

## Make Populism Great Again: Identity Crisis in Western World with a Narrative Analysis of Donald Trump's Presidential Campaign Announcement Speech

**Authors :** Soumi Banerjee

**Abstract :** In this research paper we will go deep into understanding Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined community and we will analyze why and how national identities were created through long and complex processes, and how there can exist strong emotional bonds between people within an imagined community, given the fact that these people have never known each other personally, but will still feel some form of imagined unity. Such identity construction on the part of an individual or within societies are always in some sense in a state of flux as imagined communities are ever changing, which provides us with the ontological foundation for reaching on this paper. This sort of identity crisis among individuals living in the Western world, who are in search for psychological comfort and security, illustrates a possible need for spatially dislocated, ontologically insecure and vulnerable individuals to have a secure identity. To create such an identity there has to be something to build upon, which could be achieved through what may be termed as 'homesteading'. This could in short, and in my interpretation of Kinnvall and Nesbitt's concept, be described as a search for security that involves a search for 'home', where home acts as a secure place, which one can build an identity around. The next half of the paper will then look into how populism and identity have played an increasingly important role in the political elections in the so-called western democracies of the world, using the U.S. as an example. Notions of 'us and them', the people and the elites will be looked into and analyzed through a social constructivist theoretical lens. Here we will analyze how such narratives about identity and the nation state affects people, their personality development and identity in different ways by studying the U.S. President Donald Trump's speeches and analyze if and how he used different identity creating narratives for gaining political and popular support. The reason to choose narrative analysis as a method in this research paper is to use the narratives as a device to understand how the perceived notions of 'us and them' can initiate huge identity crisis with a community or a nation-state. This is a relevant subject as results and developments such as rising populist rightwing movements are being felt in a number of European states, with the so-called Brexit vote in the U.K. and the election of Donald Trump as president are two of the prime examples. This paper will then attempt to argue that these mechanisms are strengthened and gaining significance in situations when humans in an economic, social or ontologically vulnerable position, imagined or otherwise, in a general and broad meaning perceive themselves to be under pressure, and a sense of insecurity is rising. These insecurities and sense of being under threat have been on the rise in many of the Western states that are otherwise usually perceived to be some of the safest, democratically stable and prosperous states in the world, which makes it of interest to study what has changed, and help provide some part of the explanation as to how creating a 'them' in the discourse of national identity can cause massive security crisis.

**Keywords :** identity crisis, migration, ontological security(in), nation-states

**Conference Title :** ICPSIR 2017 : International Conference on Political Science and International Relations

**Conference Location :** Copenhagen, Denmark

**Conference Dates :** June 11-12, 2017