A Thematic Review of Trump's Political Rhetoric, and its Relationship with Violence in America

Abstract:

This paper provides a socio-cultural analysis context for those interested on the intersections of self-presentations, justifications, anxieties and mitigations political rhetoric and crime offered in their testimonies by American individuals who have committed crimes and explicitly stated that their actions were motivated by the of rhetoric of Donald J. Trump's pollical rhetoric. Whilst adopting ideas from Braun & Clarke (2012), this paper does not claim to carry out a systematic analysis, but a critical review that lays out themes emergent from two kinds of sampled texts namely, documentaries and court cases. Twelve criminal cases were identified as meeting our selection criteria, covering crimes ranging from verbal to physical attacks. The aim is to provide a socio-cultural context in which to understand the impact of political rhetoric on the actions of individuals which may have resulted in criminal behaviours. The paper argues that through his political rhetoric, President Donald J. Trump, advocates extremist views; promoting and inciting different forms of violence in general and against specific social groups; and individuals. This study concludes that the political rhetoric of President Donald J. Trump is most likely a factor in the radicalisation of individuals who commit different types of violent crime.

1. Introduction

This paper explores the meanings, significance and implications of Donald Trump's political rhetoric and its potential links to criminal behaviour. It further seeks to understand how representations of political rhetoric either evident in, or portrayed by, documentaries and court documents may or may not link with criminal acts. In 2016, Donald Trump won the US Presidential campaign. The rhetorical techniques used as part of this campaign have instigated academic and wider public discussion surrounding the threat that violent rhetoric poses in the populist political arena worldwide, and the filtration of political rhetoric into social acts of violence in the community.

One of the key factors of Trump's rhetoric centres upon the concept of 'othering', creating in and out- groups of entire communities, or targeting specific individuals, reinforcing in-group social cohesion through rallies and televised impromptu speeches. Although there is a well-documented, multifaceted relationship connecting violence, politics, and the role of rhetoric, it is debatable whether these concepts can be considered as essential strategy or political necessity. Despite the fact there is a wide range of academic study on the effectiveness of political rhetoric, there is little academic research on the effects, if any, of Trumps political rhetoric and it is disseminated into society; in the light of technological developments in digital media; and the development of philosophies found in cyberspace. Based on the material collected, and interpretation of these philosophies it is recognised that further investigation is needed to explore the cultural, social and rhetorical resources that individuals who have committed crimes linked to Trump, may have drawn upon to rationalise their actions

The intention of this article is to provide a socio-cultural context in which to understand the direct impact of political rhetoric on the actions of individuals which may have resulted in criminal behaviours. It reviews publicly available records of criminal cases, in particular those individuals who implicated the political rhetoric of Donald Trump in their crimes, using the individuals own

words. In addition, the study also explores documentaries that investigate narratives communicated by the political rhetoric of Trump, relating to issues including immigration, racism, voting rights, religious beliefs and the role of 'government'. It is important to note Trump did not invent political rhetoric; however, Trump is a very effective and popular exponent of this particular political technique. Exploring and critiquing what motivations drive these individuals to commit the crimes they are convicted of; assist the researcher in understanding, if, or to what extent political rhetoric, and representations of political rhetoric therein, play a part in these individual's accounts of the crimes they have committed. The critical review, based on a selection of documentaries and court documents will further seek to highlight how political rhetoric filters through to the individual; and ascertain what impact this may possibly have on individual's behaviours.

Drawing upon the techniques of analysis described by Braun & Clarke (2012), the study intends to provide an extensive thematic description of the relationship between political rhetorical representations of Trumpian style rhetoric; and its connection with real life individuals committing criminal acts. Analysis within this article will not go beyond that which is found in the texts focused on, namely court cases and documentaries. It will focus on how political rhetoric is represented in documentaries and echoed in the court documents of defendants citing Trump as a factor in their crimes. This will be followed a by critical discussion on the meanings, implications and significance of those documentary representations in relation to the themes identified of Altered Realities, Toxic Beliefs, Delusion, Intolerance, and Acquiescence, which have emerged from documentaries in conjunction with court documents, in reference to key theoretical concepts.

2. Concepts linking Political Rhetoric and Violence

The key ideas from social constructionism, othering and mass media communication provide background to understanding how Trumps' political rhetoric was disseminated, and how it re-shaped individual perceptions and belief systems, that then led to violent actions being constructed and viewed as acceptable by the perpetrators.

The relationship between political rhetoric and violence is seemingly, as essential to 'politics' as 'statecraft'. FRAZER & HUTCHINGS (2011) highlights that historical works of Machiavelli, Clausewitz and Weber investigated this essential paradox. Furthermore, FRAZER & HUTCHINGS (2007) explored the strategies of justification for violence via the work of Weber, Sorel, Schmitt, Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty and Fanon arguing that the persuasive force of these discussions on politics and violence rely upon the aesthetics of rhetoric rather than qualities of argument.

