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TERRORISM DISCOURSE IN THE US - EVOLUTION OF DISCOURSE AT PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL AFTER 9/11

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ABSTRACT
Research on the terrorism discourse has been growing recently, however there has not been yet a research that would focus on an almost 18 years long time period and analyse all presidents of a country involved in the war on terror. This article attempts to fill this gap and analyses character and evolution of terrorism discourse in the United States at presidential level. It focuses on discourse evolution since the 9/11 attacks until the end of 2018. Author believes that it is important to know the character of discourse to be able to fight terrorism effectively, because rhetoric can influence counterterrorism measures and make them ineffective by for example being too aggressive or used for manipulation of public opinion. It uses Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and it analyses official speeches and Twitter accounts of Presidents of the United States in the studied era – George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. It focuses on all three levels of Fairclough´s analysis – textual, intertextual and contextual and it finds that the presidents' discourses are different in many respects even though they share some important characteristics and they're generally more calming throughout the time. However, all of the discourses were found not sufficient for effective counterterrorism measures. We need similar analyses of other countries to be able to change the way we present terrorism and make counter-terrorism more effective.

Key words: terrorism, 9/11, discourse, United States, presidents, counter-terrorism

Introduction

This article's aim is to analyse terrorism discourse in the US at presidential level after 9/11. It is not only important to look at counter-terrorism policies and tools but also on the way terrorism is presented. This helps us evaluate the effectiveness of our fight against terrorism and decide which way we should go next. Since spreading fear is one of terrorists´ objectives, we must know if our

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discourse contributes to spreading fear or, on the contrary, calms people down. We have to know if the discourse is too aggressive and therefore likely to create grievances and may potentially lead to adopt policies which are too aggressive and can stir people to further radicalisation. Discourse plays an important role in the fight against terrorism, therefore we need to study it. There are already some works dealing with terrorism discourse, however, they do not go in such depth to cover long periods of time and evaluate speeches on an official level covering more political leaders. This article analyses the US, since it is leading country in the fight against terrorism and therefore an appropriate starting point.

The article answers questions what is the character of terrorism discourse at presidential level in US since 9/11 and how it has evolved over time. It analyses the official speeches of three US presidents and also their social media – Twitter accounts, that are often used by politicians to communicate their message. The article uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by **Norman Fairclough**. CDA not only analyses texts themselves but also focuses on the context in which speeches were made and what practices were adopted in relation to speeches. This is the reason why the CDA was selected for this research. CDA focuses on the text itself its relation to other discourses and on the context. Therefore, CDA consists of three levels – text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 2013, p. 133).

The data used for this article consists of the presidential speeches made by presidents **Bush**, **Obama** and **Trump** since 9/11 available at AmericanRhetoric.com where the transcripts of all of these speeches can be found. We read the speeches and marked all three levels of **Fairclough**´s CDA. Then we analysed these parts and formulated conclusions about the discourse evolution based on this data. Then, the same was done with tweets made by **Obama** and **Trump,** as **Bush** had not owned a Twitter account when he was president.

1 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The article contributes to literature dealing with critical terrorism studies (CTS). This is an approach developed after 9/11 in reaction to orthodox terrorism studies (Jackson, 2016, p. 20). The attacks of 9/11 brought increase in terrorism studies and attracted both new scholars and topics. Critical terrorism studies do not reject traditional terrorism studies completely but build on them in an attempt to resolve things that are seen as problematic in the field (Fitzgerald,

2016, p. 114). CTS criticizes traditional terrorism studies for treating terrorism as objective and neutral concept. According to CTS, terrorism is socially constructed and subjective. According to them, it depends on speaker/author how he or she presents terrorism and everyone defines terrorism differently (Heath-Kelly, 2016, p. 137-138). Another critique voiced by CTS is that terrorism is not limited to violence committed by non-state actors on civilians and non-combatants but also includes states as possible perpetrators of terrorism. Another critique is limited methodology used by traditional terrorism studies. CTS especially criticize lack of primary empirical research and too much focus on secondary sources. The last critique is that authors conducting the traditional terrorism studies lack the distance from politicians and interest of government; thus the research is biased (Jarvis, 2016, p. 71-72).

