



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY

Marianna Stetsyk
English Studies (Media Discourse)

**Figurative Framing of President Donald Trump and His Policies
in Republican- and Democratic-Aligned Media
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Academic Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr Jurga Cibulskienė

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Abstract

This research paper aims to analyze how figurative language constructs the representation of the incumbent U.S. president Donald Trump in the Republican- and Democratic-aligned media. This research aims to identify and compare metaphors and the most prominent source domains in the corpus of texts, produced by the representatives of contrasting political views in the right-leaning and left-leaning U.S. online news outlets. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004), revealing how metaphors contribute to shaping representations and reinforcing ideological framing in political discourse. The methodological design is based on a qualitative research design with quantitative elements, emphasizing the interpretation of the findings. For this study, two sub-corpora (approx. 50, 000 words each) were compiled based on the texts produced by four leading American news outlets (*The Atlantic*, *the New York Magazine*, *the American Conservative*, *the American Spectator*) in the period of 2024 to 2025. To ensure the accuracy of the metaphor identification stage, a Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group 2007) was utilized. In addition, a set of criteria for identifying evaluative characteristics (Hidalgo-Downing & Perez-Sobrinio 2022) was employed to establish the evaluative tendencies of framing across both sub-corpora. The findings show that the prevailing source domains across both sub-corpora are CONFLICT, JOURNEY and ENTERTAINMENT, accounting for the most examples in terms of identified tokens. The relative evaluative distribution of both sub-corpora shows the prevalence of the negative characteristics, indicating a rather negative inclination in framing.

Key words: figurative framing, metaphors, source domains, Donald Trump, Democratic- and Republican-aligned media;

Anotacija

Šio tyrimo tikslas – išanalizuoti, kaip figūratyvioji kalba formuoja dabartinio JAV prezidento Donaldo Trumpo įvaizdį respublikonams ir demokratams palankioje žiniasklaidoje. Tyrimu siekiama nustatyti ir palyginti metaforas ir jų ryškiausias šaltinių sritis (angl. *source domains*) tekstynuose, kuriuos sudaro priešingų politinių pažiūrų atstovų tekstai dešinėsios ir kairiosios pakraipos JAV internetinėse naujienų svetainėse. Tyrimo teorinis pagrindimas yra kritinė metaforų analizė (Charteris-Black 2004), atskleidžianti, kaip metaforos prisideda prie įvaizdžio formavimo ir ideologinių įsitikinimų atskleidimo politiniame diskurse. Tyrimo metodologija grindžiama kokybinio tyrimo dizainu su kiekybiniais elementais, pabrėžiant rezultatų interpretaciją. Šiam tyrimui buvo sudaryti du patekstiniai (kiekvienas apimantis apie 50 000 žodžių), iš keturių populiariųjų JAV naujienų portalų (*The Atlantic*, *The New York Magazine*, *The American Conservative*, *The American Spectator*) tekstų, paskelbtų 2024–2025 m. Siekiant užtikrinti metaforų identifikavimo etapo tikslumą, buvo taikoma metaforų identifikavimo procedūra (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group 2007). Be to, buvo panaudoti vertinimo identifikavimo kriterijai (Hidalgo-Downing & Perez-Sobrino 2022), siekiant nustatyti metaforų vertes. Rezultatai rodo, kad abiejose tekstynuose vyraujančios šaltinio sritys yra KONFLIKTAS, KELIONĖ ir PRAMOGA. Vertinamųjų metaforų pasiskirstymas rodo, kad tiek kairiųjų, tiek dešiniųjų pažiūrų žiniasklaidoje vyrauja neigiamos savybės, o tai rodo, kad informacijos pateikimo tendencija yra gana neigiama.

Raktiniai žodžiai: figūratyvusis freimingas, metafora, šaltinio sritys, Donaldas Trumpas, respublikonams ir demokratams palanki žiniasklaida.

Introduction

The study of metaphors has become a prominent area of research, as much attention has been given to analyzing the functions and significance of metaphors in our daily life (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Charteris-Black 2004; Chilton 2004). Traditional perspectives viewed metaphors as ornamental devices, merely used in literature and poetry with decorative and aesthetical purposes. Later studies have demonstrated that metaphors are inseparable from our conceptual system, as they construct our perception of reality by conceptualizing our experiences (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Gee 1999; Brdar 2011).

Due to the mediatization of political discourse, news forms of mediated and intentionally constructed media representations were adapted to affect the audience's opinions and political convictions. In a political context, the use of figurative language is central for persuading, gaining attention, shaping political views, reinforcing ideologies and facilitating understanding of complex ideas (Hague et al. 2004; Chilton 2004; McNair 2011; Charteris-Black 2014). Figurative language, often being evaluative, reinforces certain representations and frames the construction of political legitimacy (Charteris-Black 2014). It has been noticed that a limited number of studies have been conducted in relation to the media representation of the incumbent U.S. president Donald Trump and his second-term presidency (2025 – present). Therefore, the analysis of metaphors used for constructing the media representation of Donald Trump and his policies is believed to be pivotal, due to the substantial media attention, public debates and discussions in relation to Donald Trump's political decisions and actions during his second-term presidency. Media coverage is crucial in representing political figures, as it shapes how various audiences interpret their ideas and actions. Therefore, this research paper aims to analyze how Donald Trump is metaphorically represented in Republican- and Democratic-aligned online outlets. To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were formulated:

1. To identify metaphorical expressions and categorize them into source domains in the Democratic- and Republican-aligned media sub-corpora in relation to Donald Trump's second term presidency.
2. To analyze the development of source domains through their subdomains by examining metaphorical expressions.
3. To analyze the evaluative tendencies of metaphorical expressions across the left-leaning and the right-leaning sub-corpora.
4. To analyze ideological implications of metaphors.

This research paper is structured as follows. First, the *Literature Review* section presents the overview of the relevant literature within the research field, introducing the theoretical frameworks consisting of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Cognitive Linguistics, including the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA). Then, the *Data and Methods* section provides more insights into data selection and methods of the analysis. The section of *Results and Discussion* provides results, featuring the qualitative discussion with the focus on quantitative results, including the identification of prominent source domains and subdomains in both sub-corpora. This section also compares the distribution of evaluative characteristics and reveals the ideological implications across both sub-corpora. The *Conclusion* section provides the outcomes of the analysis, by presenting key findings. Lastly, the research paper consists of the *References* and *Data sources* sections, followed by the *Appendix* section.

Literature Review

1.1. Political Discourse and Media

The complexity of defining politics lies in its multidimensional nature and the contestability of the concept itself. According to political science scholars, it is nearly impossible to provide an exclusive definition of politics that would fit in any context and regarding any uses or purposes (Dijk 1998; Hague et al. 2004; McNair 2011). However, we intuitively ascribe specific actions, decisions or occurrences as being *political*. Therefore, there are certain broad strands that are associated with politics: struggle for power and cooperation (Chilton et al. 2004).

There is a common ground to state that “politics is a certain activity by which groups reach binding collective decisions through attempting to reconcile differences among their members” (Hague et al. 2004: 3). Those differences, are believed to be settled through discussion and persuasion, which makes communication central to politics (Chilton et al. 2002; Hague et al. 2004; Romarheim 2005). This leads us to the introduction of political discourse as an ongoing discussion throughout a society. As proposed by Van Dijk (1998: 13), in order to define political discourse, we must consider identifying its central actors (politicians, institutions, etc.) as certain initiators and recipients (voters, citizens, demonstrators, etc.) as interactors. Additionally, political functions (voting, ruling, protesting, negotiating, etc.) as well as other contextual dimensions are crucial (Van Dijk 1998).

It is impossible to deny the interrelation between political and media discourses. According to Fetzer & Lauerbach (2007: 14), “as mediated political discourse, it is the outcome of the encounter of two different institutional discourses – those of politics and of the media”. With the continuous development and popularization of mass media over the decades, the speed and the accessibility of mass media have significantly increased (McNair 2011; Hague 2004; Louw 2005). As a result, the media has transformed into new formats, allowing news dissemination through digital channels and attracting unlimited audiences.

At current times, media texts play a vital role in displaying the prevalence of certain values, issues and ideologies through the construction of representations (Hague 2004; Fetzer et al. 2007). As Louw (2005: 97) puts it, “mass politics is very much about perceptions and perception management”. Due to the mediatization of political discourse, the depiction of latest domestic affairs has become more image-driven, deliberate and media-dependent than ever. As proposed by McNair (2011: 47), “the media not only provide cognitive knowledge, informing us about what is happening, but they also order and structure political reality, allotting events greater or lesser significance according to their presence or absence on the media agenda”. The media has undergone major shifts in communication style, strategically adjusting the framing of issues, adapting its language and modifying

representations for commercial interests of the media (McNair 2011). In order to understand the effect of mediated political discourse, there is a need in dividing the *objective* and *subjective political reality*. As proposed by McNair (2011), *objective reality* constitutes political actions and decisions as they happen. Conversely, the *subjective reality* is heavily dependent on media coverage, as it is ascribed to be a matter of interpretations of audiences.

Therefore “journalist’s words, as much as the camera operator’s images, help to frame the story, providing a narrative which encourages a particular reaction from the viewer” (Hague et al. 2004: 3). The main objective of media framing is to pique curiosity, set an agenda, dramatize and entertain audiences by tailoring strategies and achieving desired outcomes (Hague et al. 2004; McNair 2011). As political discourse is being purposefully mediated and carefully constructed, different narratives and identity construction strategies are used to affect audiences and reach desired outcomes.

1.1.1. Media Representation

The mediatization of political discourse has created a need to examine how political actors are narrated in media across online platforms, and how their media representations are constructed depending on the intended audiences. Therefore, it is essential to establish the significance of the concept of *identity*. The concept of identity is believed to be enigmatic, as there is no sole definition in existence, which could capture its precise meaning and would be adequate in various contexts. Certain shared features are believed to be crucial in regard to identity, including gender, age, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, social context, individual characteristics or personality traits, differences, etc. (Fearon 1999; Buckingham 2008; Leary et al. 2012).

This research paper approaches *identity* as a form of a mediated and purposefully constructed media representation, which is occasionally referred to as ‘narrative identity’. The so-called ‘narrative identity’ (Somers 1994; Whitebrook 2001; Benwell et al. 2006) is believed to be culturally dependent, situational and contextualized, dynamic and continuously changing. This leads us to the exploration of media representations, specifically of those narrated by mediators (journalists, editors, media experts, news agencies, etc.). As proposed by Georgakopoulou (2002), “through storytelling, narrators can produce ‘edited’ descriptions and evaluations of themselves and others, making identity aspects more salient at certain points in the story than others” (Georgakopoulou 2002 cited in Benwell et al. 2006: 137). Consequently, the way political actors are represented in the media affects the interpretation of their actions by audience.

The construction of media representation is crucial due to its impact on social perception and public opinion shaping (Esser et al. 2014; Louw 2005). As proposed by Neary (2018:7), “the mainstream media can never offer us a full and unbiased picture, but instead uses language and imagery to provide

us with representations of reality”. For example, a negative media representation could damage reputation and cause a loss of public trust and therefore influence voting behavior. As suggested by Inac (2013: 224), “if the identity is solely defined by the “other”, the distinctive features and otherness dimension of the identified is emphasized and the common points are disregarded”. In media, such representations aim to create an unfavorable image to put a political figure at a disadvantage and exclude him from a social group.

This research paper adopts a view of identity as a discursively and cognitively constructed phenomenon that is dependent on language use in specific social contexts. Hence, the concept of *identity* in mediated political discourse can be analyzed by combining both approaches, those of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Cognitive Linguistics. The central argument introduced above will be addressed and further elaborated in following chapters, with section 1.1.2. focusing on CDA and section 1.1.3 elaborating on the CL perspective.

1.1.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), also referred to as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), are believed to be highly multifaceted due to their wide spectrum of theoretical backgrounds and methodological diversity (Wodak 2007). One of the prominent concepts of CDA that need to be defined is one of a *discourse*. Traditionally, discourse is mainly associated with language in use, contextualized rather than isolated, ever-changing rather than fixed (Gee 1999; Wodak 2005). As proposed by Jorgensen (2002: 61), discourse is defined as “a form of social practice which both constitutes the social world and is constituted by other social practices”. Similarly, Gee (1999) suggests that social actors create a discourse by communicating and deliberately constructing their language according to the relevance or appropriateness of the context.

By referring to discourse analysis as being *critical*, as in *critical discourse analysis*, we highlight its goals to not only provide explanations to how a language functions, but to intervene with controversial topics, taking into consideration certain issues of social and political matters (Gee 1999; Van Dijk 2015). As specified by Jorgensen (2002: 64), CDA doesn’t position itself as being politically neutral, but rather as “politically committed to social change”.