The role of political rhetoric and violence has been a growing factor of investigation since Jean Paul Sartre in his 1944 play "Huis Clos" (No Exit) exclaimed "l'enfer c'est les autres", translated as," hell: it's the others" (SARTRE et Al, 2008). Over 70 years later, powerful political leaders have adapted and normalised this pervasive political practice which is changing the way the identity of politics is viewed and altering global boarders (KHREBTAN-HÖRHAGER & AVANT-MIER, 2017). KHREBTAN-HÖRHAGER (2018) further argues that Trumpian style rhetoric can also be ascribed to the former prime minister of Italy's Salvini. Whilst Prime Minister, Modi, in India uses ontological and epistemological symbols in his rhetoric to reinvent concepts of, religion, Hindu Masculinity and nationhood along gender lines, to create governmental policies designed to disseminate social concepts of security in a vastly changing

world (KINNVALL, 2019). Rhetorical techniques and actions similar to those used by Salvini and Modi can be directly seen in use by Trump in his own political rhetoric. LOONEY (2017) argues that even in the UK the rise of political rhetoric and its connections to violence can be seen in association with "Brexit", creating divisions as a way of distraction from the economic issues created by a decade of "austerity" policies.

2.1 Social Constructionism

Given the connection between political rhetoric and criminality it is important that it considers possible mechanisms by which such rhetoric is constructed and communicated to the wider population. The theoretical acceptance of Social Constructionism, allows investigation into the idea that our personal experience is a product of social construction, it also allows the paper to investigate the concept that, language, far from describing our 'world', creates it, particularly in association to the language of political rhetoric where Trump's rhetoric frames socially negative behaviours as desirable and helpful to 'America'.

Social Constructionism is multidisciplinary in nature, it encompasses linguistics, sociology and philosophy. It takes a critical view of commonly understood stances found in traditional psychology. BURR (2015) suggests that 'words' create and define a person's concept of themselves, and the world around them, not vice versa. It has been argued that language helps individuals to structure experiences , Saussure cited in (KOERNER, 2013) discussed this in terms of arbitrary, but not random, 'signs' that may be constructed in a variety of different ways dependent upon a myriad of available societal interactions and group understandings . BURR (2015) further suggests that our external experiences, and awareness of our internal states would be nameless and inaccessible without a linguistic framework to provide understanding and meaning; and therefore language, particularly its structures, define the framework for our perceptions and conscious awareness of everyday experiences (RASKIN, 2002). Trump's political rhetoric uses simplistic constructions and phrases to stereotype and caricature, social groups in a negative light which potentially could radicalise his followers to become dangerous and aggressive. This is a desensitising and dehumanising strategy used in political rhetoric to influence the perpetration of violent behaviours against these groups or specific individuals (SAVAGE, 2009)

 Social Constructionism further proposes the concept that language, in the form of "speech acts" and social practices are a performance, utilised to derive specific outcomes or actions from others. The concept of discursive psychology focuses on the work of Potter and Wetherall cited in 1987 (ADJEI, 2013). It centres on the concept that words are important because of their function rather than their ability to be descriptive. The endo-methodologist approach to language, from this perspective is too look at what is the 'function' of the speech? What effect it has? And what does it achieve? As part of the interpersonal interplay. Potter &Wetherall cited in (ADJEI, 2013) proposed the concept of 'interpretive repertoires'. This refers to groups of terms, shared meanings, metaphors and graphic verbal descriptors, around which people are able to evaluate, categorise and apply specific actions to. The role of 'interpretive repertoires 'is to provide political groups with interpersonal space to evaluate their own truths, create credibility and justify beliefs and behaviours. This is particularly pertinent to the study of political rhetoric. Many interpretive repertoires can exist, creating different versions of the same events and concepts, constructing different multi-parallel realities 'alternative truths', and reactions to those 'objective certainties'. Key to this study is the connection between rhetoric and criminality, in relation to how political speech may radicalise the populace. And what deceptively, simple language constructions such as Trump's 'build the wall' encode or embolden in the mind of the individual.

2.2 Othering

In accepting the concept of Social Constructionism, it is vital to look at the ideas and concepts communicated through those words; particularly in the case of political rhetoric and the impact thereof. There have been other historical, global examples where extreme political rhetoric has led to violent social change, which act as a cautionary tales in recent times. The rise of Hitler in 1933 coincided with the beginning of film media. Since then political rhetoric and its role in creating real world violence has been visually documented, in the form of news reels (SHORTEN, 2015). By drawing on historical and current, global research, it is apparent that there are clear parallels between Trumpian style, political right wing rhetoric and violence. However there is little written about these issues for example othering, religious intolerance, immigration, and rhetoric related violence, from the perspective of 'Trumps' America, or generated from the words of the individuals who commit crimes in which Trumps rhetoric is cited as a mitigating or exculpatory factor.