Critical terrorism studies attempt to broaden methodology, bring new perspectives on definition of terrorism, as well as new topics, such as state terrorism. Research in CTS often focuses on discourse because authors engaged in CTS often believe that the term "*terrorism*" is not objective and it depends on the interpretation that is often done through language and creation of discourse (Jarvis, 2016, p. 73-75). Not all CTS works, however, believe in such subjectivity and for example the historical materialist approach that draws on critical realism believes that there is objective truth which can be analysed. It is an opposition to a widely spread discursive research that is big part of CTS (Porpora, 2016, pp. 182-187).

This article also focuses on discursive analysis. The rhetoric is important in CDA because it decides what is presented as terrorism act and what not; what the public reaction will be and how the adopted measures will look like (Zulaika, 2016, pp. 93-96). It does not believe that there is objective truth and that terrorism can present an objective concept. Discourse is important part of terrorism research because it plays important role in dealing with terrorism and thus needs to be studied. That is why this article focuses on discourse presenting terrorism.

Since the article focuses on analysis of discourse, the Critical Discourse Analysis as selected as the most suitable method. This method focuses on study of discourse which is seen as tool misused by those in power for reproduction of inequalities and to achieve their own interests (Dijk, 2001, p.249-251). It uses CDA created by **Norman Fairclough** because it is well suitable not only for studying the character of the discourse itself, but also its relation to existing discourses and social context. **Fairclough**´s CDA consists of

three levels. Textual level focuses on the character of the text itself, the language and labels that are used in the text. Intertextual level focuses on the use of existing discourses that are mentioned in the text. The contextual level analyses the context social practices that were adopted based on the texts/speeches (Fairclough, 2013, p. 133). We analysed official speeches made by three presidents of the United States between attacks of 9/11 and the end of 2018 and also their social media, particularly their Twitter accounts. We identified parts of the speeches/Tweets that deal with terrorism. Then we looked at these highlighted parts again and identified the three levels of **Fairclough**´s CDA, which we transcribed into a table. We identified the character of speeches and labels used, focusing mostly on creation of fear and aggressiveness of these speeches, since these can make the speeches counterproductive for counterterrorism operations. Too aggressive speeches can alienate people, help terrorists´ propaganda or legitimize too aggressive policies while creation of fear can help terrorist achieve their goal to scare people. We then analyse existing discourse that were mentioned in speeches, and also policies that were presented together with the context – development of the situation in relation to terrorism. Then we draw conclusions based on the data we accumulated and analysed and summarized our findings.

2 Discourse Evolution

2.1 George W. Bush

George W. Bush uses rhetoric which can be best described as mobilisational rhetoric, rhetoric that should make people to support his war efforts. He talks about war, he presents the threat of terrorism as existential - 9/11 attacks as attacks on freedom itself (Bush, 2001a) and civilised world (Bush, 2001b). At the same time, he stresses the devotion of the US to fight terrorism (Bush, 2002a) as well as his belief that the US will win: "…*we will win this conflict with the patient accumulation of successes, by meeting a series of challenges with determination, and will, and purpose*." (Bush, 2001c). He makes citizens feel that there is a threat that must be addressed. He says that the US can defeat the enemy but if they do not act then the enemy will come to US territory and pose even more danger to its people (Bush, 2006a). Therefore, only his policies can solve the problem. He also often says that US are already winning the fight (Bush, 2002b) to show people that his policies are successful

and must be maintained. He mobilises people for their support of the war on terror. He also stresses the successes that the US had already achieved, as for example the destruction of the Taliban (Bush, 2003a), arresting many terrorists (Bush, 2002b) or bringing more freedom to Afghanistan and Iraq (Bush, 2006b). To show the success even further, he says that the US are on the offensive (Bush 2006b) – to make them sound proactive and successful and not only reactive to terrorists. He often stresses that the reason why there were no other major terrorist attacks on US soil is because terrorists were not interested in attacking because his policies prevented them from realising such an attack (Bush, 2006c). **Bush** says that terrorism must be completely defeated so the US needs to continue the efforts to fight terrorism until this happens (Bush, 2006d). He described terrorism as a new kind of threat that was not there before. He describes the conflict as a new kind of war (Bush, 2002c).

Bush talks about terrorists´ goals and intentions. He presents them as a desire to remake the world and impose terrorists´ ideas on it to destroy the freedom and democracy that they hate (Bush, 2001d). Even though he uses war rhetoric he often uses the label terrorism. He connects these two issues together into a new discourse of the war on terrorism. He also describes the fight against terrorism as the ideological struggle of the 21st Century (Bush, 2006a). He often dehumanises terrorists and described them as evil that is very violent and cruel and stops at nothing to achieve the desired goals (Bush, 2001e), to further support his case of terrorists´ dangerousness. **Bush** also compares terrorism to dangerous figures known from history, such as **Lenin** or even **Hitler** (Bush, 2006e).

