

DIGITAL FRAMING OF DISINFORMATION: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA DISCOURSES ON USA-VENEZUELA POLITICAL RELATIONS

Nazia Anwar^{*1}, Isha Razzaq Butt²

^{*1}Lecturer, Department of English, University of Gujrat,
²M Phil Scholar, Department of English, University of Gujrat

¹nazia.anwar@uog.edu.pk, ²isharazzaq13@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Nazia Anwar

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ABSTRACT

Disinformation has constantly been a vital part of political discourses particularly when considering international conflicts. In this regard, the recent example of political upheaval between USA and Venezuela can be studied to analyze the role, digital media and disinformation play in the formation and shaping of public opinions, standpoints and stories. The present study intends to study the disinformation created by digital media about the political uproar between USA and Venezuela by considering the usage of language, rhetorical strategies, role of social media and other sources in the development of political discourse. The present study has adopted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1995) to analyze the media sources including the articles published by Reuters, the Guardian, CNN and DAWN in addition to the feedbacks on the social media. The current research also investigates the grammatical features and speech that creates disinformation. Findings indicate the major themes in the process of disinformation framing such as, power struggles and disinformation, language of legitimacy and political realities, social media and official voices in creating national and global perceptions and ideology of sovereignty and resistance. These motifs indicate the media impact and social sites on the sovereignty, interventionist and geopolitical power narratives. This study puts a lot of emphasis on the manner in which disinformation is presented as a means of geopolitical competition and political opposition, constructing world discourse on USA-Venezuela conflict.

Keywords: Disinformation, digital framing, language use, media discourses, USA-Venezuela, political relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital media and its influence on political dialogue is an increasingly popular research area in recent years, especially its inclination towards disinformation and its spread (Rasheed et al., 2024). A good example of how media discourses, particularly in digital era can be operated to create the conflict, polarization and alter the mindset of people is the example of the USA-Venezuela political relations. Deliberate dissemination of false information or fake news as disinformation is often defined as a major

factor in political disputes, mostly where power is at stake. The USA-Venezuela crisis is a geopolitical conflict, the U.S. sanctions, military intervention and the sovereignty of Venezuela are the key centers of the conflict. In this respect, digital discourses have become the most important tools in the creation of a mass opinion, interpretation of political events and the world impressions (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2022).

1.1 Context of the Study

The disinformation concerning the conflict between the USA and Venezuela is not only when it comes to the manipulation of facts but rather the creation of the narratives that would advance geopolitical interests. In Venezuela, U.S. government has continuously set the Venezuelan government in authoritarian and illegitimate role, the protector of the democracy and the leader of human rights. This has been particularly used to justify the U.S interventions in Venezuela such as the military raid that resulted in seizing control of Nicolás Maduro (president of Venezuela). Alternatively, the leadership in Venezuela has developed a perception that they are struggling against imperialism and their sovereignty is not against an external aggression but internal. These conflicting versions are the evidence of the central role of the disinformation in the geopolitical confrontation of the two nations. Political discourse and digital resistance using the social media platforms is of primary significance in this lieu. A response to the disrupted map posted by Trump on social media that demonstrates how social media sites can be used as instruments of resistance has seen Venezuelan officials requesting their citizens to post the official map of Venezuela on the sites. These digital practices are the commotion of the digital era, in which both the ordinary and official voices participate in the creation of a political discourse. The analysis of these online discourses provides the insight into the potential of disinformation to affect not only the political landscape of the country but also the foreign relations.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main aim of the study is the investigation of how the digital discourses have created and interpreted disinformation involving the USA-Venezuela politics situation. The study particularly intends to explore the language and rhetoric approaches of media sources to influence the perception of the society and legitimize their political behaviors. The analysis is based on the following research questions:

1. How have the digital discourses framed the disinformation about USA Venezuela political situation?

2. What rhetorical strategies and linguistic choices have been employed by media discourses to frame disinformation?

3. How do different social media users and official statements contribute in framing these misleading narratives?

4. What themes and ideologies emerge about USA-Venezuela political relations by such disinformation in digital discourses?

By answering these questions, this research may contribute in the development of literature on media and disinformation in the field of international relations and political speech. The study hubs on the way in which the U.S. and Venezuela media as well as social media users produce opposite narratives based on disinformation and how these narratives affect the public opinion and geopolitical situation.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been adopted as the main theoretical framework in the present study to understand how language is employed to make power relations and ideologies functional in political discourse. Fairclough (1989) states that discourse is a social practice which reflects and shapes power structure in a society. CDA, by examining the rhetorical strategies and linguistic choices used in media texts may provide a firm base to comprehend the ways in which disinformation is framed and works to maintain or destabilize the political powers. Moreover, Fairclough (1989) also asserts that disinformation is normally the result of a larger ideological circumstances, where the narratives are determined by the power relations and ideological positions. The use of social media as the means of creation and dissemination of disinformation is of primary importance in this regard as it demonstrates how online platforms are offering a route of bottom-up politics and giving people an opportunity to disrupt established discourses.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study aims to critically examine the use of disinformation as a tool of global political wars. The USA-Venezuela crisis examines how digital media dictates the narrative and rationalizes interventions. At the same time, it attracts attention towards the role of the smaller countries, like Venezuela, in resisting foreign

meddling by using digital platforms to demonstrate their independence. Therefore, it is significant to comprehend how the strategies of combating disinformation can be developed in recent digital age and how the national sovereignty can be protected and maintained under the influence of the external forces.

2. Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become an effective instrument towards unveiling the ideological text of political rhetoric and media discourse. It illustrates the way language creates power networks and strengthens the prevalent geopolitical ideologies, especially when it comes to international relations (Anwar & Butt, 2025). CDA offers an understanding of how media framing can influence the views of people on conflicts and political agendas particularly by selecting which information to present and choose words that will be used effectively. These frames are usually made using the metaphors, agency, and modality to influence how the audience perceives events (Anwar & Butt, 2025).

