh yes, the anchor baby. oh, i shouldn_t say anchor baby. he puts out a report saying do not use the term anchor baby.</p>
C5: Campaign strength (11%)	thank+ (.35) amazing+ (.26) win+ (.24) incred+ (.20) evening+ (.19) love+ (.17) tonight (.17) delegate+ (.17) florida (.16) indiana (.16) new_york (.16) victor+ (.16)	<p>and we_ve won another state. as you know, we have won millions of more votes than ted_cruz, millions and millions of more votes than john_kasich. we_ve won, and now especially after tonight, close to 300 delegates more than ted_cruz. we_re really, really rocking. we expect we_re going to have an amazing number of weeks because these are places and they_re in trouble, they_re in big trouble.</p> <p>thank you, everybody. great honor. great honor, thank you. this is a wonderful day. on a saturday morning yet. isn_t that nice? thank you, all. and we_re going to have an incredible convention. it_s really going well. we_re going to have an incredible convention.</p> <p>wow. whoa. that is some group of people. thousands. so nice, thank you very much. that_s really nice. thank you. it_s great to be at trump tower. it_s great to be in a wonderful city, new_york. and it_s an honor to have everybody here. this is beyond anybody_s expectations.</p>

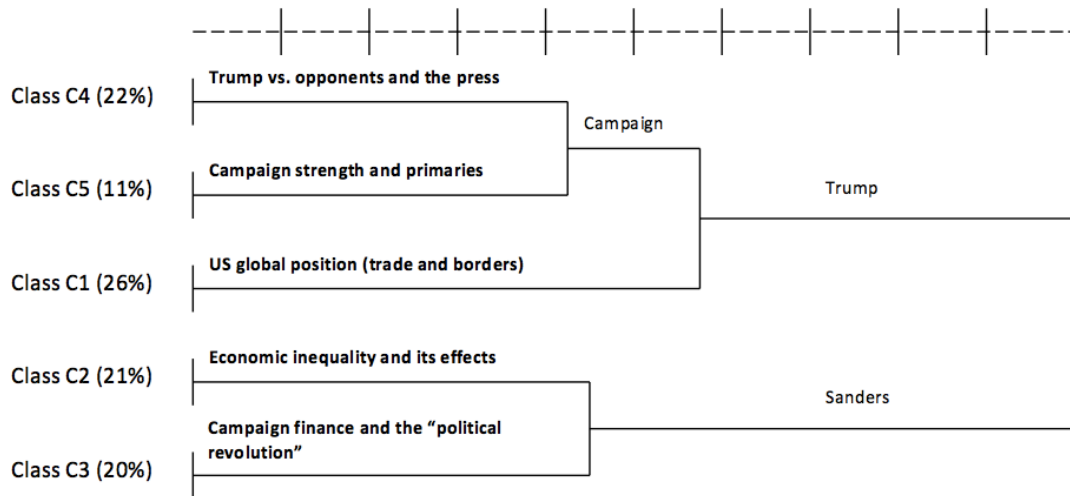
For Class C1, the words *mexico+*, *build+*, *deal+*, *china+*, *trade+*, *iran+*, *border+*, *japan+*, *Iraq*, *take+*, *oil+*, and *wall+*, along with characteristic phrases referring to competition with other countries, indicate a theme of the *US global position (trade and borders)*. This is highly associated with Trump (phi value of .46) and frames policy in terms of American success relative to other countries. Interestingly, issues relating to trade and border control are consistently linked together in this class (“look at what they’re doing not only on the border, but with trade”). Terms relating to Trump’s proposal to build a wall on the Mexican border are highly associated with this class, reflecting a policy issue covered extensively in the media during the campaign (see Walsh 2016; Woodward & Costa 2016).

Interpreting the other results in a similar fashion, Class C2 is a polemical attack on *economic inequality and its effects*. Economic and social issues are framed in terms of the gap between those at the top and the majority of citizens and the impact of this on healthcare, education and wages. Top words indicate that the US is presented as

being exceptional in this regard (“the only major country on earth...”). It is strongly associated with Sanders (.58), with the highest phi value of any class. Also associated with Sanders, Class C3 consists of *campaign finance reform and the “political revolution”*. The former reflects Sanders’ repeated claim that the dominance of economic elites in the election process is undermining democracy. The ECUs indicate that words relating to climate change here form Sanders’ argument that the political system is undermining attempts to move towards sustainable energy production. The “political revolution” is Sanders call to arms bringing together a diverse group of Americans to challenge the status quo. Class C4 involves framing the campaign as *Trump vs. opponents and the press* and, unsurprisingly, is associated with Trump. Interestingly he consistently refers to himself in the third person (note that “donald_trump” is a characteristic word) in his criticism of other candidates in the Republican primaries and the media. Finally, Class C5 refers to *campaign strength*, including the thanking of audiences and discussion of electoral success. It includes a large number of state names given references both to the location of rallies and recent primary results. Whilst associated with Trump, this association has the lowest phi value of any class.

C1 is the largest of the five classes with all the others of similar size other than C5, which is by far the smallest. This indicates a greater focus on policy, the candidates and campaigns as opposed to the election process. The fact that the combined size of classes associated with Trump is larger than those associated with Sanders reflects the larger number of his speeches that were analysed. Given that each class is associated with one and only one of the candidates, we can see that there was a clear distinction in their use of language. Whilst simply confirming what we would expect – that overall each candidate uses distinct language – it is reassuring that the analysis corroborates this.