SHORTEN (2015)'s critical discussion on 'reactional ideology' views this concept from a "top down" theoretical perspective and assessed the reactionary role in society of political rhetoric based on the theoretical work of Albert O Hirschman (HIRSCHMAN 2013). SHORTEN (2015) used Hirschman's refined definition of 'reaction' and traced its lineage through right wing politics, identifying common ideas which belonged to the 'rhetorical repertoire'. SHORTEN (2015)'s article concludes that political rhetoric is not the sole preserve of right-wing politics. It further concludes that to understand the human response to political rhetoric, and thereby in relation to this study, the appeal of Trump's rhetoric, it is important to understand its attraction to individuals engaged by the notions Hirschman discovered of 'indignation', 'decadence', and 'conspiracy, which Trump's political rhetoric potentially exploits.

Furthermore KHREBTAN-HÖRHAGER & AVANT-MIER (2017), suggest that the media focused concept of 'Animated Othering' is demonstrated in the film franchise of "Despicable Me"; as are the constructed cultural architypes and roles surrounding, Russian, Mexican and American characters within the children's film franchise. KHREBTAN-HÖRHAGER & AVANT-MIER (2017) describes animated film as essential "equipment for living"; and demonstrates how these films confirm the pedagogical and epistemological mechanisms North America uses to weave into society the concepts of dominance and American ideologies, whilst also constructing, confirming and representing negative stereotypes of "Others" in this case, Mexican's and Russians in the American culture. Notions which can be associated with the 'schemas' and 'interpretive repertoires' demonstrated by Trumps political rhetoric for example 'America First', and claims against immigrants, which negatively portray members of these communities 'rapists', 'drug mules' and 'murderers'.

KHREBTAN-HÖRHAGER (2018) additionally explored the concept of 'othering' in the European context; and in relation to the French rhetorical and cultural site French Musee du quai Branly; exploring concepts, representations and portrayals of 'Frenchness" and superiority aligning with the concept Trumps ideas of Nationalism and superiority in parallel with French colonialism. Khrebtan-Hörhager concludes a link between the radicalisation of political rhetoric, between the 'French' and 'others' and Khrebtan-Hörhager's research into deteriorating international relationships, and argues that there is a connection between the negative role played by curated representations of 'others' and political unrest in France and Europe.

On the other hand GITTINGER (2017) explores the political rhetoric of 'othering' and causes of religious intolerance in India. GITTINGER (2017)'s paper explores social, non-theological, changes in religious practices concerning the consumption of beef. It also examines the rhetorical legitimisation of acts of violence upon 'others,' in this case "beef eaters", brought about by the

political rhetoric of Prime Minister Modi. This rhetoric has fuelled violence primarily against Muslims and lower castes. GITTINGER (2017) argues there is a link between the 'othering' rhetoric of Hindu nationalism and violence particularly against Muslims. Here the link between Modi's nationalist rhetoric and violence attacks on Muslims has clear parallels with Trump's rhetoric of nationalism and islamophobia in America.

Research includes examination of the political rhetoric ascribed to the centre right, and right wing. Populist right-wing parties are also a concern for the European Union. KUREČIĆ & KUHAR (2019) conducted a content analysis to identify similarities and differences of both "New" and "Old E.U countries right wing party leader's speeches. They identified the power of political rhetoric to influence individual's attitudes, emotions, and actions; and examine how political rhetoric is used to obscure issues of immigration, and political reversals. KUREČIĆ & KUHAR (2019) centre their findings on rhetoric associated with migration. Finding a uniformity of statements of 'othering' amongst right wing popularists as is also found in the political rhetoric of Trump. It is important to note, Trump does not reserve 'othering' rhetoric exclusively for immigrants. Trump himself is the son and grandson of immigrants. It is suggested here that Trump also directs his 'othering rhetoric' against a variety of American citizens including, government employees, women, members of non-Christian religions, entire races, whole socio – economic groups, the LBGTQ ommunity, residents of individual states or cities ; and specific individuals.

2.3 Mass Media Communication

Political rhetoric itself is disseminated to the wider public via the media, both traditional and digital. Media outlets play an integral role in the formation of public attitudes about political and social issues. Particularly when related to subjects where the population has little interaction, personal knowledge or experience for example in the areas of immigration, climate change or economics (HAPPER & GREG, 2013). Trump's innovative use of technology and unfiltered media channels have allowed his brand of political rhetoric and extremist ideologies to be disseminated to a mass uncritical audience, replacing the critical media messaging of previous decades. Formerly the flow of traditional mass media information was curated and edited in order to allow a unity of particular privileged, perspectives to be promoted; giving it not only a sense of authority, but the appearance of "truth" (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003; GLASGOW UNIVERSITY MEDIA GROUP, 1976, 1980, 1982; HERMAN & CHOMSKY, 1994; VAN DIJK, 1998). However, today's digital media is made up of vast chaotic, antithetical information (KNOPP, KORB & MILLS, 2018). Within this space 'special interest groups' including political representatives, strategists, lobbyists, and religious organisations contribute disproportionality to the flow of information thus shaping content via the creation of 'privileged' information channels. These groups can actively shape discussion on topics through use of computer algorithm's using game theory (KNOPP, KORB & MILLS, 2018), in effect removing subjects from discussion and controlling the use of language, particularly using emotive language and framing of issues. This distorts individual's perceptions of the world around them (MILLER & DINAN, 2000, 2009).