2.1 Framing and Political Context of Disinformation

The digital media environments have included the aspect of disinformation in their political communications and discourses. Scholars generally refer disinformation as intentionally false or deceptive data that is aimed at changing the overall opinion or actions of people (Broda, 2024; Boudana, 2024). In research, it is observed that digital platforms allow the proliferation of such content to spread faster because of the lack of gatekeeping, high connectivity and amplification through algorithms (Caled, 2021; Recuero, 2025). This is the technological environment that has made the plane of political discussion a contested arena where rival discourses struggle to gain legitimacy and power. Studies of misinformation and disinformation indicate that media framing has a close association with the ways in which audience views political conflicts. According to the framing theory, the choice and focus on particular elements in a story influence the general political event perception by emphasizing specific interpretations of the story, rather than others (Wang, 2025). The media frames frequently reduce complicated situations

by favoring particular actors, objectives or cause-and-effect explanations, which can be seen in the digital international crisis reporting of the media when media organizations are under the influence of various ideological and institutional demands (Awan, 2025; Kaur & Arora, 2025). A more generalized systematic review highlights that disinformation is frequently examined through the prism of dissemination, detection and impact on platforms but the art and craft of constructing false messages as a strategic feature of political communication is one of the key issues in its perception (Broda, 2024).

2.2 The Media Framing and Ideological Influence

Some studies highlight the relationship between media framing, ideology and the perception of the populace. Indicatively, traditional reporting on global political conflicts often incorporates ideological premises that support specific political forces and policy outputs thus informing the general population about the legitimacy of conflict and moral duty. The scholarly literature on media framing in conflict reports indicates that news framing usually focuses on war-oriented rather than on peace-oriented frames, with an implicit justification of interventionist or militarist action (Kaur & Arora, 2025). The variations in framing of the national media outlets are indicative of underlying ideological inclinations and individualized strategic interests which indicate that framing is not a simple descriptive process but is in essence a political ideology.

The present study has identified that the misinformation campaigns, in the particular topic of digital misinformation, are purposefully designed to build a narrative to achieve certain political goals. Such narratives do not only serve to deceive but also to divide people, diminish trust in democratic institutions and further reinforce power structures of their preference (Vasist et al., 2023). Polarizing effects of political disinformation have been reported in a number of settings and it has been observed that exposure to misleading texts correlates with heightened social disintegration and mistrust of mainstream sources of information i.e. trends apparent in political landscapes of strong ideological polarities throughout the world.

2.3 Online Media and Storytelling

The spread of disinformation has a close connection with digital media platforms. Social media is not only channels through which false information is spread but also platforms within which opposing stories are built and argued (Caled, 2021). According to Recuero (2025), in order to impact political discourses, digital media lowers the barriers to the entry of fabricated content, and diversified actors who can be state actors or any other users. These studies suggest that digital space discourse is multi directional in that the official discourse, user generated content, and algorithmic forces interplay to shape the discourses which come to prominence. Research on the significance of framing fallacious political narratives on the internet has revealed that misinformation is prone to borrow emotive, culturally attractive and confirmation-biased frames in order to make the such discourses more acceptable by the target audiences (Awan, 2025; Janjua, 2025). These manipulation strategies superimpose political talk with pathos and cultural signals which modulate the critical thinking that make disinformation viral and difficult to build a factual clarity.

2.4 Social Media in Politics

Social media is not merely engaged in the dissemination of the political conflicts but also in the involvement of the audience and perception development. It is implied in the studies of the social media confidence in crisis situations that the false information tends to build an element of mistrust in professional authorities as well as in community institutions, and the latter will restrict the ability of the societies to successfully solve the crisis (Shahbazi, 2024). An internet user having a lack of trust on the sources when presented with tendency of fake narratives that reinforce already existing prejudices, it polarizes already contained and stored information in his memory. The literature also focuses on the role of digital communities in the co-construction of narratives by repetition of specific political perspectives through interactions. This type of participatory framing (in which users play an active role in reprocessing and disseminating content) makes a crucial contribution to the formation of shared perceptions during political crises. As an

example, swift virilization of fake information about political adversaries or policy decisions can make narrow-mindedness stronger and create further societal division, making it challenging to sustain positive political communication (Vasist et al., 2023).

2.5 Disinformation Geopolitics

Although, most of the studies about disinformation have focused on domestic or election related settings (American or European politics), there has been an augmentation in the research about disinformation in international conflicts. According to studies on framing in the coverage of conflicts, war, intervention and sovereignty have been shown to be especially prone to being distorted strategically, as there is much at stake in the international relations (Kaur & Arora, 2025). This international aspect of disinformation emphasizes that propaganda models, strategic framing and information warfare are being actively applied to foreign policies and opinions of the people in other countries.

In particular, the analysis of the media framing of the disputed political situations, e.g. of the humanitarian or military intervention, the researchers discover that the media based geopolitical interests of a country tend to be imposed on the media framing of the conflict (Wang, 2025). This implies that not only do framing processes indicate hidden ideological standpoints but it also actively contributes to the creation of policy narratives that strengthens status quo.

2.6 Research Gap

Nevertheless, although a lot of studies have been conducted on misinformation, disinformation and media framing, there are still some gaps. To start with, the bulk of the literature dwells on detection/technological solutions or impact assessment but limited literature has explored the discursive orientation of false narrative as a unifying strategy in global political (Broda, 2024; Recuero, 2025). Moreover, although some studies have investigated the digital misinformation in certain national or thematic contexts, no comparative analysis has been conducted that combines the critical discourse methods with geopolitical frame in such a situation as the USA-Venezuela political

relations. In addition, the literature on the use of social media and misinformation tends to consider digital contribution as a one-way dissemination process, without fully considering the interactive and disputable character of dialog. The current research seeks to address these loopholes through the application of the Critical Discourse Analysis technique to identify how disinformation narratives are constructed and challenged through mainstream and social media discourses in the framework of the USA-Venezuela conflict. The current study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on media framing, political communication and disinformation within geopolitically charged spaces, providing both theoretical and empirical data on how digital narratives are used to promote higher level ideological interests.

3. Research Methodology

The study has adopted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as theoretical and analytical framework. It has focused on thematic analysis to study the nature of the digital media discourses surrounding disinformation on the USA-Venezuela political relations. The qualitative approach is an appropriate way to study linguistic choices, linguistic framing and ideological constructions inherent in the texts which can also contextualize the language use in media narratives. It is also significant to unveil the linguistic forms of disinformation and its spread via online news media along with the broader role of multiple stakeholders (media sources, governmental releases, the social media population) in perpetuating false stories.

