

Hegemonic masculinity in political discourse: a comparative analysis of Trump and El-Sisi's speeches

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Political leadership is often deeply intertwined with notions of masculinity, shaping public perceptions and reinforcing cultural expectations of authority and dominance. This study explores the construction of hegemonic masculinity in political discourse by analysing recent speeches of the current US president, Donald Trump, and the Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. It intends to draw attention to R.W. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, as well as its presence in performing a traditional and thus political masculinity, to present the stance of each president. Above that, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study examines how both leaders, grasping firm political positions regarding their stands, deploy discursive strategies to mirror authority, dominance, and control, comparing Western and Middle Eastern perspectives. Findings suggest that while Trump's discourse often emphasises personal success, competition, and confrontation to make "America great again", and, most importantly, confrontation, El-Sisi's speeches frame leadership within paternalistic and protective narratives, mirroring Middle-Eastern values of authority and national unity.

Keywords: *masculinity, political discourse, Trump, El-Sisi*

1. Introduction

Political leadership has long been intertwined with notions of masculinity, shaping public perceptions of power, authority and dominance. Across different cultural and geopolitical contexts, leaders perform/do masculinity in ways that align with social and political expectations. This study examines how Donald Trump and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi represent hegemonic masculinity in their political rhetoric, reflecting the Western and Middle Eastern models of leadership, respectively. While Western leadership often emphasises individualism, confrontation, and economic power, Middle Eastern leadership tends to embody paternalism, national unity, and

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protectionism. Existing research has explored hegemonic masculinity in Trump's leadership (Naves 2020) and comparisons between Trump and Macron (Cottais 2021). However, there remains a gap in comparative studies between Western and Middle Eastern leadership styles, particularly in how Trump and El-Sisi represent and perform masculinity within global political discourse.

Interestingly, Trump's remark referring to El-Sisi as his "favourite dictator" serves as an instance of intertextuality, reflecting the dynamics of political masculinity. This remark made while awaiting a meeting with El-Sisi at the G7 Summit in Biarritz, France (Mindock 2019; Youssef, Salama, and Bender 2019), highlights how masculinity in leadership is not only constructed through individual discourses but also reinforced through international political interactions in purely political milieus. In this regard, the aim of this study is to critically analyse the discursive strategies used by both leaders, drawing upon CDA to uncover how masculinity is performed in political speech. By comparing Trump and El-Sisi, this research highlights key differences and similarities in the way hegemonic and political masculinity is constructed and reinforced in political communication. This comparative approach offers valuable insights into how leadership styles are shaped by cultural expectations, and how masculinity functions as a discursive tool for asserting authority, dominance, and control.

1.1. Main research questions

This research aims to examine the discursive strategies employed by both leaders and to compare the performances of masculinity in leadership within Western and Middle Eastern contexts.

- 1. How do Trump and El-Sisi perform hegemonic and political masculinity in their speeches?
- 2. What linguistic strategies do they use to assert authority?
- 3. How do cultural differences shape their political masculinity?

2. Literature review

Research on hegemonic masculinity has shown how political leadership often draws upon gendered norms to assert authority, especially during periods of crisis or political transition. Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) framework on hegemonic masculinity emphasizes how dominant masculinities marginalize both women and alternative masculinities, a pattern widely observable in contemporary political discourse.

In the U.S. context, Donald Trump's leadership has been a frequent subject of analysis through this lens. Vescio and Schermerhorn (2021) found that endorsement of hegemonic masculinity significantly predicted support for Trump across both the 2016 and 2020 elections, surpassing other factors like political affiliation and racial prejudice (Vescio & Schermerhorn 2021). Similarly, Johnson (2021) contrasts Trump's hypermasculine, exclusionary leadership style with Biden's more empathetic version of "protective masculinity", suggesting that Trump's failure to manage the COVID-19 pandemic stemmed partly from rigid masculine norms discouraging vulnerability or preventative action (Johnson 2021). Beyond individual leadership, hegemonic masculinity permeates political media and humor. Smirnova (2018) observed that political humor during the 2016 U.S. election often reinforced patriarchal norms by equating presidential ability with hegemonic masculine traits (Smirnova 2018). This media framing shaped public perceptions by marginalizing candidates who failed to align with dominant gender scripts. Expanding the analysis to global leadership, De (2020) examines how Trump and India's Modi both embody "strongman" archetypes grounded in culturally idealized masculinities that draw strength from nationalist and populist narratives. These figures use hypermasculinity to assert political dominance, often at the cost of inclusive governance (De 2020). While El-Sisi's discourse has been less frequently studied, parallels can be drawn from similar authoritarian or nationalist regimes where hegemonic masculinity is constructed through paternalistic language. In this framework, leadership is not only about control but also framed as a moral and protective duty, aligning with Middle Eastern traditions of political masculinity. These studies support the central argument of this research: that political discourse serves as a key site for performing and reinforcing hegemonic masculinity, shaped by cultural context and media representation.

