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Recolonization through Reconstruction: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Insinuation about Gaza

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ABSTRACT

The rebuilding of Gaza has emerged as a unifying theme in international political rhetoric especially within the discourse of major global leaders. This research critically examines the discourse of U.S. President Donald Trump on the reconstruction of Gaza and demonstrates how it showcases neo-colonial discourses. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study examines how Trump's lexical choices—"take over," "ownership," "level the land," and "rebuilt"—position Gaza as a passive, reliant territory and the U.S. as a heroic, outcome-focused superpower. His words build Gaza up as needing to be governed by someone else, thus making American intervention justified and saving. The analysis shows that these rhetorical practices are not ideologically innocent but tend to reinforce U.S. exceptionalism and legitimate further foreign intervention in the Middle East. In placing reconstruction under the guise of recolonization, Trump's rhetoric supports the reproduction of global power differentials. This research uncovers the way language serves to express dominance through discourses of peace, progress, and humanitarianism.

Introduction

Rebuilding Gaza has received renewed interest from the international community in light of continuous wars that have annihilated any semblance of infrastructure and deepened humanitarian crises. In this respect, political discourse fits into that mould of determining Gaza's identity as either a victimized entity in need of help or as a destabilizing entity. This typification informs the responses of international powers. Since the beginning of the Obama administration, U.S. President Donald Trump's imagined reconstruction of Gaza is particularly telling of intertwining neo-colonial tropes under the guise of recovery and sovereignty (Elsemeiri, Alsemeiri, & Alzaem, 2025; Almustafa, 2024). For theoretical context, language is considered beyond a method of communication—it is a transmission of power and ideology (Fairclough, 2015; van Dijk, 2018).

Trump has repeatedly used strong verbs like “take over,” “ownership,” “level the site,” and “rebuild,” rendering Gaza as a passive object that is awaiting governance and return/repair by an authority. His lexical choices re-public scripts of colonial imagination of “civilizing missions” and dominance of place that echo archetypal patterns of settler-colonial discourse (Veracini, 2006; Phillipson, 1992;). There have been many analyses focused on the material destruction of Gaza, and comparatively less research on how the vocabulary around reconstruction reinforces colonial stratifications. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), developed by Fairclough (1992, 2013) and van Dijk (1991, 2006), unearths implicit ideological engagements of political discourse (Ahmed, D. et al., 2024). The usefulness of CDA supports our engagement with how Trump's discourse of rebuilding becomes a legitimization of Western influence and hegemony in the Middle East (Elsemeiri et al., 2025; Almustafa, 2024). Previous CDA studies have followed the discourse of Trump in historical contexts such as the 2020 "Deal of the Century" and evidenced derogatory framings of Palestinians as passive or obstructionist in claiming U.S. and Israeli roles as inherently good and rational (Elsemeiri et al., 2025). Other studies have documented a range of Islamophobic, nationalistic, and hegemonic metaphors in his tweets and speeches, reinforcing the suggestion that his rhetoric is likely to be based on both supremacist and interventionist ideologies (Ruiz, 2018; Khaled Jamel, Abdi, & Basheer, 2024). To extend these studies, this research explores the ways in which he uses language in rebuilding Gaza. Using qualitative analysis, this study examines different configurations for modality, metaphor, and agency in Trump's rhetoric. This research contends that Trump's lexical choices crystallize visions of Gaza as dysfunctional and frozen in time without the capacity for self-determination, and justify U.S. intervention in Gaza as both valuable and humanitarian. The study not only adds to CDA scholarship, but shows how unpacking the discourse framing of reconstruction can have broader implications, highlighting how such discourse can be legitimated as a form of ideological control in post-colonial/post-conflict settings. The study illustrates how the discursive micro-level framing of Gaza has broader implications for the impact of continuities of language in establishing international relations and legitimizing power over people in the international arena. Ultimately, this study advocates for a more reflexive and inter/anti-imperialist narrative to reconstruct/rebuild.

Research Question

- What linguistic choices have been made by Donald Trump suggesting Gaza to be colonized again?
- How have the lexical choices of Donald Trump revealed his stance about Gaza?