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design has been employed in the present study since it allows exploration of the language use, social context, power relations and meaning making processes. The selected design is consistent with the objectives of the present research that examines political discourse, media framing and disinformation, which necessitates the use of interpretive and context sensitive analytic tools (Scribbr, 2019).

3.2 Theoretical Framework

CDA proclaims that language is a reflection and medium of social relations of power, ideology

and dominance. It is a way of listening to language that is not perceived as neutral but is a social practice that maintains or challenges the power structures in society. It is specifically applicable to studying the ways in which political actors and media institutions create and recreate certain versions of reality via discourses. The linguistic features used in CDA to understand ideological assumptions in texts include word choices, metaphors, nominalization, agency, modality and narrative structures. Fairclough's (1989) model of CDA investigates the discourse at three levels which are connected to each other: (1) the textual analysis of features of language, (2) discursive practices in the production and consumption of texts and (3) socio political practices that establish the position of texts in larger contexts. Such a stratified method examines the construction of disinformation narratives, the ways in which they are spread, and the reception of such disinformation content in digital discourses.

3.3 Data Sources and Sampling

The data for the present study consists of a collection of 9 news articles from dominant media platforms:

- Reuters (3 articles)
- The Guardian (3 articles)
- CNN (2 articles)
- DAWN (1 article)

The chosen sources are the top news outlets having a huge digital presence and coverage in global politics. The selection of articles was based on the relevancy to the relations between USA and Venezuela and the construction of the language related to the conflict, foreign policy, or the political narratives that might have a misleading information or be framed that way. The selection of each news article is based on the following criteria: (1) publication during the time when the two countries had the highest level of political tension, (2) digitally available and able to be searched using search engines, and (3) direct mention of political actors, actions, or events that can be discussed as the disinformation or the narratives that can be disputed.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

All the news articles were downloaded and saved in an organized way in different folders. The

text was read in detail in order to familiarize with the context and determine the language use patterns. Metadata e.g. the date of publication, name of the author (where applicable) and the media used was also saved in a separate folder. The referenced official statements and social media posts used in the articles were also gathered where necessary to obtain the role of external actors in constructing narratives.

3.5 Critical Discourse Analysis Process

The steps followed in the CDA process were as follows:

1. Textual Analysis: The articles were analyzed in terms of lexical options, metaphors, narrative forms, descriptions of actors, agency (who does what) and modal expressions of certainty or speculation.

2. Discursive Practice: At this step, the production and dissemination of the articles on the internet with references to the intertextual citations of official statements, quotes or even the contents of the social media were considered. This phase included the comparison of the frames used by various outlets to describe different similar events or actors.

3. Socio-political Contextualization: At this step, the textual and discursive results in the general political and social context of the USA-Venezuela relations were considered. Such contextualization involved looking at the scholarly literature about disinformation, media framing and political rhetoric in international relations.

This study sought to identify the ideological, power-laden assumptions in the discourse of media and to examine how the assumptions impact the audience perception, interpretation of political events and actors. Textual **Discursive Practice Socio-political Contextualization:**

3.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis was implemented to highlight the linguistic use of power and ideological positioning by detecting and sorting patterns or themes in the data. It consisted of the following steps:

1. Initial Coding: The texts were read word by word and meaningful extracts of text were tagged with preliminary codes, concepts that could be applied in the framing of text and disinformation.

2. Theme Development: Codes were aggregated into larger themes which contained repetitive narrative strategies, rhetorical devices and ideological positions.

3. Review: Themes were checked and narrowed down to make sure they represented the underlying data and still made sense.

4. Defining Themes: Final themes were stated clearly outlining how each of these themes helps people to understand media framing of disinformation.

Thematic categories were used to explain how particular discourses like deceptive coverage of political motives or foregrounding and backgrounding of information have been functioning through the chosen media outlets.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

No human subject participants were involved in this research. However, the issue of academic honesty was also observed through providing all the sources in a proper way and not misrepresenting the content studied.

4. Data Analysis

Theme 1: The Framing of U.S. Intervention in Venezuela as a Violation of Sovereignty vs. Justified Action

The analysis of the media articles indicates the use of language as a strategy to operate the concept of U.S. military intervention in Venezuela as both a sovereign violation and a legitimate move. The Venezuelan government also always describes U.S. actions as a blunt infringement of national sovereignty (DAWN, 2026) and stresses that the foreign intervention is illegal. The allegation is further enhanced by the word flagrant that shows the activities of the U.S. as an apparent and bold act against the right of Venezuela to self-determination. Conversely, media sources in the United States of America such as Reuters and CNN tend to report the intervention more neutrally or positively such as a successful large-scale strike (DAWN, 2026). This term puts the military intervention in a pragmatic perspective as it is a necessary measure to implement international law and eliminate an unlawful government. In contrast, the Venezuelan government, in its official pronouncements employs the term, sovereignty and territorial integrity (DAWN, 2026) to present U.S military intervention as an

offense to its territorial sovereignty as well as its sovereignty, which senses of self-governance. These opposing words are used to create the image of the U.S. being an aggressor who breaks international regulations and of Venezuela as the victim of imperialism as an outside force.

The agency analysis also shows the way the participants of this geopolitical conflict are represented. Rodríguez, who is the Venezuelan interim president in the article by Reuters, is shown as a proactive player who is centralizing his authority to ensure that the country is not threatened by internal forces. She is stated to have named a new leader of the DGCIM in Venezuela (Reuters, 2026) meaning that she was decisive during a crisis. On the other hand, the U.S. military is depicted as taking control of Venezuelan assets and boarding tankers (Reuters, 2026), which is an active and aggressive action, which corresponds to the image of the U.S. as the prosecutor of international peace. These opposing moves indicate the divergent images of power in the war, the opposition to the U.S. and Venezuela respectively being the external and the local forces imposing their will on the other by military intervention.

There is also the modality of certainty of both the U.S. and Venezuelan media which puts the conflict in contrasting perspective. To illustrate, in Reuters, the matter of the preparedness of Rodríguez to cooperate with the U.S. once Maduro is eliminated is presented in the form of a conditional relationship that creates uncertainty and gives a hint that Rodríguez position was flexible and receptive to the geopolitical situation. This is unlike the U.S. version where its military interventions have been characterized as decisive and unambiguous and it has created the image of law enforcement with clear goals.