2.2. From businessman to President, from General to Leader: Masculinity and the Political Rise of Trump and El-Sisi

Understanding the political rise and backgrounds of Donald Trump and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi is essential for contextualising their performances of hegemonic masculinity. Trump's ascent from a prominent businessman and media figure to the presidency reflects a distinctly Western model of leadership, rooted in individualism, economic success, competition, and aggressive self-promotion (Naves, 2020). His emphasis on personal achievement and combative rhetoric reinforces cultural ideals of masculinity associated with dominance, power, and personal triumph. Conversely, El-Sisi's transition from military general to national leader is deeply tied to Middle Eastern traditions of paternalistic governance,

where leadership is framed around protection, national unity, and moral responsibility. His military background strengthens his portrayal as a guardian of the nation, projecting an image of stability and strength.

Previous research supports these interpretations. Yousfi and Mouhadjer (2024) demonstrate that Trump's discourse heavily relies on emotive appeals, repetition, nationalism, and populist rhetoric to solidify an aggressive masculine identity. Cottais (2021) characterises Trump's political style as a "masquerade masculinity", marked by the exaggerated performance of traditional masculine traits like dominance and confrontation. In contrast, Abdelwahab (2021) shows that El-Sisi employs a rhetoric of paternalistic inclusion, positioning himself within the collective Egyptian people rather than asserting individualistic dominance. These findings highlight how political and hegemonic masculinities are constructed differently across Western and Middle Eastern contexts: Trump embodies a competitive, individualistic masculinity, while El-Sisi projects a protective, collective model of leadership. Despite the growing interest in political masculinities, there remains a significant gap in comparative studies that systematically analyse how hegemonic masculinity is performed across different political and cultural contexts. By critically comparing Trump and El-Sisi's discursive strategies, this research addresses this gap, offering valuable insights into the intersection of political leadership, gender, and culture.

3. Theoretical framework

3.2. Hegemonic and political masculinity in political discourse

The idea of hegemonic masculinity has significantly shaped contemporary perspectives on men, gender, and social structures. It has bridged the expanding field of men's studies (also referred to as masculinity studies and critical studies of men), societal concerns about men and boys, feminist analyses of patriarchy, and sociological theories of gender (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is a culturally idealised form of masculinity that reinforces male dominance and patriarchy while simultaneously eradicating and ceasing the subordination of women and other marginalised masculinities, particularly in the social, cultural, and political milieu. In political discourse, this concept often manifests through the portrayal of leadership qualities traditionally associated with conventional masculinity, such as strength, assertiveness, and control. Connell (1995) mentioned that it is a dominant, idealised form of masculinity in society.

Thus, it is argued that political discourse is a key site of its construction and performance. Political masculinity can be seen in various forms of governance and political movements, such as populist, authoritarian, and even democratic societies. Hegemonic masculinity implies that gender norms influence political behaviour and emphasises the exclusion of women from high positions of power. This concept encompasses any kind of masculinity that is constructed around, ascribed to, and/or claimed by political players. These players include individuals or groups associated with the political domain, such as professional politicians, party members, military personnel, as well as citizens and members of political movements claiming or gaining political rights (Hearn 2024).