Figure 1: Tree Graph of Trump and Sanders' Combined Discourse



The analysis so far has produced an empirical classification of the language used by both candidates. However, Alceste also provides tools for examining the linkages between these classes. *Figure 1* shows a tree graph of the structure of the themes discussed in the speeches. Following this from the right to the left, it is shown that the greatest division in language was between classes associated with Sanders and those associated with Trump. Previous direct comparisons of presidential discourse have not found the biggest divide to be between the two candidates (Schonhardt-Bailey 2005, p.707), so this is a notable distinction between Sanders and Trump. As discussed, Sanders' language is then divided into a policy focus on economic inequality and campaign focus on the power of elites. Trump's language divides into the frame of America's global position and a branch of classes related to the campaign. The latter subdivides into his attacks and discussion of the process and results.

Alceste also gives a spatial depiction of the relationship between words and classes. This depiction is shown in *Figure 2*, which can be found in the online appendix that accompanies this journal. *Figure 2* presents a map showing correspondence analysis of the combined speeches of Sanders and Trump. Like other aspects of the software, this provides a tool for interpretation by the researcher rather than indisputable results. Here, the distance between different points reflects their degree of co-occurrence between two themes. The percentage association listed indicates the amount of variation in speech that is accounted for by each dimension of the map (Schonhardt-Bailey et al. 2012, p.501). Here, the first (horizontal) dimension accounts

for 38.5% and the second (vertical) for 25.1%. The relatively low cumulative association indicates that there are multiple cleavages in the overall discourse, which are not all represented here. Despite this, the map illustrates the clear divide between the discourse of Trump on the right hand side and Sanders on the left, as shown both by the speaker contextual tags. This is corroborated by the position of the classes, with those associated with each speaker clustering around the respective contextual tag. The vertical axis can be tentatively interpreted as demonstrating a broad distinction between political process-related discourse (in or near the upper half of the map) and policy-related discourse (in the bottom half).

Thus far, the Alceste analysis has suggested that Trump and Sanders' discourse showed considerable difference. However, a combined analysis of their speeches only allows us to go so far in examining the themes in their language. Though each class is associated with one candidate, it does not solely comprise their speech. To overcome this, the speeches of Trump and Sanders were separated and re-analysed to give a sharper picture of their themes.

4.2 Trump's Discourse

Table 3 (above) gives a basic summary of the statistics from the Alceste analysis of Trump's speeches alone. The corpus included a total word count of 164,389 and 6,064 unique words across 36 ICUs. The classification rate of 80% is a high one. Four classes were identified, with *Table 4* (below) presenting the top characteristic words and phrases for each.

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Table 4: Characteristic Words and Phrases for Trump's Overall Discourse

Class (Size)	Top words (phi value)	Top three characteristic phrases (E.C.U.s) (Characteristic words in bold)
T1: Past failures and threats (20%)	american+ (.29) hillary_clinton+ (.26) Islam+ (.23) radical+ (.23) terror+ (.22) america+ (.20) polic+ (.18) foreign_policy (.18) communit+ (.17) foreign (.15) immigr+ (.15) support+ (.14)	<p>she will undermine the wages of working people with uncontrolled immigration, creating poverty and income insecurity. hillary_clinton_s wall_street agenda will crush working families. she_ll put bureaucrats, not parents, in charge of our lives, and our children_s education. can_t have it. she_ll be trapping kids in failing schools.</p> <p>america_s police and law enforcement personnel are what separates civilization from total chaos and the destruction of our country as we know it. we must remember the police are needed the most where crime is the highest. politicians and activists who seek to remove police or policing from a community are hurting the poorest and most vulnerable americans.</p> <p>hillary_clinton can never claim to be a friend of the gay community as long as she continues to support immigration policies that bring islamic extremists to our country and who suppress women, gays and anyone who doesn_t share their views or values.</p>
T2: US global position (trade and borders) (31%)	mexico+ (.26) build (.24) china+ (.20) billion+ (.20) deal (.20) japan+ (.17) negoti+ (.17) go+ (.17) wall+ (.16) trade+ (.16) iran+ (.14) ford+ (.14)	<p>nabisco is moving into mexico. can you believe it, their big plant. they_re leaving chicago, which means i am never going to eat another oreo again. nobody is i_m serious. never. never. ford is building a USD 2.5 billion plant in mexico. how does that help us? they_re closing in michigan all these plants and they_re going to build this massive plant.</p> <p>it_s peanuts compared to some of these massive trade deals. and we have people that should never be negotiating trade deals. just like we have john_kerry negotiating with iran and what they did to him and you because he has no idea what the hell he was doing and what he gave away.</p> <p>you believe that? with japan, USD 70 billion, with mexico, who will by the way, pay for the wall. with mexico, we have an imbalance of USD 45 billion and growing all the time, because ford is moving there, nabisco, they make oreos, they are moving to mexico.</p>
T3: Trump vs. opponents and the press (28%)	say+ (.23) donald_trump+ (.21) guy+ (.17) know+ (.17) see+ (.14) thing+ (.13) true (.13) camera+ (.13) question+ (.13) press+ (.12) show+ (.12) person (.12) jeb_bush (.12)	<p>so do you think they were there for jeb_bush or rand_paul? rand_paul, i_ve had you up to hear. it is funny though because rand_paul... sit down i_ll ask you a question.</p> <p>i said you didn_t see that? no. they focus on your face, they never show. but the thing i love about the protesters, and i thought the cameras were in like in a fixed position, they don_t move, right? you know, what do i know about this stuff?</p> <p>somebody else i won_t mention but they were nasty to me. they took USD 25 million on negative ads. can you believe it? USD 25 million one guy USD 25 million, and then i_m supposed to say he_s a nice person, right? and they were phony ads.</p>

