FACETS OF NATIONALISM
IN DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

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Abstract

The present research looks into Donald Trump's inaugural speech, aiming to identify the nationalistic elements that surface throughout, as well as the President-elect's attempt to combine these elements with a more conciliatory discourse, advocating for cooperation and international alliances. In the present global context, where the rise of nationalism appears to be the main challenge the world is facing, for political actors, it has become a matter of great rhetorical prowess to capitalize on this trend while also making sure that their discourse does not border on extremism or isolationism. In other words, nationalism is perceived as a good, positive force as long as it is interpreted as patriotism rather than radicalism. In our paper, we will analyse Donald Trump's approach to this delicate issue, an approach we find to be of utmost importance, since he won the elections against all odds, precisely due to his nationalistic views.

1. Preliminaries: a few general considerations on nationalism

The concept of *nationalism* appears to be one of those terms that need explaining and clarification above all else, since under this all-encompassing umbrella, political speakers have crammed a wide array of constructs, ranging from those with a powerful positive connotation to those that are extremely negative in meaning. "The glib use of the blanket term nationalism obscures the range of factors – economic, historical, social – that vary from case to case". (Horsman and Marshall, 1995: 78) Thus, starting from the dictionary definition, whereby nationalism represents "loyalty and devotion to a nation", "especially a sense of national consciousness", "exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other

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nations or supranational groups"[3], we can see that several possibilities of defining, interpreting and applying nationalism ensue; out of these, we have identified at least three directions:

a. One of the most common interpretations of the term equates *nationalism* with *patriotism*.

Technically speaking, the two terms are not synonyms, as "nationalism means to give more importance to unity by way of a cultural background, including language and heritage, while patriotism pertains to the love for a nation, with more emphasis on values and beliefs".[4] Besides, while nationalism in its strictest sense represents a concept slightly aggressive in nature, entailing a superior attitude, implying that your country is better than the others and presenting some features resembling a tribal spirit, patriotism is a peaceful, tolerant attitude, leading not only to an acceptance of the other, but also to embracing the other, regardless of the types of differences that may exist. In this respect, a sense of friendship and respect defines patriotism, while nationalism springs from a sense of rivalry and sometimes even conflict. However, despite these differences, in some acceptations of the term *nationalism*, it has come to mean, or to seem to mean the same as *patriotism*.

b. A second definition places *nationalism* at the opposite pole of the semantic spectrum, where it becomes similar in meaning to *extremism*. This view does not accurately reflect reality either, since a nationalistic perspective is to some extent legitimate and morally justified (see, for instance, former president Barack Obama's repeated appeals to back the national economy so that it may face the challenges of the global world) (Enache, 2017: 138-140), whereas an extremist approach always entails taking radical measures to eliminate the opponent, where anything or anyone that is *different* from the self in any way has the potential of turning into that opponent. In other words, we can say that, while nationalism capitalizes on *competition* with the other, extremism pursues the *destruction* of the other.

c. Lastly, there exists another facet of nationalism that we think conveys a strongly *populistic* message. In other words, if populism constitutes "a particular way of formulating demands in the name of «the people» and a particular way of constructing «the people»"[5], in their discourse, political actors will resort to those concepts that they believe the audience wishes to hear. Populism is said to "revolve around the powerless-powerful dimension, a vertical dimension – the down versus the up – where the populists claim to represent «the people» against the current

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[3] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nationalism, viewed on October 21, 2017

[4]   http://www.differencebetween.net/language/difference-between-nationalism-and-patrioti sm/, viewed on October 21, 2017

[5] https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/populism-nationalism-and-transnationalism/, view ed on October 21, 2017

elite that does not represent them[6]. In this respect, populism also taps into the endless resources of the discourse of "opposition candidates"[7], enhancing the power of the challenger as against the representative of the establishment. In the case of Donald Trump, in the 2016 elections in the USA, he was considered to be the challenger, running against Democrat Hillary Clinton who, had she won, would have continued to implement the policies of the Obama administration. Hence, although one cannot equate nationalism with populism, we can say that, given the ever more powerful international trend against globalization and for the reinforcement of local and national values (see the case of Brexit or the more recent referendum in Catalonia), politicians responding to the nationalistic expectations of their voters can be said to give in to a certain degree of populism.