Fairclough (2004) suggests viewing language as a discourse and social practice, while highlighting the necessity and commitment of oneself to not only concentrate on the production and interpretation of texts, but to also analyze the relationships between them and their social conditions. In CDS, the commonly shared view of language is as of a *social practice*, which allows a discourse to be shaped by social conditions, participants, their identities and relationships (Gee 1999; Fairclough 2004). For that reason, a text is considered to be only a part of a discourse, as the process of production and

interpretation are of equal importance. Hence, the idea of a linguistic unit being thoroughly analyzed without its communicative context has been earnestly questioned by scholars (Gee 1999; Jorgensen 2002). The idea that two expressions are exactly identical or constructed from the same words does not mean that their meaning is the same (Foucault 1972). Therefore, a notion of context is central to CDA, as it allows analysts to interlink how and for what reasons discourse is being produced and interpreted.

As a matter of fact, discourse, ideology and power are referred to as *cornerstones of CDA*, as they are crucially important for the interpretation of text (Wodak 2003). Consequently texts, spoken or written, are potentially ideological, thus ways in which social contexts occur can have significant ideological impact on distribution of power, creating unequal relations between certain groups (Fairclough 1989; Van Dijk 2011). In this case, power is exercised through discourse by implementing a specific ideology and controlling production and consumptions of texts. Consequently, ideologies are seen as “shared mental representations that are used or applied as a basis for the specific ideological conduct of group members – of which discourse is crucial” (Van Dijk 2011: 384). Additionally, according to Nesler (1993), people tend to accept ideological ideas and beliefs through discourse, if they believe sources to be “authoritative, trustworthy, or credible sources, such as scholars, experts, professionals, or reliable media” (Nesler et al. 1993 by van Dijk 2001). Hence, different discourses may affect the way social representations are formed and mental models are altered (Van Dijk 2001).

Moreover, Chilton (2004) defines power in terms of controlling others’ use of language, specifically by censorship and various accessibility limitations. At the same time, ideology is intertwined with the notion of power, as power is also defined by the ability to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (Fairclough 1989). That ability, on the other hand, puts oneself to an advantage and allows access to ‘scarce social resources’ such as information, knowledge, fame or status, etc.

1.2.Cognitive Linguistics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Cognitive Linguistics has been a prominent research area for the last few decades and have resulted in numerous research studies, attracting many scholars with diverging interests (Fillmore 1982; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987). According to Geeraerts (2007: 4), CL “focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information”. Similar stances are shared by Croft (2004: 2), who views language as the “real-time perception and production of a temporal sequence of discrete, structured symbolic units”. The general idea of CL, as presented by Geeraerts and Cuyckens (2007), highlights that linguistic knowledge is much broader than just knowledge of language, as it also encompasses understanding of the world mediated by language.

In accordance with Bruner (1991: 3), “cultural products, like language and other symbolic systems, mediate thought and place their stamp on our representation of reality”. Similarly, Hall (1997) suggests that language is the source of the meaning-making, as it serves as a *media* through which people represent their feelings, ideas and thoughts. Accordingly, semantics has always been one of the major interests of researches conducted by cognitive linguists, as meaning is intertwined with the human cognition mechanisms (Croft 2004). Therefore, CL studies are revolved around the relationship between language and the mind, exploring the ways our cognitive processes, affected by conceptual structures, cultural and physical experience, produce meaning of the world around us.

According to CL, metaphors play a significant role in structuring human cognition and shaping how certain concepts are conceptualized and understood. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), by shifting the view of the metaphors from being ornamental to pervasive in every aspect of life, have demonstrated the importance of comprehending and analyzing the relationship between language and mind. From a cognitive-semantic approach, metaphors are believed to be reflected in our thought processes and everyday language, and some, more than others, are embedded so deeply that we can no longer notice them without intentional observation.

As proposed by Lakoff (1980: 4), “if our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor”. Therefore, an innovative view of metaphors has been postulated in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which is essential for understanding how the world is reflected and interpreted by a human mind (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). As proposed in CMT, the meaning is interconnected with the physical experience, which manifests a system of *image-schemas*, provoked by human understanding of position, motion, balance, movement, etc. Therefore, ‘embodiment’ is considered to be one of the central ideas in CL (Johnson 1987). As suggested by Brdar et al. (2011: 19), “we construct and understand our categories on the basis of experience, under the constraints imposed by our bodies”. As a consequence, bodily experiences play a crucial role in creation of human conceptual categories, motivating the meaning of words and sentences.

Conceptual metaphors are defined as understanding one domain of experience, which is referred to as a target domain (usually complex or abstract) in terms of source domain (concrete) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Therefore, metaphors are “a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience” (Kövesces, 2020: 2). The term ‘correspondence’ is usually substituted by ‘mapping’ in literature, used to demonstrate the relations between domains and their elements. To gain a better understanding of ‘mapping’ and the way some elements are intertwined, one should consider an example: LOVE IS A JOURNEY. In this particular case, the domain of LOVE is understood with the help of the other domain JOURNEY. In accordance with Chilton (2004: 52), source domains “provide a

source for conceptualization”. For instance, by conceptualizing LOVE in terms of a JOURNEY, one may use such metaphors as “we are at the crossroads”, “we went separate ways”, “we cannot turn back”, “we are stuck”, etc. In this case, the complex concept of LOVE is interpreted by the concrete concept of a JOURNEY, picturing certain “we” (e.g. a couple) as travelers, confronting complex romantic issues in terms of concrete obstacles that may occur in the course of travelling. In accordance with Gee (1999: 40), “human mind as a ‘pattern recognizing’ device that works primarily by storing experiences and finding patterns in those experiences”. To understand the mental constructions of media representations, one needs to apply CL techniques and examine the ways metaphors contribute to our interpretation of discourse.

1.3. CDA and Cognitive Linguistics

Critical applications of CL, as well as the implementation of its techniques in critical approaches to discourse analysis, have become one of the recent expansions in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (Baker 2008; Hart 2007). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) conceptualizes political identity, also referred to as representation, as being shaped by power relations, ideological aspects and social contexts (Van Dijk 1997), while CL seeks to explain how these discursive representations are conceptualized by human cognitive mechanisms and how it affects the mental representation and interpretation of certain social actors (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Such integration, specifically by applying one of the most developed and widely recognized frameworks of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), brings value to the analysis by allowing us to closely examine the ways metaphors shape those identities (Hart 2007).

The emergence of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA), as described by Charteris-Black in his book *Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis* in 2004, has enriched and provided more insights into already well-established CDA and CMT approaches. According to Charteris-Black (2004), a sufficiently designed framework aimed to analyze metaphors must include three components: corpus linguistics, pragmatics as well as cognitive linguistics (Charteris-Black 2004; Wei Li 2016). Such approach is justified by the complex nature of a metaphor and a struggle for defining the concept itself, as the degree of incorporated characteristics and its overall metaphoricity is frequently questioned due to various changes in language (Charteris-Black 2004).

As stated by the Charteris-Black (2004: 42), CMA is “a way of revealing underlying ideologies, attitudes and beliefs – and therefore constitutes a vital means of understanding more about the complex relationships between language, thought and social context”. Therefore, CMA aims to identify and explain the choice of metaphors used in persuasive genres of a discourse and unveil hidden intentions of language users (Charteris-Black 2004). In order to achieve its aims, three stages

of metaphors analysis are incorporated, including *metaphor identification*, *metaphor interpretation* and *metaphor explanation* (Charteris-Black 2004). The addition of CL to CDS allows a more detailed and comprehensive description and interpretation of analysis, as well as the ability of CL to provide new theoretical perspectives and draw connections between linguistic and conceptual structures (Hart 2007).

However, an issue of subjectivity of our understanding arises, as the interpretation is also dependent on the way we derive meaning. According to Langacker (2008), meanings are in the minds of those who produce and interpret expressions. A contrasting view of meaning interpretation is shared among objectivists, which is mainly dominant in philosophy and formal semantics, who relate meaning to certain conditions under which it is true (Langacker 2008). Nevertheless, Charteris-Black (2014: 49) suggests that “identification of conceptual metaphors is inevitably subjective, like all qualitative judgements, but the analytical method is clear and the reader is free to challenge metaphor classifications”.

Moreover, much attention has been given to the multivarious nature of metaphors in the way they function (Pittner 1995; Hetmanski 2021). For instance, as described by Pittner (1995), some major functions that can be ascribed to metaphors include aesthetic, heuristic, referential and cognitive ones. Similar functions are proposed by Charteris-Black (2014), who suggests that metaphors are mainly used as a tool to persuade, simplify, assert a positive or a negative evaluation, reflect an ideology or arouse certain feelings. In political discourse, a significant amount of attention is distributed towards the mythic function of metaphors, as in accordance with Charteris-Black (2014), it may contribute to the creating a certain story and affect significantly the way we ascribe certain representations to being favorable or unfavorable. Political metaphors, while functioning as a tool in creation of myths, contribute to creating mental representations of social and political issues, asserting a desired ideology and conveying predetermined evaluation. Therefore, a deliberate choice of words is crucial in persuading, gaining power and exerting influence and controlling the overall outcomes of an interaction (Charteris-Black 2014).

Data and Methods

The analysis aims to explore the contribution and role of the figurative language in shaping media representations of Donald Trump, the incumbent president of the U.S., concentrating on the comparison of contrasting political views that are represented in the right-leaning and left-leaning U.S. online news outlets. The methodological design of this thesis is based on a qualitative research design with quantitative elements, focusing on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The following procedure was divided into the main parts: corpus construction and data analysis and its interpretation.

2.1. Corpus construction

The initial stage of the study was concerned with the data selection procedure, which resulted in the compilation of two sub-corpora, one of which was based on the Democratic-aligned media outlets (*The Atlantic*, *the New York Magazine*), while the other was built on the basis of the Republican-aligned media outlets (*the American Conservative*, *the American Spectator*). The left-leaning sub-corpus comprised a total of 54, 969 words, while the right-leaning sub-corpus contained a total of 50, 633 words. Data was collected from the prominent U.S. online news outlets as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. *Corpus data*

Political affiliation	News outlets	# words	# texts	# authors
Left-leaning media	<i>The New York Magazine</i>	27 775	15	14
	<i>The Atlantic</i>	27 194	13	13
Right-leaning media	<i>The American Spectator</i>	24 237	24	14
	<i>The American Conservative</i>	26 395	18	13
Total		105 601	70	54

The following media outlets were chosen due to their high demand and perceived credibility among the readers. In order to ensure the validity and sufficiency of the collected data, a certain set of predefined criteria was established. In order to build a balanced corpus, much emphasis was given to the topicality of the chosen data, which was displayed in the headlines of the articles. Specifically, the inclusion of the predetermined key words: *president*, *Donald Trump's presidency*, *second term*, *inauguration*, *MAGA*, *presidential*, *Trumpism*; The selection process was restricted to texts that were published in the period of 2024-2025 due to the political significance of this period and its relevance to the research objectives. The chosen period of text production covered the pre-elective and post-

elective representations of Donald Trump; therefore, it ensured the variety of opinions and impressions on his second term presidency. Various authors were featured in the left-leaning and the right-leaning media outlets (see Appendix 1). Additionally, a minimum length of 500 words per text was established, excluding brief texts, which could prove to be insufficient for the current analysis. In order to fully cover the chosen topic of the research, high priority was placed on commentaries, opinion-based articles, editorials and etc., featuring the overall impression or opinion on Donald Trump's presidency, rather than on the objective or topic-specific reporting. Such measures were necessary to observe how right-and left-leaning news outlets construct Donald Trump's overall image without narrowing it to a specific issue.

2.2.Methods of Data Analysis

After the corpus construction process, the Thematic Analysis (TA) method was applied to focus on a thorough familiarization with the selected data, concentrating on observing and identifying the recurring patterns, topics and themes within the compiled corpus. This step ensured a better contextual understanding of the chosen topic and was instrumental in identifying prominent themes within the data.

Following the TA method, this research adopted the Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) framework, proposed by Charteris-Black (2004). The CMA framework is a three-dimensional method, consisting of the following aspects: *identification*, *interpretation* and *explanation of metaphors*. Therefore, by employing the CMA framework, the analysis was split into the following interrelated stages:

a. Metaphor Identification

This stage of the analysis required a thorough examination of data, which included repetitive reading of the compiled corpus of texts and establishing metaphorical expressions. In order to ensure the validity of the metaphor identification process, a Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), as proposed by Pragglejaz Group (2007), was employed as a primary analytical framework. The MIP framework is proposed as follows:

- 1) Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
- 2) Determine the lexical units in the text-discourse
- 3) (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context, that is, how it applies to an entity, relation, or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical unit.
(b) For each lexical unit in the text, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context. For our purposes, basic meanings tend to be
 - More concrete; what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.
 - Related to bodily action.
 - More precise (as opposed to vague)

- Historically older.