3.3. Fairclough's model

This study critically analyses and compares the discourse of political speeches using Fairclough's (1989, 25) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough (1992/1995) conceptualizes discourse as a form of social practice, emphasising that analysing language use alone is insufficient without considering how language contributes to social or political maintenance and change. The analysis follows Fairclough's three-dimensional model. The first stage, Text Analysis (Description), focuses on the linguistic features of the text, including vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices. It examines how meaning is constructed through strategies such as repetition, metaphor, modality, presupposition, and evaluative language (Fairclough 1995), with particular attention to assertiveness, emotional restraint, appeals to strength, and nationalism. The second stage, Discursive Practice (Interpretation), explores how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed within society. This level of analysis addresses who the speakers are, who the intended audiences are, and how messages circulate within media, political, or institutional contexts (Fairclough 2001). It also considers intertextuality (the referencing of other texts) and interdiscursivity (the blending of different discourses, such as political and economic narratives). The third stage, Discourse as Social Practice, focuses on the broader social conditions influencing discourse production and interpretation. It examines the ways discourse reproduces or challenges power relations, ideological processes, and hegemonic structures (Fairclough 1989; 1992).

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine how hegemonic masculinity is constructed and performed in the political speeches of Donald Trump and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. The analysis is grounded in Fairclough's (1989, 1992) three-dimensional model of CDA, which conceptualizes discourse as a social practice. The first stage, Text Analysis (Description), focuses on identifying key linguistic features such as assertiveness, emotional restraint, appeals to strength, nationalism, the use of collective pronouns, and repetition. The second stage, Discursive Practice (Interpretation), analyses how the speeches are produced, distributed, and interpreted within their respective sociopolitical contexts, considering elements of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The third stage, Discourse as Social Practice, examines the broader ideological and hegemonic functions of the discourse, particularly how it reinforces gendered notions of authority and leadership in both contexts.

Speeches were selected based on their political significance and their representation of national leadership narratives during recent critical moments. Thematic analysis was used initially to identify patterns related to the performance of masculinity. This was then followed by a detailed CDA, attending to how linguistic and rhetorical strategies reflect and reinforce hegemonic masculine ideals in Western (Trump) and Middle Eastern (El-Sisi) contexts. Figure 1 illustrates the categorization of the selected data:

Data collection

Table 1

Themes/ Speeches	Trump's Speeches	El- Sissi's speeches
Theme 1: Nationalism/ post-election speech	Inaugural Address by President Donald Trump 20th January 2025	President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's speech following the announcement of the Presidential election results, 18th December 2023
Theme 2: Gender Discourse and Political Narratives of Masculinity	Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the federal Government. 20th January 2025	President El-Sisi's Speech at the Egyptian Women's Day Celebration Thursday, 21st March 2024

As seen in table 1, the data for this study consists of four selected speeches delivered by Donald Trump and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, chosen for their relevance to themes of nationalism, post-election discourse, and gendered political narratives. Two speeches from each leader were analysed: Trump's 2025 Inaugural Address

and his speech on gender ideology and governance, and El-Sisi's post-election address in December 2023 and his Women's Day speech in March 2024. These speeches were selected based on thematic relevance to the construction of hegemonic masculinity and political authority, focusing on two core themes: (1) Nationalism and Post-Election Narratives and (2) Gender Discourse and Political Narratives of Masculinity.

5. Analysis and findings

A. Trump's speeches

Table 2 presents the findings from the comparative text analysis of Donald Trump's speeches, highlighting key discursive strategies such as assertiveness, emotional restraint, appeals to strength, nationalism, and the use of collective and first person pronouns and adjectives to construct and project leadership masculinity. For the purposes of this analysis, we use the term 'collective pronouns' to refer to plural forms such as we and our, which function to build group identity and shared responsibility.

Comparative Text Analysis of Trump's Speeches

Table 2

Feature	Speech/ Count	Examples from the Speech
Assertiveness	S. 1 16	From this day forward, our country <u>will</u> flourish and be respected again all over the world. We <u>will</u> be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer.
	S.2 4	By the <u>authority</u> vested in me, It is the policy of the United States
Emotional restraint	S.1 3	The golden age of America begins right now. The scales of justice will be rebalanced. The vicious, violent, and unfair weaponisation of the Justice Department and our government will end.
	S.2 2	This is wrong., Basing Federal policy on truth is critical
Appeals to strength	S.1 4	America will soon be greater, stronger, and far more exceptional than ever before. But first, we must be honest about the challenges we face.
	S.2 5	<u>My Administration will defend</u> women's rights and protect freedom of conscience by using clear and accurate language and policies that recognize women are biologically female, and men are biologically male.