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T4: Campaign strength and supporters (21%)	thank+ (.33) win+ (.28) incred+ (.22) amazing+ (.22) republic+ (.19) vote+ (.18) florida (.17) love (.15) evangelical+ (.15) endorse+ (.14) special (.14) great+ (.14)	you_ve been great friends. thank you. thank you. so, this was very exciting tonight. but i_ll tell you. it looks like we won by a lot evangelicals. we have some real talent in the republican party and the rnc and. we want to thank everybody. thank you very much. we yes right, right. well, i_ll tell you what. i_ll tell you what. i love the evangelicals. and i have to tell you, pastor jeffress has been so incredible on television and elsewhere. he has been great. and as you know, liberty university. do we love liberty university? jerry falwell junior, an unbelievable guy. and he has been with us and with us from the beginning.
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The classes are similar to those found to be associated with Trump in the combined analysis, but are not identical. Class T1 includes a broad range of negative references to terrorism, crime, foreign policy and Hillary Clinton. This suggests a general frame of *political failures and threats* that was not picked up in the combined analysis. The diverse range of issues grouped together here suggests a lack of focus in Trump’s language. Consisting of only 20% of his speech, it is the smallest class in the analysis. “Americans+” is the most characteristic word is here linked to internal threats as well as apparent anti-elitism (“Hillary Clinton’s Wall Street agenda...”). Whilst this indicates a potential populist theme, the lack of focus makes it hard to establish this. As such, it is subjected to a further analysis below to examine this in more detail.

Class T2 combines references to trade deals, other countries and the proposed Mexican wall, so is labelled as relating to the *US global position (trade and borders)*. This is the largest of all of the classes with 31% of ECUs and, despite covering multiple policy areas, is more focused than T1. Trump connects trade and border policy, framing them both in terms of the global position of the US relative to other countries. Class T3 focuses on *Trump vs. opponents and the press*. “Donald_trump” is the second most characteristic word, indicating that he repeatedly refers to himself in the third person in his attacks other Republican candidates, the press, and protesters in the crowd. This includes 28% of ECUs indicating that a large amount of Trump’s time was spent discussing the division between him and others. Class T4 focuses on *campaign strength and supporters*, reflecting the points in speeches where Trump thanks the audience and supporters as well as discusses the outcome of primary elections. The positive tone of the top words suggests that here Trump is highlighting his success as a rallying cry to his supporters.

As discussed, there is more to be discovered about the patterns of discourse within the broad frame of Class T1. Fortunately Alceste provides a secondary analysis tool whereby all of the ECUs from a specific class can be subjected to a separate analysis, which was done for T1.

Table 5: Basic Statistics for Secondary Analysis of Trump Class 1 (T1) – Political Failures and Threats

Trump 1 (T1): Political failures and threats	
Total word count	27,237
Unique words analysed	3,133
I.C.U.s (= number of speeches)	29
Passive variables (tagged indicators)	22
Classified E.C.U.s	485 (=74% of the retained ECU)
Number of lexical classes	5
Distribution of classes (%) and discursive content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (16%) Public services 2. (43%) Trade deals 3. (15%) Foreign policy 4. (14%) Islam, terrorism and crime 5. (12%) Immigration and attacks on US values

Table 5 shows the results of the secondary analysis of Class T1 (*political failures and threats*), with a total word count of 27,237 and a 74% classification rate. Five classes were found within the broad *political failures and threats* frame, corresponding to perceived threats across different policy areas: *public services; trade deals; foreign policy; Islam, terrorism and crime; and immigration and attacks on American values*. Full tables of characteristic words and phrases for this analysis and all subsequent ones are available in Appendix 3. Whilst there is not space here to discuss all of the classes in detail, Class T1.2 and Class T1.4 are particularly relevant for this project. The top characteristic words and phrases for these are shown in *Table 6*.

Table 6: Characteristic Words and Phrases for Selected Sub-Classes of Trump Class 1 (T1)