Today's passive and persuasive utilisation of digital media and communications, processing and storage of information has led to a fundamental shift in how individuals consume, construct, observe and synthesize information. This shift is as fundamental to the power dynamics of information flow, as that caused by the creation of Gutenberg's printing press in the fifteenth century. (DEWAR, 1998), (BAGCHI, 2016). The unintended consequences of this change in information sharing and gathering is the minimal costs involved in exploiting data for the purposes of deception or the propagation of political ideology, inflammatory language, and the ability of this information to reframe an individual's personal sense of realities, in an "echo chamber of ideas". BORDEN and KOPP (KOPP, 2000) define a model of deception which

outlines four models associated with information theory, a) degradation, b) corruption, c) denial and d) subversion. Each of these models have been designed with the specific intention to altering the personal perception of the unsuspecting individual.

These models have a particular effect when utilised in the area of Social Media. Numerous incidents exist where the lack of robust modelling has led to the impairment of research into logically, scientifically and empirically observed facts. For example, in the case of the Macedonian Fake – News Complex. This consisted of a group of teenagers creating a localised, well paid industry, who earn significant advertising revenue by creating, publishing and circulating 'Fake News' via social media during the 2016 American Political Presidential campaign (SUBRAMANIAN, 2017). Using deception modelling, simulates Fake-News intrusion by a minimal population of deceivers, subsequently disseminates to a much greater number of unsuspecting individuals introducing, uncertainty, false beliefs and fear into otherwise rational individuals. These beliefs are then continually reinforced by social media algorithms (ROSLING, 2009). This alters the 'equilibrium' of behaviour in the overall population towards the bias introduced by the deceivers/special interest groups involved. Results also show that the ability for creators and producers of deceptive bias to remain within a particular marketplace or population is directly responsive to the financial cost of creating the data (KNOPP, KORB, & MILLS, 2018). The dispersal behaviours of agents creating falsehoods are remarkably similar, empirically to those patterns observed in social media when compared to epidemiological models.

3. Methodology and selection of thematic paragraphs

The 36 cases listed in the article, "No Blame" (LEVINE, 2019) were reviewed and categorised into the following themes: Physical violence, ethnic intimidation, cyber threats, telephone threats, verbal threats in person and terrorism. These examples have been specifically chosen on the basis of the prominence and clarity of the individuals' own associations between Trumps political rhetoric and their resulting criminal behaviour. The documentaries were chosen because of their narrative qualities and because popular culture may potentially validate or invalidate particular rhetorical constructions about individuals and social groups. The validated and invalidated rhetorical constructions may have different impacts as some people may draw from documentary films to understand certain individuals or particular social groups. In addition to this documentaries were chosen, rather than 'stills', or drama due for the immediacy of the media, allowing the researcher to investigate themes from an eyewitness perspective.

The strongest relationship between the individuals own words, and Trump's political rhetoric was found in 12 cases. As the main focus of this review is the relationship between Trumps political rhetoric and criminality it is important to in the first instance to concentrate on the words of the defendant's themselves. Identifying explicit verbatim, references, connecting court documents and the political rhetoric of Trump, as this relationship is the main focus of the review. This resulted in a purposeful sample of 5 cases being included in the analysis, 4 involving defendants and 1 legal counsel.

The broad range of documentaries were narrowed by date for relevancy, to those released in the last 20 years, and by accessibility. The documentary 'Hypernormalisation' (CURTIS, 2016) covered subject matter which gives historical context and mechanisms of the relationship between, politics, and cyberspace. The subsequent four documentaries are chosen for their representation of the individuals personal philosophies in the first person account. The documentaries provide an opportunity to explore how political rhetoric aligns with the specific philosophies; and how it shapes everyday behaviours, lives and beliefs.

The following list of documentaries were accessed and analysed initially :-"Brainwashing of My Dad" (SENKO, 2015), "Inside Job: How Bankers Caused the Financial Crisis" (FERGUSON, BECK & HOLT, 2010), "The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross" (GATES, 2013), "Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoc's War on Journalism" (GREENWALD, 2004), 'Hypernormalisation'

(CURTIS, 2016), "Immigration Battle – Reasons to Believe" (CAMERINI, ROBERTSON & EPIDOKO PICTURES, 2015), "Louis Theroux: Louis and the Survivalists" (BBC, 1998), "Louis Theroux: Louis and the Nazis" (THEROUX, 2003), "Surviving Americas Most Hated Family" (THEROUX, 2019), "Fahrenheit 11/9" (MOORE, 2018), "Reggie Yates: Race Riots USA" (BBC, 2015) and "Miss Representation" (SEIBEL NEWSOM & ACQUARO, 2011).

The documentaries were then selected on the basis that they provided opportunities for the individuals concerned to use their own words, citing ideologies and personal opinions expressed within their homes and communities.

The documentaries identified reflect observations on right wing, American politics and catalysts for social actions. Themes identified relate to the motivations and anxieties, which may contribute to the committing of crimes in the name of 'Donald Trump'.