He also uses his rhetoric to connect the war on terror to other issues for the reason to legitimise his policies to deal with this issue. From 2003, he did that with Iraq. He connects **Saddam Hussein** to the threat of terrorism and the threat that terrorists will gain the weapons of mass destruction from **Saddam Hussein**. He stresses that terrorists are actively seeking these weapons and that regime of **Saddam Hussein** possess them and therefore make the threat of terrorism sound even more dangerous and alarming. His discourse and connection of these two issues are aimed to legitimise his policies to invade Iraq. **George W. Bush** often uses emotional language. He reminds people the 9/11 events to keep the memory of terrorist attack alive (Bush, 2001f) throughout his presidency (Bush, 2008a).

On an intertextual level of CDA, **Bush** draws on some already existing discourses. He stresses the American greatness. He describes America as the

"*brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world*"(Bush, 2001g). Another discourse he uses is the democratic peace theory – the belief that democracy can leave to peace (Bush, 2004). **Bush** does not draw on many existing discourses. However, he creates new ones that will also be used by other speakers later. He creates the discourse of the war on terror that has not been mentioned before. He connects terrorists to the desire to gain weapons of mass destruction. He also connects Iraq to terrorism. He proclaimed terrorism to be new threat and make some stereotypes about terrorists such as we cannot negotiate with them. The last discourse he creates is the 9/11 as the worst attack on US that changed everything. These are the discourses he creates and he repeats them often.

On a contextual level of CDA, **Bush** focuses on policies that the US adopted to fight terrorism. Directly after the 9/11 attacks he talks about the measures the US have adopted to assist the victims and protect people. He describes these measures in more general sense such as "*appropriate measures*" (Bush, 2001a) "*full resources*" (Bush, 2001h). He also talks about measures to help injured people, he stresses that the government continues to work and assist people and that they are searching for the terrorists who committed the attacks (2001g). He talks about the war in Afghanistan (Bush, 2001c) and war in Iraq (Bush, 2003b) as two parts of war on Terror that is fought abroad and aim to defeat the enemy before he is able to come back to the US. He talks about the international effort and coalition that is fighting terrorism in these two countries (Bush, 2003c).

Bush also states that US are fighting terrorists by means other than war – for example freezing their assets (Bush, 2001b) or also building Afghanistan and Iraq to become strong and stable nations (Bush, 2003d). He also talks about domestic measures such as the creation of Homeland Security (Bush, 2001d), use of intelligence or also adoption of Patriot Act (Bush, 2001i). Another measure that he talks about is the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for intelligence and targeted killing (Bush, 2001j). Since **Bush** often connects terrorism to the desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction, he also talks about strategies to stop the proliferation of these weapons (Bush, 2001j). He connects the fight against terrorist organisations with the fight against states which sponsors them (Bush, 2002b). He talks about modernising domestic institutions to be more able to fight against terrorism (Bush, 2002c). In his speeches he not only mentions the efforts of nations – but also the efforts of international organisations in fighting terrorism. He speaks about the resolutions

adopted by the United Nations (Bush, 2003e) or the NATO's efforts (Bush, 2008b). According to **Bush**, part of the US strategy is also to stay on the offensive and fight terrorism abroad so they will not come to the US (Bush, 2005). Therefore, his fight against terrorism is more focused abroad than it is on the domestic soil. He says that terrorists are also being arrested and send to Guantanamo Bay where they are questioned by CIA (Bush, 2006d).

2.2 Barack Obama

The general character of his speeches can be described as milder than the rhetoric of **George W. Bush**. He does not dehumanise terrorists as often as **George Bush**. In the first term of his Presidency he does not describe terrorists themselves as evil but relates more to the acts that they are committing (Obama, 2010a). He also often talks about them as "*men*" (Obama, 2010b). This changed during his second term with the danger of ISIL. He describes them as cancer (Obama, 2014a), therefore dehumanising them. He also connects it to hatred and violence, even though he does not dehumanise the terrorists as much as his predecessor. He also uses the dichotomy of good and evil and describes terrorists as full of hatred and their victims as innocent civilians (Obama, 2009a). This is the only characteristic in his speeches that is more aggressive in the second term of his presidency. He is generally milder during the second term. He no longer describes terrorism as existential threat (Obama, 2016a) while he does during his first term (Obama, 2010a). He also tries to calm people down. He describes terrorism as tactics and says that Islam is not the only religion that uses religion to justify violence. He reminds people of the crusades in the past (Obama, 2009b) and says that terrorism itself is not new (2014b). He had described it as a new threat before (Obama, 2010b). Later he also acknowledges that terrorism cannot be eradicated completely (Obama, 2016b). However, when talking about ISIL he still says that it has to be ultimately destroyed (Obama, 2015a).