Research Objectives

- To critically examine the discourse of U.S. President Donald Trump regarding the reconstruction of Gaza.
- To identify and analyze the specific lexical choices used by Trump that reflect neo-colonial and interventionist ideologies.

Literature Review

This research has foregrounded the way political discourse can be both a tool to legitimize power structures and pursue ideological aims, particularly insofar as the geopolitical context of the Middle East is concerned. Anwar, Butt, and Shahzadi's (2024) study importantly and critically examined the political-war statements issued by Israeli officials and how their language choices strategically mask colonial ambitions under the nebulous symbols of national security and defense. By using metaphors invoking threats, protection, and peacekeeping, Israeli officials accomplished a narrative fixed in morality where colonial ambitions are obscured. When Anwar and Butt (2025)

examined the discourse of Benjamin Netanyahu's 2023 speech to the United Nations General Assembly—arguably a text of colonial ideologies—the authors explored a “New Middle East” discursively articulated by Netanyahu's vision of existential dangers and regional upheaval. The authors concluded that Netanyahu's language constructed a simple opposition of civilization/terror, positioning Israel as a desired stabilizing force in a chaotic region.

Suleiman and Kienpointner (2023), in their critical discourse analysis of Western media representations of Palestinian resistance, also found similar patterns of lexical and syntactical strategies used to dehumanize Palestinians and articulate interventionist policies as reasonable and necessary. Collectively, these studies reinforce the notion that political language is a key ideological weapon that frames geopolitical realities in ways that normalize domination and control over foreign spaces. This study undertakes an analysis of Donald Trump's discourse around the reconstruction of Gaza, with particular attention to the use of lexical choices in the semantic field of “take over,” “ownership,” and “rebuild,” in which Gaza is framed as a passive space requiring reconstruction by American colonization. In turn, the reconstruction of Gaza serves as a discursive vehicle of recolonization.

Discourse, Power, and Ideology in CDA

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an established method of research on how language and power interact. Norman Fairclough (1989) describes CDA as a means of analysing how and why language is employed to create and reproduce social relations of power. Fairclough (2003) points out that discourse is not only a representation of reality but is also constitutive of social practices and, therefore, affects how individuals perceive the world they live in. Discourse, then, is not neutral, but is influenced by structures of power and in return constructs those structures.

In international relations, CDA is applied to explore how political discourse, especially from influential actors like the United States, constructs state-to-state and state-to-region relations, and reinforces dominance, intervention, and control-oriented constructions of ideas. Teun A. van Dijk (1993), another prominent scholar of CDA, builds on Fairclough's work by concentrating on the cognitive processes of discourse. van Dijk argues that discourse is influenced by the ideologies of those creating it. Ideology dictates how social groups and political institutions are represented—usually in ways that reinforce the status quo of power relations. Trump's rhetoric surrounding Gaza, filled with words like “take over,” “ownership,” and “rebuilding,” can be interpreted as a symbol that the Gaza Strip and its inhabitants need to be controlled and taken over by an outside force. This discourse, which locates rhetoric of intervention centrally, places Gaza as a sphere where U.S. dominance must be asserted and exercised, and where external rule is needed to overcome challenges.

Colonial Discourses in Political Language

Perhaps the most applicable theoretical model for critiquing Trump's discourse on Gaza is Edward Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism, where he examines how the West represents the East (and non-Western places in general) as exotic, primitive, and in need of civilizing intervention. Said's work illustrates how the West, through its own discourse, spoke of the Orient as a region of disorder and chaos that necessitated Western governance and control.

U.S. Foreign Policy and Imperialist Rhetoric

The concept of the U.S. as an international force able to impose order on turbulent territories is one of the primary threads in American foreign policy rhetoric.