As stated earlier, this piece is by no means a systematic analysis of documentaries or sources related to the effects of Trump's rhetoric. However, it strives to discover, and share how political rhetoric is reflected in the lives and actions of everyday American individuals, by critically reflecting on the following themes identified during the thematic analysis.

3.1 Acceptance of (distorted) altered realities as a motivator for murder

A primary theme discovered in the research which informs this paper was that of 'Altered Realities'. This phrase has been adopted to refer to the way in which an individual's perceptions of reality, beliefs or understanding of truths, are created, reinforced or changed through interaction with information found on the internet.

In the documentary "Hypernormalisation" (CURTIS, 2016), Curtis investigates the origins of cyberspace, and the internet. Curtis further explores the historical, political, technological, financial and social pathways which have destroyed public trust in political process and traditional journalism.

In conjunction with this documentary, this study explores the case of Anthony Comello (NUNZIATO, 2019). Comello is alleged to have murdered Francesco Cali on 13th March 2019. Comello believed Cali was part of the 'deep state'. Gottleib, Comello's lawyer, portrayed Comello as a delusional individual, and presented evidence that Comello, had become radicalised online. Comello has a particular interest in right wing conspiracy theories. Gottleib's defence proposes that Comello is 'not guilty by mental defect' urging for Comello to undertake psychiatric treatment rather than a custodial sentence. Comello appeared in court graphically sporting Trump phrases and the word QAnon.

Political strategists, like those involved in Trump's 2016 election campaign, create and exploit unregulated outlets to manipulate the population and alter perceptual realities in order to control and possess 'power' in the vacuum created by the loss of faith and understanding in objective truths. By exploiting the programming hierarchy's found in cyberspace Trump and his strategists have negated traditional checks found in physical world power structures, and spread extremist philosophies, online, presenting them as rational. Exploiting confusion and distrust in the real world. Obtaining the digital based power to create change, ruling through distrust, fragmentation, confusion and division, seeded in society over the past 50 years and leading to real world crime committed by Comello in the name of Trump's, debunked, rhetorically spread conspiracy theories.

The systems and algorithms developed have utilised the internet to collect information on millions of individuals, and dictate what individuals see and have access to online, causing an 'echo chamber of ideas' creating, reshaping and reinforcing an individual's belief systems, culminating

in a skewed 'hyper normality' or alternative reality, where real-world experience, is negated by online experience. As demonstrated by Comello graphically referenced Trump's rhetoric and political conspiracies in court. The algorithms may foist particular identities, and misrepresentations onto individuals creating confusion; and impose specific narratives of political rhetoric onto an individual's subconscious. The algorithms manipulate beliefs and behaviours to create a safe, simple digital space full of like-minded individuals, free of contentions and challenges, a refuge from the harsh, confusing complexities of the real world. This 'echo chamber of ideas' may have significant effects on and individual's subsequent perceptions of 'reality'.

Curtis's documentary explores the mechanisms which created the conditions for the hyernormalised concepts, intrinsic to the digital dissemination of Trump's political rhetoric Comello's crime can be directly linked with the conspiracy theories rhetorically disseminated by Trump; and brings into focus the destructive nature of altered cyber realities and the effect of extreme political, ideological rhetoric espoused by Donald Trump on vulnerable individuals.

As demonstrated in this theme, Comello and Trump through actions and political rhetoric display a chaotic relationship with perceptual reality. Altered Realities establish a power paradigm via confusion, as a staple tactic of right wing political policy. In this case, between Trump and Comello. Trumps Presidential political rhetoric and distorted, conspiracy theory centred, rhetorical narrative, disseminated through cyberspace endorses, and spread ideologies designed to aggravate and to confuse individuals, especially vulnerable individuals like Comello. The creation of Altered Realities escapes traditional informational checks in order to control political 'power'. Comello's actions in murdering a supposed member of the Deep State, named by Trump, bring into focus the destructive nature of altered cyber realities and dangers caused by extreme political rhetoric and conspiracy theories espoused and condoned by Trump. Particularly when such rhetoric and conspiracy theories are easily accessible, and toxically programmed online, marketed to vulnerable individuals who like Comello, kill motivated by the desire to create a 'safer society.

3.2 Toxic Beliefs

The phrase 'toxic beliefs' used as a title for this theme can be understood as a reference to a habit or mental state in which confidence or trust is placed in someone, or something, that is potentially harmful or malicious. It is important to note that the representation of the legislative process in "Immigration Battle – Reasons to Believe" (CAMERINI, ROBERTSON & EPIDOKO PICTURES, 2015) represent the frustrations, brought about by the incongruity between belief in a personal quest and ability to create significant change, leading to extreme actions. This concept is be found widely in western culture although mainly applied to young males in film and literature.