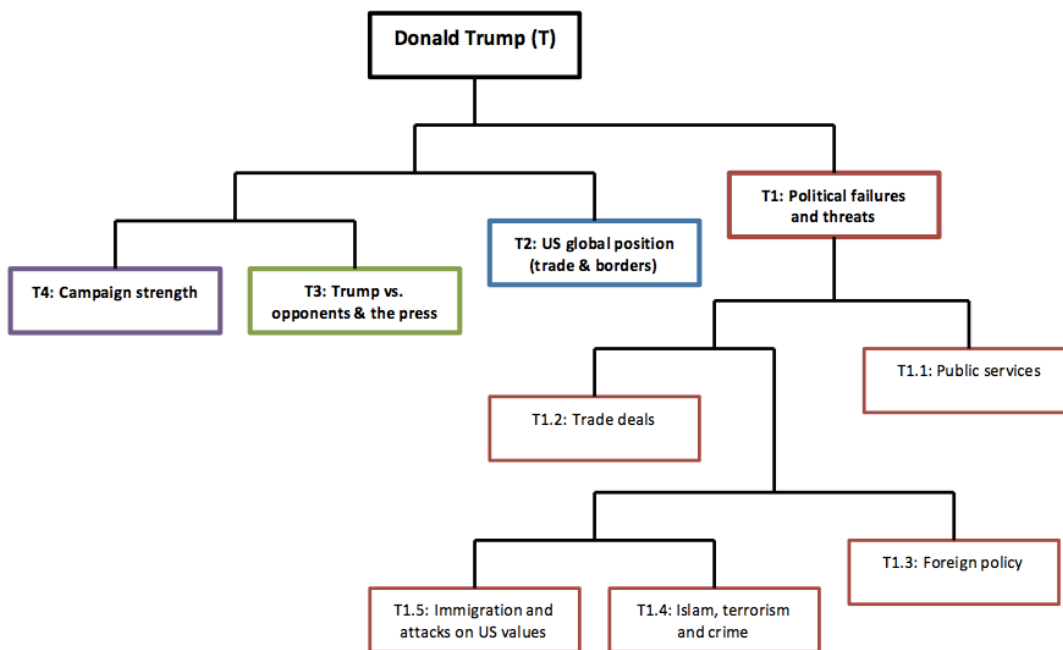
Class (Size)	Top words (phi value)	Top three characteristic phrases (E.C.U.s) (Characteristic words in bold)
T1.2: Trade deals (43%)	trade (.29) million+ (.25) job+ (.24) bill_clinton+ (.21) american+ (.21) foreign (.20) dollar+ (.20) deal (.19) veteran+ (.19) work+ (.18) agree+ (.18)	and they are going to go up , because we_re going to thrive again as a country. the trans pacific partnership is the greatest danger yet. the tpp , as it is known, would be the death blow for american manufacturing . it would give up all of our economic leverage to an international commission that would put the interests of foreign countries above our own it was also bill_clinton who lobbied for china_s disastrous entry into the world trade organization , and hillary_clinton who backed that terrible, terrible agreement. then as secretary of state , hillary_clinton stood by idly while china cheated on its currency , added another trillion dollars to the trade deficit , and stole hundreds of billions of dollars in our intellectual property but have no doubt that she will immediately approve it, if it is put before her. and that is guaranteed. guaranteed. she will do this, just as she has betrayed american workers for wall_street and throughout throughout her career
T1.4: Islam, terrorism and crime (14%)	radical+ (.39) islam+ (.35) terror+ (.34) gun+ (.33) criminal+ (.25) crooked (.24) enem+ (.23) name+ (.22) deal+ (.22) intelligence (.22) san (.22)	i don_t know if you know this, but just a few weeks before san bernardino , the slaughter, that_s all it was a slaughter, hillary_clinton explained her refusal to say the words radical islam and yet, they have body guards that have guns . so, i think that in addition to calling for them to name judges , we_ll also call them and let their body guards immediately disarm and i tell thank you. i tell the same story on san bernardino . here_s two people. i guess she radicalized him. who knows? who knows? it_s a mess. we_re in a mess, folks, a mess. radical islamic terrorism . we have a president doesn_t mention the words, doesn_t want to talk about it

The *trade deals* class was by far the largest, comprising 43% of the text. Trade featured heavily in Class T2 of the initial analysis where it was framed in terms of the national interest. In T1.2, this continues but is accompanied by populist themes. The fact that “American” is a top word does not in itself demonstrate the presence of populism; indeed, looking at the ECUs shows a number of times when it is not used to refer to the people as a whole. However, there are other elements of populism. The combined presence of “work+” and “wall_street” indicate that this class could contain a discourse of producerism, with Trump claiming to speak for the ordinary people who create wealth as opposed to the elite. The top ECUs corroborate this, with “work+” consistently referring to the idea of a homogenous group of American workers. They also show that the prominence of “bill_clinton” reflects an attempt to link the Clintons to economic elites and Wall Street as Trump highlights their combined threat.

Class T1.4 is interesting given that the perceived threats of *Islam, terrorism and crime* are grouped together. Not only are “radical and “Islam” the top two words, but the Alceste analysis found that they were often used one after another. The combination

of words related to crisis, threats and Islam show an element of conspiracism: Trump conjures up an image of on-going plots by “radical Islam” to subvert the common good. This reflects theories of right wing populism (Berlet & Lyons 2000, p.5). The class also shows an attempt to link this to a failure, and even corruption of the elite – “crooked” is a prominent word.

Figure 3: Dendodiagram Showing Full Breakdown of Trump's Discourse



To provide a clearer overview of these classes and how they interact with each other, *Figure 3* shows a dendodiagram of these analyses. Each branch represents a division identified by Alceste. The first division in the initial analysis was between Class T1 (*political failures and threats*) and all of the others, indicating that it was the most distinct class. Given that the next division was between Class T2 and the others, we can conclude that Classes T3 and T4 are more related to each other than to T1 and T2. This makes sense given that the former both refer to aspects of the election campaign. Class T1 first divided between failure of *public services* and everything else. The next division was between trade and a branch of the other issues, which broadly related to foreign policy and homeland security. A final distinction is found showing that Classes T1.4 and T1.5 are more similar to each other than the other classes.

Correspondence analysis allows for a further examination of how these themes relate to one another and how their use changed over time. *Figure 4* (see online appendix) shows a spatial map of the classes and month and year contextual tags for Trump's discourse, accounting for a cumulative 75.5% of variation in the corpus. Reflecting the divisions shown in the dendrogram above, the horizontal axis indicates that the greatest divide in the discourse was between the *political failures and threats* frame on the right hand side and the other three classes on the left. The vertical axis shows a division between the two years: the 2016 contextual tag and all 2016 months are in or very near the bottom half, whereas the 2015 contextual tag and all 2015 months are in the top half. The distance between points indicate a moderate association of 2015 with Classes T2 and T3 as well as 2016 with Classes T1 and T4. This is corroborated by the phi values, which show an association with the 2015 tag of .20 for T2 and .17 for T3. Similarly, the analysis found an association with 2016 of .25 for T1 and .22 for T4. It shows that Trump spent more time discussing *US global position and attacks on opponents and the press* earlier in the campaign, with a shift towards *election process and supporters and failures and threats* in 2016.