Researchers including Chomsky (2003) and Harvey (2005) criticized the United States for presenting its activities in the Middle East as altruistic or innocuous undertakings for re-establishing stability and peace. In his book *Hegemony or Survival* (2003), Noam Chomsky explains how U.S. interventions, particularly in the Middle East, are framed as promoting democracy, peace, and stability, while actually being driven by geopolitical hegemony and economic interests. Trump's language regarding Gaza is part of this broader trend, with him projecting the U.S. as a stabilizing and expanding power that can rebuild Gaza and offer Gazans economic prospects. In portraying Gaza as a land in need of U.S. domination, Trump's language advances an ideology of American exceptionalism and hegemony, suggesting the region is incapable of governing or feeding itself.

David Held and Henrietta Lutz (2004) would advance the argument, in their intervention and sovereignty work, that international interventions—though generally humanitarian in description—undermine state sovereignty and reinforce a hierarchy of global power. Trump's suggestion that the U.S. should take charge of Gaza aligns with this argument, as it implies that Gaza cannot exist without U.S. initiative. This position reflects the reasoning of imperialism, where stronger countries control weaker areas under the pretext of assisting them in overcoming their issues.

Recolonization and the Politics of Development

Trump's remarks also resonate with the discourse of development, which has a long history of intertwining with colonial discourse. Scholars like Arturo Escobar (1995) argue that the discourse of development is a form of contemporary imperialism, where the West foists its conception of progress on non-Western societies.

Escobar's work emphasizes that the development discourse legitimizes the appropriation of resources and the imposition of Western values on the Global South. Trump's portrayal of Gaza as a "massive demolition site" waiting to be "rebuilt differently" is consistent with this framework. He places the U.S. as a power that can redevelop Gaza into a stable and prosperous area, but this redevelopment is conditional on U.S. domination and management.

In this way, Trump's plan demonstrates a colonialist attitude, where the U.S. plays the role of the "developer" and Gaza is the "undeveloped" territory. Nira Yuval-Davis (2015), in *The Politics of Belonging*, discusses how language is employed to create concepts of inclusion and exclusion, especially with regard to marginalized groups. Yuval-Davis' work applies to Trump's discourse regarding Gaza, because his words construct Palestinians and Gazans as excluded and marginalized from global prosperity. American intervention, according to Trump, will give these individuals a sense of belonging to an international community by offering them employment, shelter, and protection.

Research Methodology

This study, relying on the theoretical foundation of Norman Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of discourse, applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze Donald Trump's

discourse regarding Gaza. CDA is a type of analysis with the goal of identifying, representing, reproducing, and resisting power relations and belief systems through features of language. This study analyzes Trump's explicit proposals for U.S. activities to "rebuild Gaza," with the aim of identifying the ideological motivations behind those propositional statements. Overall, this study examines how Trump's rhetorical activity perpetuates and creates power relationships and rationales for American power over Gaza. The goal of this study is a good fit for Fairclough's three-dimensional model, as it considers language at three levels of analysis—text, discursive practice, and social practice. This allows for a consideration of the multiple ways in which power relations constitute and are constituted by discourse.

Data Collection

The data used for this research include public remarks about Gaza provided by Donald Trump, whose primary source material is collected through interviews, speeches, and public appearances in which he reacts to the situation in the region. These materials are selected due to their focus on U.S. intervention in Gaza, as well as their engagement with the Middle East's broader geopolitical context. The content is quoted word for word from authoritative sources, including interview transcripts, speeches, and news media, in an attempt to ensure credibility and authenticity.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis. In accordance with Fairclough's model, discourse operates at three interconnected levels: text (linguistic structure), discursive practice (production and consumption of the discourse) and social practice (wider social, political, and ideological context). At the textual level, the discourse analysis looks at Trump's language usage, metaphors, and lexical patterns to see how language constructs power relations towards Gaza. The dimension of discursive practice looks at the context that Trump is in, examining how the discourse is produced, circulated and read by media and audiences. Last, the social practice level places Trump's language in the context of larger political ideologies including U.S. foreign policy, imperialism and neoliberalism. Such a framework helps to fully appreciate how Trump's language not just represents political ideologies but also operates as a device to sustain power relations in world affairs.