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meanings of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current-contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

4) If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

(Pragglejaz Group 2007: 3)

In accordance with the objectives of this research, the MIP framework was adapted to align with the aims of the study. Accordingly, it was essential to establish the general understanding of the meaning by closely reading the compiled sub-corpora of texts. Then, by means of TA, each sub-corpus was analyzed and divided into themes related to the representation of Donald Trump. Instead of deriving separate lexical units, the procedure was aimed at the words and expressions used for representing the following themes. The next step entailed determining whether a word or an expression was metaphorical based on its meaning. This step involved determining basic meanings of identified expressions by means of the online Oxford Learner's Dictionary and the Cambridge Dictionary, while comparing these meanings to the given context. After comparing the basic meaning to the contextual one, the final step was deciding whether they were divergent. For instance, in the sentence *These inclinations will invariably infect the credibility*, the word *infect* was marked as metaphorical on the basis of the MIP procedure. According to the online Cambridge Dictionary, the basic meaning of *infect* is "to pass a disease to a living organism" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2026). However, the contextual meaning of *infecting* is not related to passing a disease and does not refer to a living organism, but rather describes the decline in trust and reliance on credibility. Therefore, as such meanings are contrastive, the expression was marked as metaphorical.

b. Metaphor Interpretation

The further step in the CMA framework, which is referred to as the Interpretation stage, was aimed at identifying conceptual metaphors. The application of TA method facilitated the process of establishing the recurring themes within the corpus, which were subsequently divided into the target domains. The interpretation stage mainly focused on the identification of source domains, as well as linking them to the existing target domains within the corpus. Thereafter, metaphorical expressions were grouped into different source domains and further on categorized into the "subdomains", allowing for more coherent mapping to be created.

The necessity for the identification of evaluative characteristics of metaphorical expression was identified. Therefore, in accordance with the needs of this analysis, a set of criteria, proposed by Hidalgo-Downing and Perez-Sobrino (2022), was adopted. As suggested by scholars, a range of

criteria had to be met in order to identify the word or phrase as expressing evaluative characteristics. The study adopted the following criteria:

1. It must assess entities, events or propositions yielding positive or negative value, and it must be concerned with the expression of attitudes and opinions. [...]
2. It must express the positioning of the speaker/writer towards a topic or event in the discourse.
3. It must express alignment or disalignment with other voices or communities of speakers and shared systems of beliefs evoked in the discourse. [...]

(Hidalgo-Downing & Perez-Sobrino, 2022: 7)

By following the set of criteria provided in the method by Hidalgo-Downing and Perez-Sobrino (2022), metaphors were analyzed for the evaluative characteristics. Each metaphorical expression was analyzed separately for existing evaluation aspects and further on distributed into one of these groups: positive (P), negative (N), mixed (M) or neutral (NT). The evaluative value was based on the meaning carried behind metaphorical expressions. Metaphors, expressing approval or a favorable stance, were classified as positive (P). If a metaphorical expression carried a negative evaluative value, expressing criticism or disapproval, or by carrying a negative connotation, it was distributed to the negative (N) evaluative category. Examples, combining both positive and negative aspects were classified as mixed (M), while metaphors lacking evident evaluation were classified to the neutral (NT) evaluative group. Additionally, the following evaluative categories were divided into two groups in relation to the evaluation types: evoked and inscribed. The former group encompassed all metaphors that became evaluative based on the contextual meaning. The latter group, on the other hand, consisted of metaphors that were evaluative themselves because of the encoded words containing a positive or a negative evaluative characteristic.

c. Metaphor Explanation

The finalizing stage of the analysis aimed at introducing a discussion of findings, by providing detailed explanations supported by relevant examples from both sub-corpora. The examples were marked with the following abbreviations: LLS-C (left-leaning sub-corpus) and RLS-C (right-leaning sub-corpus). This stage presented similarities and differences in conceptualization across the left-leaning and right-leaning sub-corpora by comparing the findings in relation to specific source domains and their subdomains. The discussion revealed the ideological implications and evaluative tendencies of Donald Trump's representation across the Democratic- and Republican-aligned media. Precisely, the comparison showed what aspects of Donald Trump's presidency are framed negatively and what aspects are perceived as positive. In addition, the metaphor explanation stage contributed a better understanding of how Donald Trump and his policies are framed in the left-leaning media sub-corpus in comparison to how the right-leaning media sub-corpus constructs his representation.

Results and Discussion

The Results and Discussion section presents a comprehensive summary of all findings, concentrating on qualitative approach to data and supported by the quantitative results. This section is divided into several parts: the overview of general findings of metaphors and their source domains in sub-corpora, their quantitative distribution across sub-corpora; the analysis of the most prominent source domains and their subdomains across two sub-corpora; the comparison of similarities and differences of their ideological representation supported by relevant examples.

3.1. Quantitative Results

Findings show (see Table 2) that twenty-one source domains were identified across two sub-corpora. The combined total of the Democratic- and Republican-aligned sub-corpora is 980 tokens. The analysis showed that the left-leaning media sub-corpus consisted of 459 tokens, while the right-leaning media sub-corpus resulted in the accumulation of 521 tokens. Based on the presented findings, fifteen individual source domains such as ANIMAL, COMPETITION, CONFLICT, CONSTRUCTION, CRIME, ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, HEALTH, HUMANBEING, JOURNEY, MACHINERY, MONARCHY, NATURAL PHENOMENON, OBJECT, RELIGION were identified, each containing at least 10 tokens of metaphors. The remaining six source domains (LIQUID, PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, EDUCATION, SUPERNATURAL, EDUCATION, CLEANLINESS), were merged into one MINOR category, due to the insufficiency of individual representation measured by the number of tokens (<10) identified in each source domain.

The general findings (see Table 2) reveal that the most dominant source domain in the Democratic-aligned media was CONFLICT (94). Similarly, CONFLICT (87) is one of the prominent source domains in the right-leaning sub-corpus, accounting for slightly fewer examples, but nevertheless representing a significant proportion of the sub-corpus. Another high-frequent source domain across both sub-corpora is ENTERTAINMENT, in the left-leaning sub-corpus (53) and in the right-leaning sub-corpus (56). In contrast, metaphors related to a source domain of JOURNEY is more commonly identified across the right-leaning media sub-corpus (92) rather than the left-leaning media sub-corpus (49).

Table 2. *Source domains and the raw frequency of metaphorical expressions and their evaluation;*

Source domains	Left-leaning media; tokens	Evaluation				Right-leaning media; tokens	Evaluation				Total
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M	
CONFLICT	94	1	84	0	9	87	25	49	1	12	181
JOURNEY	49	2	18	7	23	92	39	20	5	28	143
ENTERTAINMENT	53	3	29	5	16	56	15	15	3	23	109
CONSTRUCTION	49	2	32	2	13	16	4	7	1	4	65

COMPETITION	13	3	8	0	2	44	20	14	1	9	57
NATURAL PHENOMENON	14	2	9	0	3	40	8	16	2	14	54
OBJECT	18	1	16	1	0	34	8	10	7	9	52
ANIMAL	21	1	14	0	6	27	1	18	0	8	48
HEALTH	21	4	12	0	5	21	5	13	0	3	42
FOOD	18	5	10	0	3	20	4	10	1	5	38
HUMANBEING	23	0	10	0	13	11	3	2	0	6	34
RELIGION	12	1	5	0	6	15	12	1	0	2	27
MONARCHY	19	0	12	1	6	7	0	6	0	1	26
MACHINERY	12	0	7	0	5	11	3	2	1	5	23
CRIME	15	0	14	0	1	5	0	5	0	0	20
Minor Source Domains: (LIQUID; ECONOMIC TRANSACTION; PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, CLEANLINESS EDUCATION SUPERNATURAL)	27	1	21	2	3	35	12	15	1	7	62
Total	459	26	301	18	114	521	159	205	23	136	980

Additionally, a relative distribution of source domains and their numerical value within each sub-corpus is presented to ensure the validity and accuracy of the comparison. The dispersion of source domains in the left-leaning media sub-corpus (see Figure 1) is as follows: the largest allocation of metaphorical expressions is represented by the CONFLICT source domain, accounting for 21%, proving to be dominant. Other significant source domains, which are of equivalent worth in terms of distribution across the left-leaning media sub-corpus, are ENTERTAINMENT (12%), CONSTRUCTION (11%) and JOURNEY (11%). Less prominent source domains as HUMANBEING (5%), ANIMAL (5%) and HEALTH (5%) are represented proportionally.

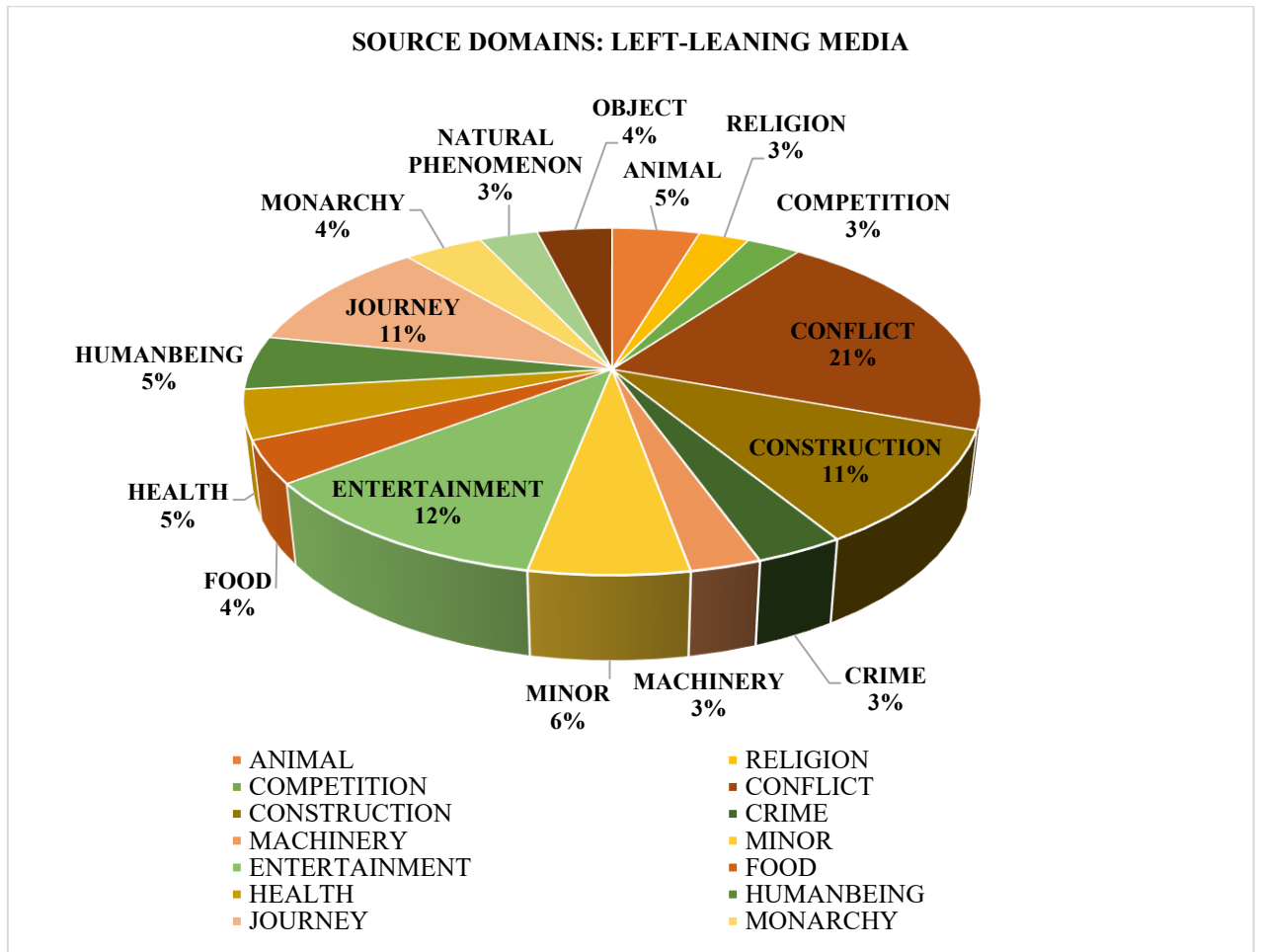


Figure 1: *Relative frequency of source domains in the left-leaning corpus;*

Similarly, findings demonstrate (see Figure 2) a corresponding dominance of two source domains, one of JOURNEY (18%), and the other of CONFLICT (17%), proving to have the most extensive coverage in the right-leaning media sub-corpus. The next most frequent source domain is ENTERTAINMENT (11%), contributing a substantial proportion to the sub-corpus. Furthermore, less represented source domains of COMPETITION (8%), NATURAL PHENOMENON (8%) and OBJECT (7%) enrich findings in terms of covered themes.