The documentary "Immigration Battle – Reasons to Believe" (CAMERINI, ROBERTSON & EPIDOKO PICTURES, 2015). Follows Luis Gutierrez, Democratic Congressman, and the progress of bi-partisan legislation on immigration reform through congress. The theme of 'toxic belief' is central to the documentary

In parallel to this documentary we will discuss the court case of Patrick Crusius aged 21, who is charged with 'Capitol Murder' after a mass shooting in the Cielo vista Mall, El Paso, Texas, USA, 3rd of August 2019 (GARCIA, 2019). Minutes prior to the attack, Crusius is alleged to have posted on 8chan a four page manifesto title "The Inconvenient Truth" outlining Crusius reasoning and ideology relating to the incident and blue–print for a 'better' society. The language and ideas described in the manifesto can be directly linked to those espoused in Donald Trump's political rhetoric and in Trump's Israeli peace plan.

Entwined in the documentary and Crusis's manifesto is the Trumpian, right wing rhetoric of 'othering' and 'racism', dehumanising the perceived enemy, potentially goading Trump supporters into supporting/committing violence against Latinos and Immigrants. Trump has called supporters to shoot immigrants in Texas. Cruisis's malicious actions may have been emboldened by the political and rhetorical validation of Trump to murder 22 and injure 24 people in the name of Alt-right ideology.

Evidence of the theme of 'toxic beliefs' align with the documentary 'Immigration – Reasons to Believe' (CAMERINI, ROBERTSON & EPIDOKO PICTURES, 2015) and are also taken from the Crusis manifesto. Crisis's and Gutiérrez's actions display uncritical toxicity, in the space where their beliefs become intrinsic to their motivations and identities. 'Belief' becomes accepted as the 'truth' because of the lack of critical thought surrounding their actions and active awareness of any negative feedback surrounding a situation. Both individuals ignore alternative narratives, displaying the ultimate naiveté of strongly held beliefs and actions, untethered by critical thought, evidenced in Crusis's writings, and Gutiérrez's impotent drive towards immigration reform. Rhetoric is used, that emphasises the need for immediate action creating anxiety which amplifies urgency to act, calling for change, and limiting critical thought processes for the protagonists and supporters. Both Gutierrez and Cruisis were reliant on the energy of political activists to validate, and embolden their actions, leading to harmful outcomes to supporters or bystanders. Gutiérrez and Cruisis leave a written legacy, seeking to disseminate these beliefs to others. The toxicity of belief systems is displayed in the negative outcomes experienced by witnesses and supporters alike; via death, family separation and deportation, and to Gutiérrez and Cruisis. Members of society who draw their understanding the political process of political change from these examples may be encouraged to accept the unhealthy concept of human 'collateral damage' as an acceptable part of the process of political change.

It is argued here that Trump's rhetoric and actions bypass traditional political pathways. Highlighting the impotence of the political process, as shown in Gutierrez's quest for immigration reform in the documentary.

3.3 Intolerance

For the purposes of this study, the theme, 'Intolerance' can be understood as unwillingness to accept beliefs, behaviours and views that are dissimilar or contrasting to one's own. Trumps political rhetoric displays intolerance for individual freedoms enshrined in the American Constitution for example the right to equality.

In March 2019, Matthew Haviland was convicted for sending threatening emails to a 'pro – choice' and anti – Trump, Harvard Law Professor at her places of work (LAFT, 2019).. Haviland also left threatening voice mails on the answerphone of an abortion clinic.

The THEROUX, (2019) documentary identified in this case also echoes themes of found in Havilland's crime. "Surviving Americas Most Hated Family" (THEROUX, 2019), returns to Topeka, Kansas, USA to revisit members and ex-members of the Westbro Baptist Church (WBC). WBC were made infamous for their protests against homosexuality and LBGTQ+ rights, at the funerals of soldiers, and at gay pride events with offensive chants, placards and actions which have officially labelled them a 'hate-group'. Theroux investigates the logical perversion and contortions of thought they follow in their interpretation of the Christian faith, the family divisions created in the name of God and the harm done by the WBC to ex-members and to the wider public through intolerance.

Explorations of this documentary and court case have led to the theme of intolerance. The concept of 'God' and multiple interpretations of socially acceptable group behaviours, particularly the Christian faith is an integral part of American life enshrined in the 'Pledge of Allegiance, chanted, daily by every school child in America. Haviland and congregants of the WBC show a strong commitment to their faith or cause, and radical divergence from generally accepted Christian norms of empathy and compassion in its interpretation. Negative attitudes to the LGBTQ community by WBC arise from the rigidity in their philosophy and fear of difference displayed in their rhetoric and actions shown to those who do not accept WBC's vision for a 'better' more moral America.

It is suggested here that Trumps' intolerant rhetoric exploits, amplifies and combines the concepts of 'Church' and 'State', adding validity to the values and criminal actions of WBC and Haviland. Individuals sharing similar belief systems may draw their understanding of appropriate behaviour from these examples giving rise to intolerant behaviour. Language echoing Trump's rhetoric and the WBC is cited directly in Haviland's transcripts, as evidence in his crime.