Data Analysis

U.S. Intervention and Control

Donald Trump's rhetoric surrounding Gaza demonstrates a colonial ideology in multiple ways through his choice of words. Trump's willful choice of verbs like "take over" and "own" clearly orients toward acts of taking and capturing—both usages carry forceful ownership intentions that undermine any sense of local autonomy. His use of the future tense with phrases like "will take over" and "we'll own it" implies certainty and inevitability, which frames U.S. intervention as a foregone conclusion. Also, the use of words like "dismantling" and "level the site" highlights the ongoing process of erasure and reconstruction—an essential component of colonialism that seeks to decimate existing establishments and then make room for rebuilding anew. Coupled with the repeated use of the word "level," Trump suggests not only the removal of existing built places, but the definitive, complete wiping away of what came before. His paternalistic phrase "give people a chance" suggests that the U.S. is altruistic and the voice of reason, providing a new utopian future for Gaza—one that is "beautiful" and therefore secure for the degraded and, essentially, dehumanized people of Gaza. Lastly, Trump's appeal for a "world-class" outcome serves to

reinforce ideas of American superiority, suggesting the existence of a lower original state and implying that the U.S. would endeavor to implement a world-class transformation, as if it were a "trade" show.

Trump's dialogue about Gaza exemplifies the *longue durée* of U.S. interventionism and imperialism, as his beneficent promises to take over and own Gaza evoke colonial strategies of declaring authority and control over foreign land in the name of reconstruction. The importance of language is significant here, and Trump draws upon intertextual references to past U.S. military interventions—such as in Iraq—where waste and destruction were the preconditions for rebuilding. There are stark power dynamics at play here: the U.S. is characterized as transcendent and unquestionable, scripting a new Gaza while ignoring its sovereignty altogether. The rhetoric of a "beautiful," "safe," and "secure" life translates U.S. actions into a paternalistic gift, with Gazans as the exhausted subjects of inevitable historical progress, incapable of exercising their own free will. With the pledge to achieve "world-class" standards, Trump connects Gaza to global narratives about capitalist development, where the U.S. represents those triumphantly positioned at the summit of excellence, while Gazans are framed as the dehumanized remnants of a lesser North Africa—lesser for unexplained reasons of inferiority. In the end, Trump's language portrays the U.S. as the transcendent actor justified in its project of implementing its benevolence and global leadership in Gaza.

Trump's articulation demonstrates a powerful ideological construction of the United States as a global arbiter of norms, suggesting that it has both the right and the obligation to engage, intervene, and oversee Gaza for the purposes of stability and order in the region. This also implies that Gaza's national governance is fundamentally incapable of achieving legitimate self-rule. As such, Gaza's local system is allowed to operate only as a regulated overlay. This declaration is well situated within the larger sociocultural backdrop of U.S. interventions in the Middle East, where U.S. dominance and engagement are routinely framed as necessary for peace and reconstruction. The idea of "leveling" Gaza signifies a colonial ideology that insists recognizable local structures are unworthy and therefore disposable, making way for a better-organized, Western-ordered reality to be constructed. Demonstrating discourses around reconstruction after military conflicts intersects with the ability of external actors to dictate the reorganization of an occupied or besieged society post-conflict. For example, Trump's emphasis on "world-class" standards substantively reflects historical ideologies—in this case, Trump essentially argues that Western (specifically American) models are the benchmarks for success and development, and therefore, Gaza is currently deficient. Moreover, the linguistic and sociocultural concepts parallel global metaphors that imagine Western solutions as the gold standard. These metaphors serve as critical and necessary reaffirmations of U.S. hegemony, rendering local agency explicitly subordinate. Overall, the framework imagines the U.S. as a benign and paternalistic authority, sincerely coaxing stability, order, and prosperity—while cooperatively hiding the fact that it is exercising control and dominion over a denigrated, war-damaged area.