Barack Obama is aware that spreading fear is one of the terrorists´ goals and he warns people against it (Obama, 2015b) So, his rhetoric is less spreading fear than that of **George W. Bush** because he is aware that doing so would be counter-productive. Even though he calms people down, he still presents terrorism as a present threat. He says that terrorists are still planning to attack the US (Obama, 2010c) he stresses that terrorists are not only a threat to distant countries but also to the US (Obama, 2010d). He stresses that al

Qaeda has continued to plan attacks against the US on more than one occasion (Obama, 2011a). **Obama** also mentions the threat from individuals that undergo radicalisation (Obama, 2013a). He also often mentions the determination of the US to win the fight against terrorism (Obama, 2009a). He talks about the successes that the US has already achieved. This includes the killing of al Qaeda leaders (Obama, 2009c) including **Osama bin Laden** (Obama, 2011b), the end of the Iraq war and progress in Afghanistan (Obama, 2012a). Just like **George W. Bush,** he also uses emotional words, such as – tragic (Obama, 2013b), chaos (Obama, 2013c), ruthless killing (Obama, 2015c) etc.

On an intertextual level, **Obama** draws more on existing discourses than **Bush**. He talks about the greatness and exceptionality of the US (Obama, 2016c) and, also talks about US values, for instance in relations to Guantanamo that is against these values (Obama, 2016d). He believes that the US are strong and cannot be broken (Obama, 2015d). He then often mentions discourses created by his predecessor **George W. Bush** - the war on terror and the terrorists desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction, he talks about nuclear terrorism as a high priority for his administration (Obama, 2010e). However, he frames the war on terror differently. He does not use the words "*war on terror*" often and simply refers to it as a war (Obama, 2009b). He also uses discourse created by another counter-terrorism model – the health model – when he refers to ISIL as a cancer (Obama, 2014a). Just as the **George W. Bush**, he also often reminds people of the events of 9/11 and does not allow them to forget this event (Obama, 2010f).

In contextual level, **Obama** also talks about the policies and strategies. He mentions the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, ending the combat operations in Iraq and sending troops back home (Obama, 2009d). With regards to Afghanistan he talks about the transition of responsibility to the Afghan government (Obama, 2010g), helping to build Afghanistan (Obama, 2009e), the reduction of troops (Obama, 2013d) and changing the mission to support and training local forces (Obama, 2015e). Another issue he talks about in his speeches are the air-strikes against the ISIL (Obama, 2014c). The US conducts air-strikes against ISIL positions and also supports local forces in their fight against this terrorist organisation (Obama, 2015a). Besides that, **Barack Obama** talks about the international coalition to fight the ISIL (Obama, 2015f), and other measures that are taken to defeat terrorists from the ISIL, such as disrupting their financing (Obama, 2016a). In relation to military operations, **Barack Obama** also talks about using drones. He supports them for US

protection in Afghanistan (Obama, 2013e), however, later he limits their use to stop alienating the local people (Obama, 2014d). With regard to measures that are taken abroad he talks about two other issues. The first is closing of Guantanamo Bay that he wants to close to improve America's image and to show that the US do not torture prisoners (Obama, 2009f). The second is securing nuclear materials (Obama, 2011c) and therefore preventing nuclear proliferation (Obama, 2009f).   As the article mentioned above, **Barack Obama** speaks about the terrorists´ desire to acquire nuclear weapons and therefore he places the focus on means of preventing them from achieving this goal.

He does not just talk about measures that have to be or are being taken abroad but also about domestic policies. He mentions the need revise intelligence that is important for the counter-terrorism efforts, including as well the Patriot Act (Obama, 2013f). He reviewed the hostage policy (Obama, 2015g) that became more visible when the ISIL took and killed American hostages in Iraq. He also focuses on the counter-terrorism policy and its reform to make it suitable for present threats (Obama, 2014e). After two domestic terrorist attacks on US territory – The Christmas Day bombing and the Boston bombing, he also speaks about these events and the measures that have to be taken. After the Christmas Day bombing, he talks about intelligence revisions (Obama, 2010i) after Boston he mostly speaks about investigation this event and helping victims (Obama, 2013g). He also talks about countering radicalisation and therefore not only focuses on the policies that should deal with existing terrorist organisations but also people who are at risk of being radicalised (Obama, 2015d).

