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# Donald Trump as a Political Figure: The most Powerful, Populist and Rhetorical Leader in "Presidential Announcement Speech"

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**Abstract:** This paper's main intention is to study the United States' President Donald Trump's political position in "Presidential Announcement Speech" from the context of authoritarianism, rhetoric, populism, business-politico person and racist. It also examines the idea of "Trumpism" and how Trump is getting de/famous through this announcement speech. We can get to know by analyzing this announcement that President Trump has the quality of being rhetoric by his choice of words and he also portrays in his speech he is the most powerful leaders. Trump portrays the picture of being authoritarian leader in this speech but at the same time being popular and political figure. This paper tries to set on those issues to show the position of President Donald Trump and his political and rhetorical identity in his "Presidential Announcement Speech".

**KeyWords:**Donald Trump, Authoritarianism, Populist, Rhetorical Leader, and Presidential Announcement Speech

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

While the analysis of United States President Donald Trump's political position in Presidential Announcement Speech has embodied our perception of 'Trumpism', the words of this speech represent Trump as one the most powerful and rhetorical political leaders. Distinctively, Trump is regarded a popular political figure by his supporters and it is prominent on June 17, 2015, Presidential Announcement's Speech. Focusing on this speech, my paper examines the concept of populism, the idea of authoritarianism, rhetoric and superpowerful person, 'business-politico' person and racist. Due to his rhetorical expression and style, Trump manages to get the acclamation from the mass people around the world and from United States voters by his slogans like 'Make America great again'. Even though, some lines in this speech from one end to the other speakers for the evocation of racism. Accordingly, this paper suggests that Trump's styles of being confident, rhetorical, showing power through words, authoritarian and aspiration of the subject matter have accompanied with the concept of 'Trump the Powerful and Popular Politician' and 'Trump the Rhetorical Leader'. The main objective of this paper is to find out Donald Trump's political strain in his Presidential Announcement Speech and this political strain is followed by the idea of authoritarianism, populism, rhetoric, and racism. By analyzing this speech, it can be regarded that Donald Trump is a populist, authoritarian, rhetorical and to some extent racist political leader. Ultimately, this paper suggests that the present President of the United States of America is not only 'de/famous' in front of America or in front of the world but also an exemplified political, authoritarian and powerful leader due to his rhetorical and informal speeches and; as well as Trump distinguishes the people with pronoun 'they/us/' which is very prominent in this speech.

#### II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### **Populism**

If the word 'populist' refers to free, socialist, popular, and common, the term 'populism' alludes to the idea of a political doctrine that thrives for the support and the power of common people by conflicting with the privileged 'elite'. But it is difficult to define 'populism' in a word or sentence because this definition is arbitrary. That is why; Gangon and others claim in the paper "What is Populism? Who is the Populist?", 'Both "populism" and "populist" have long been considered ill-defined terms, and therefore are regularly misapplied in both scholarly and popular discourses. This definitional difficulty is exacerbated by the Babelian confusion of voices on populism, where the term's meaning differs within and between global regions (e.g. Latin America versus Western Europe) time periods (e.g. 1930s versus the present), and classifications (e.g. left/right, authoritarian/libertarian, pluralist/antipluralist, as well as strains that muddy these distinctions such as

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homonationalism, xenophobic, feminism, and multicultural neonationalism" (Gangon et al. v). So, populism continues with a broader sense and it stays a larger part in between politics and politician.

Nevertheless, according to a study by Chabal 'There can be few more polemical terms in today's political vocabulary than 'populism'. The word is applied variously to parties, leaders and social movements of the left and the right, most often as a term of abuse. At the same time, populists themselves have frequently embraced the term as a way of describing their authentic relationship to their supporters [...] populism is the 'shadow' of representative democracy. Its central feature is "a moralized form of antipluralism" that incessantly speaks "in the name of the people as a whole" [...] populism as product of "anger" or as the voice of the disenfranchised masses, he takes seriously the claim of populists to speak for the people and against the elites. The way to in distinguish populists from others who make similar claims is that populists operate at a "moral and symbolic" level. Hence, the important thing is not who populists represent in practice, but who they represent [...] populists "distort the democratic process" by rejigging constitutions and shutting down dissent seems fair enough' (Chabal 1-2).