Its discursive practice looks at the production, distribution and consumption of the media texts regarding the U.S.- Venezuela conflict. These articles have been produced in line with their ideological standpoints. Reuters, CNN, and The Guardian are Western sources that have worldwide readership and their coverage is usually influenced by political affiliations and regionalism. The U.S. intervention is described in the context of the world politics with the U.S. portrayed as a world enforcer of its values and interests whereas the Venezuelan media

(although it is less active in this dataset) would generate the one about nationalism and sovereignty.

The statements made by the Venezuelan government and the actions in the social media platforms contribute to the spread of its narrative even more. An example is that the Venezuelan government urged its citizens to display their official map of Venezuela (Reuters, 2026) as an act of resistance against the U.S. misinformation on the territorial claims of Venezuela. This shows that digital platforms are not only space to transmit information, but also a space to resist politics and create narratives. The sharing of the official map is a counter-marketing campaign of the disinformation spread by the U.S. that had already manipulated maps to demonstrate its superiority in the area. The example shows that media practices are not just restricted to the conventional journalism but also to user-generated material that disrupts the mainstream narratives.

The social media, as evident in the Venezuelan government call to action, is of paramount importance in heightening nationalistic discourses and offer a venue of bottom up resistance. The U.S. takes advantage of the social media platforms to promote its own geopolitical agenda, and the posts of President Trump and the U.S. military take measures to legitimize their actions. All these competing digital discourses indicate the dynamic nature of the role which social media plays in both public opinion formulation and disinformation since each group uses the digital means to advance their ideological and political agendas.

The socio-political contextualization is an introduction of the textual and discursive practices into the wider geopolitical and ideological conflicts around the conflict between the USA and Venezuela. This is not just a conflict of territorial integrity or military intervention, it is a struggle of discourse of legitimacy and sovereignty. The U.S. government has always cast the U.S. activity as an imperialist intervention aimed at toppling the socialist government of Venezuela, which it has been using historical accounts of the U.S. imperialism in Latin America. The opposition to the interference of the U.S. in Venezuela is not isolated, but rather a part of the larger ideological fight against the outside domination

and the necessity of self-determination in the country. Conversely, the U.S. government defends its acts by saying that it is trying to eliminate a dictatorial government and enhancing democracy in Venezuela. The intervention of the United States is viewed as the application of international law, especially when it comes to illegal operations concerning the oil industry in Venezuela. The U.S. military taking over oil tankers is described as a move to combat the illegal trade and other authorized practices, making the United States seem as the defender of international standards.

The socio-political situation also highlights the influence relations between the USA and Venezuela. In the case of Venezuela, it is not just a question of sovereignty of the territory but also struggles against the foreign powers that had long wanted to dominate its resources and political agenda. To the U.S., the intervention can be regarded as a larger geopolitical policy of keeping control of Latin America and preventing the emergence of other leader states such as Russia and China in the region. Moreover, the international bodies such as the UN, EU, and Russia taking a stand in criticizing the actions of the U.S. portray the international divide on the justness of U.S. interventions. As the U.S. and its allies are casting themselves as protectors of democratic transitions, countries such as China and Russia say that the U.S. should stop because of its actions against the international law of sovereignty. Such international polarization also makes matters more complicated and leads to the increase of disinformation, with both parties rewriting events to suit its geopolitical needs.

Theme 2: The Digital Media and Social Media play a role in the dissemination of disinformation regarding the USA-Venezuela Relation

Digital media and social media have a central role in disinformation dissemination in the USA-Venezuela conflict as it is important to comprehend the manner in which the narratives are being created and propagated. The U.S. and the Venezuelan governments use social media and other online news sources strategically to influence the audience on their perception of the political events. Digital media will also become a key device of framing disinformation,

particularly given the digital age whereby the political discourse is becoming more and more influenced by the online content.

The lexical decisions employed to justify or criticize the U.S. military intervention is one of the most vivid characteristics in the analysis of the textual feature of the digital discourses. As an example, the Venezuelan government commonly calls the U.S. intervention as an act of imperial aggression and violations of the sovereignty. Such terms as imperial, in this context, can be associated with one of the most profound and powerful historical and ideological contradiction to the U.S. foreign policies in the Latin American countries, especially its interventions into the countries in their sovereignty. The notion of sovereignty is used symbolically to show that Venezuela is resistant to what it concludes as foreign control. Conversely, the rhetoric of the media and government of the U.S. (particularly, on social networks such as Twitter and Truth Social, a platform that Trump uses) contains such terms as military operation, oil security, and law enforcement. These decisions give the impression of legitimate, systematic initiatives of the U.S. government to guarantee peace and security in the world. As an example, there is a use of words such as defense of democracy and protection of human rights at the time when the Trump administration justifies the capture of Maduro. Such lexical framing difference shows the ideological fight: in Venezuela, language is used to position itself as a victim of outside interests, whereas in America, this framing positions its actions as interventions to restore international peace.

Metaphors are widely used in the formation of the narratives within the social media, especially when the official statesmen like U.S. President Trump or Latin American authorities resort to the symbolic words to shape the senses of the audience. An excellent example is the edited map post by Trump on Truth Social. His sharing of the picture with U.S. flags flying in Venezuela, Canada and Greenland symbolically encloses Venezuela as an area that should be brought under or redone by U.S. interests. This visual disinformation in the form of posting a geopolitical map is an important symbolic act. However, the official reaction of Venezuela to this disinformation was to ask its citizens to

share the official map of Venezuela in the social media. This was done through a symbolic element of resistance that re-established its ownership on its contested lands such as Esequibo. The Venezuelan map was more than an act of territorial assertion, but also of national unity, an image of counter-narration to the domination of the U.S. that is presented by the modified map. This is a symbolic gesture on social media that indicates that both parties are employing online tools to present their vision of reality and challenge the other position.

The role of the actors in spreading disinformation is also an important characteristic of the digital space. Using such tools as Twitter and Facebook, Venezuelan officials address their domestic and foreign subscribers and promote messages on the illegitimacy of the U.S. intervention. The nationalist discourse of sovereignty and independence is reinforced through official channels and even independent users who are on the side of Venezuelan government. The Venezuelan government requesting the people to share the official map in the social media (as reported by Reuters) is a grassroots type of opposition that makes the digital media the weapon of national defense.