Barack Obama has had a Twitter account throughout the entire duration of his presidency. However, he does not discuss the issue of terrorism there very often and generally focuses on other issues such as LGBT rights, education or health care. When he tweets about terrorism the discourse is very similar to one of his official speeches. In some tweets he mentions his successes in the fight against terrorism (Obama 2012b), he mentions the success of ending war in Iraq and Afghanistan (Obama, 2012c) or saying that US citizens will not be terrorised when he talks about the attacks in Boston (Obama, 2013h). He does not draw on other discourses or describes actions that will be implemented, on Twitter.

2.3 Donald Trump

The character of **Donald Trump**'s speeches is more aggressive than that of his predecessor. He dehumanises terrorists and in majority of his speeches he talks about them as evil (Trump, 2017a). He also presents the battle as good versus evil (Trump, 2017b) and describes terrorists as violent and full of hatred and who are killing innocent people (Trump, 2017c) and therefore making them sound even more ruthless. **Trump** also stresses that "…*terror groups stop at nothing to commit the mass murder of innocent men, women and children.*" (Trump, 2017d) which stresses the danger their present. He also presents the battle as one between civilised world (Trump, 2017e) and terrorists who are seen as the enemy of civilisation (Trump, 2017f) and therefore further dehumanising them. His speeches may spread fear by some characteristics – for example by focusing on attacks that have happened recently – United Kingdom (Trump, 2017b), Manila (Trump, 2017g) and Barcelona which he described as vicious (Trump, 2017d). He also names other terrorist attacks and presents terrorism as a threat that is present worldwide (Trump, 2017c), that they "*gathered strength*" and have the rogue regimes support (Trump, 2017h).

Trump also presents the threat as existential and says that the freedom and survival of the US and their allies depend on this fight and their cooperation in it (Trump, 2017f). He stresses the danger by connecting terrorist to the desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction. He talks about Iran and the danger it presents by owning nuclear weapons since it is considered to be one of the states sponsoring terrorism and therefore able to provide them with this weapon (Trump, 2018a). However, he does not only present them as vicious killers that should be feared but degrades their image by describing them as losers on multiple occasions (Trump, 2017d). **Trump** also calms people down by stressing US successes have had in the fight against terrorism and his devotion to win this fight. He believes that terrorism has to be destroyed. He says that it is necessary to "…*demolish and destroy ISIS.*" (Trump, 2017i), "…*extinguish ISIS from the face of earth.*" (Trump, 2018b) and he seems certain that the US can do it and "…*will eradicate terrorism completely.*" (Trump, 2017a). He says that US citizens should not be afraid and that they are protected (Trump. 2017a). He names terrorist attacks in various countries, at the same time, he says that he will not allow terrorism to reach the US again (Trump, 2017i). He says that even though the threat exists, the US will confront it and win the struggle (Trump, 2017f). The only time he does not seem sure about victory is

when he presents war in Afghanistan as a war without an end (Trump, 2017d). On the other hand, when talking about ISIS, he stresses the success that the US and their allies are achieving (Trump, 2018b). **Trump** also uses emotional language. When talking about terrorism he uses words such as "*horribly murdered*," "*barbaric vicious attack*" (Trump, 2017d), "*horrific terrorist attacks*" (Trump, 2017b), "*dangerous terrorists*", "*bloodthirsty killers*" (Trump, 2017j).

On intertextual level, **Trump** does not draw on other discourses too often. He mentions the war on terrorism (Trump, 2017g) discourse created by **George W. Bush** and also often used by his predecessor **Barack Obama**. Just as the previous two presidents, he talks about American greatness (Trump, 2017a). He also mentions the terrorists desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction (Trump, 2018b) and 9/11 as the most horrible attack on US soil that can't be forgotten (Trump, 2017d).