4.2 Sanders' Discourse

Table 7: Basic Statistics for Sanders' Overall Discourse

Sanders (S): overall discourse	
Total word count	90,150
Unique words analysed	4,285
I.C.U.s (= number of speeches)	24
Passive variables (tagged indicators)	21
Classified E.C.U.s	2,058 (=93% of the retained ECU)
Number of lexical classes	2
Distribution of classes (%) and discursive content	1. (52%) Economic inequality and its effects 2. (48%) Political process

Turning to a similar analysis of Sanders' speeches alone, *Table 7* (above) shows a summary of the basic statistics. This corpus had a total word count of 90,150 across 24 separate speeches. The 93% classification rate was the highest of any analysis. This initial analysis divided into just two classes. Class S1 broadly focused on *economic inequality and its effects* and comprised 52% of his speech. The fact that over half of

Sanders' speech refers explicitly to economic inequality indicates how significant this issue was in his campaign. It focused on the problems of income and wealth inequality, as well as words relating to the associated issues of jobs, education and healthcare. Class S2 comprised 48% of his speech and discussed the *political process*, with references to other candidates, the general election and the importance of maximising turnout. Sanders is therefore found to be considerably more focused in his patterns of speech, as demonstrated by the single clear division between policy-related and campaign-related language and high classification rate. However, the broad frames discovered by this initial analysis do not allow for an examination of populist language. As a result, both classes were subjected to a secondary analysis.

Table 8: Basic Statistics for Secondary Analysis of Sanders Class 1 (S1) – Economic Inequality and Its Effects

	Sanders 1 (S1): economic inequality and its effects
Total word count	44,398
Unique words analysed	2,745
I.C.U.s (= number of speeches)	24
Passive variables (tagged indicators)	21
Classified E.C.U.s	793 (=74% of the retained ECU)
Number of lexical classes	4
Distribution of classes (%) and discursive content	1. (20%) Healthcare 2. (18%) Income and wealth inequality 3. (45%) Jobs and lost opportunities 4. (17%) Wages and social security

Table 8 (above) shows a basic summary of the secondary analysis of Class S1. The *economic inequality and its effects* frame had a total word count of 44,398 and a 74% classification rate. It splits into four classes, each relating to a different policy aspect of economic inequality.

Class S1.1 centres on healthcare, framing the failure of existing policy both as a matter of inefficiency and the injustice of Americans being denied a basic right. Class S1.2 presents a clear and consistent focus on *income and wealth inequality*. Both the characteristic words and phrases show an unambiguous distinction being drawn between the interests of economic elites and the other Americans – particularly the top 0.1% and the rest. Class S1.3 is by far the largest class at 45% of ECUs, with a focus

on *jobs and lost opportunities*. The characteristic words suggest an amorphous class spanning jobs, young people, and education policy. However, a close examination of the characteristic phrases indicates that it is in fact a coherent frame of the limits to Americans pursuing their ambitions, as discussed below. Class S1.4 relates to *wages and social security*, again presenting current social policy failures as a denial of rights. Characteristic words and phrases for the two most relevant classes for the discussion of populism are listed in *Table 9* below.

Table 9: Characteristic Words and Phrases for Selected Sub-Classes of Sanders Class 1 (S1)

Class (Size)	Top words (phi value)	Top three characteristic phrases (E.C.U.s) (Characteristic words in bold)
S1.2: Income and wealth inequality (18%)	wealth+ (.68) percent+ (.58) top (.55) bottom (.42) owns (.37) income (.36) inequality (.36) wealthiest (.34) new (.31) see+ (.24) rigged (.24) grotesque+ (.22)	today , in america , and i_d like you to hear this. you don_t see it on tv . you_re not going to read it in the papers often . today , in america , the top 1/ 10 of one percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent . today , in america , the 20 wealthiest people in our country own more wealth than the bottom 150 million , bottom half of america unbelievably and grotesquely , the top one tenth of one percent today owns nearly as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent . one tenth of one percent owns nearly as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent . that is not the kind of america that we should accept it is not acceptable to me that in america today we have more income and wealth inequality than any other major country on earth. it is worse now than at any time since 1928 . it is not acceptable that the top one tenth of one percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent
S1.3: Jobs and lots opportunities (45%)	job+ (.27) educat+ (.26) young (.21) school+ (.21) invest+ (.20) leave+ (.19) debt+ (.19) jail+ (.17) college (.17) best (.15) union+ (.15) kid (.15)	trillion deficit and i find it interesting republicans complain they_re only growing 250, 000 jobs a month . well , it_s a hell of a lot better than losing 800, 000 jobs a month that_s wrong. we_re going to change that . we are going to invest in our infrastructure , create millions of good paying jobs . and by the way, not only do we need to create millions of good paying jobs , we need to stop the loss of millions of jobs through a disastrous trade policy that allows corporate america to shut down plants here and move to low wage countries abroad my father worked everyday of his life, and he never made a whole lot . my mom and dad , and brother and i grew up in a small three and a half room , rent controlled apartment in brooklyn , new_york

The combination of words in Class S1.2 shows the clearest populist element. The ECUs show that references to “top” and “bottom” are drawing a divide between

economic elites and others, reflecting an anti-elitist discourse. Here, the economic interests of both groups are homogenised and presented in opposition to one another – even if it is not clear whether Sanders is homogenising them in other ways. Other top words in this class, such as “rigged” and “grotesque”, indicate a sense of crisis and corruption. These come together to imply an overall populist message: normal people need to work together for their unified interest to overcome the dominance of the wealthy elite.