Instead, the U.S. government and its supporters employ social media as a top-down means to push their message. The media is frequently fed on the first hand by the tweets and official statements of the Trump administration, which are popularized in the news outlets like CNN. The U.S. positioned itself as a world authority by framing military interventions in the Caribbean and oil hijacking in the form of international law enforcement to make sure that its interests are preserved and justified. In addition, the fact that these digital messages are repeated by allies of the U.S. also supports the U.S. interventionist narrative enabling the digital audience to internalize the notion that the intervention is one of the components of world peace.

Creation, distribution, and consumption of media content in a digital environment is a major focal point in the disinformation construction and distribution process. Both the U.S. government and the Venezuelan officials can be strategic in their use of social media in the spread of their messages and rallying their side. The Trump administration relies on online

platforms such as Truth Social and Twitter to put forward its side of the story. As an illustration, the U.S. media outlets disseminated very quickly the tweets by Trump about the capture of Maduro, presenting the military strike as a yielding operation. The digital media system in this case is based on tactic repetitions and emotional requests. Such terms as democracy, human rights and freedom are constantly employed to justify the intervention and relate it to the American values.

On the other hand, the social media of Venezuela can be seen as a tool of opposition, where the governmental messages of self-governance are aired. The Venezuelan government invites the citizens to take action collectively by sharing the official map of Venezuela and this is enhanced over the digital platform to form a narrative of solidarity and resistance to foreign intervention. Digital media outlets in Venezuela also contribute to formulating the U.S. military actions as the continuation of imperialist approach, through metaphors like the concept of military aggression and the meddling of other countries they call to create a feeling of injustice.

Another important element of the discursive practice is the role of the public and private actors in the process of spreading disinformation. The U.S. government is a major information provider, and the official statements and tweets of the president are lawful messages, which are further promoted through different media outlets. In this aspect, disinformation propagation may be regarded as a top-down communication, in which the official version of the governmental discourse is spread to the rest of the population. Venezuela on the other hand tends to be more bottom-up whereby the inclusion of citizens in the storytelling is a key element. The fact that the call to action encourages citizens to share the official map on social media generates a digital backlash movement on a grassroots level, which makes the official narrative even harder. Such digital practices are decentralized, and a higher level of participation in framing the narrative and challenging disinformation can be provided by the population.

The use of social media as a means of enhancing political messages is the same in both the U.S. and Venezuela. The latter platforms are

especially effective in spreading misinformation due to their potential to engage a vast population of users within the shortest period of time. The content of hashtags, memes, user-created materials can be easily shared and can change the perception of the population, supporting certain ideologies. As a case in point, the message of the Venezuelan government to stick together and protect the territorial integrity by using social media is enhanced when individuals and organizations share the message through reposting, commenting, and sharing.

The way U.S. media frames military activity and economic interventions along with the official pronouncements made by the governmental sources constitute a very coordinated activity aimed at perpetrating disinformation that would serve the U.S. purposes. Such official utterances are then echoed through the different mainstream press outlets and a cycle of repetitive message creation is executed which aids in the construction of a hegemonic discourse. The contextualization of disinformation in the context of the U.S.-Venezuela conflict needs to be interpreted in terms of the greater geopolitical conflict. Venezuela is considered by the U.S. to be a major player in Latin America not only due to its oil deposits but also due to its political orientation with countries such as Russia and China. To the U.S., the oil industry of Venezuela is not only of importance in economic aspects but also in the region. Venezuela, however, is a country that perceives the U.S. as an imperialistic nation that tries to destabilize Venezuela and draw the country under its control. The contextualization of disinformation is not merely on matters concerning the territorial integrity only, but also on issues of resource control and economic future of the nation. In this regard, social media would be an instrumental resource to both parties to establish a universal understanding of the war.

Digital geopolitics has become a major battlefield on social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Truth Social. The fact that both the U.S. and the Venezuelan officials use these platforms indicates power relations in the region. The call made by the Venezuelan government to its citizens to post their official map is a reaction to U.S. disinformation to weaken the Venezuelan claims on its territories. This fight against digital sovereignty shows the

significance of social media in the international perception-making process and the geopolitical agenda. The international law and sovereignty are important in the Venezuela-U.S. conflict. The territorial integrity of Venezuela is put in the context of the immediate opposition of the U.S., and the U.S. defends it by referring to human rights and world order. Digital media are used by both parties to get legitimacy, which is mainly achieved through the manipulation of international norms and legal rhetoric. In the case of Venezuela, national sovereignty against foreign intervention is not only an ideological stand but a legal battle that is fought on the social media platforms.

Theme 3: Rhetorical Resources that Media employs to Frame Disinformation in USA-Venezuela Political Relations

The use of rhetorical strategies in media has been central in creating the perception that the USA-Venezuela conflict has on the people. The disinformation presentation is shown in the language selection, metaphors and storytelling of the media outlets. Depending on the ideological stand of the media source, the application of specific rhetorical devices may strengthen or destabilize power structures. The discussion of these strategies shows how U.S. and Venezuela formulate and manage their own political narrative using media discourse.

The aspects of the textual analysis that are most important are the lexical decisions of media outlets because these decisions are influential in the frames of the intervention. The media in the U.S. such as Reuters and CNN frequently employ language that talks about the success of the military, law enforcement and international security. The terms used to describe the actions of the U.S. military are often used, and they are seized, captured, military operations, and oil security. These words create the image of the intervention as justified and needed, and the U.S. is merely applying international laws and ensuring world peace. As the example of a description of the military operation, such terms as successful large-scale strike (DAWN, 2026) concentrate on the effectiveness of U.S. action to give an idea of intervention as the well-performed mission, but not the aggressive action. In contrast, U.S. actions are outlined in a more critical manner by the statements by the

Venezuelan media and government. Sovereignty is also mentioned repeatedly to drive home the point that the actions of the U.S. are illegal. The Venezuelan government presents the U.S. as an intruder, using such words as imperialist and flagrant violation to produce an impression of something wonderfully wretched in terms of morality and law. As an illustration, such a term as flagrant violation of national sovereignty (DAWN, 2026) promotes the idea that the U.S. military operation was not only illegal but also posed a threat to the right of Venezuela to self-determination. Through the word sovereignty, Venezuela places itself in the role of the target of foreign aggression and creates the disinformation narrative, making it appear to be aimed at disrupting its national sovereignty.