Feature	Speech/ Count		Examples from the Speech
Nationalism	S.1	8	During every single day of the Trump administration, I <u>will put America first</u> . This reflects a desire for superiority and exceptionalism, traits often linked to hegemonic masculinity.
	S.2	1	Long Live America! The validity of the entire American system
Collective pronouns (we, our)	S.1	14	We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer.,)
	S.2	3	" <u>Our</u> policies must reflect the fundamental truth of biological sex."
First person pronouns and adjectives	S.1	8	I will, very simply, put America first.,
	S.2	7	By the authority vested in me, Under my direction
Repetition for emphasis	S. 1	6	Our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world.... Our country can no longer deliver basic services in times of emergency,
	S.2	5	Each agency and all Federal employees shall enforce laws, By the authority vested in me as President. / The repetition of "biological reality"

Text Analysis

As shown in table 2, the assertive language in Trump's speech, marked by frequent use of "will", "we are", and "going to", constructs a discourse of control, dominance, and certainty. This aligns with Fairclough's (1992) concept of discourse as social practice, where language reinforces power relations. The repetition of collective pronouns ("we", "our") fosters a sense of national unity while also reinforcing a paternalistic and protective leadership stance, which is a key feature of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Emotional restraint, demonstrated through terms like "justice" and "sovereignty", positions the speaker as a rational and authoritative figure, distancing from emotions typically coded as "weak." The appeals to strength (e.g., "stronger", "we must") reinforce militaristic and aggressive masculinity, framing leadership as a battle for national survival. Similarly, nationalistic references ("America First", "our country") evoke a heroic, paternal protector role, asserting the leader's dominance over external threats. This speech exemplifies how political discourse naturalises hegemonic masculinity

through assertions of strength, unity, and decisive action, reinforcing traditional power hierarchies in national leadership.

For instance, in the second speech, he said: “By the authority vested in me as President...”. This phrase is a direct assertion of institutional authority, using legal discourse to establish the speaker’s power. The use of passive voice (“vested in me”) removes the agent of power (i.e., the Constitution, legal system) and centres the President as the ultimate enforcer of gender policies. It reflects personal authority and invokes executive control over social structures, reinforcing the idea that gender norms are not up for debate but are dictated by state power. This aligns with hegemonic masculinity, where power and decision-making remain centralised within a male-dominated hierarchy. By defining gender policy as a matter of state governance rather than individual identity, the text legitimises political masculinity, ensuring that the state — not individuals or communities — controls gender definitions. The absence of inclusive language reinforces a hierarchical, male-centred discourse. The phrase positions the state as the protector of traditional gender norms, framing any deviation from binary sex categories as a legal and social threat. This reflects a broader socio-political context where gender debates are framed as conflicts over national identity, morality, and governance rather than as individual rights.

The second Example: “Each agency and all Federal employees shall enforce laws governing sex-based rights, protections, opportunities, and accommodations to protect men and women as biologically distinct sexes.” This statement explicitly names men first (“to protect men and women”), reinforcing gender hierarchy through ordering. The phrase “enforce laws” carries an authoritative tone, suggesting that biological distinctions between men and women require state-imposed control rather than social recognition. By legally enforcing sex-based rights, the text reaffirms a state-controlled, male-led approach to defining gender, ensuring that power remains centralized within political masculinity.

The third Example: “My Administration will defend women’s rights and protect freedom of conscience by using clear and accurate language and policies that recognize women are biologically female, and men are biologically male.” This constructs a binary opposition between the state (protector of traditional values) and external threats (e.g., gender ideology, political opposition). This aligns with van Dijk’s (1998) idea that dominant groups use discourse to exclude and delegitimise opposition. This reinforces political masculinity, where leadership is defined by protection, control, and confrontation with ideological threats.

Discursive practice: intertextual references, media circulation

In speech 1, Trump leans on nationalist and populist discourse: "From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world." / "Our sovereignty will be reclaimed. Our safety will be restored." He uses polarisation, repetition, and militaristic language to create a battle-like narrative of governance. The leader is framed as a heroic figure, embodying resilience and dominance. By using strong, confrontational rhetoric and a saviour-like image, the speech legitimises authoritarian leadership, reinforcing a rigid, masculine ideal of power and control. Appeals to nationalism, portraying the U.S. as a strong, self-sufficient entity. The use of militarised and defensive language (e.g., reclaimed, restored) emphasises assertiveness, control, and national superiority—traditional markers of masculine power. He further uses gendered and Political discourse: "As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders: male and female. (Applause.)". This legitimises a rigid, binary gender structure, reinforcing traditional gender norms and rejecting gender diversity, aligning with conservative and patriarchal ideals. By using political power to regulate gender identities, the discourse asserts control over social norms, a key element of political and hegemonic masculinity.