From the perspective of the present paper, we can say that nationalism can be considered to be a good, positive force only when it includes at least accepting *difference* and *the other*, if not embracing them. A type of nationalism that becomes extreme, bordering on hatred against all that is foreign and / or different, regardless of the negative impact on one's own people, can only be considered a harmful attitude with potentially lethal consequences. In all forms of interaction between *self* and *other*, peace, tolerance and cooperation must play a crucial role.

In Donald Trump's view, a nationalistic perspective on the world appears to be strongly linked to *American identity* and how it is presented to his audience. In his inaugural speech, we can see that he makes absolutely no distinction between *patriotism* and *nationalism* – the two concepts seem to be not only closely intertwined, but even identical in meaning.

It goes without saying that, in an ever-changing global environment, a certain degree of nationalism is necessary in every country's attempt to shape its own identity. Even more so in the case of the USA, a nation formed over the centuries via an incessant immigration process. If in the case of European countries, national identity represents to some extent a given construct, its roots being defined primarily by ethnic belonging, in the case of America, where the ethnic criterion cannot prevail, other criteria have come to shape a sense of national awareness. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that the political speakers' definitions of identity can shift depending on the priorities of a certain era. During the Republican regime of George W. Bush, in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the whole idea of national identity seemed to revolve around the war on terror and the ultimate goal was, justifiably, the annihilation of its perpetrators. By contrast, for his successor, Barack Obama, the main definition of national identity

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[6] *Id.*

[7] Candidates running in the elections on behalf of the "opposition" party usually resort to a specific set of linguistic strategies advocating for *change* and *reform* (Enache and Militaru, 2013b: 298).

and therefore nationalism relied on economic criteria, a fact that is explained by the very context that propelled him to power – Obama won the presidential elections in the wake of the crisis in 2008, a crisis leading to a recession the consequences thereof were felt throughout his two terms of office. Donald Trump won the elections in 2016, when the recession had been, at least in theory, mostly overcome and the country was facing a different type of situation – one in which the main challenge came neither from international terrorism nor from economic issues; instead, the overwhelming problem the world is facing and no country can ignore comes from the rise of nationalism. The reasons behind this ever more obvious worldwide trend are many; however, briefly, the main motivation seems to be the rising social frustration, anger and worry about globalisation, unemployment, the increasing income divide and above all else, immigration. To all these frustrated potential electors, nationalistic discourse promises redemption through the redistribution of wealth, welfare, the expulsion of immigrants and the reinforcement of national values.

In Donald Trump's inaugural speech, we have identified a series of elements highlighting his nationalistic approach to politics, an approach he has no intention of hiding; in fact, it was precisely due to his views that he won the elections against his opponent, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton. Out of these elements, in the following sections of the present paper, we will focus on two main directions: the "opposition discourse" and the nationalistic themes explicitly exploited and conveyed.

2. *"Opposition" discourse in Trump's inaugural speech*

Everyone knows that Republican Donald Trump won the 2016 elections against all odds. Throughout a campaign riddled with scandal, mutual accusations and much populist appeal, all the mainstream media appeared to support the Democratic candidate; moreover, opinion polls showed an increase in people's support of Hillary Clinton even after the email scandal[8] and the subsequent FBI announcement[9], stating that, although there was no clear evidence that Hillary Clinton or her colleagues "intended to violate laws governing the handling of classified information, there is evidence that they were extremely careless in their

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[8] With her email setup, she became the sole arbiter of what should and shouldn't be provided to the government, made public via freedom of information requests or turned over to interested parties, such as the congressional committee investigating the 2012 attack on the US consulate in Benghazi. (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-31806907, viewed on October 22, 2017)