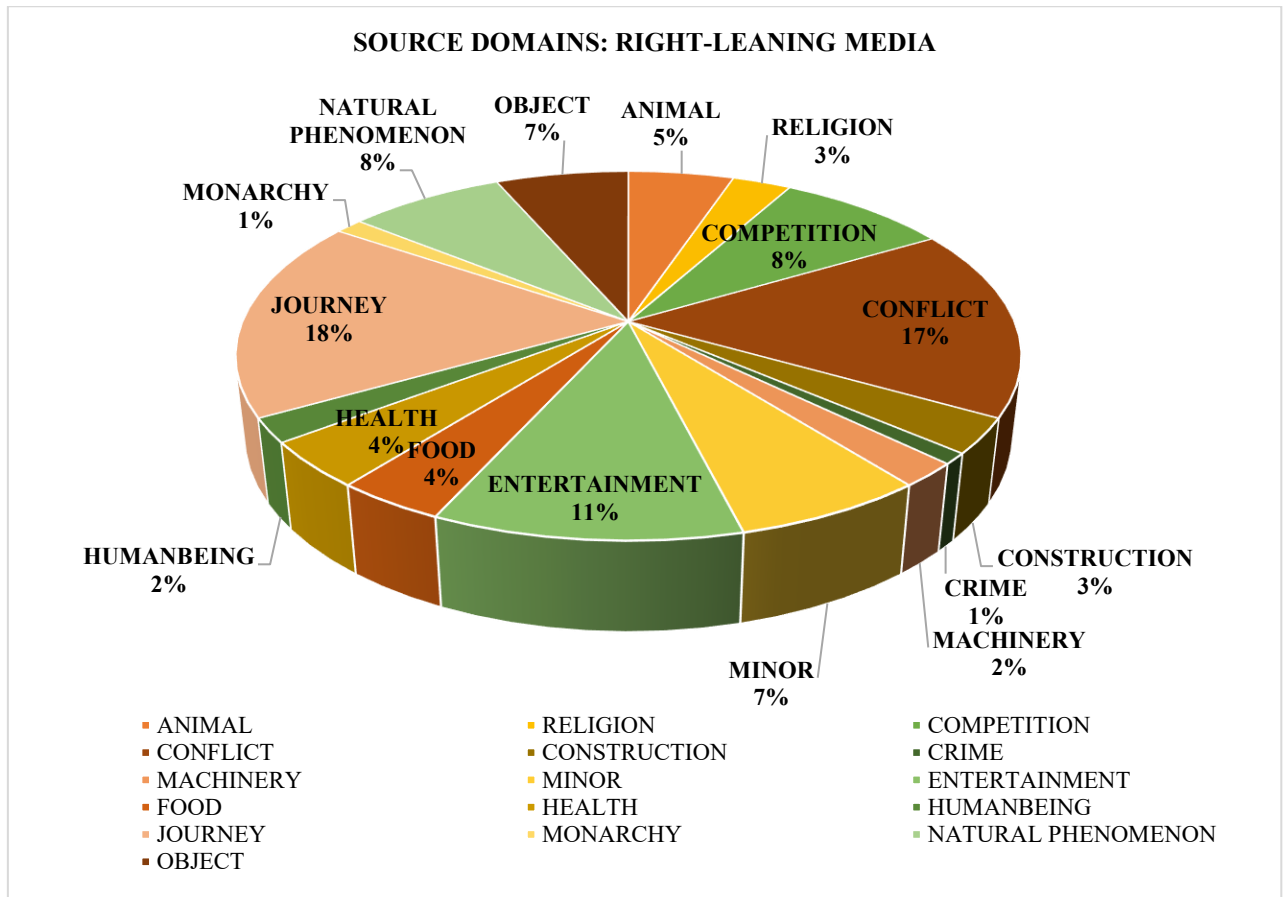


Figure 2: *Relative frequency of source domains in the right-leaning corpus;*

While comparing both sub-corpora's distribution of source domains, some apparent similarities are indicated, such as the dominance of particular source domains (CONFLICT, JOURNEY, ENTERTAINMENT, etc.) across the corpus. Both sub-corpora are represented with a high variety of themes in various proportions, ensuring the complexity of the representation. For example, the same distribution is allocated for ANIMAL (5%) and FOOD (4%), RELIGION (3%) source domains. Conversely, the source domain of CONSTRUCTION is represented more commonly in the left-leaning media sub-corpus (11%) comparing to the right-leaning media sub-corpus (3%).

In the left-leaning sub-corpora (see Figure 3), negative evaluation is highly dominant (66%), indicating a clear superiority in the sub-corpus in relation to other evaluative categories. Mixed evaluations (25%) are less distributed, representing one quarter of the sub-corpus. Positive evaluations (5%) and neutral evaluations (4%) are found to be the least represented, demonstrating the clear tendency of the left-leaning media sub-corpus toward the negative representation rather than an affirmative one.

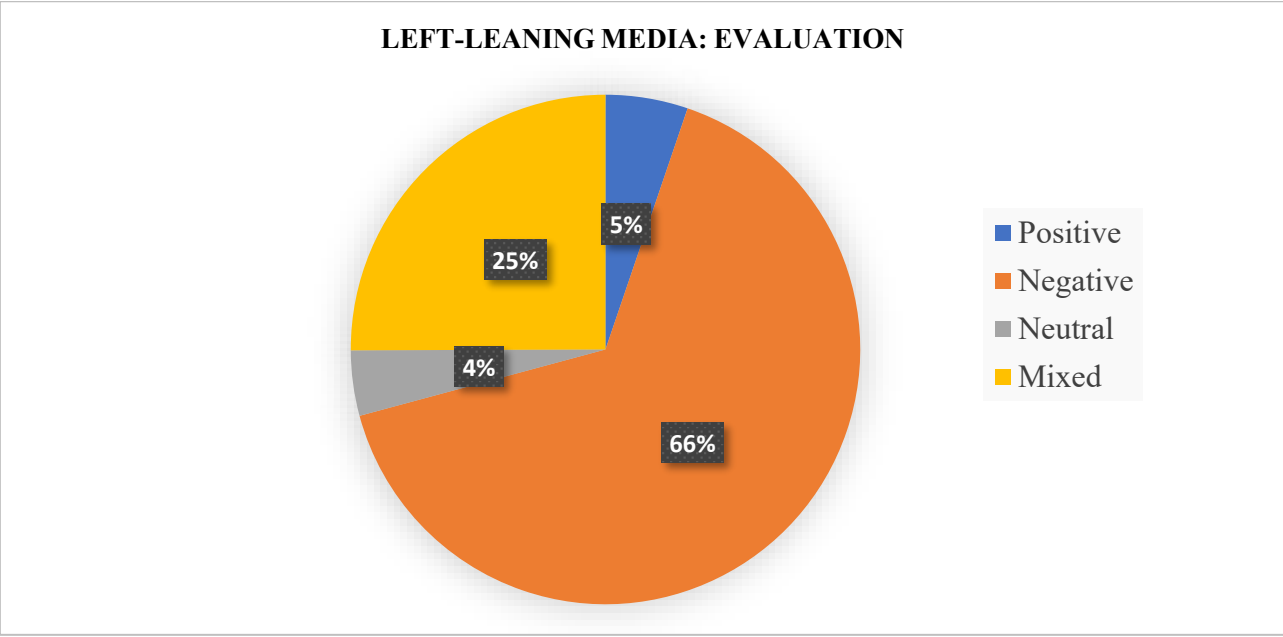


Figure 3: *Relative frequency of metaphor evaluation in the left-leaning corpus;*

By contrast, the right-leaning media sub-corpus (see Figure 4) presents a more balanced distribution of evaluation. While negative evaluation (39%) remains the most commonly identified category, its dominance is less apparent due to the substantial proportion of positive evaluation (30%) within this sub-corpus. It can be seen that the category of mixed evaluation (26%) is allocated similarly as in the left-leaning sub-corpus, indicating the same level of conflicted interpretation across the corpus. Neutral evaluations (5%) remain the least represented within both sub-corpora, proving the discourse is rather evaluative rather than unprejudiced.

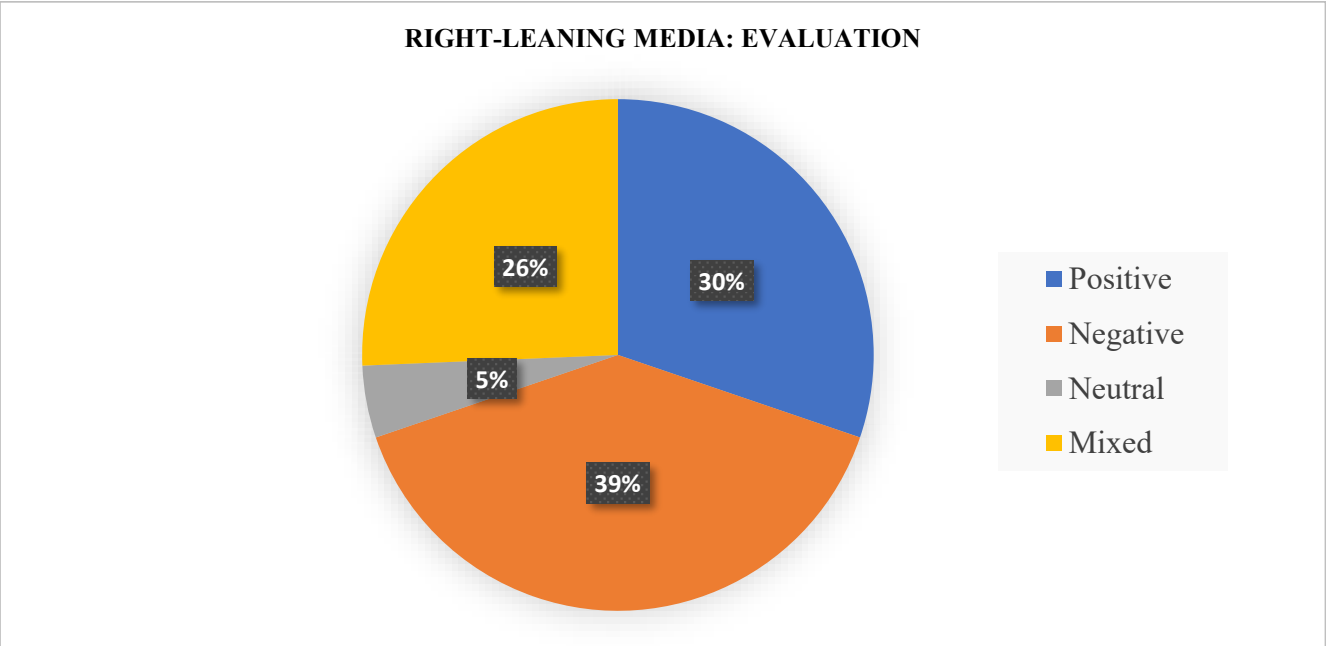


Figure 4: *Relative frequency of metaphor evaluation in the right-leaning corpus;*

3.2. The source domain of CONFLICT

The findings show (see Table 2) that the source domain of CONFLICT is one of the most prominent across both sub-corpora, accounting for a total of 181 tokens and representing the largest proportion: LLS-C (21%) and RLS-C (17%). In total, 12 various subdomains were distinguished across both sub-corpora, each comprising a relative share of metaphors. As shown in Table 3, the identified subdomains are presented in terms of the number of tokens identified. The findings suggest that *Attacking* (21), *Fighting* (20) and *Enemies* (17) are the most frequent subdomains within the left-leaning media sub-corpus. Additionally, all tokens within the dominant subdomains carry negative (N) evaluative characteristics, contributing to an overall negative evaluative tendency within the left-leaning media sub-corpus.

Table 3: *The CONFLICT source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Attacking	21	0	21	0	0	7	0	5	0	2
Fighting	20	0	20	0	0	11	1	9	0	1
Enemies	17	0	17	0	0	7	0	7	0	0
Allies	9	0	4	0	5	9	8	0	0	1
War	8	0	7	0	1	31	8	18	1	5
Hurting	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winning	4	1	1	0	2	10	7	1	0	2
Suffering	3	0	3	0	0	4	0	4	0	0
Weapon	3	0	0	0	0	5	2	2	0	1
Losing	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Conqueror	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Destruction	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	94	1	84	0	9	87	25	49	1	12

Subsequently, the findings from the right-leaning media sub-corpus reveal that *War* (31), *Fighting* (11) and *Winning* (10) are the most prevalent subdomains. In comparison with the opposing sub-corpus, the right-leaning sub-corpus demonstrates different results in terms of evaluation, by comprising positive (P) metaphorical expressions. Negative (N) evaluative characteristics remain dominant.

In accordance with results presented above, the left-leaning sub-corpus mostly centers around the action-driven narrative (as in *Fighting* and *Attacking*), while the right-leaning media sub-corpus conveys an outcome-based narrative (as in *Fighting* and *Winning*). Also, the results show that the subdomain of *Allies* (9) is proportionally identified within the sub-corpora, thereby contributing to the construction of the opposition of sides *Enemies – Allies*. A more detailed discussion of this and the previously mentioned aspects will be presented in the subsequent subchapters.

3.2.1. The subdomain of *War*

The subdomain of *War* encompasses a broad set of aspects (such as actions, roles, outcomes, circumstances, etc.) and therefore could appear as more conceptually general in comparison with other narrower categories. Despite its complexity, it is highly evident in data. Precisely, analysis reveals that the most salient subdomain in the right-leaning media sub-corpus is the subdomain of *War* (31). The examples are presented as follows:

- (1) *For the left today it is a **battle** between privileged whites and oppressed people of color and their allies. (RLS-C)*
- (2) *Trump swept the **battleground** states, but didn't drag many Republican Senate candidates across the finish line with him. (RLS-C)*

In example (1), the metaphor of “battle” depicts ideological divisions of opposing groups and their continuous struggle in confrontation. Similarly, in example (2), elections are conceptualized as “battlegrounds”, where candidates are portrayed as competitors, hence shifting the attention to a competitive nature of politics as a conflict.