The second speech endorses Nationalist Discourse: "Basing Federal policy on truth is critical to scientific inquiry, public safety, morale, and trust in government itself." → This links gender policy to national identity and governance, positioning gender debates as a threat to the integrity of the nation. It also reflects Gender Discourse: "Gender ideology replaces the biological category of sex with an ever-shifting concept of self-assessed gender identity." The framing of gender as ideological and sex as biological reflects a gender discourse that seeks to maintain traditional roles and eliminate non-binary identities. Additionally, the executive order by Trump exemplifies the intersection of hegemonic and political masculinity, blending nationalist, gender, and political discourse to enforce a rigid, state-controlled gender hierarchy. Political masculinity is evident in the top-down authority exercised through legal mandates, as seen in "By the authority vested in me as President...", which asserts state control over gender policies, stripping individuals of agency in defining their identities. Simultaneously, hegemonic masculinity emerges in the reinforcement of traditional gender roles, positioning sex as biologically immutable while portraying gender identity as a threat to legal and societal stability. The phrase "Gender ideology replaces the biological category of sex" reflects this, as it constructs gender fluidity as both unnatural and dangerous to national integrity. By merging these discourses, the order does not merely regulate gender identity but actively polices it, ensuring that state power, legal enforcement, and cultural norms align to uphold a strictly binary, male-dominated structure.

Social Practice: Cultural Ideologies, Masculine Norms

In his post-election victory speech, Trump constructs a narrative that reinforces hegemonic masculinity and political masculinity. Using assertive and decisive language, such as “I will” and “we will reclaim”, Trump positions himself as the authoritative protector of national values and traditions. This mirrors Fairclough’s (1992) idea of language as a tool of power, where assertive, direct discourse is used to legitimize leadership and reinforce traditional masculine ideals of dominance and control. Trump’s statement, “Our safety will be restored”, further strengthens his militarised discourse, portraying himself as the saviour of the nation, a protector who must defend against external threats, aligning with hegemonic masculinity’s emphasis on strength and protection. In addition, Trump uses gendered discourse to reinforce traditional gender roles by stating, “There are only two genders: male and female.” This serves as a clear example of hegemonic masculinity by excluding non-traditional gender identities and positioning male dominance as the standard. Fairclough’s concept of interdiscursivity helps explain how Trump’s language draws from existing conservative gender norms, reinforcing gender binaries and maintaining patriarchal structures in political discourse. Trump’s merit-based rhetoric over social justice, such as emphasising individualism and self-sufficiency, reinforces the hegemonic masculine ideal of self-reliance and traditional values, while rejecting diversity efforts. According to Fairclough, when this rhetoric is institutionalised, it shapes policy decisions and social practices, institutionalising political masculinity by privileging traditional masculine values in governance and policy. In speech 2, The executive order reinforces both hegemonic and political masculinity. It uses authoritative language to define gender as binary, suppressing non-conforming identities, exemplified by “Federal funds shall not be used to promote gender ideology.” This reflects hegemonic masculinity by limiting individual agency and reinforcing traditional gender roles. It also enforces political masculinity by empowering state institutions to uphold a rigid gender hierarchy, as seen in “Each agency and all Federal employees shall enforce laws governing sex-based rights... to protect men and women as biologically distinct sexes.” This political masculinity rejects gender fluidity and reinforces male-dominated power through legal and institutional control, maintaining traditional gender norms.

B. El-Sisi’s Speeches

Table 3 presents the findings from the comparative text analysis of El-Sisi’s speeches, highlighting key discursive strategies such as assertiveness, emotional restraint, appeals to strength, nationalism, and the use of collective and personal pronouns to construct and project leadership masculinity.