[9] http://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/03/politics/trump-brexit-polls-wrong/index.html, viewed on October 22, 2017

handling of very sensitive, highly classified information".[10] Indeed, up until the last moment, the general perception was that Clinton would win the elections anyhow; against this apparently predictable background, Trump's victory emerged as a great surprise, defying most poll projections. Political analysts later explained that he did well in small towns and rural areas, capitalizing on the "anger and frustration" existing among uneducated voters who felt they had been ignored by the previous administration and also had a problem with immigrants and minorities taking their jobs; moreover, surprisingly, Trump "fared relatively well among minorities".[11] Although Trump's victory reflects the volatility of an ever-changing American society faced with the diverse challenges of the global world, it also supports the concept of *dealignment* – the process by which partisanship, or loyalty to one party among the electorate has reduced. The phenomenon's roots can be traced back to the erosion of class divisions – to the extent to which ideological differences between parties are reduced and platforms become increasingly more equivocal, voter loyalty becomes more flexible, and therefore unpredictable. However, Trump can be considered the *opposition candidate*, the challenger, the person aiming to implement change and reform and do away with all the wrongs of the past; at the level of discourse, we can identify *antithesis* as one of the main strategies endorsing his rhetorical prowess.

Antithesis, a figure of speech involving an apparent contradiction of ideas, words, clauses, or sentences in a balanced grammatical structure, where this particular parallelism of expression aims to highlight an opposition of ideas, contains in this case two opposing constructs within one statement. The opposition serves to highlight the either inherent or explicitly stated Manichean distinction of all political communication (Enache and Militaru, 2013b: 302) - since this type of communication always includes a competitive, even conflictual dimension whereby a political actor struggles against their rivals. Thus, not surprisingly, against the background of the antithesis established at the level of discourse, the speaker and all they stand for emerges as the "hero", whereas the opponent(s) (in this case, Clinton and implicitly the Democratic party) are left the part of the "villain":

Example 1

Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one Administration to another, or from one party

to another – but we are transferring power from Washington, D.C. and giving it back to you, the American people.
For too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost.
Washington flourished – but the people did not share in its wealth.
Politicians prospered – but the jobs left, and the factories closed.
The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country.
Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.
That all changes – starting right here, and right now, because this moment is your moment: it belongs to you.
It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America.
This is your day. This is your celebration.
And this, the United States of America, is your country. (Donald Trump, Inaugural Address)[12]

The extract above resorts to antithesis as the primary weapon of the *opposition discourse*, while its beginning and its ending also tap into the endless resources of the audience's nationalistic feelings. To begin with, we must say that the ideas used in an antithesis may not be structurally opposite in themselves; however, they become functionally opposite through their specific, highlighted contrast, which a skilled rhetor will use to their advantage. In the excerpt above, we can identify the following pairs of conflicting terms and ideas:

Washington DC vs. *you, the American people*
a small group vs. *the people*
Washington vs. *the people*
politicians vs. *jobs and factories*
the establishment vs. *the citizens*
their vs. *your*
celebrate vs. *struggle*

We can see that the pairs above are contrasted for rhetorical purposes; the speaker attempts to highlight how the present administration will do things differently from the previous one; thus, the President-elect projects himself as the representative of the American people with all their problems which, as can be inferred from the above, are mainly economic. For emphatic reasons, the *(American) people/ citizens* are contrasted with the following: *Washington DC*, *a small group*, and *the establishment*. This implies that, in the speaker's view, on the one hand, his defeated opponent, Hillary Clinton, has been backed throughout her campaign by

Wall Street bankers, media moguls, oligarchs and other powerful special interests representing *the few* as opposed to *the many*. Thus, social anger and frustration springing from the accelerating income divide and other social and economic problems are aroused. On the other hand, by referring to *the Administration*, Trump appears to imply that his predecessor, Barack Obama, has also served the interests of this very exclusive group of people to the detriment of the entire nation.

The contrast is highlighted not only by nouns, but also pronouns: *their* victories, and *their* triumphs, are not *your* victories and *your* triumphs, deepening the dichotomy *you* vs. *them* even further. The problems alluded to are mainly economic, as the orator hints at a *lack of prosperity* ("people did not share in its wealth"), *bankruptcy and unemployment* ("jobs leaving" – that is, moving overseas and factories closing) and even a *lack of social assistance* ("citizens were not protected"). Throughout, the main idea is clear: that *the few* have made a better, more prosperous life for themselves to the detriment of *the many*. Since the traditional view is exactly the opposite (that Democrats represent the interests of the nation while Republicans tend to serve financial interests; in the dichotomy Wall Street vs. Main Street, currently used in populistic discourse, where Wall Street is metonymically used to describe powerful financial institutions, corporations and executives while Main Street metonymically describes average employees and common people, traditionally, it is Democrats who are believed to serve the interests of Main Street), we can see, yet again, how ideological differences have become more blurred, dealignment has set in, enabling a type of political discourse where anyone can say anything, as long as the message addresses the demands of the public agenda. Moreover, a strong emotional dimension is always attached to the dichotomy *the few* vs. *the many* or *you* vs. *them* – audiences still respond positively to this type of populistic discourse though democratic experience has raised doubts as to the extent to which such implied promises are ever actually met.