Reconstruction and Economic Development

Trump consistently characterizes Gaza in ways that evoke vivid and catastrophic images of dehumanization. Examples include the repeated use of "horrible," "hellhole," "death," "destruction," and "rubble," creating images of a wasteland. Metaphors like "hellhole" completely erase Gaza's human facets and render it as unlivable for humans. Trump's foregrounding of "has made it," and "has been" grounds ideas of Gaza's misery in an ongoing reality, making it seem as if Gaza's misery is a state long in the past that is simply getting worse. The use of emotional and

repetitive adjectives like “so bad” and “terrible, terrible” drives hopelessness and desperation. Additionally, the term “absolutely destroyed,” in reference to the people of Gaza, obfuscates their humanity, agency, and complexities, and instead prioritizes them as war victims of their environment. The language, in various forms, allows the narrative to develop in a way that elicits pity and justifies foreign intervention—representing Gaza not merely as a crisis to intervene in, but as a place not capable of self-repair. Overall, the textual descriptions of Gaza are ultimately all intertwined to preserve a narrative along the axis of dehumanization and helplessness.

Trump’s rhetoric utilizes intertextual stories from Western political rhetoric about conflict zones. In depicting a destroyed and suffering Gaza, he is embedding narratives common to the colonial imagination that depict areas like Gaza as chaotic and in need of governance from abroad. The rhetoric is similar to colonial rationales in which the indigenous space cannot be mediated without foreign “expertise” and control. Hamas is portrayed as the single villain, while the local population is constructed without agency—only as passive victims. This creates a clear contrast: the chaotic “other” compared to the capable, intervening authority. This rhetorical choice also accentuates the power differential between the U.S. and Gaza and constructs intervention as not only necessary but also morally defensible. The cumulative significance of these rhetorical practices is to further legitimize the notion that Gazans are incapable of resolving their circumstances in a self-determined way—validated through mobilizing notions of humanitarianism and reconstruction to legitimate paternalistic action.

The discourse of Trump draws on broader ideological structures that have historically justified Western interventionism. His characterization of Gaza reflects the belief that non-Western societies, especially in the Middle East, are fundamentally unstable and in need of ‘saving’ from external agents. This ideology frames the U.S. as not only a superpower but also a moral agent to come to the rescue of ‘failed’ spaces around the world. In referring to Gaza as a ‘hellhole’ before the most recent fighting, Trump implied that Palestinian society is intrinsically broken and requires outsider intervention to rebuild. His characterization of Gaza also follows historical and ongoing colonial tropes of portraying the land and people as primitive, chaotic, and incapable of self-governance to rationalize domination and efforts toward reconstruction and complete re-structuration. Socioculturally, this type of language contributes to an already pervasive narrative in which the suffering of local populations is emphasized not to empower them but to justify foreign intervention and re-structuring of their societies in the image of Western values. Trump’s characterization is also tied to the post-9/11 rhetoric around Middle Eastern societies as barbaric, ruined, and dependent. In this way, dehumanizing and derogatory language surrounding Gaza does two things: it erases the nuance of Palestinian agency and history, while reiterating the narrative of Western (and specifically American) superiority, as well as the justification of humanitarian work in the name of imposing “order” and “civilization.”

Dehumanization of Gaza

Trump’s lexicon in these statements is primarily in the future tense: “we will own,” “will supply,” “will be there,” which hints one degree further into a feeling of certitude and inevitability of rebuilding Gaza. He mentions a plethora of terms—“to dismantle,” “level the site,” “economic development,” “unbelievable potential,” and “world-class”—to illustrate Gaza as a blank canvas waiting to be canvassed. He references “destroyed buildings” and “dangerous unexploded bombs” to dress what is clearly devastation that needs to be dealt with by external experts. The phrase “long-term ownership” is an implication of an even deeper possibility of continuing control—to ensure a hand up to assist but not actually give. The description of “world-class” and “wonderful”

also implies superiority—that Gaza can only meet high standards after it has been intervened in from outside its existing plight. Ultimately, these choices of language present a description of Gaza as both ruined and also filled with potential, waiting to either be built or extracted of its future through outside (and probably American) leadership.