Table 3

Comparative Text Analysis: El- Sisi's Speeches

Feature	Count		Examples from the Speeches
Assertiveness	Speech 1	10	"I tell you <u>honestly</u> ", "I rekindle the <u>covenant</u> ", "I <u>will</u> be their voice"
	Speech 2	7	"I have <u>affirmed</u> our genuine <u>commitment</u> to strengthening the position of Egyptian women to reflect their value and the magnitude of sacrifices they have altruistically made."
Emotional restraint	Speech 1	8	"I bear faithfully before <u>God Almighty</u> ", "I spare no effort", "I ask <u>Allah</u> to grant me success"
	Speech 2	11	"Women are the living conscience of the nation, the faithful guardians of the Egyptian identity and the source of support during hardships."
Appeals to strength	Speech 1	12	"Great Egyptian citizen", "I belong to the military institution"
	Speech 2	5	She is the patient mother of the martyr, the supportive wife in times of adversity,
Nationalism	Speech 1	15	"Long live Egypt", "Dear sons and daughters of Egypt", "Our dear Egypt"
	Speech 2	4	the Egyptian woman will always remain a cornerstone of the security and stability of <u>society and the nation</u> , an endless source of inspiration
Collective pronouns (we, our)	Speech 1	22	"Let us work together for <u>our</u> dear Egypt."
	Speech 2	8	" <u>We</u> celebrate our annual tradition of honouring the great women of Egypt."
First person pronouns and adjectives	Speech 1	10	"I address you today, filled with joy and overwhelmed by the sight of your line-up and commitment to the voter queues in the presidential election."
	Speech 2	5	I extend the sincerest salutation and all appreciation of the sons of this homeland to the patient, resilient, fighting, sincere and loyal Egyptian women.
Repetition for emphasis	Speech 1	3	"Long live Egypt ...Long live Egypt ... Long live Egypt"
	Speech 2	3	" <u>Your</u> past is a civilisation that preceded history, <u>your</u> present stands tall with pride and steadfastness, and the future of this homeland is illuminated by the sun of your radiant presence."

As seen in table 3, El-Sisi's first speech operates within a hegemonic masculinity framework, where strength, control, and authoritative leadership define Egypt's role in regional politics. Through assertive language ("Egypt condemns," "Egypt confirms"), he establishes a dominant, protector role, reinforcing the masculine-coded leadership model that prioritizes sovereignty and stability. This aligns with political masculinity, where governance is framed as a duty of strong male leadership, ensuring order and regional security. His emphasis on Egypt safeguarding Arab nations reflects a paternalistic, state-cantered masculinity, portraying Egypt as the guardian of regional stability. Additionally, the interdiscursive use of humanitarian rhetoric (mentioning women and children as victims) serves to legitimize Egypt's interventionist stance, reinforcing the idea that strong leadership is necessary to restore order and justice. In this way, the speech naturalizes a male-dominated political order, where power, national security, and diplomacy are masculinized through both language and political strategy. For instance, he said: "It possesses military, political, and economic capabilities that safeguard national security and the gains of its people." This reflects a protective and security-oriented leadership style, where the leader's role is to guard the nation's stability and resources. He also claimed: "The true hero defying these challenges is the great Egyptian citizen, who has stood up to terrorism and its violence, endured the economic reforms and their impacts, and persevered through crises with steadfastness, awareness and wisdom." This shows that the leader is not just a ruler but a father figure, praising the strength and sacrifice of the people while presenting himself as their moral and protective guide.

In El Sisi's Text Analysis of the 2nd speech: Women's Day Celebration; The speech subtly reinforces male power and authority through its top-down structure, directives, and framing of women's roles. The speaker asserts control through commanding language, as seen in "I directed the government to do the following", which reflects hegemonic masculinity by positioning decision-making within a male-led authority. While the speech praises women, it frames them as supporters rather than leaders, emphasizing their role in maintaining moral and emotional stability rather than holding power. This is evident in "Women are the living conscience of the nation, the faithful guardians of the Egyptian identity and the source of support during hardships," which recognizes their contributions but within a supportive and protective role rather than one of leadership. Additionally, the phrase "To further empower the Egyptian woman, I directed the government..." suggests that empowerment is granted from above, reinforcing a male-dominated institutional structure. The idea of protection and stability, typically associated with masculinity, is also present in "Women will always remain a cornerstone of the security and stability of society and the nation," where

security is traditionally a male-dominated sphere. While the speech advocates for women's inclusion, it does so without challenging existing power structures, ultimately reinforcing hegemonic masculinity within a nationalist framework.