On a contextual level, **Trump** talks about strategies of how to continue the fight against terrorism. He changed the strategy for Afghanistan. Even though he would prefer leaving Afghanistan, he said that the US will stay and continue the fight. They will not set a timetable to leave because he does not want to inform enemy about the timetable for ending combat operations. He says that the new strategy also involves economic and diplomatic measures, not only military ones and he even does not rule out future settlement with Taliban – therefore, he does not support the discourse that we cannot negotiate with terrorists. He wants to change strategy towards Pakistan and India – not blindly supporting Pakistan since it continues to help terrorists and instead build relations with India. He also wants NATO partners to support this new strategy. The big change in the new strategy for Afghanistan is that the US will not do any nation building and they are not interested in building democracy in Afghanistan (Trump, 2017d). He stresses that the US will help Arab nations to fight terrorism but they will not win the war for them and they will only assist. He says that Arab partners need to carry their share of the burden as well and not simply wait for the US to solve the situation (Trump, 2017c). He wants to focus both on the terrorist groups and on states that support them. He says that it is important to fight terrorist financing, ideology and strip them of the territory they possess. On the other hand, the strategy also needs to focus on states sponsoring terrorists, providing them with safe havens (Trump, 2017h) this includes dealing with Iran that can potentially provide them with nuclear weapons (Trump, 2017c). **Trump** approved new sanctions on Iran (Trump, 2017k). **Trump** also

wants the Guantanamo Bay to remain open (Trump, 2018b), unlike **Obama** who fought to close it as mentioned above.

He says that in cooperation with their allies, the US also made some institutional changes in the fight against terrorism and opened Global Centre for Combating Extremist Ideology; signed an agreement to fight terrorist by financing the Terrorist Financing Targeting Centre (Trump, 2017c). **Trump** not only talks about strategies and measures that have to be taken abroad but also about domestic counter-terrorism measures that should protect American citizens. These involve new US vetting procedures (Trump, 2017k) and he also wants to cancel the visa lottery which allow random people to acquire a green card (Trump, 2018b).

Donald Trump is the only analysed president that uses Twitter more than official speeches. The discourse is also the same as the discourse in his official speeches. He also dehumanises terrorists, not only talking about them as about evil but also as animals (Trump, 2018c). He stresses the threat´s presence (Trump, 2017l) and also the devotion and successes of the US in this fight (Trump, 2017m). He also does not draw on other discourses and does not even talk about the connection of terrorism and nuclear weapons. He calls for the stronger measures to protect borders etc. (Trump, 2017n).

Conclusion

This article analysed terrorism discourse in the US at official level after 9/11 and its goal was to answer what is the character of terrorism discourse at presidential level in US since 9/11 and how has it evolved? It used both official speeches and Twitter account of presidents to answer these questions. The character of discourses is very similar in some respects. When looking at textual level, all presidents dehumanise terrorism, even though **Barack Obama** does that to lesser extent. They also all talk about terrorism emotionally, remind people of 9/11, describe it as a threat and connect it to the threat of nuclear weapons. All presidents also stress their administration's devotion to fight terrorism and the certainty of victory as well as stressing the successes their administration have already achieved. All presidents thus do create fear and use aggressive rhetoric. This is least true for **Barack Obama**; however, he also does it to some extent.

The rhetoric is also quite different for each president. While the discourse of **George W. Bush** is mostly mobilizational in character, **Barack Obama** tries to

keep people calm by saying that terrorism is not new and spreading fear is one of their goals so people should not be afraid; **Donald Trump** then adopts a more aggressive discourse but also focuses on domestic politics which makes it sound less mobilizational and he also assures people that the US are protected.

All of the analysed presidents draw on some already existing discourses. **Obama** and Trump used more existing discourses than **Bush** who was the creator of most of them – such as war on Terror or 9/11 as the worst attack in history. All presidents also mention their policies and strategies and the changes that will occur within them. The contextual part is the most neutral in character and the most similar for all of them.

The evolution of discourse is visible over time. The character of rhetoric of all presidents is mostly stable over time in regards to terrorism. The major change in **Bush**'s speeches is the turn to Iraq in 2003; in **Obama**'s speeches there is a milder character in his speeches during his second term of his presidency, as described above. **Trump**´s speeches are still very similar in character, but that could be caused by the short time of his presidency so far.

The spread of fear by the discourse is most visible during **Bush**'s era. However, all of the analysed presidents use speeches that can be seen as spreading fear and therefore there is still room for improvement. The aggressiveness of speeches seemed less pronounced during Obama's term, but is increasing again under **Trump**. Nevertheless, it does not always lead to the adoption of aggressive measures – **Trump** for example does not adopt policies to intensify the war against terrorism but focuses more on ending the US engagement.

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