Another effective figure of speech, and a tool of framing the disinformation in the USA-Venezuela conflict, is the use of metaphors. When the U.S. media report on their intervention, they do not use words that can be viewed as overly aggressive. Rather, they are concerned with neutral, or even positive metaphors, e.g. calling military operation implementation of international law or democratic transition. These metaphors imply that the U.S. is operating in a morally acceptable way to bring order and stability. To use just one case, the U.S. military occupation of oil tankers is not seen as an occupation of the oil tankers, but as a process of securing the oil market or ensuring the legal flow of oil. These figurative decisions serve to authorize the intervention that enables the audience to perceive the operation as a just reaction to the unlawful actions.

Conversely, the imperialism and foreign aggression metaphors are also founded on the U.S. intervention in Venezuela. The U.S. as the imperial force is a recurring metaphor, which shows historical accounts of the U.S. imperialism in Latin America. The Venezuelan government tries to stir the nationalist feeling and place itself at the frontline of defending the sovereignty against the invasion of a foreign state by addressing the intervention as an imperialist invasion. This simile fits into the overall story of Venezuela as the one opposing the outside oppression. Such inflammatory metaphors are aimed at mobilizing citizens back at home, and justifying the U.S. efforts. Also, the manipulated map shared by President Trump on Truth Social

is a metaphorical allegory in the text. Trump is symbolically claiming Venezuela as his by replacing a normal map with one with U.S. flags over it. This symbolic reterritorialization act is in a bid to strengthen the story that sovereignty of Venezuela is being challenged. Accordingly, the Venezuelan government urges its people to have an official map affixed in social media, and this gesture translates to take a stand against U.S. dominance.

The narrative form applied on the media reports is one of the important aspects of the presentation of the U.S.-Venezuela conflict to the population. American media houses tend to follow a linear narrative in explaining the happenings of the war. To offer a case in point, the capture of Maduro is presented as the denouement of a greater military intervention in which the U.S. is the active law enforcer. This story is narrated in a direct, causally interconnected way: the U.S. intervenes due to the illegitimacy of the regime of Maduro, and the intervention holds the promise of the stability and democracy in Venezuela. The framing in the Reuters report is well evident: The U.S. military raid has led to the capture of Maduro who was flown out of the country. This is a pure, smooth story that shows the U.S. as the global force of justice, and the military intervention seems to be a justified way of addressing the political crisis in Venezuela.

By comparison, the Venezuelan media replaces this with a contrastive narrative format, where the conflict is portrayed as a duel of imperialism and resistance. The story is usually presented involving two opposing parties: the imperialist one (the U.S.), and the other one the sovereign state of Venezuela. The highlighting of the struggle of Venezuela to gain independence is done by contrastive structure where it is viewed that the U.S. intervention was part of a long-standing imperialist agenda. The role of the government of Venezuela in articles like the one by DAWN is portrayed as one that opposes foreign aggression and the measures taken by the U.S. are seen as going against international law. This plot structure brings out a sharp contrast, making the situation more complex to seem like a good and evil fight.

The media role in construction and spread of disinformation is key in realizing how the U.S. and Venezuela construct different versions of

reality. The U.S. media, especially those that support the Trump administration, have a major role to play in the framing of the intervention as a legitimate enforcement. The U.S. government media approach tends to use official press releases and personal messages of the President to develop a top-down discourse. The U.S. government uses press releases, social media platforms and interviews to show its activities as being part of the battle against regimes that are illegitimate and also to ensure worldwide security. On the contrary, the media in Venezuela, such as state-controlled newspapers and social media profiles, is used as the main channel of the resistance narrative in Venezuela. Venezuela attempts to present itself as the victim of U.S. imperialism by using official statement and mobilizing social media, which shows violations of the sovereignty, the injustice of the foreign intervention. The attempt to mobilize citizens to share the official Venezuelan map on social media is the most notable example of the media of the grassroots speaking against the U.S. hegemony. This digital resistance made possible by the social media means that Venezuela can mobilize its citizens in the struggle towards sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The social media have an exaggerated role in spreading disinformation especially in the case of the conflict between the U.S. and Venezuela. The U.S. and Venezuela are in the modern digital age where social media is used to disseminate their respective narratives. Through social networking sites, including Twitter and Facebook, the Venezuela government leaders, including Delcy Rodriguez, directly appeal to their internal and external viewers. An example is what Rodriguez says in her social media about the need to unite against the U.S. aggression, and how she uses this to mobilize and enlist the support of the rest of the world. Social media also serves as a site whereby the citizens can participate in the creation of the narrative e.g. the symbolic posting of the official Venezuelan map as a reply to the Trump-changed map.

On the contrary, the government of the U.S. is another disinformed tool of the social media. The posts by Trump on Twitter, more specifically, his manipulated map, are used to reenact the notion that Venezuela is a land that needs to be conquered. Media houses in the U.S. amplify these posts and provide a dominant

narrative that the intervention is justified and it is part of U.S. geopolitical strategy. Through social media broadcasting of its activities, the U.S. can spread its side of the story in quick and effective ways, which will influence the perception of people regarding the conflict.