In contrast, Class S1.3 is notable because of its lack of populist themes. Like Trump, the ECUs show that Sanders rejects existing trade policies. Indeed this was one of the factors initially identified by those drawing comparisons between the two (Hirsh 2016). Whilst not in the top list, “trade” is a characteristic word for this class and the ECUs show that the prominence of “jobs” reflects a repeated criticism of outsourcing. But the words and phrases do not show a populist frame. It is instead one aspect of the wider theme about lost opportunities in employment and education. Interestingly, a number of the ECUs present the life story of Sanders’ parents: he uses his back-story as an illustration of American opportunities and contrasts this with those available to the situation of young people today. However, this is not presented as a division between the interests of American workers and economic elites. Despite the large size of the class, the fact that it does not solely comprise the issue of trade indicates that Sanders did not give it as much of a clear emphasis as Trump. He also diverges from Trump in the lack of nationalist language or clear populist discourse.

Table 10: Basic Statistics for Secondary Analysis of Sanders Class 2 (S2) – Political Process

Sanders 2 (S2): political process	
Total word count	39,871
Unique words analysed	2,966
I.C.U.s (= number of speeches)	24
Passive variables (tagged indicators)	21
Classified E.C.U.s	636 (=65% of the retained ECU)
Number of lexical classes	4
Distribution of classes (%) and discursive content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (8%) Minority rights 2. (19%) Campaign finance reform 3. (54%) “The political revolution” 4. (19%) Campaign strength, donations and opponents

The analysis of the *political process* frame had a total word count of 39,871 and a 65% classification rate (see *Table 10* above). Given that this was the lowest rate of any analysis, it indicates that Sanders’ discourse relating to this frame was less focused than others. However, the results are still worth exploring. Class S2.3 is by far the largest, comprising 54% of speech, and refers to “*the political revolution*”. This reflects a theme of the importance of the campaign in bringing people together and engaging the disenfranchised. Class S2.1 is the smallest (8%) and is somewhat incongruous given its policy focus on *minority rights*. However, its small size means this lack of fit is not a major worry. The other two classes are identically sized, each comprising 19% of ECUs. Class S2.2 discusses different aspects of *campaign finance reform*. Class S2.4 covers *campaign strength, donations and opponents* – the words indicate a theme of Sanders talking up his chances in terms of recent primary results, how his polling compares to Trump and Clinton, and individual donations to the campaign.

Table 11: Characteristic Words and Phrases for Selected Sub-Classes of Sanders Class 2 (S2)

Class (Size)	Top words (phi value)	Top three characteristic phrases (E.C.U.s) (Characteristic words in bold)
S2.2: Campaign finance reform (19%)	system (.47) citizens_united (.40) fossil_fuel (.37) democrac+ (.36) campaign_finance+ (.25) corrupt+ (.33) supreme_court (.31) koch (.30) spend+ (.30) overturn+ (.29) undermin+ (.29) industry (.27)	the united states must lead the world in combating climate_change and transforming our energy system away from fossil_fuels and to energy efficiency and sustainable energy. republicans must start worrying about the planet that they will leave to their kids and their grandchildren, and worry less about the campaign contributions they may lose from the koch brothers and the fossil_fuel industry we have a moral responsibility to future generations to stand up to the fossil_fuel industry, to transform our energy system away from fossil_fuel to energy efficiency and sustainable energy we must be focused on campaign_finance reform and the need for a constitutional amendment to overturn this disastrous citizens_united decision. i have said it before and i_ll say it again. i will not nominate any justice to the supreme_court who has not made it clear that he or she will move to overturn that disastrous decision which is undermining american democracy
S2.3: “The political revolution” (54%)	people (.25) turnout+ (.18) young+ (.18) thank+ (.17) political+ (.17) voter+ (.16) great+ (.15)	ordinary people, working people, young people don_t vote. we have an economic and political crisis in this country and the same old, same old politics and economics will not effectively address those crises i don_t trust anybody and young people who have never been involved in the political process. it_s bringing people together by the millions to stand up and say something very simple, and

<p>economic+ (.15) politic+ (.14) countr+ (.14) process (.14) think+ (.13)</p>	<p>that is that the government of this country belongs to all of us, not just a few</p> <p>thank you all. but let me also say this. let me give you an important a political reality that i think all of you understand. that is republicans win elections when voter turnout is low. that_s a fact. democrats win when voter turnout is high. our job, and what we try to do in public policy and in politics is to encourage more and more people to participate</p>
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Classes S2.2 and S2.3 contain populist elements so are presented in detail in *Table 11*. Whilst the prominence of “corrupt” and “undermine” in S2.2 suggests a sense of systemic crisis, populism in this class is nuanced and requires some exploration. Characteristic words relating to campaign finance indicate a perceived dual threat of the fossil fuel industry and economic elites buying influence in the political system. References to the “supreme_court” and “citizens_united” reflect the 2012 Citizens United ruling that allowed for the formation of Super PACs and Sanders’ pledge to nominate a Supreme Court justice who will overturn it. This has been a key target of proponents of campaign finance reform (Azari & Hetherington 2016, p.104). In this class the elite is more clearly identified than at any other point in Sanders’ speech, with individuals such as the Koch brothers present in the top word list. Whilst the ECUs listed focus on the aspect of climate change, another top ECU demonstrates how these themes come together to form a populist frame:

“The **american** people are **sick and** tired of **billionaires** running **our economy and our** political **lives**. together, we are going **to overturn** this **disastrous citizens_united supreme_court decision**, and we are going **to move** toward **public funding** of **elections**”

This class contains the most severe tone of crisis in Sanders’ discourse. The campaign finance system is used to illustrate the problem of the power of elites, who are presented as fundamentally corrupting democratic institutions.

Class S2.3 makes a broader argument for the importance of Sanders’ campaign in returning power to the people. It is summed up by “*the political revolution*”, a phrase he repeatedly returns to, reflecting the need to bring a movement of people into politics in order to challenge entrenched power. “People” is a top characteristic word and looking at this in context shows that Sanders is repeatedly using this in a homogenous sense: the campaign represents the unified interests of the disenfranchised masses.

Other top words relating to the political process indicate that this is presented in opposition to a system that works against them. The campaign becomes the embodiment of Sanders’ populist vision: its diverse support and radical outlook demonstrates the ability to challenge elites and return power to ordinary people. The sheer size of this class reflects that Sanders spends far more time presenting the campaign as a movement than discussing opponents and the election process in Class S2.4. This contrasts sharply with Trump’s continual framing of the campaign as a battle between him and his political opponents.

Figure 5: Dendodiagram Showing Full Breakdown of Sanders' Discourse

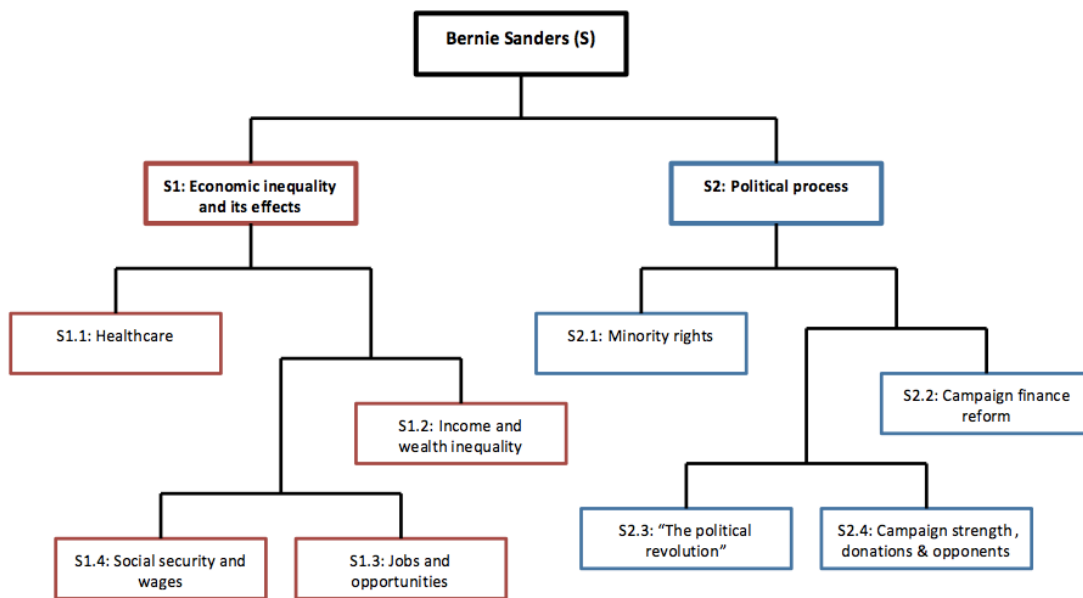


Figure 5 presents a dendodiagram of all of these classes and again allows us to see how they are structurally related to each other. It shows that *healthcare* is the most distinct element of Class S1’s *economic inequality and its effects* frame. The specific policy areas discussed in Classes S1.3 and S1.4 are more similar to each other than the general discussion of inequality in Class S1.2. Within the *political process* frame, the initial division of Class S2.1 from the other classes supports the intuition that it is something of an outlier. Discourse then divides between the substantive policy proposals in Class S2.2 and the others focusing on the election campaign.

Given that the initial analysis of Sanders' discourse only produced two classes, Alceste does not produce a spatial map of the relation between themes and contextual tags.

5. Discussion

Considering the initial theoretical perspectives, there are some general findings that can be drawn from this analysis. Alceste has given empirical evidence to substantiate claims that both Trump and Sanders used populist discourse, with the classes showing issues and policy areas that were repeatedly framed in such terms. However, they also show that the candidates' use of populist discourse was marked more by difference than similarity. Very little overlap in their language was found in the initial combined analysis. Whilst it is not surprising that two candidates use different language, this demonstrates that any resemblance between them should not be overstated. The way that they communicated was more reflective of their political positions and individual styles than any overarching populist theme, confirming the consensus that there are divergent varieties of populism and that the label only gives a partial understanding of their ideas.