The subdomain of *War* is commonly depicted by the means of evaluative descriptors, such as *tawdry*, *endless*, *no-win*, etc. Such examples present a critical stance on Donald Trump's political engagement, by highlighting his inability to refrain from participating in international conflicts, describing it in terms of “tawdry wars”. The expression “endless wars” reinforces the idea of repetitively occurring conflicts and the overall disapproval with the government's actions rather than a topic-specific occurrence. A highly evaluative stance on conflicts is depicted through the use of the term “no-win”, emphasizing futility of such engagement.

In contrast, the left-leaning media sub-corpus demonstrates contrasting results, as metaphors belonging to *War* (8) subdomain are less frequently identified. Therefore, the depiction of this subdomain is less versatile, for example:

- (3) ***The blitzkrieg** of the early days continues. (LLS-C)*
- (4) ***Declaring war** on “woke culture,” he has shaken education and private industry with threats of financial penalties. (LLS-C)*
- (5) *If I can **destroy, if I can defile and march** on relatively unscathed and unpunished, that makes me powerful. (LLS-C)*

In example (3), the term “blitzkrieg” refers to a historically characterized military strategy, which involves quick, rapid, cruel attacks. Therefore, this metaphor highlights the intensity and speed of actions taken by Donald Trump, while also emphasizing their destructiveness. Example (4) creates a negative representation of Donald Trump by representing him as an initiator of ruthless military actions and positioning him as a danger to education and private industries. Similarly, example (5) portrays the incumbent U.S. president as a destructive force, willing to inflict damage and avoid consequences.

The right-leaning media, in comparison to the left-leaning media, contains more metaphors belonging to the *War* subdomain, conceptualizing politics through the use of war vocabulary, leaning toward negative framing. In the Republican-aligned media, the *War* subdomain features the opposition between the Republican and Democratic political parties and highlights the confrontation between social groups and minority groups. Various descriptors such as *legal*, *no-win*, *unresolved*, *new* are used to intensify and describe the essence of such conflicts. Conversely, in the Democratic-aligned media, war is represented by fewer examples, mainly foregrounding Trump’s destructive behavior and his agency in initiating conflicts. The representation is therefore less diverse in the left-leaning media sub-corpus, as war vocabulary is rarely used in conceptualizing politics.

3.2.2. The subdomains of *Fighting* and *Attacking*

The results demonstrate (see Table 3) that *Fighting* (20) and *Attacking* (21) are the most prominent subdomains in the left-leaning sub-corpus. In contrast, subdomains of *Fighting* (11) and *Attacking* (7) are not frequently identified within the right-leaning media sub-corpus. While *Fighting* remains the second most commonly identified subdomain within the sub-corpus (see Table 3), it accounts only for 11 tokens. The metaphorical expressions of *Fighting* subdomain are presented as follows:

- (6) *Citizens and journalists working to expose and **fight** the enormous wave of kleptocracy and corruption that will now engulf our political system. (LLS-C)*
- (7) *POTUS doesn’t like to be told what to do or give Dems a win, so **he’s been fighting it**. (LLS-C)*
- (8) *The green imperialists in Washington, DC will resist, of course, and so **the fight will commence**. (RLS-C)*
- (9) *The president-elect is quoted thusly: To every citizen, **I will fight for you** and your family and your future. (RLS-C)*

In example (6), the act of *fighting* is portrayed in a form of resistance to government and existing issues within a political system. The agency is ascribed to “citizens and journalists”, who are *fighting* against Trump and his administration. In addition, example (7) provides a negative evaluative stance on Trump by featuring him as acting defensively or even tenaciously if provoked. Example (8) highlights Trump’s unwillingness to participate in armed conflicts, suggesting the possible

inevitability of his participation, which also partly reduces his responsibility for the outcomes. Example suggests that “the fight will commence” without ascribing active roles, as if a fight is autonomous. The reason of such inevitability is then linked to the resistance of “green imperialists”. Conversely, in example (9), Donald Trump’s representation is narrated through the willingness to fight for the U.S. citizens and their families. This example demonstrates a favorable framing through the idea of protecting others, even by means of “fighting”. Additionally, the subdomain of *Attacking* is represented by, though not limited to, the following examples:

- (10) *He **launched a direct attack** on the Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of birthright citizenship...* (LLS-C)
- (11) ***Trump’s assault** on American institutions and values is not supported by most of his voters.* (LLS-C)
- (12) *Our president has chosen to only wash clean the blights of one fighting group while consistently **attacking the other**.* (RLS-C)

Examples (10), (11), and (12) create an unfavorable representation of Donald Trump by constructing his image as the initiator of aggression. The agency and the voluntarism in his actions, as in “launched a direct attack” and “Trump’s assault” reinforce the image of cruelty and indifference of his character. Similarly, example (12) foregrounds the duality of Donald Trump by emphasizing his contrasting and prejudiced behavior toward groups. The expression “consistently attacking” reinforces the intensity and harmfulness of his actions.

While metaphors of *Fighting* and *Attacking* domains display fully negative evaluations in the left-leaning media sub-corpus, a slight deviation toward mixed and positive evaluations are observed in the right-leaning media sub-corpus. The most common metaphors representing the sub-domains of *Attacking* and *Fighting* include *attack*, *assault*, *fight over*, *battles*, *wounds*, *blitz* and the target domain is mainly politics. Metaphors from the Democratic-aligned media convey strong feelings of hostility, cruelty and indifference in regard to Donald Trump’s actions. In the examples above, Trump is attributed a semantic role of an agent, contributing to his overall representation of an attacker. In this sub-corpus, the opposing side is not foregrounded, but displayed as a collective group rather than separate individuals (e.g. the Democratic Party, American institutions and values, citizens and journalists, etc.).

In the Republican-aligned media, Trump and his policies are not commonly conceptualized in regard to *fighting* and *attacking*, but the few examples from this sub-corpus show that the focus is rather shifted from Trump’s agency to the notion of *fighting*. Conversely, the subdomain of *Attacking* is more aligned with the results from the left-leaning sub-corpus, as the identified metaphors contribute negatively to Trump’s media representation by depicting him in relation to *attacking*, *bombing*, *lashing out*, etc.

3.2.3. The subdomains of *Enemies* and *Allies*

The subdomains of *Enemies* and *Allies* are two mutually connected subdomains, which are crucial in representing the source domain of CONFLICT. The subdomain of *Enemies* (17) remains among three most prominent subdomains of CONFLICT (see Table 3) in the left-leaning sub-corpus. The examples are as follows:

(13) *It's about showing **his enemies** that what they support, he can tear down.* (LLS-C)

(14) *Doing so would signify **the ultimate triumph over his political enemies**.* (LLS-C)

(15) ***Trump's personal enemies** become **the enemies of the nation** and the party.* (LLS-C)

In example (13), *enemies* are foregrounded and depicted as targets of Trump's force, as this example contributes to the construction of his representation through acts of cruel destruction, as in "tear down". Example (14) provides a negative evaluative description of Trump supported by the metaphorical expression of "the ultimate triumph over his political enemies". The *ultimate triumph* is emphasized and suggests conclusiveness, while *political enemies* serve as a reinforcement of opposition. Lastly, example (15) indicates the hostility of Trump by emphasizing his attitude toward political enemies, which is based on his personal antipathy. In comparison to *Enemies*, the *Allies* (9) subdomain is identified less frequently within a sub-corpus. For example:

(16) ***His allies** will help him build a Department of Justice that does not serve the Constitution, but instead focuses on harassing and punishing **Trump's enemies**.* (LLS-C)

(17) ***Trump's closest allies** intended chaos wrought by destruction which helps advance the elite reactionary programs.* (LLS-C)

In example (16), the opposition of *allies* against *Trump's enemies* is clearly defined and narrated, depicting Trump's allies as accomplices in his wrongdoings, as emphasized in "instead focuses on harassing and punishing". Example (17) highlights the alignment of Trump and his allies in intentions and desired outcomes. Such examples create an unfavorable representation of Trump and his *allies*, due to the choice of lexical terms such as *harass*, *punish*, *chaos*, *destruction*.

Conversely, the subdomains of *Allies* (9) and *Enemies* (7) are not consistently identified within the right-leaning media sub-corpus. The subsequent examples illustrate the *Allies* subdomain:

(18) *Donald Trump — and **countless allies** — will compare his opening salvo favorably with the achievements of FDR and LBJ.* (RLS-C)

(19) *French President Emmanuel Macron, greeted Trump like a long-lost brother-in-arms, smiling broadly at the reunion of the two presidents of their **old allied nations**.* (RLS-C)

In example (18), *allies* are described as "countless", conveying an idea that Donald Trump is highly supported by a large number of people. Example (19) foregrounds the political relations of two presidents – Emmanuel Macron and Donald Trump, by describing their encountering as a reunion of "old allied nations". In addition, the subdomain of *Enemies* consists of such examples:

(20) *The Trump administration has reversed the Biden-era approach of rewarding **geopolitical enemies** and punishing geopolitical friends by returning to the more familiar approach he deployed during his first term: rewarding friends and **punishing enemies**.* (RLS-C)

(21) *Some are worried Trump will prosecute **his political enemies** and put them in prison.* (RLS-C)

Example (20) illustrates the comparison of Donald Trump to the former U.S. president Joe Biden, by highlighting the contrasting attitude of Trump toward his *allies* and *enemies*. In example (21), *enemies* are represented as targets of Donald Trump, indicating that “his political enemies” will be prosecuted and imprisoned.

While comparing both sub-corpora, it is apparent that the metaphors from the subdomain of *Enemies* carry negative meanings across both sub-corpora. In the Democratic-aligned media, the subdomain of *Enemies* is foregrounded, which demonstrates the pattern of the narrative construction in the left-leaning media. The target domain of politics is conceptualized through the use of opposition, precisely highlighting the *enemy* aspect of conflicts. Trump’s *enemies* are commonly described by means of *punishing, crushing, going after, catching*, etc. Moreover, some examples from the sub-corpus explicitly identify the Trump’s *enemies*, outside the United States (e.g. In Moscow and Beijing and Tehran) and internally (e.g. the media, the “deep state”, the disloyal members of his first administration). In contrast, the subdomain of *Enemies* in the right-leaning media sub-corpus is rather underrepresented. In the Republican-aligned media, *enemies* are described in terms of attitudes toward them (e.g. punishing, rewarding) and they are attributed various descriptors (e.g. *geopolitical, political, America’s, worst*).

In the Republican-aligned media, *allies* are mentioned in relation to *thanking, smiling, favoring*, etc., conveying mostly positive evaluations. In addition, some specifications are observed in the descriptions of Trump’s allies, as for example: *American allies, his allies, NATO allies, Arab allies*. In comparison, examples from the left-leaning media sub-corpus contain negative evaluations, portraying Trump’s *allies* as instigators, whose actions are harmful and hostile. In the Democratic-aligned media, allies are described in the similar manner: *American allies, his allies, closest allies, traditional allies*. Contextually and based on the contrasting evaluative characteristics across both sub-corpora, the depiction of Trump’s allies is contradictory and ideological and therefore is dependent on the perspective.

3.3. The source domain of JOURNEY

The source domain JOURNEY is represented by various travel-related concepts, categorized into subdomains, such as *vehicle*, *obstacles*, *destination*, etc. It is a second-largest source domain in the corpus, accounting for a total of 141 tokens and representing the sub-corpora in the following way: RLS-C (18%) and LLS-C (11%). In contrast, more metaphorical examples related to the source domain of JOURNEY were collected from the Republican-aligned media. In total, 8 various subdomains were identified across both sub-corpora.

As shown in Table 4, the most prominent subdomains in the left-leaning media sub-corpus are: *Vehicle* (14), *Paths* (10), *Movement* (7). The evaluative characteristics of this sub-corpus is mainly divided into two main categories: mixed (M) evaluations and negative (N) evaluations, while positive (P) and neutral (NT) categories remain rather underrepresented.

Table 4: *The JOURNEY source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Vehicle	14	2	5	1	6	12	6	3	0	3
Paths	10	0	1	4	5	18	6	3	2	7
Movement	8	0	3	0	5	20	8	5	2	5
Road	6	0	3	2	1	9	1	2	1	5
Leader	5	0	3	0	2	17	11	2	0	4
Obstacles	3	0	2	0	1	4	1	2	0	1
Destination	3	0	0	0	3	10	5	3	0	2
General	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
Total	49	2	17	7	23	92	39	20	5	28

Findings reveal that the most commonly identified subdomains in the right-leaning media sub-corpus are: *Movement* (20), *Paths* (18), *Leader* (17). This sub-corpus contains metaphors with mainly positive (P) evaluations, while also presenting a balanced distribution between the negative (N) and mixed (M) evaluations.

In the following subchapters, an overview of the dominant subdomains of *Movement*, *Vehicle*, *Leader* and *Paths* will be presented supported by relevant examples.