After the contrasting pairs of nouns, there is also a contrasting pair of verbs: *celebrate* (what *they* have been doing) vs *struggle* (what *you* have been doing), which further emphasises the problems the audience has been facing; the speaker aims to show awareness of these problems and empathy for his people, and also to set the stage for the apotheotic ending whereby this unfair state of affairs is to be eliminated and justice is to be restored, as power is returned to the American people and it becomes their turn to celebrate.

Aside from the pairs of opposing terms above, the use of the verb *change* also pertains to *opposition discourse*. The peaceful transfer of power Trump refers to, one of the pillars of American democracy, is thus envisioned not only as a change in policies, but also as a new beginning, the beginning of an era where power is shifted back to its rightful owner, the American people, *you*. This, in fact, brings the extract to its nationalistic ending: celebration of the United States of America,

your country, not *theirs*, as the speaker implies it has been up until that moment. The nationalistic ending is in harmony with the beginning of the extract, where the American people had also been mentioned. In this excerpt, nationalism is a positive force; although there is an implied enemy (the previous administration, which has failed to serve the interests of the people), the speaker in no way demands the physical annihilation of this enemy; he merely expresses hope and optimism springing from its political annihilation which has already happened, democratically, through the vote.

3. Approaches to nationalism

In the following section of the present paper, we will look more closely into the way in which President-elect Donald Trump uses his inaugural speech to convey his views on America's relations with other countries. We will see that there exist, in this respect, two main perspectives: on the one hand, here and there, the speech appears replete with nationalistic streaks; on the other hand, there are cases where the rhetor tones down his appeals, resorting to the possibility and even necessity of forming alliances; thus, he shows awareness of the fact that America cannot go it alone, especially in the context of an ever more threatening global insecurity.

3.1 Nationalism at its peak

The nationalistic appeals to support everything and everyone that is American as against everything and everyone that is non-American have already become part of the Donald Trump "brand". (Lilleker, 2006: 41-45) Although the President-elect occasionally tones town the nationalistic pleas in his inaugural speech, he cannot drop this kind of discourse altogether – it has come to be an inherent part of his political persona. By ever more slightly touching upon the views that made him win the elections, he aims to safeguard his political prestige, to preserve and reinforce the legitimacy of his presidency and the coherence of his image and, last but not least, to reassure his audience that economic power shall be wrested from "communities believed to have benefitted unduly"; after all, when your electoral success is based on "growing popular dissatisfaction and a widespread need to assign blame" (Horsman and Marshall, 1995: 78), a blunt shift towards a peaceful, conciliatory discourse is likely to result in significant face loss.

Example 2

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.
For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry;
Subsidized the armies of other countries while allowing for the very sad depletion of our military;
We've defended other nations' borders while refusing to defend our own;

And spent trillions of dollars overseas while America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and decay.
We've made other countries rich while the wealth, strength, and confidence of our country has disappeared over the horizon.
One by one, the factories shuttered and left our shores, with not even a thought about the millions upon millions of American workers left behind.
The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world.
But that is the past. And now we are looking only to the future. (Donald Trump, Inaugural Address)[13]

The extract above also relies on antithesis, only this time the nationalist dimension is fully exploited. In this case, nationalism is forged not based on the dichotomy *you* vs. *them* where *you* are the people and *they* are the Democrats, but on the dichotomy *self – other*, where *self* means *American* and *other* means *non-American*. Strictly speaking, the pairs of opposing terms are the following:

foreign industry vs. *American industry;*
other countries (armies thereof) vs. *us (our military)*
other nations' borders vs. *our own*
overseas vs *American*
other countries vs *our country*
foreign workers (implicitly favoured by relocation of factories) vs *American workers*
our middle class vs *the entire world*
past vs *future*