A large amount of this difference can be explained by the candidates' contrasting ideologies. Trump used populist discourse to frame the issues of immigration and terrorism, reflecting a right-wing populism with appeals to the people used to advance a broader ideology of social conservatism. The threat of "radical Islam" that he repeatedly referred to in T1.4 indicates an element of conspiracism, which was discussed as a distinctive feature of populism on the right (Berlet & Lyons 2000, p.5). In contrast, the clearest populist themes in Sanders' discourse were used to frame his policy agenda relating to economic inequality (S1.2) and campaign finance reform (S2.2). These appeals reflected a classic left-wing attack on economic elites couched in explicitly populist terms. This challenges the national context theory, which argues that populists in the one country will target the same power structure (Canovan 1999, p.4). Instead, such differences support the assumptions of the thin-centred ideology school: their divergent strands of populism reflect that populist ideas cohabit with other ideologies to form a comprehensive approach to political questions. They had different conceptions both of the elite and of problems with the status quo that

require the return of power to the people. Trump attacked a liberal elite facilitating the conspiracies of “radical Islam” whilst Sanders attacked billionaires and corporate America.

However, this ideology explanation only tells part of the story. Trump and Sanders’ broad agreement on trade policy shows an issue where their ideologies overlapped. It could provide some support for Canovan’s argument about similarity in the same national context. But this predicts that both candidates would frame the issue in similar populist terms. Contrary to this, the analysis found a very large difference in their discourse surrounding trade. Class T2, the largest share of Trump’s discourse (31%), discussed the combined issues of trade and the border in essentially nationalistic terms. They were issues of collective US pride and self-respect rather than a division between the interests of the elite and normal Americans. The secondary analysis found a smaller but still significant share of his discourse (T1.2) presenting trade deals through a populist frame – particularly in an attempt to link the Clintons to economic elites. Whilst S1.3 also showed a large share of Sanders’ discourse referring to trade, this was linked to education policy and presented in terms of lost opportunities for young Americans rather than a homogenous American people.

The ideology approach does not explain why Trump would frame the issue of trade in populist terms but Sanders would not. This suggests that differences between varieties of populism are more nuanced than just ideological disagreements. Given that Trump’s discussion of trade deals linked the Clintons to the failure of economic elites, this could indicate a strategic use of populism to make a partisan attack. Similarly, Sanders’ failure to present the issue in populist terms could reflect a strategic reluctance to explicitly attack other Democrats as members of the elite.

The candidates’ discourse surrounding the campaign also shows that differences in populism cannot be explained by ideology alone. Whilst Class T3 indicates that 28% of Trump’s discourse presented the campaign as a battle between him and his opponents, S2.3 found around a quarter of Sanders’ overall speech (54% of Class S2) that was a populist call to arms, bringing together diverse America against political and economic elites. As mentioned, populism often includes a focus on a charismatic leader. In a sense, Trump’s repeated focus on himself could therefore reflect the previously-discussed idea of the “ordinary leader with extraordinary attributes”

(Panizza 2005, p.21). However, the analysis found little evidence of Trump discussing his ordinary qualities. Either way, the contrast in how they framed the campaign shows that differences in populism reflect individual style and personality, as well as ideology and political context.

Finally, the analysis has uncovered some general points about the candidates' communication. Trump moved from a nationalist focus on trade and borders prior to the primaries towards discussion of the campaign process and political threats later in the campaign. Unsurprisingly, this shows that campaign speeches reflect the context of the election process. Sanders' discourse was found to be considerably more focused than Trump's: not only did the analysis initially find a single clear division in Sanders' language, but his classes tended to focus on a more unified set of issues.

6. Conclusions

In using computer-assisted thematic analysis this project has proposed an alternative method of measuring populism based on an automated examination of the context of words. This expands on the empirical turn in populist studies in order to explore the nature of differences between varieties of populism. The empirical analysis has compared Trump and Sanders' use of populist discourse and how this framed different policy areas and issues. In doing so it has demonstrated that identifying someone as a populist only captures part of their political outlook. Key theories account for aspects of difference in populist discourse but none provide a comprehensive theory of it.

The focus on the US means it is important to be careful about generalising from this study. The element of difference explained by ideology could well reflect the divergent strands of US populism and might not be found elsewhere; other countries may not have the same diversity of populism on left and right. Regardless, as a case study in populist communication, the findings are notable in demonstrating the limitations of existing theories. In this sense the counterintuitive result about their discussion of trade is the most important in highlighting the need for a more nuanced account of how populism interacts with other ideologies. Further research could explore whether this difference in populist communication by actors who broadly agree on an issue is replicated elsewhere.

It is important to bear in mind some general limitation of using Alceste to study populist discourse. First, as discussed throughout, a proportion of each corpus could not be classified. Whilst the classification rate was almost universally above 70%, this leaves 20-30% of speech overlooked in each analysis. Second, given that populist discourse tends to be dispersed throughout the text, Alceste does not give a clear answer to the overall intensity of populism used by each candidate. Although the project has taken the consistent use of certain discourse as evidence for populism, it has not fully engaged with how much of this would be needed before the populist label is justified. This reinforces the assumption that Alceste is suited to treating populism as a continuous rather than dichotomous concept. Third, it remains limited by the ambiguity of populist language. Whilst Alceste provides an alternative method of attempting to overcome this, it is not perfect and the findings remain reliant on the researcher's interpretation. The detailed explanations of how these interpretations have sought to be transparent in this but could still be challenged.

Whilst further work is needed to test theories of difference, the analysis has given a comprehensive and rigorous mapping of the discourse of Trump and Sanders in the 2016 presidential election. "The yin and yang of America's present discontent" describes an element of how both communicated, but does not capture the nuanced differences in their language.

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