Still and all, Özgür states in his article "Jan-Werne Muller, What is Populism? (2016)", 'William Gibson recently tweeted that "populism, a nightmare state of democracy, can result in electing someone very foolish, or perhaps criminal, or even, perhaps, both. Nevertheless, his complicated and smart definition should be underlined: populism as "a nightmare state of democracy". For although a nightmare belongs to the subconscious, it is still an offspring of the mind. As Jan-Werner Müller puts it, "the danger comes from within the democraticworld." Populism is an "internal periphery of democratic politics;" populismas politics is performed on the "edge of liberalism" (Özgür 1).

#### Rhetoric

The word "rhetoric" refers to a specific style and art in speaking and writing by using figures of speech or other writing techniques. This ornamentation or rhetoric is very common in political speech or writing and that time it can be regarded as "political rhetoric". Covino and David assert in their book *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definition, Boundaries*, "What is Rhetoric?" This is very difficult question for which there is no short answer. The difficulty begins with the fact that rhetoric is not a content area that contains a definite body of knowledge, like physics; instead rhetoric might be understood as the study and practice of shaping contents [...] studying rhetoric means studying how people get fooled, and rhetoric is understood as the opposite of truth. The rhetoric of a text is seen as its use of ornamental, pretentious, carefully calculated, sometimes, bombastic languages, through which the writer or speaker seeks power over listeners or readers. If we consider rhetoric as the study and practice of featuring rather than shaping content, we foreground its function as tool for "special interest groups". The-special-interest-group rhetor selects and configures language so that certain terms are privileged and endorsed; and others are ignored' (Covino & David 2).

Apart from this, rhetoric plays an important role in politics because when politicians give any speech in front of the audience they prepare a speech with so many ornamentations and eloquence. Sometimes, political rhetoric or rhetorical speech shows the leaders' intelligence and challenge and on the basis of this audience or common people get attracted with them and support them. We can refer here Condor, Tileaga&Billig observation in their essay "Political Rhetoric "The topic of political rhetoric concerns the strategies used to construct persuasive arguments in formal public debates and in everyday political disputes. The study of politicalrhetoric therefore touches upon the fundamental activities of democratic politics" (Condor, Tilega&Billig 262). According to the study Kane and Patapan (qtd. in Condor, Tileaga&Billig), "because public discussion and debate areessential in a democracy, and because leaders are obliged to rule the sovereign peopleby means of constant persuasion, rhetoric is absolutely central" (Condor, Tileaga&Billig 262). Apart from this, van Zoonen (qtd. in Condor, Tileaga&Billig) comments, "In the modern world, political oratory is typically mediated to distal audiences by textual or electronic means of communication often blurring the distinction between politics and entertainment" (Condor, Tileaga&Billig 264). So, rhetorical speech in politics can be regarded as a source of entertainment for the common people because media publishes it broadly. That is why, Condor, Tileaga&Billig words "The fact that political rhetoric is now often conveyed through television, newsprint, or e-communication has resulted in a diversification of potential audiences" (Condor, Tileaga&Billig 265). Therefore, the concept of 'Rhetoric' and 'Political Rhetoric' is playing of words languages for getting the attraction from the audience or from the readers. People use this technique to become famous and be a trustworthy person in front of others. Politicians make the rhetorical speech for getting support from the common people to be a leader.

#### Authoritarianism

The notion of 'Authoritarianism' is very common in the contemporary political arena. Seemingly, authoritarianism refers to the concept of enforcement and strictness of authority towards the common people at the cost of personal freedom. For instance, Robert Bedeski asserts in his essay "Authoritarian System"-

'Authoritarianism is a theory and a system of government customarily linked with dictatorship, in contrast to democracy. It is a principle based on obedience to authority, and opposes autonomy of individuals in thought and action. As a form of government, authoritarianism concentrates power in a leader or in small elite not constitutionally accountable to the people. Unlike totalitarians systems, authoritarian governments usually lack a highly developed ideology [...] Leaders in authoritarian systems often exercise their power arbitrarily and consider themselves above existing law. Modern authoritarian systems usually operate through single, dominant parties, which control government and other key parts of the society, including the economy, media and education' (Bedeski 2).