To put it bluntly, the entire extract above takes the form of a plea in favour of *the self* to the detriment of *the other*. In other words, we believe that this excerpt is more aggressive than extract 1, in that the enemy becomes equal to anything that is foreign: foreign industry, the foreign military, foreign borders, infrastructure, wealth and population. The speaker no longer asks for support of the Republican party against the Democrats; he urges his audience to embrace the cause of *our nation* against *other nations*. The appeal to the audience's nationalistic feelings becomes even more justified against the background of American diversity – American identity represents a construct faced with the challenge of forging itself despite this diversity, whereas nationalism is closely related to identity – you cannot have nationalistic feelings unless you know who you are. Even more so, nationalistic feelings are enhanced through contrast – *our nation* emerges as a stronger construct if it is envisioned against other nations. Nationalism here plays upon the distinction *self – other*, and we believe that its message can be labelled as

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[13] http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/index.html , viewed on October 12, 2017

significantly more aggressive than the message of extract 1, since it draws upon our inherently competitive nature and it advocates, if not for the destruction of *the other*, at least for increasing the benefits to *the self* to the detriment of *the other*. Naturally, given the rules of the political game and the specific international context in 2016, the speaker is, to some extent, morally justified to capitalize on the audience's nationalistic emotions; however, we can see that, unlike in extract 1, where national identity was forged mainly *from within,* in extract two, national identity is defined *from the outside*, that is, through highlighting the difference between *us* and *them* and the ensuing contrast. Here, *our welfare* grows and become meaningful only to the detriment of *theirs*.

"The need of individuals for self-esteem leads them to believe that their group is better than the others. Their sense of self rises and falls with the fortunes of the groups they identify with and with the extent to which other people are excluded from their group." (Huntington, 2005: 25) In this respect, we can say that in extract 2, the audience's nationalistic feelings are exploited in a manner that stresses *exclusion* and *difference*, and recognition of this exclusion generates *competition* – a game in which *our winning* inherently leads to *their losing*. Furthermore, the final pair of opposites (*past* vs *future*), which is semantically different from the others, reiterates the idea of extract 1 and capitalizes yet again on the features of the *opposition discourse* – that the previous administration has generated *our losing* while the present one will spawn a state of affairs that will work to *our* benefit and result in *our winning*.

Example 3

(a) From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land.
(b) From this moment on, it's going to be America first.
Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families.
(c) We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength.
(d) I will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down.
(e) America will start winning again, winning like never before.
(f) We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams.[14]

Extract (3) represents a typical example of the speaker resorting to the audience's nationalistic emotions; however, we have selected this particular excerpt due to its complexity and to the wide array of rhetorical strategies covered. Thus, paragraph

[14] http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/index.html , viewed on October 12, 2017

(a) also represents an instance of "opposition discourse", as the implementation of a *new vision* capitalizes on the public's expectations of *change* and *reform* (natural since there has been a transfer of power from a Democratic administration to a Republican one), also implying that the current vision is flawed and needs to be replaced. Moreover, what is remarkable about this paragraph is its *abstract dimension*: the reference to *vision*, or intelligent foresight and wise anticipation of the future, appeals not to the audience's immediate material needs, but to their emotions. It appears more and more obvious that, in an era marked by the growing "mediatization, tabloidization and entertainmentization" (Jamtøy, 2012: 3) of all aspects of public life, the use of *emotion* has gradually gained ground, slowly replacing *reason* as the primary motivator of our choices. Public opinion appears to be increasingly shaped by the "moods, feelings or emotions of citizens" rather than by a process of thinking and objectively analysing a situation or a person. (Marcus, 2000: 222)