The language in Haviland's email threats; and those used by the WBC on their placards is violent, graphic and echoes Trump's anti-abortion, anti-Semitic, anti LGBTQ+ narrative and political rhetoric. Trump frames these philosophies as attacks on "the family" or as against the concept of 'family values'. Trump, WBC and Haviland use bullying and intimidation techniques. Intolerance is displayed by WBC and Haviland, all practicing negative, othering narratives in order to protect a 'hall of mirrors' defined ecosystem of existence. Intolerance borne of fear of a rapidly changing world, WBC, Haviland and Trump demonstrate cognitive dissonance in their beliefs, understanding of the lack of social acceptance and are unable to rationally discuss or defend their extreme ideologies with out- group individuals.

This theme has shown that Trump's political rhetoric demonstrates continuing, presidential endorsement and hyper-normalisation of intolerant, extremist beliefs, language and actions to the Jewish, LBGTQ communities and to 'pro-choice' providers. Trump's political rhetoric represents, intolerant belief systems as, desirable, positive behaviours to the wider public .It is argued here that Trump's political rhetoric positively endorses and normalises the current actions of the WBC, and Haviland's crime.

3.4 Delusional social representations of white and black Americans

In this theme, the word 'delusion' is used to refer to an unconventional impression of belief maintained in spite of contradictions by rational argument or evidence of personal reality. Representations of deluded behaviour that can act as window into issues surrounding and individual's concept of identity. Constant, unchecked reinforcement of extremist beliefs and behaviours may promote delusions. Such representations may act as warnings to the wider public. '

The documentary, "Louis and the Nazis" (THEROUX, 2003) looks at the life and social interactions of Tom Metzger, American Nazi Leader. The documentary investigates how racist, alt-right ideology shapes perceptions, and how Nazi ideology is shared through music and community events.

Coupling with this documentary in the theme of 'Delusion' is the criminal case of Frank Nucera (ADDISON, 2017). Nucera, Police Chief, of the Bordentown Township Police Department in Bordentown, New Jersey, USA, was convicted of a hate crime and violating a victims civil rights after using excessive force in the arrest of a Black individual in October 2016. Evidence against Nucera was provided by fellow officers.

The rhetoric espoused by Trump, Metzger and Nucera aligns with traditional racist labels and stereotyping, utilizing 'othering' narratives to disseminate and normalise their Nazi ideology

within social groupings. Trump, Nucera's and Metzger's rhetoric evidences personal fears and desires, to recourse to casual sadism for both for personal entertainment; and to virtue signal their visions for a 'better' America.

Dissemination of toxic ideologies through political rhetoric, either digitally or in community events, represents how hypernormalisation of extremist ideologies is rationalised, reinforced and normalised using, as previously discussed, an 'echo chamber of ideas' as a mechanism for individual self- radicalisation. Creating and reinforcing delusional beliefs in some individuals. Trump, Metzger's and Nucera's delusions centre on concepts of self-identity, and perceptions of respect and elevated social status signified by elevated roles in the hierarchies of Alt-right ideology. Trump, Nucera and Metzger, show delusion in how they perceive and enact their social or personal roles and actions, displaying confusion and uncritical belief. This is between beliefs, personal realities, and traditional, democratic social ideals. Together Metzger and Nucera, like Trump, can be seen as both perpetrators and victims of the fear created by their altered personal realities, manufacturing confusion and distrust in the communities they profess to serve

It is possible that, those sympathetic to Alt-right beliefs who have seen the documentary or read about Nucera's case will form a positive opinion of their representations. Others however, in contrast seeing them as narcissistic and isolated from wider society by Nazi beliefs. Whilst Metzger's rhetoric echoes and pre-dates Trump political rhetoric, it does not pre-date Trumps involvement with the Alt-right. Whereas Nucera's crime can be directly linked to Trump's political rhetoric through court documents evidencing shared verbal concepts and interpretive repertoires. This highlights again, through the theme of 'delusion', the distinct thematic connections between the representations of Metzger, the political rhetoric of Trump; and Trump's rhetorical endorsement of actions similar to those espoused by and evidenced in Nucera's words and criminal actions.

This theme highlights the harmful consequences of Trump's political rhetoric causing confusion, representing self-interest as group interest in order to disseminate, normalise and pursue toxic personal beliefs, ungrounded in the actuality of everyday experience.

3.5 Acquiescence

Within the context of this study the theme of 'acquiescence' has emerged. This theme can be understood in relation to individuals working for civil institutions or public services; and the instances where they are passive to, or give tacit agreement to policies, procedures and actions with which they do not personally agree or are detrimental to themselves, or the public.

The documentary "Fahrenheit 11/9" (MOORE, 2018) investigates the 'Water Crisis' in Flint, Michigan, U.S.A. In 2011, Republican Governor, and Trump supporter, Rob Snyder, appointed an unelected, emergency manager to manage the financially delinquent state. In 2013, the public water supply was changed causing widespread domestic pollution resulting in brain damage and developmental problems in thousands of children, as well increasing cancer causing pollutants in the water supply. The documentary suggests that public servants created and perpetuated the water crisis in Flint by concealing and denying evidence of the health crisis; and blocking improvements. This is mirrored in the Senate's actions, with the 'acquiescence' displayed by Republican Senators, in the denial of witnesses, who could give first hand evidence during Trumps impeachment.