After that, since authoritarianism is opposite of democracy, sometimes a leader is selected in the name of democracy or in the name of public votes but ultimately that leader or government play the act of dictatorship, autocracy or authoritarianism indirectly. This variable is very common in today's politics. Government comes in the leading position in the name of democracy but they rule a country like a dictator. Ryan Shirah describes in article "Electoral authoritarianism and political unrest" - 'When dictators hold elections there is likely always manipulation at some level- some candidates or parties may be barred from participating (others might boycott), media outlets may be censored or, worse, may be propaganda organizations for the incumbent, or the results of elections could be entirely fabricated. As has been seen over the last decade, the result of this manipulation can sometimes be outrage, express as mass dissent or political unrest' (Shirah 471). So, authoritarianism provides the conceptual framework of modern dictatorship, and the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The latter is a form of government in which one person or a small elite group wields absolute power with few or no constitutional restrictions. The term originates from Roman Republic dictator, who was a temporary magistrate, granted extra powers to deal with emergencies. In the twentieth century, dictators have also claimed extraordinary powers to deal with state crises and exercise despotic powers, using coercion, terror, and suppression to hold control, and they employ modern propaganda to maintain popular support (Bedeski 2).

#### III. DISCUSSION

#### **Presidential Announcement Speech**

Speech holds the most important message and information for the audience and for the common people. If it is the speech for any presidential announcement, then it means a lot for the country and for the supporters. Because 'Presidential Announcement Speech' usually comes with the agenda of a party and this speech shows the whole sketch of that party's work. For instance, Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech was broadcast on 16 June 2015 as a candidate for the participation of the 45<sup>th</sup> presidential election of the United States of America. It can be assumed that Donald Trump's this speech played a major role to win as 45<sup>th</sup> president in America after defeating Hillary Clinton. Because we can get the essence of 'Trumpism' in this speech and the ideology of 'Trumpism' shows his idea and ideology through this speech. Rachel D. Beemen depicts in her essay "What are the three characteristics of Trumpism? A Discourse Analysis of Four Major Campaign Speeches", 'This presidential election represents one of the most contentious in history [...] Trumpism represents the ideology of president Trump. This ideology relies on his background as an executive and an entrepreneur, referred to within the paper as a business-like approach to politics' (Beeman 6).

#### Donald Trump as a Populist Leader

Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech is highlighting the idea of 'populism' and he is a 'populist leader'. This speech starts with the concept of populism because he begins his speech as, "Wow. Whoa. That is some group of people. Thousands. So nice, thank you very much. 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. There's been no crowd like this." These lines depict Trump's populism in public place. He represents himself as a popular leader because here he says there has been no crowd before this day. So, he is emphasizing his position and his acceptance from the common people is as high as his opponent party. Since Trump is a business-politico person, he uses this as the weapon as being a popular leader. He arranges this announcement at 'Trump Tower" which is named with Trump. Seemingly, he does this because he wants to spread his popularity around the world and the world's politics. So, Trump's populism can be regarded as "Trumpism". This is the first attempt of Trump to allure appeal his audience and supporters by his wonderful and attractive words. We can refer here Beeman essay "What are the three characteristics of Trumpism? A Discourse Analysis of Trump's Four Major Campaign Speeches"-

"Therefore, President Trump wants to appeal to the masses the most during the speech, to encourage his voter base to go out and vote for him which is why there is the highest occurrence of 'populism'. Populisms' coding consists of three main characteristics. These include an appeal to the average citizen's desires, disparaging elite opponents, simplifying complex ideas. The average citizens in this case are working, middleclass, typically Caucasian Americans. This was the typical demographic of the individuals who attended

Trump rallies. Based on the speeches, the author has concluded their desires to include jobs, increasing economic growth, and a decrease in immigration" (Beeman 7). By keeping this mind, we can include here president Trump's speech, "A lot of people up there can't get job. They can't get jobs, because China has our jobs and Maxico has our jobs. They all have jobs [...] I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created. I tell you that. I'll bring back jobs from China, from Mexico, from Japan, from so many places. I'll bring back our jobs, and I'll bring back our money [...] I don't need anybody's money. It's nice. I don't need anybody's money. I'm using my own money. I am not using the lobbyists. I'm not using donors. I don't care. I'm really rich. I (inaudible) [...] I would build a great wall, and nobody builds better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern border. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall". Indeterminately, president Trump gets carried away with the idea of 'jobs', 'economical issues' and 'decreasing immigration' for his 'populism'. Most importantly, he knows very well what type of issues will be attracted American people and he brings together in his speech for getting more support. Undoubtedly, American people have a problem with jobs, economy and immigration system. President Trump touches the most sophisticated arena to make his supporters believe that he will solve all the problems by his own hand. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, president Trump embraces 'populism' with a new meaning.