Paragraph (b) brings the speaker's discourse back into the realm of the concrete, with the same implications arising: that things will improve in the *future* as opposed to the *past* and *present* (*from this moment on*), and that citizens have not been the previous administration's main priority. Specific issues are brought into discussion: *trade, taxes, foreign affairs* and most importantly, *immigration*, which is commonly perceived as the most important challenge the Western world is facing nowadays. However, the reference to American *families* skilfully preserves the emotional dimension, as resorting to the concept of *family* is always a powerful emotional trigger. Trump's nationalistic appeal climaxes in paragraph (c), where he not only speaks about *borders, domestic employment* and *protectionism* in unequivocal terms, but he also identifies an enemy of all of the above: the *other countries*, that cause extensive damage (*ravages*) to national *prosperity* and *strength*. *Otherness* in this paragraph is seen as a destructive force, unequivocally threatening the national *self* in every respect: security (*borders*), employment (*jobs*), welfare (*prosperity*) and even existence (*strength*). Thus, with paragraph (c), with the explicit identification of an enemy and with the plea to fight it relentlessly, the speaker's nationalistic views reach a peak.

The demand placed upon the audience is strengthened by the promise in paragraph (e), whereby the speaker undertakes to serve his conationals successfully. The promise represents the backbone of political communication (Enache and Militaru, 2013a: 41); it never appears out of nowhere; by contrast, it responds to a state of expectation of the audience, it responds to the public agenda while in its turn shaping the political actor's future conduct. The promise functions as a commitment before the public, whose implications may impact the speaker's entire future political career. However, in the case of vague promises, as is the case with paragraph (d), there appears to be a low risk of face loss, since the vaguer the commitment is, the more difficult it becomes to pin responsibility or hold the initiator accountable in case something goes wrong. Concrete promises bear a

higher degree of responsibility for the speaker, as concrete actions are at stake, while vague promises rely mainly on their emotional appeal.

The impact of paragraph (e) is also emotional, since *winning* is a concept so deeply embedded in the American subconscious that its impact never fades. America is all about competing and winning; even a loss is rationalized as a kind of gain by means of moving forward with a lesson learned. Hence, the orator does not fail to capitalize on this emotional aspect either, while also setting the stage for the next statement (paragraph f), which summarizes everything he has said so far. The four concepts referred to in paragraph (f) are interesting not only in terms of the ideas they put forward, but also due to their association. Thus, firstly, Trump first mentions *jobs*. This is not surprising, since economic problems still exist in the US, with unemployment still taking its toll on the active labour force; therefore, the speaker needs to show both an awareness of this problem and a commitment to overcoming it. Secondly, there is reference to *borders* – in an increasingly global world, reinforcement of the borders functions as a reinforcement of national identity. In the absence of other criteria, or in a context where accelerated immigration has shed doubt on ethnicity-related criteria, *location* becomes more important and is so acknowledged by the orator. Thirdly, *wealth* also constitutes a response to the audience's agenda, capitalizing on their expectations, on their infinite resources of hope and, last but not least, bonding with the idea of *prosperity* in paragraph (c) above. Lastly, reference to *dreams* not only shifts the focus of discourse from the concrete to the abstract realm, it also resumes the emotional appeal in paragraph (a) and serves a powerful inspirational purpose for the audience. The *dream* represents one of the most familiar and impactful phrases in the American national lexicon, not only triggering the audience's innermost emotions, but also sparking off awareness of national history, the Declaration of Independence and most importantly, the American creed – supporting awareness of national identity and, above all, national exceptionalism.

3.2 "Mild" nationalism

Although Donald Trump won the elections capitalizing on the worldwide surge in nationalism and the ensuing expectations of the audience, once President-elect, his discourse is bound to change, not only in response to the heterogeneity of the American population (as he is, as of that moment, President of all Americans), but also for diplomatic reason. Nationalism is a good idea as long as its meaning remains confined to protecting the national borders and ensuring the prosperity of all citizens. Once nationalism crosses that line, bordering on extremism, it runs the risk of turning into a dangerous force that could backfire against its perpetrator.

Moreover, ideologically, *nationalism* need not imply *isolationism*. Pursuing the well-being of your people ought not to mean going it alone, at least in theory; moreover, in the context where there is talk of a decline in American international

influence, as world politics is decreasingly shaped by the West while wealth and power are shifting towards the economic and military powers of the East, thus posing a challenge to the long-established American supremacy, with a threatening global instability in the future, the speaker must pay close attention not to antagonize other international actors; in this respect, his plea for nationalism attempts to take into account awareness of, and respect for, other international players. Against this background of uncertainty and potential economic and even military danger, isolationism is an approach to be avoided at all costs – even at the cost of being perceived as inconsistent by some strata of your former electorate.