The theme of acquiescence is also present within the court case of Allen, Stein, and Wright (MOORE, 2016). Known as the 'Crusaders', they espoused, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, anti-government, sovereign citizen extremist views echoing Trumps own endorsing, political rhetoric on these subjects. Allen, Stein and Wright were arrested on charges of domestic terrorism after planning to blow up a 'complex' in which Somali immigrants and Muslims lived and worshiped.

However, what is most interesting in their case is the acquiescence demonstrated by their lawyer, Pratt. Counter intuitively Pratt argued Trump's political rhetoric; and the current political climate, as a mitigation for their crimes, arguing that planning a domestic terrorism attack on peaceful members of the public, was simply a case of 'self-defence'.

Researchers in dissonance theory and authoritarianism have shown how the irrational can be justified as rational by individuals in order to fit a defined belief system leading to acquiescence of responsibility, and compliance with counterintuitive actions. As in the case of the Republican Senators,Trump's political rhetoric, endorses, defines and normalises public policies, procedures and attitudes counterintuitive to those responsible for public wellbeing. Allowing public servants then to carry out dehumanising, negative actions even when it violates personal morality, conscience, established behaviours or sworn duty, as in Flint by legal counsel, by members of Congress or in the case of child Immigrants.

An interesting picture emerges when we consider both the documentary relating to the Flint water crisis and the Allen, Stein and Wright case (MOORE, 2016). Public servants like Pratt, public officials in Flint; and the Republican Senators have, by their choice of rhetoric and actions or lack of them, acquiesced any personal or moral responsibility for their actions or ensuing consequences. Their actions skew and hyper-nomalising professional behaviours meant to protect the wellbeing of general public regardless of personal or party affiliations, despite multiple alternative views, or scientific evidence and any personal negative effects that might ensue. Pratt's legal defence of Allen, Stein, and Wright represents the acquiescence of legal professionals normalising domestic terrorism as a behaviour, incongruently portrayed as pre-emptive 'self-defence. The representation of these actions as acceptable, have lead other public servants to feel able to acquiesce personal responsibility for decisions that have strong negative effects on the wider population as in the case of the Senatethe theme of Acquiescence has highlighted in the case of Flint, Pratt by Republican Senators during Trumps 'Impeachment'. Impeachment is both a legal and public process encompassing both aspects of Acquiescence demonstrated by Pratt and in Flint. Trump's campaign of political rhetoric targeted at the close community of Republican Senators has caused Acquiescence by the Republican Senate of Constitutional duties and oaths. Again, Trumps political rhetoric publicly promotes self-interest as group interest, as better for America. Acquiescence by the Senators, both promotes Trump's own self- interest and that of the Senators themselves. Trumps political rhetoric endorses and promotes toxic beliefs by deluding, confusing and normalising ideologies, behaviours and counterintuitive, legal and public procedures consequently, creating new normal thereby causing individuals alter both their realities and behaviours.

4. Conclusion

The study investigated the link between representations of Trumpian political rhetoric and criminal activity found in documentaries and relevant court documents. The subjects of the documentaries ranged from the history of politics and its links with cyberspace, to cultural and social investigations into extremist philosophies and its effects on everyday life. The range of court cases covered included, cyber and telephone threats, use of excessive force, terrorism, murder and mass murder. This review did not look at historical examples of political rhetoric and its connection with crime, as the intention here, was to focus on the political rhetoric of Donald Trump; and individuals who committed crimes, that went onto cite Trump as a mitigating, or motivating factor. Alternative papers may adopt quantitative approaches to this subject, investigating linguistic links between Trump's political rhetoric, court documents, and posts on online platforms and forums. Other research strategies may produce different results and would provide a rich statistical source of information, to prove or disprove links. The focus of the research reported here did not seek empirical facts however, it clearly discovered thematic links between Trump's political rhetoric and criminal acts committed by his supporters. Future studies may   focus on other politicians in Europe or India, such as, Italy's ex- Deputy Prime Minister,

Matteo Salvini or India's Prime Minister Narendra Damodarda Modi. The data could also be categorised using different criteria, subject focus or research techniques. However, the purpose of the review was to demonstrate how different themes were represented culturally in documentaries, and also in reality, via criminal actions. The findings of this research paper demonstrated that themes of Altered Realities, Toxic Beliefs, Intolerance, Delusion and Acquiescence were represented in Documentaries and also found in crimes associated with Trump's political rhetoric. This added insight to our understanding of what underlies the criminal behaviours, and narratives represented within the key documentary and court cases reviewed. This study has provided a socio-cultural, analytical context for researchers interested in studying the links between Trump's political rhetoric as a motivation or endorsement of criminal behaviours. Future research may concentrate on a psychological approaches to criminal acts linked with self-radicalisation through political rhetoric, or a close analysis of the linguistic and psychological connections between Trumpian political rhetoric and criminal activity, found in criminal documents and online forums.

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