#### Trump's Style of being Political Rhetoric

The concept of rhetoric is very common in politics. Political leaders use this technique for their speech to appeal to the audience and to increase their supporters. It can also be regarded as 'Presidential rhetoric'. Trump is one of the best examples in the ground of 'political rhetoric' or 'presidential rhetoric'. President Trump's "Presidential Announcement Speech" is partially showing the evidence of rhetorical speech. Yannick Lahti depicts in the paper "'Make America Great Again". A rhetorical analysis of campaign and presidential speeches by Donald Trump in 2016-2017", "[...] by Donald Trump, the element of act emerges as America and Americans being on the verge of division, fundamental ruin and destruction, due to the bad and corrupt politicians that control the media and are being controlled by the so called special interest groups [...] all the jobs of honest Americans are leaving overseas while illegal immigration, Mexico and Mexicans, radical Islamic terror / Isis and a dishonest media establishment are all a concrete threat to Americans and linked to each other. In this act of ruin that is happening according, to Donald Trump's rhetoric, only he can save America and its people by becoming the next president, who will put America's interests first" (Lathi 66). According to the speech, President Trump asserts-

- [1] I watch the speeches of these people, and they say the sun will rise, the moon will set, all sorts of wonderful things will happen. And people are saying, "What's going on? I just want a job. Just get me a job. I don't need the rhetoric. I want a job."
- [2] Now, our country needs- our country needs a truly great leader, and we need a truly great leader now. We need a leader that wrote "The Art of the Deal".
- [3] You know, when President Obama was elected, I said, "Well, the one thing, I think he'll do well. I think he'll be great cheerleader for the country [...] But he wasn't a cheerleader. He's actually a negative force. He sheen a negative force. He wasn't a cheerleader; he was the opposite.
- [4] We need somebody that can take the brand of the United States and make it great again. It's not great again.
- [5] We need- we need somebody- we need somebody that literally will take this country and make it great again. We can do that.
- [6] We've got nothing. We've got Social Security that's going to be destroyed if somebody like me doesn't bring money into the country. All these other people want pt cut the hell out of it. I'm not going to cut it at all; I'm going to bring money in, and we're going to save it.
- [7] There is so much wealth out there that can make our country so rich again, and therefore make it great again. Because we need money. We are dying. We need money. We have to do it. And we need the right person.
- So Ford will come back. They'll all come back. And I will say this, this is going to be an election, in my opinion, that's based on competence.
- [8] Sadly, the American dream is dead.

But, if I get elected president I will bring it back bigger and better and stronger than ever before, and we will make America great again.

So, in the first example, President Trump depicts the negative side of previous presidents and they cannot do a great job and cannot bring back jobs for people. But if he is elected, he will arrange jobs for all people. This is her rhetoric that he is the only person to solve the problems of the country and make it better. And then, he appreciates the former President Obama but through his words and lined he makes fun of him intentionally. President Trump can only save America and the dead American dream. He can utilize money properly in different sectors. He/we can "make America great again". Now I can refer here Yannick Lahti's assertions from the paper ""Make America Great Again". A rhetorical analysis of campaign and presidential

speeches by Donald Trump in 2016-2017"- "As the element of act in Trump's rhetoric emerges to be describing the narrative of America's apocalyptic destruction and of himself as the savior of America, the element of agency, however is delivering a speech which is conducted through blaming and self-sacrifice for the greater good [...] 'repeating and highlighting' appear to be an essential part of Trump's rhetoric and this also manifests in the examining of the agency element. Trump's medium is to blame outside parties for the problems he projects in his rhetoric. In addition to Trump's blaming and self-sacrifice he also emphasizes the importance of this presidential election and strongly urges his supporters to vote in order to change the course where America, according to his rhetoric, is heading to" (Lathi 68).

#### **Authoritarian Expression and Power**

It can be regarded that Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech promulgates the conception of 'authoritarian' and 'powerful'. He is the only person who can solve all the problems of America and he and his party can be rebirth dead America and can make America great again. He makes the difference between us versus them which shows the authoritarian concept. Because President Trump as a leader and his party is morally good and other leaders in America are not morally good. He is generalizing other leaders or politicians by his depiction and supporters of President Trump somehow believe his ideology or his words regarding other leaders. This is another expression of being an authoritarian or powerful leader. President Trump tries to allure or to appeal the mass people by mentioning all of the negative works of other politicians and diminishes people's personal freedom by his appealing words. Donald Trump shows threat and fear to the audience by his negative illustration of other leaders so that he can get all the attraction and support from his supporters and from the mass people. He asserts in his speech, "So I've watched the politicians. I've dealt with them all life. If you can't make a good deal with a politician, then there's a something wrong with you. You're certainly not very good. And that's we have representing us. They will never make America great again. They don't even have chance. They're controlled fully- they're controlled fully by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests, fully. Yes, they control them. Hey, I have lobbyists. I have to tell you. I have lobbyists that can produce anything for me. They are great. But you know what? It won't happen. It won't happen. Because we have to stop doing things for some people, but for this country, it's destroying our country. We have to stop, and it has to stop now". According to these assertions, Trump as 'we' has good 'lobbyists' and they can help him any way and 'other/them' politicians have the 'lobbyists' but they are not good for the country. President Trump can save the country from these bad 'lobbyists'. Here, he shows his power and authoritarian expression that he is only person who can do all the work properly. And these bad 'lobbyists' are threat for this country and it represents his threat and authoritarian point of view. In keeping with Matthew McWilliams words from his book named The Rise of Trump: America's Authoritarian Spring-