Trump's discourse is infused with a well-known post-conflict and neoliberal reconstruction storyline that evokes the right type of external intervention—one that sits uneasily between being a necessary agent and an ally. His turn of phrase and rhetoric also resonates with the language of economies of scale deployed in discussions of global economic summits, development conferences, and rebuilding nations led by Western powers and their associated organizations. The pledge of economic trade-offs (e.g., "unlimited numbers of jobs and housing") indicates that neoliberal understandings of growth and change are predicated upon foreign investment and foreign control. Furthermore, the mention of international collaboration explicitly ("representatives from all over the world") implies further that Gaza's post-conflict future must also not be controlled locally by Gazans. Overall, Trump's framing relocates the U.S. and the international community as actors in active roles and the people of Gaza as recipients of passive agency. The multiple intertextual echoes of colonial discourses that ignore local agency in favor of foreign consultants and control highlight the power imbalance intertwined latently in this reconstruction narrative.

Trump's comments signal continued, deeply rooted ideologies in Western colonialism and neoliberal development models. The implicit assumption underlying this claim is that Gaza and its people—who live in a war-compromised territory that has little, if any, infrastructure—cannot rebuild without outside assistance. Suggesting "long-term ownership" and promising "world-class" building, Trump mimics previous patterns in which Western nation-states were historically considered to have legitimate reasons for increasing their length of time and control over land, because they were ostensibly providing law and order, financial stability, and eventually modernization and development. Trump's comments reflect a broader conceptual framework of progress that is profoundly Western-centric, where development is contingent on externally imposed standards of development—not according to indigenous needs or aspirations. The implication that Gaza has "unbelievable potential and opportunity," contingent on outside management, demonstrates an egregious disregard for the realities of lived experience, resilience, and agency of the Palestinian people—igniting a process where Palestinian people are ultimately seen as passive recipients of American-led initiatives.

Socio-culturally, this normalization of foreign control over a post-conflict region emphasizes existing global hierarchies and relations of power and domination, where the West is positioned as a paternalistic leader. The tendency in Trump's remarks to commercialize, commodify, and sanitize the idea of rebuilding represents existing geopolitical agendas—those of post-war regions being, and remaining, economically rediscovered and politically dependent in order to create regional and geopolitical stability and to secure Western interests. The socio-cultural implications of Trump's comments regarding reconstruction in Gaza go beyond simply making a promise to reconstruct; they advance—and ultimately endorse—a modern recolonization presented as reconstruction and development, or humanitarian relief.

U.S. Extraordinariness

The choices of language across the statements rely heavily on strong futuristic diction as well as the modality of the future tense to convey certainty and authority. Words like "dismantling,"

"level," and "world-class" describe a total transformative approach, conveying a sense of change that involves total reconstruction and not just repair. The repetition of "we'll" suggests agency and responsibility, consistently framing the U.S. as the active agent of reform. Using hyperbolic language like "unlimited numbers of jobs" with "unbelievable potential" promotes an image of infinite opportunity and a blank-slate Gaza waiting to develop. Grammatical structures maintain consistent assertive future projections, which allow for almost no room for alternative narratives or agency from locals. Diction choices such as "ownership," "world-class," and "great stability" imply that not only will Gaza be rebuilt, but it will also be an improved and upgraded model of a West-constructed state of success, making clear the notions of superiority and control that are at play in the process of reconstruction.

The discourse resembles a historical pattern in the West whenever it speaks of intervention in conflict-ridden or war-torn areas, representing these regions as catalyzing some form of American-led salvation. Making intertextual reference to Iraq, Afghanistan, and countless other examples of Western-led utopia amidst post-conflict rifts, Trump's rhetoric feeds into the trope of benevolent reconstruction in the West. By consistently referring to property ownership and external development, Trump is forcing a power dynamic, where local governance is omitted and external entities emerge as authorities. Gaza is not presented as a site where recovery is influenced by Gazans, but a subject space awaiting the West's alteration. The aspiration is greater than Gaza alone, suggesting U.S. stewardship could stabilize the "whole Middle East," which further exemplifies American exceptionalism. Additionally, the discourse leads to a global interest in Gaza, imparting a sense of international migration into it, while simultaneously pulling from discourses pertaining to globalization with the implication that "the only pathway to success through unrest or underdevelopment is economic liberalization and global interdependence," the West promised.