When it comes to the case of the USA-Venezuela conflict, the official sources of information (such as government-controlled media) and the unofficial sources (such as citizen journalists or independent news sources) complement each other in the aspect of disinformation framing. Authoritative media tend to present an official version of the reality, whereas unauthoritative media can present other interpretations of the truth that contradict the official one. In Venezuela, the state-owned media usually include the actions of the U.S. in a history of imperialism and emphasizes the illegality of the foreign interventions. Independent sources in Venezuela, or other alternative digital space, on the other hand, can bring more subtle or even contradictory perspectives, occasionally disputing the government account of things. The official version of events is being reinforced in the media in the U.S. through state-sponsored media outlets that conform to the political agenda of Trump. Nevertheless, the independent media in the U.S. can offer counter-narratives, challenge the economic and political interests of the U.S. intervention, and imply the motive of intervention is more of control of resources rather than democracy or human rights. The U.S.-Venezuela dispute is a bit intricately connected with the global political competition of oil, military and regional authority. Venezuela is among the largest oil reserves in the world, and its association with Russia, China, and the other non-Western powers make it difficult to do the geopolitical calculations to the U.S. These power struggles are reflected in how disinformation has been framed on both sides. The rhetoric of sovereignty and anti-imperialism in Venezuela is a defense mechanism against the U.S., putting the U.S. in the role of external oppression in a bid to gain control of the resources in Venezuela. In its turn, the U.S. justifies its intervention in its terms of protecting the global security, which is required to eliminate authoritarian regimes that endanger democracy and stability in the region. The U.S. supports its military and

economic interventions in Venezuela by calling Venezuela a rogue state or dictatorship, and therefore justifies that the military and economic intervention was to restore order in the world. This is the core of the conflict and both parties develop disinformation that promotes their geopolitical interests.

Social media is an important location of digital geopolitics in this conflict. The U.S. and Venezuela both use social media to establish their narratives and refute the version given by the other. In the case of Venezuela, the request to the citizens to upload the official map is the digital resistance to the U.S. activities. The U.S., however, takes social media and relies on it to air its legitimacy and its intervention by tweeting about its legitimacy by President Trump and the official commentary of military officials. The role of social media, in this regard, does not only concern disseminating information, but also influencing the opinion of the people, and building a geopolitical advantage in the online realm. The fight over the media about who controls the discourse of social media turns into a continuation of the political battle to determine who has the sovereignty and U.S. geopolitical interests in Latin America.

The position of international law is a very essential part of the socio-political environment. Venezuela justifies U.S. intervention in the country as a contravention of international norms and resorts to the UN Charter and international sovereignty. The U.S. on the other hand defends its acts as being in accordance with the international system using the argument that it is acting according to the quest to ensure world peace and safeguard human rights. Both parties use the international law to their advantage albeit differently. The U.S. relies on the principle of sovereignty to justify its efforts in intervening, whereas Venezuela invokes the responsibility to protect, which is the policy used by that nation to reject foreign intervention. The media has been the place where this ideological struggle of sovereignty and global standards takes place where each party presents the other as one that is not adhering to some of the most important tenets of international law.

5. Findings and Discussion

Media discourses of the U.S.-Venezuela political relations demonstrate that the processes of

framing, digital media, and rhetorical strategies interact in a complicated way and influence the production, distribution, and interpretation of disinformation. Based on qualitative information gathered by Reuters, CNN, The Guardian, and DAWN, this study has discussed the ways in which political narratives are formed by media entities, the way in which digital platforms serve to create conflict between the media and truth claims, and the linguistic and ideological processes that perpetuate a narrative of disinformation in geopolitical settings. The following discussion summarizes the major findings of the three themes, which are framing, the role of digital media, and rhetoric strategies, and places them into the context of the recent academic literature on the topic of media and disinformation.

5.1 U.S. Intervention Framing: Violation of Sovereignty vs. Justified Intervention

The initial significant revelation is the ways in which the media texts interpret the U.S. intervention in Venezuela as an infringement of national sovereignty or a sound geopolitical policy. Textual commentary indicates contrasting lexical and structural constructions of texts which represent opposed political interests. The Venezuelan outlets and politicians label U.S. activities as a clear breach of state sovereignty and an act of imperialism and place Venezuela as the target of coercive power (see DAWN articles). This is similar to the findings of studies that politically relevant actors who perceive themselves threatened to use the concept of foreign intervention as a loss of sovereignty and external inferiority, which can tap into deeply-rooted nationalistic discourse (e.g., Torrealba & Vilorio, 2024). On the other hand, the U.S. media tends to present their military measures in their language such as seizing tankers and successful strikes and focus on the maintenance of order and law enforcement instead of aggression. That framing aligns with the results of media studies, which indicate that the dominant powers often use neutral or perpetrating speech to frame the intervention actions and this way predetermine the attitude toward acceptance or the minimum level of questioning among the population (Sadler, 2025).

The very framing strategies are part of bigger ideological struggles. Due to the strong intertwining of press accounts with the political power, media framing is an activity that builds social reality in the foregrounding of some accounts of events and backgrounding others (Chong and Druckman, 2007). To take one example, insisting on military accuracy and security objectives can deflect the argument of illegality and humanitarian consequences, and depicting these efforts as the infringement of sovereignty can be used to elicit popular opposition to intervention. This duality underscores the fact that framing is not simply descriptive; it has got an active influence on meaning-making that occurs during geopolitical conflicts.

Besides, the narrative frames in the two media sources are suggestive of Hallin spheres of consensus and controversy, in which mainstream media naturalizes some ways of perceiving things (e.g., U.S. intervention as law enforcement) and marginalized some ways of seeing things (e.g., imperial violation) to oppositional discourses (Hallin, 1986 as summarized in turn0search56). Such a dynamic demonstrates that framing does not only occur at the word-level but at the story-line, actor-portrayal and morality-location. These trends support the notion that disinformation is not merely fake information, but also ideologically colored stories of a certain political agenda.

5.2 The Impact of Digital and Social Media on the Disinformation Spread

A second significant conclusion is the amplification of disinformation in the USA-Venezuela conflict by the digital media and social media. As disclosed by the data, the digital practices serve as a battleground on which various competing narratives are spread, opposed, and strengthened. This is not limited to the traditional media narrations to user generated content, official government posts, and image discourses.

The contribution of social media is especially timely: the demand of the Venezuelan government that its citizens publish official maps as a reaction to a modified map disseminated by U.S. personalities is one successful example of how digital media is manipulatively employed to

deal with perceived disinformation. This is consistent with the current research that emphasizes the potentials of social media in spreading and challenging misinformation and disinformation, influencing the beliefs of users and polarization processes (Tucker et al., 2018; Vasist, 2023). In Venezuela, digital media is a medium of digital resistance and mobilization, and bottom up participation in the political discourse. On the other hand, the manipulated visuals and fake accounts of military activities spread by the use of social platforms, like AI generated and recycled videos that distort the real situation in Caracas, exemplify the dark side of the impact of digital media (RSF, 2026).