This excerpt reinforces hegemonic masculinity and political masculinity by positioning men as the acknowledging authority while framing women's value in terms of their service to the nation rather than as independent agents of change. The phrase "the sincerest salutation and all appreciation of the sons of this homeland" implicitly highlights male recognition and endorsement, suggesting that men's acknowledgment validates women's contributions. This reflects a patriarchal structure where male voices hold power in defining and legitimising women's roles. Additionally, the passage links women's significance to national identity and history, reinforcing their role as symbols of resilience rather than active leaders. The line "Your past is a civilisation that preceded history, your present stands tall with pride and steadfastness, and the future of this homeland is illuminated by the sun of your radiant presence" idealises women within a nationalist discourse, presenting them as bearers of cultural and moral continuity rather than agents of transformation. While the speech praises women, it does so in a way that aligns with traditional gender expectations, where their strength is celebrated within the boundaries of patience, resilience, and sacrifice, rather than political or institutional leadership.

Discursive Practice

El-Sisi frames himself as a guardian of Egypt's stability, morality, and tradition, highlighting his military background. Interdiscursivity in discourse practice allows for the analysis of how multiple discourses—such as gender, politics, and power—interact and influence one another, revealing how leaders like Trump and El-Sisi draw from pre-existing cultural, social, and political narratives to reinforce dominant/ conventional ideologies and maintain control.

In Speech 1: El Sissi's uses Protective and Paternalistic Discourse: "I will not allow anyone to destabilize this country. The Egyptian people have entrusted me with their safety, and I will stand firm in protecting our values and traditions.", Military-Inspired Discourse: "I belong to the military institution" (justify decisiveness and command), and Gendered and Political discourse: "the Egyptian women once again proved they were the voice of the national conscience." positioning them as supporters rather than direct decision-makers, showing that Men are fighters, workers, and protectors ("workers and farmers were a model of awareness and will") while women symbolize moral integrity.

In Speech 2, he uses Nationalist Discourse: "Your past is a civilization that preceded history, your present stands tall with pride and steadfastness." "Here, women are portrayed not as independent agents of change but as symbols of resilience, deeply tied to the nation's past and future." He also states Gender Discourse: the speech reproduces traditional gender roles by presenting women as caregivers and moral guardians rather than leaders. The phrase: "The sincerest salutation and all appreciation of the sons of this homeland to the patient, resilient, fighting, sincere and loyal Egyptian women, "suggests that women's strength lies in their endurance and sacrifices, reinforcing traditional femininity while positioning men as those who grant recognition and appreciation. The speech employs political masculinity discourse, where leadership and decision-making remain concentrated in the hands of male authority: "I directed the government to do the following, "which reflects a top-down approach to women's empowerment, where changes for women are sanctioned and controlled by state institutions rather than grassroots movements or individual agency. Hence, the intersection of these discourses produces a hegemonic framework where national stability (nationalist discourse), traditional femininity (gender discourse), and state control (political discourse) coexist. Women's roles are framed not as autonomous but as instrumental to the broader nationalist and political agenda, ensuring continuity rather than transformation. This interdiscursive practice sustains hegemonic masculinity, reinforcing male-centred authority while allowing space for a controlled and conditional form of female empowerment within the limits of state ideology.

Social Practice

El-Sisi's re-election serves as a public endorsement of his leadership, reinforcing his authoritative position. This victory allows him to project an image of unwavering control and dominance, traits traditionally associated with masculinity. In his post-election speech, El-Sisi's rhetoric draws heavily on hegemonic and political masculinity through protective and paternalistic discourse, where he positions himself as the guardian of national values and traditions. He states, "I will not allow anyone to destabilize this country. The Egyptian people have entrusted me with their safety, and I will stand firm in protecting our values and traditions." This reinforces his hegemonic masculinity, where control and protection are equated with strong, male leadership. El-Sisi also uses military-inspired discourse, stating, "I

belong to the military institution," which justifies his decisiveness and command, further positioning him as a leader embodying strength, discipline, and authority, attributes associated with political masculinity. This aligns with Fairclough's (1992) idea of language as a tool of power and control, where El-Sisi uses his discourse to legitimize his authority through military language and the protection of traditional values. El-Sisi emphasizes women's role in supporting national unity: "the Egyptian ...the voice of the national conscience," positioning women as moral pillars rather than active decision-makers. Men, by contrast, are described as "fighters, workers, and protectors", emphasizing their active roles in national defence and productivity. Women, however, are symbolized as moral integrity, reinforcing traditional gender roles where women are subordinate to male leadership and feminine roles are aligned with moral strength, not political agency. This discourse reflects hegemonic masculinity, where men's roles are central to political and military strength, while women's roles are passive and supportive, reinforcing gender hierarchies in both cultural and political domains.