3.2.1. The subdomain of *Movement*

As presented in Table 6, *Movement* (20) is the most commonly identified subdomain in the right-leaning media sub-corpus. In these instances, metaphorical expressions are commonly related to the notion of moving upward or downward, for example:

(22) *And he will act to prevent the world from **descending** into a global war. (RLS-C)*

(23) ***His ascension** is a clear bellwether that the American people are ready to give just about any crazed idea a chance if it means eggs and gas and rent in this country actually do fall in price. (RLS-C)*

(24) *But that is only one of the depredations coming should Trump **ascend** to the White House. (RLS-C)*

In example (22), despite the negative meaning of an expression “descending into a global war”, a favorable representation of Trump is created, as he is portrayed as a leader preventing a disaster from happening. Conversely, next examples (23) and (24) foreground Trump’s “ascension” by framing it as a highly negative event. Example (23) depicts it as “crazed idea”, while example (24) suggests that it is an action carrying negative consequences as in “depredations coming”. Other metaphors in regard to movement are mainly featuring the returning aspect of JOURNEY:

(25) *In short, America and the world beyond are simultaneously breathing a sigh of relief that **Trump is coming back**. (RLS-C)*

(26) *Like Napoleon, however, he has already made **an astonishing comeback** to power from a political Elba. (RLS-C)*

(27) *This was due in part to the undisguised radical leftism that had overtaken the mainstream media since **Trump’s arrival**. (RLS-C)*

In example (25), Donald Trump’s victory in elections is conceptualized as a long-awaited return, conveying a clearly positive evaluation. Moreover, example (26) provides additional evaluation of his return, by framing it as “an astonishing comeback” from a reputed political exile. Lastly, in example (27), the beginning of Trump’s second term presidency is described as “arrival”, conveying an idea of him reaching a desired destination.

Conversely, according to findings (see Table 4), metaphorical expressions of the *Movement* (7) subdomain are not commonly identified within the left-leaning media sub-corpus. Some examples are presented as follows:

(28) *Trump, a demagogue **who would ascend to the presidency** and refuse to relinquish power to a successor chosen by the American people in a free and fair election. (LLS-C)*

(29) *His pro-death penalty views emerged decades before **he ascended to the presidency**. (LLS-C)*

The term “ascension”, which is primarily interpreted as a positive occurrence, as it signifies the upward movement or rising to a higher position, is framed negatively in the following metaphors. In example (28), Trump’s *ascension* is depicted unfavorably, as contextually Trump is described as a

“demagogue”, who does not obey rules and rejects the idea of a free and fair election. Lastly, example (29) describes Trump’s *ascension* to power in a similar manner, while also referring to his pro-death penalty opinion as an observation of the persistence of his views despite the changes in his status. In addition, some examples foregrounding movement forward are presented as follows:

(30) *The president **has taken extraordinary steps** over the past three weeks to weaponize the closure of the government. (LLS-C)*

(31) *In a second term, he and the people around him will have every incentive **to go much further**. (LLS-C)*

Example (30) features the metaphorical expression of “taking extraordinary steps”, as signifying headway in regard to strategical weaponizing of the government closure. In example (31), the emphasis is put on the movement metaphor “to go much further”, highlighting possible negative outcomes that Trump’s second term presidency will bring by moving forward with their current ideas and initiatives.

It is evident that the subdomain of *Movement*, as a dominant category in the Republican-aligned media, presents a range of diverse metaphors related to motion. Metaphors are commonly linked to directions (moving upward, downward, further, back, etc.), depicting Trump’s presidency and politics as an ongoing *journey*, where moving upward, further and moving back is interpreted as making progress or returning to a desired location, while moving downward is framed negatively, as regressing. While the evaluative tendencies in the right-leaning media sub-corpus are assorted, the positive (P) evaluations remain prevalent.

In comparison, fewer examples in regard to movement are identified within the left-leaning media sub-corpus. Metaphors in relation to directional movement are foregrounded, describing Trump’s presidency in terms of *ascending*, *descending*, *returning*, *migrating*, *going further*, etc. Conversely, in the Democrat-aligned media, the directional movement is interpreted differently, framing directions such as *moving upward* and *further* as overextending president’s position. Additionally, in this sub-corpus, mixed (M) and negative (N) evaluations are identified.

3.2.2. The subdomain of *Vehicle*

Findings show (see Table 4) that metaphors within the subdomain of *Vehicle* are similarly distributed across the left-leaning media sub-corpus (14) and the right-leaning media sub-corpus (12). The most commonly identified examples of *Vehicle* subdomain in the left-leaning media sub-corpus are associated with water transportation, for instance:

(32) *Mr. Trump also lacks the emotional intelligence that the great presidents had in various degrees — the self-awareness, self-control, empathy and ability to manage relationships that are so vital **to steering the ship of state on the desired course**. (LLS-C)*

(33) *It's about showing that you can **turn the boat 180 degrees around** and that you can do whatever you want and you can bring the people who opposed you to their knees. (LLS-C)*

In example (32), a critical stance on Trump's presidency is presented through the prism of a voyage and ship steering. Politics are conceptualized in terms of operating a vehicle, in this particular case as "steering the ship of state". In addition, the destination of such travelling as in "the desired course" depict political future and stability of the country. Similarly, example (33) frames politics in terms of a vehicle, emphasizing the possibility of "turning the boat 180 degrees around" and reinforcing the idea of radical changes. By contrast, the right-leaning media sub-corpus consists of metaphors mainly featuring land transportation, for example:

(34) *In this climate, Trump's reindustrialization **drive** is pivotal. (RLS-C)*

(35) *It never occurred to me that President Trump's fame, energy, and **drive** — and President Joe Biden's collapse — would lead to a totally new model. (RLS-C)*

Example (34) features the metaphor of "drive", reinforcing determination and consistency and emphasizing its current importance. In example (35), the description of Donald Trump's "fame, energy and drive" reinforces his individual representation in a favorable manner, highlighting his strengths as well as his "drive", which is interpreted as persistence and enthusiasm to introduce new models to the system.

In comparison, the evidence illustrate that the subdomain of *Vehicle* is conceptualized differently across both sub-corpora. In the Democratic-aligned media, the identified metaphors are commonly in relation to a journey by sea. Accordingly, the examples include metaphors such as *a desired course*, *steering the ship*, *turning the boat*, etc. Conversely, the right-leaning media sub-corpus provides examples of metaphors in regard to road transportation, which include metaphors such as *ride*, *hold onto seats*, *hitting reverse*, *drive*, *bulldozer*, etc. The evaluative tendencies are quite diverse across both sub-corpora (see Table 4), revealing that negative (N) evaluations are dominant in the Democratic-aligned media, while in the Republican-aligned media positive (P) evaluation is prevailing.

3.2.3. The subdomain of *Paths*

The *Paths* (18) subdomain in the second most prominent category in the right-leaning media sub-corpus. Metaphorical expressions of *Paths* subdomain are commonly associated with ways, tracks, steps, routes and paths. For instance:

(36) *Some 73 percent of respondents say the United States **is on the wrong track**, the highest portion since 1989, when that polling question was first asked. (RLS-C)*

(37) *The Trump administration should, where it makes sense to do so, negotiate contentious issues on separate **tracks**. (RLS-C)*

In example (36), a metaphor of United States being “on the wrong track” emphasizes the current political situation and the dissatisfaction of U.S. citizens. Hence, this example carries a negative evaluation and intensifies the idea by supporting it with analytical data. Similarly, example (37) presents a metaphor of “separate tracks” to emphasize working toward a common goal alongside each other, rather than following the same *path*. In comparison, the subdomain of *Paths* (10) is not frequently distributed across the left-leaning media sub-corpus. The examples are as follows:

(38) *Hundreds have been fired, often for being perceived **as out of step** with the president’s agenda. (LLS-C)*

(39) *There is no easy answer, nor is there **an obvious path** to an answer. (LLS-C)*

In example (38), a metaphor of being “out of step” suggests that former employees did not align with Trump and his planned direction or timing of his agenda. Example (39) provides an evaluation to Trump’s actions and political decision-making, by speculating about the consequences of president’s second term. In such case, a *path* metaphor is used to demonstrate the way to finding answers.

In the Republican-aligned media, the examples of *Paths* subdomain include metaphorical expressions such as *separate tracks*, *meaningful steps*, *judicially-approved paths*, *find ways*, *wring tracks*, etc. The main evaluative characteristics in this sub-corpus are mixed (M) with the positive (P) evaluations ranked second. Similarly, in the left-leaning media sub-corpus, *Paths* metaphors convey mixed (M) evaluative characteristics, while also conveying neutral (NT) evaluations. The examples from this sub-corpus contain metaphorical expressions such as *path back*, *his own path*, *first step*, *obvious path*, *out of step*, etc.

3.2.4. The subdomain of *Leader*

In accordance with findings (see Table 4), the right-leaning media sub-corpus show strong presence of the *Leader* (17) subdomain. Some of the examples are as follows:

(40) ***Under his leadership**, he promised, America will pay down its debt, lower taxes, and avoid wars. (RLS-C)*

(41) *Trump has been given an opportunity not merely **to lead** the nation he so clearly loves. (RLS-C)*

(42) ***All we needed was a strong leader** to survive the forces of deception, oppression, censorship, even assassination. (RLS-C)*

Example (40) reinforces the idea of resolving national issues through the agency of Donald Trump as in “under his leadership”, creating a favorable image of the president, whose help and guidance are irreplaceable. In example (41), the emphasis is put on the importance of Trump’s mission of *leading the nation*, which is also strengthened by the idea of his devotion to it. It creates a favorable representation of Trump as a president, who is prepared to overcome any difficulties. Lastly, example

(42) features Trump as “a strong leader”, who is resilient and protective, and conveys a similar idea of his importance. Conversely, the *Leader* subdomain is rather underrepresented in the left-leaning media sub-corpus, consisting of only a few examples. Some of the examples are presented below:

(43) *Around the world, illiberal politicians who seek to subvert their own democracies will **follow America’s lead**.* (LLS-C)

(44) *This was a desperate **tin-pot leader** yelling into a microphone while cornered in his palace redoubt.* (LLS-C)

In example (43), an indirect reference to Trump and his administration, who “subvert their own democracy” and serve as an example for other illiberal politicians, is made. In this case, “America’s lead”, despite having initially a positive meaning of an authoritative guiding force, is interpreted negatively. Example (44) exhibits a highly negative portrayal of Trump by describing him as “a desperate tin-pot leader”, therefore delegitimizing his political figure and reinforcing the idea by contextual description.

The findings show that metaphors of the *Leader* subdomain are more prominently identified in the Republican-aligned media rather than the Democratic-aligned media. Such visible differences in the number of tokens imply that the right-leaning media attributes leadership qualities to Trump and therefore contributes to his positive representation as an authoritative presidential figure. In this sub-corpus, positive evaluative characteristics are dominant, reinforcing a favorable framing of Donald Trump and his second-term presidency. In contrast, the concept of leadership is not emphasized in the Democratic-aligned media, as the sub-corpus accounts for very few examples. In addition, the prominence of negative (N) evaluations and the absence of positive framing reinforces the contrasting view on the Donald Trump’s leadership.

3.3. The source domain of ENTERTAINMENT

The source domain of ENTERTAINMENT encompasses various kinds activities or items, which are aimed at amusing or engaging audiences, therefore the identified subdomains include *performance*, *music*, *game*, *gifts*, etc. The overall number of metaphors identified within both sub-corpora is 109 tokens, with a relatively similar distribution within each sub-corpus: LLS-C (12%) and RLS-C (11%). In total, 11 various subdomains were identified within both sub-corpora. Similarly, as presented in Table 5, the frequency distribution of subdomains reveals that the subdomains of *Performance*, *Game* and *Movie* are equally dominant in both sub-corpora. The allocation of subdomains is presented below:

Table 5: The *ENTERTAINMENT* source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Performance	30	1	17	4	8	21	7	8	0	6
Game	11	2	6	0	3	14	5	3	1	5
Movie	7	0	4	1	2	7	2	2	2	1
Fashion	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1
Cartoon	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Art	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Music	0	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	5
Balloons	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Books	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1
Gifts	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Amusement park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	53	3	29	5	16	56	15	15	3	23

The evaluative characteristics of the left-leaning media sub-corpus demonstrate an apparent dominance of negative (N) metaphors, while also displaying noticeable results in the mixed (M) evaluative category. In contrast, positive (P) and neutral (NT) evaluations are not commonly identified within this sub-corpus. While comparing the results to the right-leaning media sub-corpus, it is evident that mixed (M) metaphors prevail. In addition, the categories of positive (P) and negative (N) evaluative characteristics are distributed equally, indicating no tendency toward positive or negative framing.