"[...] while scholars differ from on the specific origin of authoritarianism, threat and fear have long been theorized to play an important role in the activation of authoritarian behavior and the expression of authoritarian attitudes. Indeed, the linkage between threat and authoritarian behavior has remained a central focus on authoritarian studies from more than seven decades (McWilliams 28)." According to the study of Hetherington, Weiler and Suhay have all advanced what I call the Pogo principle (qtd. in McWilliams) – that "[a]s people in the middle and lower tiers of authoritarianism come to perceive threat, they adopt policy orientations that are more like an authoritarian's (McWilliams 28)." So, President Trump's speech has demonstrated a bridge between 'threat' and 'authoritarian behavior' and it is rendering the original conception of 'authoritarian studies'. "We will make America great again"- by this demonstration, he emphasizes the authoritarian behavior with the words 'we' and 'again'. By the pronoun 'we', he affirms as an ultimate savior of American people and by the adverb 'again' he marks the threat of failure of previous politicians. They cannot make America great and better because of their bad work and President Trump tries to establish this notion by his technique of authoritarian speech.

### **Expression of Racism**

Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech is somehow representing and indicating the remark of racism and white supremacy of the United States of America. He does not like immigrants in America and he shows his animosity towards Mexico and he wants to build a great wall so that Mexican people cannot enter inside America. He demonstrates- "I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I'll build them very inexpensively, I will build a great, great wall on our southern part. And I will have Mexico pay for that wall". In these lines, it shows the clear abhorrence towards Mexican people and race and Mexican people need to pay for building this wall. President Trump creates hierarchy and treats Mexican people and country as inferior race. In keeping with the study of Albert Memmi (qtd. in Huber) - "[...] a key element of racism is that it is based on perceptions- both real and "imagined" differences between groups of people- and those differences assign values that benefit one group at the expense of other. Thus power is distributed according to both real and perceived racial differences, creating structural inequities that benefit the

perceived superior group and impede others" (Huber, 218). Besides, President Trump shows his abhorrence to the Islamic states and remarks Islamic states or people as terrorist whereas Islam as a religion does not support any terrorism. A group of people is doing terrorist work in the name of Muslim and Islam. Donald Trump characterizes and generalizes with racist point of view that Muslim as a terrorist. President Trump says-"Islamic terrorism is eating up large portions of the Middle East. They've become rich. I'm in competition with them". So, in my analysis, terrorism has no religion and a white or Christian or other religion's person can also be a terrorist, as it has already showed its result. For instance, he is blaming all Muslims without any reason. This type of attitude elucidates the treatment of racism and he himself is forgetting about the American dream.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the study has demonstrated that through the exertion of the idea of populism, authoritarianism, rhetoric, and racism in Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech is pointing out the features that Donald Trump is a populist political figure in contemporary American politics. Even from the analysis of the words, it seems President Trump's this speech contains the feature of an authoritarian leader which follows with his rhetorical and racist attitude through his words. Donald Trump's characteristic in this speech represents the contemporary American presidential politics. Above all, President Trump is popular political person to his supporters and audience because of his powerful words and being a politico person, President Trump's ultimate goal is to get so many votes to win the election and to increase his supporters; and he has done this in a prime manner and he has won the election. We can refer here Rachman and Yunianti's lines- "Trump is being more persuasive in delivering his idea in order to make the audience respond are more willing to joint his demands and dramatic effect that used in persuasive speech which it can be a powerful and a effective way to make a point also it can be a part of Trump's way to deliver his utterance" (Rachman&Yunianti 15). So, it is clear that Donald Trump is a popular, authoritarian, rhetoric political persona in contemporary American politics and it is more visible in his Presidential Announcement Speech.

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