Example 4

(a) We will seek friendship and goodwill with the nations of the world – but we do so with the understanding that it is the right of all nations to put their own interests first.
(b) We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to follow.
(c) We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones – and unite the civilized world against Radical Islamic Terrorists which we will eradicate completely from the face of the earth.
(d) At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other.[15]

Several ideas emerge from the extract above. Most importantly, though the speaker does not drop his nationalistic views altogether, we notice two directions: firstly, his discourse no longer targets all "*other countries*" as potential rivals and even foes, as was the case in extracts (2) and (3). On the contrary, he appeals to other countries as possible allies and even friends (paragraph (a)), while making sure to emphasize that, in spite of these alliances, national interests still prevail and always will. However, we must notice the fact that he has toned down his nationalistic appeal, acknowledging the existence of other players whose support he cannot afford to discard. Secondly, he yet again relies on the identification of an enemy, only this time the enemy is one that everyone would agree to call that way: *radical Islamic Terrorists*, and the annihilation discourse is targeted at them (paragraph (c)). The goal pursued is thus twofold: on the one hand, everyone can see that here Trump views "*other countries*" as allies rather than foes; on the other hand, by pointing at radicals as enemies, he aims to emphasize that he is not a radical himself, thus once again softening his discourse.

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[15] http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/20/politics/trump-inaugural-address/index.html , viewed on October 12, 2017

With paragraph (b), the orator proposes the national example as a model to follow, thus attempting to lead not by force but through moral authority. Therefore, while American supremacy is implied throughout his discourse, as is the case with most American politicians, in this particular situation we do not speak of concrete facts like *prosperity* or *economic well-being*; rather, the rhetor refers to a *way of life* distinguishing and differentiating the nation from other nations, while the superiority of *our* way of life speaks for itself. Thus, national identity and hence superiority become meaningful and reach their full potential only through contrast with others; in this way, this superiority is shaped from within and from the outside, equally.

Finally, with paragraph (d), the nationalistic plea returns, where nationalism is envisioned as a positive, unifying force: on the one hand there is allegiance to *our* country, on the other hand there is loyalty to *each other* – that is, loyalty amongst the people. Here, the values and beliefs shaping national identity are built solely from within, then displayed, ideologically, for the whole world to see. Nationalism here becomes meaningful not by contrast with others, it is no longer shaped as a relationship between *self* and *other*; nationalism from this perspective is entirely self-oriented, it is a construct emerging through a determined reinforcement and strengthening of the *self*, while the *other* is merely a witness, a passive force with no apparent say or impact.

4. Concluding remarks

In the present research, we have attempted to shed light on Donald Trump's views on nationalism right after the outcome of the 2016 elections. While his winning was a great surprise for everyone, as most opinion polls forecast a clear victory of his opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton, what we find particularly relevant for our study is the slight, almost unnoticeable shift in his discourse from a strong nationalistic perspective to a "softened" one, where the all-pervading support for everything and everyone American has to make room for, and dutifully acknowledge the existence of other international players as well. Thus, as we have shown in the present paper, there are at least three directions in which his nationalism unfolds: firstly, scattered throughout his inaugural speech, we find numerous cases of "opposition discourse", whereby he pleads for *change* and *reform*, implying that the soon-to-be former administration has failed to serve the interests of American citizens; secondly, there are situations where his nationalistic appeals reach a peak, as everything foreign ("*other countries*") is depicted as an enemy – here, the politician addresses the needs of his most radical electors; and lastly, there are cases where he tones down his discourse, referring to the necessity of forming international alliances – here, we believe the speaker wishes to show awareness of the fact that the world is no longer a unipolar construct and, in the context of a possible decline in American supremacy versus the rise of other economic and military powers, even the most influential person on the planet, who

is, technically speaking, the president of the USA, has to adjust both his discourse and his policies to take into account these changes. Through all these elements that surface in his discourse, the President-elect aims to increase his legitimacy, to consolidate his position in the eyes of the audience and, last but not least, to improve his image by showing responsibility and political diplomacy.

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