Trump's characterization of the reconstruction of Gaza conforms to a wider sociocultural tradition of Western neocolonialism in which foreign territories are subject to management from outside agents to achieve "modern" practices of development. The posited worldview is that progress is the adoption of "Western" economic, political, and physical arrangements. The disproportionate references to "world-class" practice, large-scale job creation, and the importance of foreign actors would suggest a neoliberal capitalist view of the world that assumes an unqualified benefit to and value of private capital, the governance of foreign nations, and market-process-driven growth for everyone. Moreover, the sociocultural context expects that sites of post-conflict will be managed in ways that economically and politically benefit the powerful actors intervening in the site, while minimizing local peoples', cultures', systems', and political autonomy. This framing diminishes what appear as obligations of Palestinians to be agents of their own futures, assuming an inferior role in relation to the ability of Americans to demonstrate their own generosity and benevolence. The language indicates that Gaza is an untapped state of "unbelievable potential," the realization of which commodifies Gazans as possessions that can be, once again, symbolically and physically imagined as part of economic utility and opportunity from the West. This construction of Gaza substitutes a narrative of reconstruction that will ignore local historicity and resilience with a modernization narrative of progress that benefits U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East.

Destabilization and Violence

Through these excerpts, the lexical choices strongly convey the theme of U.S. exceptionalism in development. Words like "take over," "own it," "countless numbers of jobs," "long-term ownership," and "world-class" cultivate a narrative and imagery of authority, capability, and

supremacy. The future tense formations “will take over,” “will supply,” “will be wonderful,” including the future perfect tense, bring a sense of certainty and inevitability, establishing the United States as the only one who can incite such change. The adjectives “magnificent” and “wonderful” elevate the appeals to emotion, illustrating that the intervention is not only noteworthy but excellent. The use of inclusive pronouns such as “we” constructs a nationalistic identity and frames the United States as volitional in the mission of reconstruction and development of Gaza. The statement “everybody loves the idea” attempts to universalize support for the intervention, with the implied reference that global and local endorsers of the U.S. concept are already established. In summary, the word usage has established a confident, paternalistic image of the U.S. as a uniquely capable and responsible redeveloper.

These statements utilize existing discourses of U.S. foreign intervention as relatively unilaterally applied narratives of reconstruction following war, evident in Iraq and Afghanistan—discourses where “nation-building” is a benign act of ownership and infrastructure development. The references to “economic development,” “world-class functions,” and “stability” are also intertextually referenced towards discourses of neoliberal globalization that normalize and codify U.S. notions of capitalism and governance as global, and therefore welcomed. There is an emergent power dynamic where the U.S. is characterized as the competent and effective unilateral agent, and Palestinians are positioned and cast as passive recipients of American altruism. The statements suppress possible resistance through the professed universal acceptance (“everybody loves the idea”), thereby establishing a discursive space where U.S. power is unquestioningly legitimate and necessary. Ultimately, this rhetorical work constrains a future vision for an economic and political future for Gaza and frames it only through the approving lenses of U.S. interests, norms, and standards, asserting control in the logistics of power—even in humanitarian development discourses.

At a sociocultural level, this discourse is situated within ideologies of American entrenchment and neocolonialism. The expression of the U.S. being the only actor who can develop Gaza as a “world-class” locale captures an understanding of Western superiority: only through American intervention can Gaza possess prosperity and stability. This ideology is rooted in a centuries-long hegemonic tradition, where Western actors have justified intervention in non-Western locales as bearers of civilization, progress, and peace. The language suggests a neoliberal economic ideology and outlines development through a notion of market-driven growth and rebuilding of infrastructures by external (often corporate) entities. The lack of agency assigned to Palestinians is typical of larger fears in postcolonial debate, where locals are assumed to have no capacity to govern their own affairs, which requires that they be treated by outsiders as incompetent without oversight from Western actors. Invoking global legitimacy and speaking of Gaza’s “potential” becomes commodifying in reference to the region and serves to promote attractiveness for foreign investment and exploitation. This entails a wider sociocultural context, defining development as Western influence, and defines the “success” of reconstructing Gaza against U.S. terms, facilitating or foreshadowing futures that are not defined by local needs or values. In short, the discourse that underpins these processes defines U.S. domination under the illusion of caring, benevolence, and inevitable progress.