3.3.1. The subdomain of *Performance*

The subdomain of *Performance* appears the most dominant in the left-leaning media sub-corpus (26) and the right-leaning media sub-corpus (18). Metaphors of *Performance* subdomain in the left-leaning media sub-corpus carry mainly negative evaluations, hence the entertainment aspect is usually portrayed in a critical or sardonic manner. This subdomain is composed of metaphorical expressions evoking various kinds of performative acts, such as theatrical displays or circus shows, for example:

(45) *The administration looks incompetent, in a fashion reminiscent of the clown-car chaos of Trump 1.0. (LLS-C)*

- (46) *The competing camps—the **MAGA fire-breathers**, the establishment swamp creatures, “Javanka” and the globalists—leaked relentlessly to the media and tried to knife one another. (LLS-C)*
- (47) *Scientists who cannot support their labs while President Trump holds their funds hostage for the sake of **MAGA theatre** over the next four years will take their labs elsewhere. (LLS-C)*
- (48) *To him so much of **it is a show**. (LLS-C)*

In example (45), “the clown-car” evokes an idea of unseriousness, comedic and exaggerated behavior, supported by the term “chaos”, portraying Trump as disorganized and careless. Example (46) features MAGA supporters as “fire-breathers”, depicting them as performative actors in a circus display rather than political figures or supporters. Similarly, example (47) illustrates MAGA movement in terms of a theatre display, narrating it as scripted, performative and overly dramatized. Lastly, example (48) is directly criticizing Trump’s attitude toward political matters, featuring his unseriousness, as perceiving his responsibilities as “a show”.

In comparison, the right-leaning media sub-corpus contains examples of metaphorical expressions mostly describing Trump’s behavior as dramatic and staged, for instance:

- (49) *When Trump does decide to use force, he has favored **quick, theatrical displays**—like the 2017 and 2018 U.S. airstrikes on Syrian military assets. (RLS-C)*
- (50) *The balance between **scripted and extemporaneous**, so often favoring the latter in rallies, leaned toward the former Thursday night. (RLS-C)*

In example (49), the use of force is displayed as “quick theatrical displays”, rather than a strategic action, which could be interpreted as a need to attract audiences and their reactions by giving them a visual and dramatized “theatrical” performance. In example (50), a metaphorical expression of “scripted and extemporaneous” emphasizes the essence of Trump’s political communication by conveying an idea of his political speech being staged and hence lacking naturalness. Additionally, some examples related to Trump’s performative behavior exhibit positive evaluations:

- (51) *It also became evident that **his performance** exceeded his previous victory in 2016. (RLS-C)*
- (52) *Still, even Trump’s history could not have prepared anyone for his **second presidency’s first quarter performance**. (RLS-C)*

In example (51) and (52), political success and Trump’s achievements are framed as *performance*, which in both examples is depicted as an effective and impressive show rather than a dramatized and staged display.

The examples describing Trump’s presidency as *performance*, collected from the Republican-aligned media, include metaphors with prevailing negative (N) evaluations, while also consisting of a fair number of positive (P) metaphors. The examples conveying negative evaluations include such metaphors as *a nearly forgotten minstrel show*, *unprecedented spectacle*, *scripted and*

extemporaneous, quick and theatrical displays, etc. Positive metaphorical expressions include *dominating the world stage, play a bigger role, his dominant performance*, etc. Accordingly, in the Democratic-aligned media, Trump's presidency and politics as a *performance* is framed highly negatively, by including such metaphors as *clown-car chaos, glitzy jukebox musical, staging a spectacle for amusement, scenery-chewing performance*, etc.

3.3.2. The subdomain of *Game*

The subdomain of *Game* is the second most frequently identified subdomain within the ENTERTAINMENT domain, in the left-leaning media sub-corpus (11) and the right-leaning media sub-corpus (14). Metaphorical examples of *Game* subdomain are commonly connected to narrating politics in terms of games, their rules, specifications and outcomes. Some of the examples are presented below:

- (53) *“Calvinball has only one rule: There are no fixed rules,” Jackson wrote. “We seem to have two,” she continued, the second being “**This administration always wins**”.* (LLS-C)
- (54) *When really what's wrong is that **there aren't a lot of cards to play**.* (LLS-C)
- (55) *The Supreme Court's Trump immunity decision last year provides Trump (and any future presidential felons) **with a get-out-of-jail-free card** for committing federal felonies.* (LLS-C)

In example (53), Donald Trump's presidency is compared to a “Calvinball” game, in which the rules are unpredictable due to constant changes. This example conveys the idea that Trump's presidency is inconsistent and noncompliant, suggesting the unbreakable yet unfair rule as in “this administration always win”. In addition, example (54) presents political resources and options in reference to cards that are used in games, comparing political reality to a board game, in which strategy is chosen based on card distribution. Similarly, example (55) emphasizes the immunity of Donald Trump from the consequences of his actions and draws on comparison with a board game by implying that a special “get-out-of-jai-free” card is in president's possession. In comparison, similar metaphorical expressions are identified within the right-leaning media sub-corpus, for instance:

- (56) *The lesson is that it's hard to write a law to cover every possible circumstance especially **if players are not playing in good faith**.* (RLS-C)
- (57) *But even if the “**If Trump Wins**” game does not portend planetary extinction, some on the left are plenty troubled by the prospect.* (RLS-C)

In example (56), politics is compared to a game, where players are not obeying rules as they are “not playing in good faith”. Example (57) provides a similar comparison, by describing a pre-elective period and by referring to a commonly distributed apprehension of “If Trump Wins” idea. Additionally, metaphorical expressions with positive evaluative characteristics are also identified within the right-leaning media sub-corpus:

(58) Trump **adjusted his game plan** this time around. And it shows. (RLS-C)

(59) He just **outplays them**. (RLS-C)

In example (58), a metaphor “adjusted his game plan” convinces an idea of preparation, strategy and alignment with goals. This example suggests that Trump has made improvements comparing to his first term presidency. Similarly, example (59), as if providing a continuation to the previous metaphorical expression, emphasizes the supremacy of Trump’s actions and decisions, which contribute to his political success.

The subdomain of *Game* is framed differently across the sub-corpora, due to the prevalence of metaphors with negative (N) evaluation in the left-leaning media sub-corpus, and the dominance of positive (P) evaluations in the right-leaning media sub-corpus. In the Democratic-aligned media, metaphorical expressions include *self-serving rules*, *cards to play*, *the field of play*, *moves*, etc. In comparison, the Republican-aligned media feature such metaphors as *presidential gambit*, *game plan*, *played nice*, *not playing in good faith* and others. As the subdomain of *Game* consists of various examples exhibiting negative (N), positive (P) and mixed (M) evaluations in the sub-corpora, Trump’s second-term presidency is framed ambivalently, displaying both supportive and criticizing stances.

3.4. Other source domains

Although only three source domains have been discussed in the preceding subchapters, many other source domains (see Table 2) were identified across both sub-corpora. In the present section, a general overview of the other identified source domains is presented, with the quantitative data presented in Appendix 2 (see Tables 6–17).

The source domain of **CONSTRUCTION** is quite commonly identified within the left-leaning media sub-corpus (49), while in the right-leaning media sub-corpus (16) it remains less represented (see Appendix 2, Table 6). The leading subdomain of *Destruction* (27) conceptualizes political actions as processes of demolition. The domain of **COMPETITION** is more frequently identified in the right-leaning sub-corpus (44), while the left-leaning media sub-corpus (13) contains a relatively smaller number of tokens (see Appendix 2, Table 7). Subdomain of *Winning* (16) is prevalent, framing politics in reference to rivalry and emphasizing outcomes of it. The domain of **NATURAL PHENOMENON** clearly predominates the right-leaning sub-corpus (40), while the left-leaning sub-corpus (18) contains fewer examples. Subdomain of *Meteorological phenomena* (15) conceptualizes politics in regard to ever-changing weather conditions, such as rain, snow, hurricanes, etc. (see Appendix 2, Table 8).

The domain of **OBJECT** is more evident in the right-leaning sub-corpus (34) than the left-leaning media sub-corpus (18) (see Appendix, Table 9). The *General* subdomain (21) is the leading category,

conceptualizes abstract political ideas and occurrences as physical items. The domain of **ANIMAL** is similarly represented in the left-leaning sub-corpus (27) and the right-leaning sub-corpus (21), accounting for a slight token-wise difference (see Appendix 2, Table 10). The leading subdomain is *Farm animals* (10), which associates and attributes animal characteristics to political actors. The domain of **HEALTH** is equally distributed within both sub-corpora: the left-leaning sub-corpus (21) and the right-leaning sub-corpus (21), featuring the subdomain of *Disease* (16) as the most frequent category, framing politics as harmful, infectious, and in need of treatment (see Appendix 2, Table 11). The domain of **FOOD** is represented similarly in the right-leaning sub-corpus (20) and the left-leaning sub-corpus (18), with the prevalent subdomain of *Cooking* (10) within the corpus (see Appendix 2, Table 12), simplifying complex political actions by means of food preparation and consumption.

The domain of **HUMANBEING** is more evidently identified in the left-leaning sub-corpus (23) rather than in the right-leaning sub-corpus (11) (see Appendix 2, Table 13). Its dominant subdomain is *Relationships* (11), which draws on human relations and qualities rather than abstract political institutions, emphasizing human connection and emotions. The domain of **RELIGION** displays a relatively similar frequency of both: right-leaning (15) and left-leaning (12) sub-corpora (see Appendix, Table 14). Its subdomain of *Believers* (6) frames Donald Trump's supporters as devoted religious followers. The domain of **MONARCHY** is more frequently identified within the left-leaning sub-corpus (19), while the right-leaning sub-corpus (7) shows minimal representation (see Appendix, Table 15). By combining identified metaphors, the dominant subdomain of *Emperor* (20) stands out as the dominant category, framing Donald Trump as the supreme ruler, often evoking strongly negative evaluation.

The domain of **MACHINERY** is represented similarly in both sub-corpora, in the left-leaning sub-corpus (12) and the right-leaning sub-corpus (11) (see Appendix 2, Table 16). *Computer* (11) subdomain is identified most prominently, comparing Trump and politics to devices, by ascribing characteristics like various advancements, high-speed, and lack of emotional engagement. Lastly, the domain of **CRIME** is more commonly identified in the left-leaning sub-corpus (15) rather than the right-leaning sub-corpus (5) (see Appendix, Table 17). Its prevalent subdomain is *Mafia* (10), with examples mainly identified within the left-leaning sub-corpus, frames political actors as organized crime groups.

Conclusions

This research paper analyzed metaphors in relation to Donald Trump's second term presidency in the Democratic- and Republican-aligned media outlets. In accordance with the aim and objectives of this research paper, the conclusions are presented as follows:

1. The quantitative findings revealed that twenty-one source domains were identified across both sub-corpora, with the combined total of 980 metaphorical expressions, consisting of 459 tokens from the left-leaning media sub-corpus and 521 tokens from the right-leaning media sub-corpus. The dominant source domains across both sub-corpora included CONFLICT (181), JOURNEY (141) and ENTERTAINMENT (109). Other individual source domains included ANIMAL, COMPETITION, CONFLICT, CONSTRUCTION, CRIME, ENTERTAINMENT, FOOD, HEALTH, HUMANBEING, JOURNEY, MACHINERY, MONARCHY, NATURAL PHENOMENON, OBJECT, RELIGION. In addition, six source domains (LIQUID, PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, EDUCATION, SUPERNATURAL, EDUCATION, CLEANLINESS) were combined into one MINOR group.
2. All source domains were developed to a greater or lesser degree by their respective subdomains. For instance, such source domains demonstrate a bigger number of subdomains: CONFLICT (12) ENTERTAINMENT (11), OBJECT (11) and ANIMAL (10) allowing for a wide range of mappings to be created, in regard to actors, outcomes, processes, etc. Interestingly, the source domain of NATURAL PHENOMENON accounts for the highest number of subdomains (16), covering various aspects (such as climate, water, flowers, rock, natural disaster, etc.) embedded in daily human experience. Moderately developed source domains with fewer subdomains include: FOOD (9), JOURNEY (8), RELIGION (8), HEALTH (8) and MACHINERY (7). Source domains exhibiting a limited set of conceptual aspects include CONSTRUCTION (6), COMPETITION (6), CRIME (6), HUMANBEING (4) and MONARCHY (3). The dominant source domains (CONFLICT, JOURNEY, ENTERTAINMENT) and their leading subdomains were analyzed in details. In the source domain of CONFLICT, the prominent subdomains of *War*, *Attacking* and *Fighting*, *Enemies* and *Allies* were chosen for the analysis. In the domain of JOURNEY, the subdomains of *Movement*, *Vehicle*, *Leader* and *Paths* were the most commonly identified. Lastly, the source domain of ENTERTAINMENT demonstrated the dominance of the *Performance* and *Game* subdomains.
3. The results indicate the superiority of negative (N) evaluations in constructing the media representation of Donald Trump's second-term presidency. The relative distribution of evaluative characteristics revealed that negative (N) evaluations are dominant in both sub-corpora, in the Democratic-aligned (66%) and in the Republican-aligned (39%) media. The prominence of negative evaluations in the left-leaning media is consistent with their oppositional views. However, it is noteworthy that the right-leaning media also displays a tendency toward negative