Researchers have observed that one of the negative effects brought about by digital media include the low barriers of entry, as well as visibility caused by algorithms, which can easily disseminate misleading information, leaving the audience unable to distinguish between truth and fiction (Shahbazi, 2024). The case of Venezuela is the embodiment of this difficulty: platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Tik Tok became the mediums of both real news and fake images after high profile actions like the alleged capture of the leadership of Maduro, which caused tsunamis of fake and misinformation on social networks (Wired, 2026). These tendencies are more widespread digital disinformation phenomena worldwide, with viral dissemination frequently supporting ideological information regardless of its validity, polarizing and increasing distrust.

Moreover, the social media landscape in Venezuela has been conditioned by a decreasing media ecosystem and increased cases of false information, especially citing election-related cases and a political crisis. Hundreds of cases of misinformation have been documented on Facebook, X, and WhatsApp, which highlight the level at which digital networks become the transmitters of misleading information (Mediannalisis report, 2025).

Generally, digital media does not only increase the rate of disinformation but also changes the subject matter of conversation with some power being taken over by traditional media on to digital players. The impact of this democratization of information production is both complex and dual: on the one hand, it makes it possible to create alternative narratives

and put up resistance, on the other hand, it exposes political communication to manipulation (Tucker et al., 2018).

5.3 Media Framing Strategy Rhetorics

The third important result is the focus on rhetorical techniques, which influence the construction and perception of narratives on the conflict. The analysis reveals that the strategic rhetoric employed by the U.S. and Venezuelan media to invoke emotions, assign agency, and express normative positions invokes metaphors and metaphoric presentation and uses metaphoric framing and narrative channels.

As an example, the use of such metaphors as imperialism and the violation of sovereignty leads to a moral fight, which presents Venezuela as an anti-imperialism fighter, appealing to historical anti-imperialism discourses that appeal both domestically and internationally. Such metaphors are emotional and experience sympathy and strengthening the political identity, which aligns with the findings on the emotive value of narrative framing in disinformation (Sadler, 2025). On the American side, the metaphors that focus on the law enforcement and security operations are used to justify the interventionist operations as the ones aimed at safeguarding as opposed to attack, which correlates with the research findings that the ethical and legal metaphors can be used to justify the controversial foreign policy operations. Such rhetorical means are not random but indicate the conscious efforts to shape the perceptions of people and the way events are perceived by the audience. Studies on narrative and disinformation have highlighted that texts and formulations of narratives including hero vs. villain patterns, moral rhetoric, and calls to collective values play an important role in the way audiences comprehend political disagreements (Sadler, 2025). In the case of Venezuela, the rhetorical framing is therefore a competitive sphere: both sides does not only present factual statements but also subject them to moral and ideological pragmas through which those facts can be viewed.

Summary: Disinformation as Discursive Power

Combined, the three thematic findings indicate that disinformation in the USA Venezuela

political conflict cannot be minimized to single false statements; instead, it lies in the discursive power relations that employs language, digital technologies, and strategic framing to make meaning in the political life. This observation has been echoed by critical discourse analysis approaches to media, according to which language is not a non-partisan channel but a means of power that is able to uphold or disrupt hegemonic practices (Fairclough, 1989; applicable in this study). The narrative control in geopolitics is as important as military or economic control, particularly as the population shifts towards using digital platforms that put less and less gatekeeping on material. The results also indicate that the disinformation is multidimensional- it functions at the textual (lexical choices and metaphors), discursive (practices of digital dissemination) and socio political (ideological commitments and geopolitical stakes) dimensions. This intricacy highlights the significance of integrative research methods which focus not only on the content but also on context, medium and power relations.

6. Conclusion and Implication

To sum up, the analysis proves that linguistic devices, including vocabulary, metaphors, and modality, frame the disinformation in the USA-Venezuela conflict. The contradictory accounts of sovereignty breach and lawful intervention are indicative of underlying geopolitical conflicts and use of digital media to serve political end. The discourse of the construction of such narratives helps see how the U.S. and Venezuela apply language to enforce their status in the global political arena, which reflects the larger picture of digital disinformation as a method to influence the opinion of the people and international relations. The impact of the digital media in the dissemination of disinformation about the conflict between the USA and Venezuela is complex and rooted in the ideological stands of both the USA and Venezuela. The social media and online news sources are two sources of influence that both governments attempt to manipulate the narrative by using words, symbolic behaviors, and positioning messages. The digital discourses are further complicated by the socio-political context of the conflict based on the geopolitical

power relations, oil resources, and territoriality, and it is through this that the social media serves as a potent means of digital resistance and counter-narratives. The rhetorical strategies are examined to analyze the ways in which the disinformation is framed and spread across the media discourse around the USA-Venezuela conflict. Lexical choices and metaphors, as well as narrative structures employed by the U.S and Venezuela, can support the rival ideologies and present people with the image of the intervention.

The significance of social media in the multiplication of these stories worsens the online environment of fake information. Finally, the distortion of the truth is not about only spreading fake news, but the ideological and geopolitical battlefield of influence on the world. The results of the presented research indicate that media discourses of the USA-Venezuela conflict are strongly determined by the opposing political interests, the digital media dynamics, and rhetorical techniques, which lead to the formation and release of disinformation. Media framing is a contesting between sovereignty and intervention narratives, social media reinforces and challenges these narratives, and rhetoric tools have influence on how the audience understands it. These processes demonstrate the way disinformation works not only as counter fact information but as the strategy of communication within more extensive politics and technology.

The concept of these mechanisms is essential to scholars, policymakers, and media practitioners interested in dealing with the issue of disinformation in international relations. Some of the interventions may be to increase the fact checking coalitions, enhance media literacy, and to examine the regulatory framework that regulates the transparency without interfering with the freedom of expression. Future studies may also explore the differences in the interpretation of the audience in different political situations with respect to the theory such as the hostile media effect, which argues that highly involved audiences interpret the media coverage as being biased toward the opponents of their own knowledge (Perloff, 1981). In a world, where cyberspace communication influences world politics, it is important to understand disinformation as a

discursive and ideological phenomenon, as opposed to a mere collection of fake statements, to create robust and democratic societies and to create increasingly informed processes of public communication.

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