Historical Amnesia

Trump's rhetoric also has a narrative of historical amnesia. Trump repeatedly suggests that earlier attempts to resolve the Gaza conflict were wasted and that history has “repeated itself.” Talking about Gaza’s history, he says that “If you go back, it’s going to end up the same way it has for a

hundred years.” This is shortening the history of Gaza and brushing aside the historical, social, and political reasons behind the recurring conflict, which have been ongoing for decades. Trump says that prior solutions were below equality and that something revolutionary and new is required now—something with leadership by the U.S. By brushing aside the wealth of history on the conflict and citizens' experience in Gaza, he encourages a clean slate approach: “you just can’t keep doing the same mistake over and over again.” Trump promotes a simplistic assumption that issues in the region can be resolved by a clean slate through intervention from America. Selective drawing on history obliterates Palestinian efforts, regional leadership, and world engagement, and hence pronounces U.S. exceptionalism in stopping the conflict and building a new future for Gaza.

Donald Trump's discourse on Gaza demonstrates how his language creates power relations and promotes ideologies of U.S. interventionism, neoliberal economic development, and U.S. exceptionalism. Through the discourse of the narrative of the story of U.S. interventionism and hegemony, reconstruction and economic development, dehumanization of Gaza, U.S. exceptionalism, violence and destabilization, and historical amnesia, Trump's language makes the U.S. the only one capable of resolving Gaza's issues. His discourse diminishes the agency of local actors and the history of the area, making U.S. intervention necessary and inevitable. Through this thematic analysis, it is easy to understand how Trump's discourse is not only a display of U.S. strength, but also a mechanism through which public knowledge of Gaza and the Middle East is being manipulated and transformed.

Findings and Discussion

The results show that Donald Trump's rhetoric in Gaza uses words that are imbued with neo-colonial and interventionist discourses. His use of words like "take over," "ownership," and "rebuild" projects Gaza as an area that is not capable of governing itself, thereby making it legitimate for the U.S. to control it. This follows Said's (1978, 1993) Orientalism theory, in which the West depicts the East as unstable and requiring external leadership. This framing enables the U.S. to exercise dominance in the name of humanitarian assistance.

Trump's emphasis on economic revival, highlighting "jobs," "housing," and Gaza's "phenomenal location," reflects Escobar's (1995) criticism that development discourse is a contemporary manifestation of imperialism. This reinforces Harvey's (2005) idea of neoliberalism, under which capitalist expansion in the name of good for the Global South is, in fact, meant to serve Western agendas. Furthermore, the analysis reveals a trajectory of historical amnesia, with Trump's rhetoric reducing decades of occupation, resistance, and political nuance to oversimplifications. This confirms Held and Lutz's (2004) contention that interventionist discourse habitually ignores local histories and sovereignty. By characterizing Gaza as a "hellhole" and disregarding Palestinian agency, Trump reinforces a discourse that facilitates recolonization in economic and militaristic terms. Van Dijk (1993) discusses how power is normally legitimized in elite discourse by presenting ruling actors as rational and moral. Trump's constant claim that "everyone supports U.S. control" is one such instance, establishing American exceptionalism and presenting intervention in terms of global consensus.

Conclusion

This research finds that Donald Trump's rhetoric on Gaza reveals a strategic use of language aimed at advancing neo-colonial ideology under the guise of reconstruction and development. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, it becomes evident that his discourse frames Gaza as a failed state necessitating U.S. intervention, thereby reinforcing American exceptionalism and erasing

Palestinian agency. Although his statements are often couched in humanitarian concern, they follow a historical trajectory of Western dominance—resonating with arguments made by Said (1993), Escobar (1995), and Chomsky (2003). The portrayal of Gaza as a space of chaos, destruction, and untapped economic potential functions to obscure the political struggle of the region, replacing it with a narrative of Western salvation. These discursive strategies not only justify external authority but also normalize neo-colonial intervention. Therefore, political rhetoric must be critically deconstructed to reveal how language is used to veil projects of domination and recolonization behind appeals to peace, progress, and prosperity.

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