- evaluations. The category of mixed (M) evaluations is represented similarly across the sub-corpora, representing 26% in the right-leaning and 25% in the left-leaning media sub-corpora. Nevertheless, the differences were established while comparing the distribution of positive (P) evaluations across both sub-corpora, as in the left-leaning media, positive (P) evaluations are minimal (5%). On the contrary, the right-leaning media sub-corpus features positive (P) evaluations as the second-largest category identified, resulting in 30% of the overall distribution. In addition, findings demonstrate the underrepresentation of the neutral (NT) evaluative category. Such tendency is explained by the evaluative nature of metaphors and the choice of data sources.
4. Figurative framing of Donald Trump and his policies is reflected in the ideological implications imposed in the texts produced by the representatives of the Democratic- and Republican-aligned media outlets.
 - a. The right-leaning media sub-corpus focuses on the construction of Donald Trump's representation mainly through the subdomains such as *War* (CONFLICT), by depicting politics as an armed conflict, characterized by destruction, battles and struggles through the use of war vocabulary, displaying predominantly negative evaluations. Metaphorical expressions belonging to the *Movement* and *Leader* subdomains (JOURNEY), narrate Trump's presidency in relation to guidance, strength, direction and decisiveness, reinforcing the favorable representation of Trump's second-term presidency. The subdomain of *Performance*, consisting of both positive and negative examples, conveys the idea of the artificiality of Trump's second-term presidency by comparing his actions and decisions to performative displays, often delegitimizing his authoritativeness and depicting him in a negative light.
 - b. The left-leaning media sub-corpus constructs Donald Trump's representation through the leading subdomains of *Attacking* and *Fighting* (CONFLICT), by depicting politics in terms of violent actions. The metaphors construct an unfavorable media representation of Donald Trump and his second-term presidency by highlighting his agency in actions, depicting him as an aggressor and initiator of conflicts. The metaphors from the subdomain of *Vehicle* (JOURNEY) focus on describing the political future of the United States in relation to a voyage, by assuming Donald Trump as a captain of the boat. Such descriptions are framed negatively, often including criticizing stances on Trump's ability to perform his duties. The subdomain of *Performance* focuses on framing the MAGA political movement and Trump's decision-making in regard to theaters and circus shows, displaying mainly negative evaluations, portraying the presidency as absurd and amusing.

Several limitations of this research must be addressed. Firstly, due to the length requirements of this research paper, the sub-corpora may not have fully represented the diversity of source domains within

the Democratic- and Republican-aligned media. Secondly, as the analysis and the categorization of examples were conducted manually, it may be the case that some metaphorical expressions were unintentionally overlooked. Lastly, some limitations regarding the subjectivity of the results are acknowledged, as an inevitable aspect of the conducted analysis, specifically in regard to distributing and interpreting results.

Future study of Donald Trump's figurative representation across the left-and right-leaning media could focus on increasing the size of both sub-corpora by including a broader range of media outlets and texts, ensuring the diversity and credibility of the results. The qualitative discussion chapter could be expanded by providing a detailed overview of all high-frequency source domains and their prominent subdomains. In addition, future research could focus on the comparison of metaphorical representations constructed in different periods of time, comparing the metaphorical framing of Donald Trump's first-term presidency and his second-term presidency.

Summary

Metaphors are an integral part of our conceptual system, shaping our perception of reality. In a political context, metaphors are used to persuade, attract attention, shape political views, reinforce ideologies and facilitate the understanding of complex ideas. The media coverage of political events is particularly important for shaping images of political figures, as the choice of metaphors determines how they are perceived by different audiences.

The aim of this study is to analyze how Donald Trump is metaphorically represented in Republican- and Democratic-aligned media. This study also aims to identify and compare the most prominent source domains that reflect how Donald Trump's second-term presidency is narrated by representatives of opposing views in the left-leaning and right-leaning media. The study examines what metaphors contribute to his favorable and unfavorable media representation. To conduct this study, two sub-corpora (approx. 50,000 words each) were compiled from texts published in four widely-known U.S. news outlets (*The Atlantic*, *The New York Magazine*, *The American Conservative*, *The American Spectator*) between 2024 and 2025. The theoretical framework of this study is based on Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004), which reveals how metaphors shape representations and reinforce ideological beliefs in political discourse. Additionally, a Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group 2007) was adapted. Criteria for identifying evaluative characteristics (Hidalgo-Downing & Perez-Sobrinho 2022) were also used to determine evaluations of metaphors.

The results of the quantitative analysis revealed that 21 source domains were identified across both sub-corpora, accounting for a total of 980 metaphorical expressions, in the left-leaning media sub-corpus (459) and in the right-leaning media sub-corpus (521). A more detailed analysis showed that the most prominent source domains in both sub-corpora were CONFLICT, JOURNEY and ENTERTAINMENT, constituting the largest share of the corpus. The relative evaluative distribution of both sub-corpora showed the prevalence of the negative characteristics, in the left-leaning media (66%) and in the right-leaning media (39%), indicating a rather negative inclination in framing.

Santrauka

Metaforos yra neatsiejiama mąstymo sistemos dalis, nes jos formuoja mūsų realybės suvokimą. Politiniame kontekste metaforos naudojamos siekiant įtikinti, pritraukti dėmesį, formuoti politinės pažiūras, stiprinti ideologijas ir palengvinti sudėtingų idėjų supratimą. Politinių įvykių atspindėjimas žiniasklaidoje yra itin svarbus politinių atstovų įvaizdžio formavimui, nes metaforų pasirinkimas lemia, kaip juos vertina skirtingos auditorijos.

Šio tyrimo tikslas – išanalizuoti, kaip Donaldas Trumpas yra metaforiškai reprezentuojamas respublikonams ir demokratams palankioje žiniasklaidoje. Taip pat, siekiama nustatyti ir palyginti dažniausiai pasitaikančias šaltinio sritis (angl. *source domains*), kurios parodo, kaip yra suvokiamas antrasis Donaldo Trumpo prezidentavimo laikotarpis (nuo 2025 m.) priešingų politinių pažiūrų tekstuose, t.y. dešinėsios ir kairiosios pakraipos JAV žiniasklaidoje. Tyrime siekiama ištirti, kokios metaforos pasirenkamos, kuriant palankų arba nepalankų politinio veikėjo ir jo politikos įvaizdį. Remiantis keturiais populiariais amerikietiškais naujienų portalais, buvo sudaryti du patekstiniai (kiekvienas apimantis apie 50 000 žodžių). Šio tyrimo teorinis pagrindas remiasi kritine metaforų analize (Charteris-Black 2004), kuri atskleidžia kaip metaforos prisideda prie įvaizdžio formavimo ir ideologijų stiprinimo politiniame diskurse. Siekiant užtikrinti metaforų identifikavimo tikslumą, buvo taikoma metaforų identifikavimo procedūra (Pragglejaz Group 2007). Taip pat buvo panaudoti vertinimo identifikavimo kriterijai (Hidalgo-Downing & Perez-Sobrino 2022), siekiant nustatyti vyraujančius metaforų vertinimus.

Kiekybinės analizės rezultatai parodė, jog abiejuose tekstynuose buvo nustatyta 21 šaltinio sritis, o bendras metaforinių pasakymų skaičius siekė 980, iš kurių 459 atiteko kairiųjų, o 521 – dešiniųjų pažiūrų žiniasklaidos tekstynui. Detalesnė analizė parodė, kad abiejuose tekstynuose dažniausiai pasitaikančios šaltinių sritys yra KONFLIKTAS, KELIONĖ ir PRAMOGA, kurie sudaro didžiausią dalį duomenų. Vertinamasis pasiskirstymas rodo, kad neigiamos savybės vyrauja tiek kairiųjų (66%), tiek dešiniųjų pažiūrų žiniasklaidoje (39%), o tai rodo gana neigiamą tendenciją formuojant naratyvą.

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Appendix 1: The news outlets and the authors

The New York Times Magazine: Matthew Purdy, Bret Stephens, Ross Douthat, Emily Bazelon, Jamelle Bouie, Thomas B. Edsall, David Wallace-Wells, Thomas L. Friedman, Frank Bruni, Jack Goldsmith, Matthew Walther, Maureen Dowd, Michelle Goldberg and Patrick Healy;

The Atlantic: David Frum, Toluse Olorunnipa, Adam Serwer, Michael Luttig, Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, Helen Lewis, Jonathan Chait, Ashley Parker and Michael Scherer, Elizabeth Bruenig, Tom Nichols, Russell Berman, Eliot A. Cohen;

The American Conservative: Peter Van Buren, Spences Neale, Charles Benoit, W. James Antle III, Joseph Addington, James P. Pinkerton, Collin Pruett, James Bovard, Andrew Day, Ted Galen Carpenter, Peter Tonguette, Daniel R. DePetrìs, Razib Khan;

The American Spectator: Jonah Apel, Josh Hammer, Jeffrey Lord, John Rodden, Scott McKay, Francis P. Sempa, Daniel J. Flynn, Lou Aguilar, Debra J. Saunders, Thomas Kolbe, J.T. Young, Itxu Diaz, Shmuel Klatzkin, Jed Babbin;

Appendix 2: Source domains and their subdomains

Table 6: The CONSTRUCTION source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Destruction	23	0	22	0	1	4	0	4	0	0
Restoring	8	2	3	0	3	2	2	0	0	0
Building	7	0	5	1	1	5	2	1	0	2
House parts	6	0	2	1	3	3	0	0	1	2
Damages	4	0	4	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Regulating	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	49	2	36	2	9	16	4	7	1	4

Table 7: The COMPETITION source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Rivals	5	0	5	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Sports	3	1	2	0	0	10	3	1	0	6
Opponents	2	0	1	0	1	11	0	10	0	1
Teams	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0
Winning	1	0	0	0	1	15	13	1	0	1
Rewards	1	1	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0
Total	13	2	8	1	2	44	20	14	2	8

Table 8: The NATURAL PHENOMENON source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Meteorological phenomena	6	1	4	0	1	9	3	5	0	1
Water	3	1	2	0	0	7	1	3	0	3

Natural disaster	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	3	0	1
Space	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Surface	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tree	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	0	1
Echo	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Astronomical event	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1	1	4
Flowers	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1
Metal	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Climate	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Eruption	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rock	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Swamp	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Wilderness	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Abyss	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	14	2	9	0	3	40	8	17	1	14

Table 9: The *OBJECT* source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
General	13	0	13	0	0	8	0	3	2	3
Toolbox	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1
Clothes	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	1
Shiny	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cloth	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Metal	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	1	0	0
Color	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	4	0	2
Sharp	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1
Stool	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Ropes	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Container	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

Total	18	1	16	1	0	34	8	14	3	9
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Table 10: *The ANIMAL source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Actions	6	0	3	0	3	2	0	2	0	0
Wild animals	6	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Farm animals	2	0	2	0	0	8	0	4	0	4
Dogs	2	0	2	0	0	5	0	4	0	1
Fish	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Birds	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	4	0	0
Cats	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Dinosaurs	1	0	1	0	0					
Wildlife	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	1	0	3
Worms	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	21	1	14	0	6	27	1	18	0	8

Table 11: *The HEALTH source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Disease	9	1	4	0	4	7	0	7	0	0
Treatment	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Disorder	3	0	3	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Resuscitate	3	2	0	0	1	4	3	0	0	1
Symptoms	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Medication	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	2	0	1
Muscles	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Surgery	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	21	3	12	0	6	21	5	13	0	3

Table 12: *The **FOOD** source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Cooking	7	2	2	0	3	3	1	2	0	0
Appetite	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fruits	4	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	1
Catering	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	2
Eating	1	0	1	0	0	7	1	5	0	1
Portion	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	1	1
Refreshments	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Spices	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	18	5	10	0	3	20	4	10	1	5

Table 13: *The **HUMANBEING** source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Children	9	0	7	0	2	1	0	0	0	1
Body	6	0	1	0	5	4	0	2	0	2
Relationships	5	0	1	0	4	6	3	0	0	3
Family	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23	0	10	0	13	11	3	2	0	5

Table 14: *The **RELIGION** source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.*

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Believers	5	0	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Church	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Savior	3	1	0	0	2	3	3	0	0	0

Cult	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
God	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0
Faith	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	1
Praying	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Spirit	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total	12	1	5	0	6	15	12	1	0	2

Table 15: The *MONARCHY* source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Emperor	13	0	11	0	2	7	0	6	0	1
King	4	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Royalty	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	19	0	12	1	6	7	0	6	0	1

Table 16: The *MACHINERY* source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M
Computer	5	0	3	0	2	6	1	0	1	4
Device	3	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Separation of parts	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machine	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
Machine's parts	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	12	0	7	0	5	11	3	2	1	5

Table 17: The *CRIME* source domain, its subdomains and evaluation.

	Left-leaning media					Right-leaning media				
Subdomains:	Tokens:	Evaluation				Tokens:	Evaluation			
		P	N	NT	M		P	N	NT	M

Mafia	9	0	9	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Thieves	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Arsonist	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kidnapper	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culprit	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
Trick	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0
Total	15	0	14	0	1	5	0	5	0	0