In the second selected speech, delivered in the context of Egyptian Women's Day, the speech operates within a patriarchal social structure where women's empowerment is acknowledged but remains constrained by hegemonic masculinity and political masculinity. Rather than challenging power dynamics, the discourse reinforces male dominance by positioning the state as the agent of change and women as beneficiaries rather than active participants in shaping their own futures. The phrase "I directed the government to do the following" exemplifies how agency is retained within male-led institutions, reflecting a top-down power structure where reforms are granted rather than demanded. Additionally, "The sincerest salutation and all appreciation of the sons of this homeland to the patient, resilient, fighting, sincere and loyal Egyptian women" signals that women's contributions are validated through male recognition, reinforcing social norms that prioritize women's roles as moral and emotional supporters rather than as political or economic leaders. The lack of emphasis on women's independent political agency reveals a structural resistance to disrupting deeply ingrained gender hierarchies, ensuring that social norms remain intact while offering a state-controlled version of empowerment. This aligns with political masculinity, where leadership, authority, and national identity are still overwhelmingly tied to male governance and decision-making.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Donald Trump's speeches reflect a confrontational, individualistic form of hegemonic masculinity, where leadership is performed through dominance, assertiveness, and legal authority. His phrase "By the authority vested in me as President" positions state power as an extension of his personal control, reinforcing political masculinity through executive dominance. His rhetoric, filled with militaristic and nationalistic themes ("Long Live America!"), constructs a protector narrative, where leadership is about strength, law enforcement, and rejection of progressive gender policies. Women in his discourse are framed as passive recipients of state protection, reinforcing a binary, male-dominated social order where gender norms are enforced through legal mandates and institutional authority.

This aligns with Yousfi and Mouhadjer (2024), who argue that Trump's speeches rely heavily on repetition, emotive appeals, nationalism, and populist rhetoric. His simple, forceful, and direct language enhances his populist appeal, making his masculinity appear more accessible to his audience. Additionally, Cottais (2021, 6) describes Trump's masculinity as a "masquerade masculinity", where he exaggerates traditional masculine traits—aggressiveness, dominance, and toughness—to maintain an image of power. This interpretation is valid, as Trump's self-presentation is highly performative, emphasizing personal success, outsider status, and competitive strength rather than collective governance. Additionally, Trump's speech constructs a binary opposition between the state (protector of traditional values) and external threats (e.g., gender ideology, political opposition). This aligns with van Dijk's (1998) idea that dominant groups use discourse to exclude and delegitimize opposition. Trump legitimizes political masculinity by presenting state intervention as necessary to preserve women's rights, while in reality, the policy restricts gender inclusivity rather than expanding protections.

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi constructs a paternalistic and protective form of hegemonic masculinity, where leadership is about moral guidance, national unity, and stability. His phrase "I directed the government to do the following" reflects a top-down, male-led governance model, where reforms and empowerment come from the state rather than individual agency. Women are framed as the moral and emotional backbone of the nation, but their empowerment remains conditional upon male recognition and governance ("Women are the living conscience of the nation"). Unlike Trump's direct authoritarian style, El-Sisi's discourse blends traditional masculinity with national pride, portraying leadership as a collective duty to preserve societal values and gender hierarchies. El-Sisi naturalizes his

leadership by presenting himself as a protector of Egyptian traditions. His use of plural pronouns (“we,” “our”) aligns with van Dijk’s (1998) argument that elites construct legitimacy through inclusion while maintaining control. This aligns with Abdelwahab (2021, p. 166), who notes that El-Sisi rarely refers to himself alone but instead includes himself with the Egyptian people in his speeches. This strategy is a hallmark of paternalistic masculinity, where the leader positions himself as a father figure rather than an individual competitor. Unlike Trump, who emphasizes his personal achievements, El-Sisi collectivizes his identity, reinforcing his role as a unifying protector rather than a self-made winner. This distinction highlights how political and hegemonic masculinity manifests differently across cultural contexts—Trump embodies a Western, aggressive, and individualistic masculinity, while El-Sisi does a Middle Eastern, paternalistic masculinity centred on national unity and protection.

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