

The Emotional Politics of Making America Great Again: Trump's Working Class Appeals

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Abstract

Real estate developer and reality TV star Donald Trump's election to the presidency of the U.S. was a departure from politics as usual in many ways. Most notably, Trump received more white working-class support than any Republican presidential candidate since 1980. Using data from 44 Trump campaign rallies, we analyze Trump's emotional messages encoded in his working class appeals. We find that Trump's language (1) temporarily oriented audiences towards feeling shame or fear as a nation, (2) reoriented them towards feeling anger at the elites he blamed, and (3) ultimately promised they would feel safe and proud if he was elected. Trump's emotional scripting seemed crafted to resonate with working class audiences feeling left behind from decades of bipartisan neoliberalism. We conclude by discussing limitations and potential avenues for future research.

Keywords

Trump, election campaign language, working-class voters

Introduction

Donald Trump's successful 2016 U.S. presidential campaign has sometimes been referred to as a white working-class revolt (see, e.g., Tankersley 2016). The Pew Research Center has found that two-thirds of whites without college-degrees backed Trump, the largest amount to support any Republican candidate since 1980 (Tyson & Maniam 2016). This support was particularly integral in Trump's victories in Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, which enabled him to win the Electoral College despite losing the popular vote. These Midwestern and Rust Belt states have arguably been devastated by neoliberal policies, which have led to the loss of family farms and unionized manufacturing jobs, and increased hopelessness and addiction (see, e.g., Longworth 2007).

Reflecting and eclipsing a national trend of the U.S. survey participants rising negativity toward corporate globalization, a 2011 survey found that by a 3-1 margin Midwesterners believed globalization hurt the economy, led to unfair competition and cheap labor, and harmed manufacturing; by about the same margin, they viewed China as a threat to jobs and security, saw

trade policies as causing job loss, and believed that there should be stricter enforcement of immigration laws in the Midwest (Cordery & Johnson 2011). *After the election*, survey researchers found that of Trump supporters, about 80% believed life is worse than it was fifty years ago; 70-75% believed that the U.S. is less internationally important, powerful, and respected than it was a decade ago; 75% believed U.S. trade policies have hurt the economy; 69% believed immigrants are a ‘burden’ because they take jobs and resources; 87% believed that federal regulations on the economy, environment, etc. were harmful; and 38% said they were angry at the federal government (Stokes 2016). While such research enables us to understand how key economic, demographic, and attitudinal factors were associated with Trump’s victory, it is also useful to examine how his messaging resonated with working-class communities.

In this article, we analyze 44 transcripts of Trump’s 2016 campaign rallies in order to answer the following question: How did Trump appeal to working-class voters? We secured transcripts online (mostly from CSPAN), verified and edited them for accuracy by watching YouTube videos of the rallies, and brought them into a qualitative coding software program (see Appendix 1). We first coded for substantive topics such as trade policy and job loss, military weakness, etc. But as we delved deeper into the data and began writing memos on these topics, it became increasingly clear that emotional language washed over Trump’s appeals and we decided to reconceptualize the analysis to bring emotions to the forefront. We found that regardless of the substantive issue being discussed, Trump’s language temporarily oriented audiences towards feeling shame or fear as a nation, reoriented them towards feeling anger at those he blamed for social ills, and ultimately promised they would feel safe and proud if he was elected.

Literature Review

In the U.S., the sociology of emotions gained its footing when Arlie Hochschild (1983) uncovered how women managed their emotions to fit sexist workplace norms. Hochschild uncovered how people manage emotions through bodily emotion work (e.g., deep breathing), cognitive emotion work (e.g., thinking about things differently), and expressive emotion work (e.g., smiling to hide one’s anger). Research on ‘cognitive’ emotion work emphasizes how people use discourse--a way of thinking or talking about something--to transform a person or group’s emotions. Classic work shows, for example, how medical students use medical and sometimes even slut discourse to mute feelings of disgust or arousal when dealing with the bodies of the living and the dead (Smith & Kleinman 1989). Social constructionists further developed a discursive approach to emotions, showing how narratives are often embedded with emotional messages (see Lutz 1988). As Loseke (1993, p. 207) put it, a speaker’s words construct for audiences a ‘preferred emotional orientation.’ We take that approach in our analysis of Trump’s working-class appeals.

Although social movement scholars have increasingly examined emotional processes of mobilization, as James Jasper (2005, p. 132) put it, ‘even the most culturally oriented analysts of politics have ignored emotions.’ Despite continued calls for research on politics and emotions (Srblijinovic & Bozic 2017, p. 410), most work is done by psychologists focusing on internal processes (e.g., Pliskin et al. 2014; van Prooijen et al. 2016). There are some notable exceptions. Ost (2004, p. 229) argues, for example, that politicians use language to ‘capture and channel’ citizen anger by ‘offering up an ‘enemy.’’ Scheff and Retzinger (1991) suggested that Adolf Hitler came to power largely by transforming the population’s emotions of shame into rage at named

outsiders. And studies of political advertisements show that ‘emotional appeals’ are ‘designed to evoke . . . happiness, goodwill, pride, patriotism, anger, and hope’ (Kaid & Johnston 1991, p. 56). Marmor-Lavie and Weimann (2006) quantified emotional messages in political ads and found that Israeli right-wing parties more often appealed to fear, anger, and hope, while left-wing parties more often appealed to sympathy for the less fortunate.

Although not focusing on election rhetoric, Loseke (2009) analyzed how a politician’s discourse contains emotional appeals, an approach we follow here. Focusing on former U.S. President George W. Bush’s public speeches about the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks, Loseke found that Bush’s ‘Story of September 11’ oriented audiences to feel sympathy for those constructed as worthy victims, anger at defined enemies, and pride in the nation. Importantly, this emotional discourse was embedded in a story structured as a ‘melodrama,’ a classic genre with pure victims, villains, and heroes. Loseke argues that Bush’s emotional stories worked to justify going to war with Afghanistan rather than approach the attack as an international crime. Trump’s emotional discourse at his 2016 campaign rallies took a similar form, though it was geared toward mobilizing voters as opposed to minimizing opposition to state violence.

Social movement scholars have shown the importance of emotional discourse for recruiting and mobilizing activists, which has similarities to mobilizing voters. Young (2001) found, for example, found that 1880s Christians were emotionally mobilized to join the abolitionist movement because leaders altered the religious discourse of ‘slavery to sin’ to mean ‘slavery was sin.’ Schrock, Holden, and Reid (2004) found that transgender activists promoted an emotional discourse that promised to transform personal shame into pride, fear of bigots into anger at them, and feelings of alienation and powerlessness into solidarity and efficaciousness. Wasielewski’s (1985) analyses of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X’s speeches similarly found transforming emotions was key: they would often, for example, linguistically orient audiences to reframe despair into hope, and shame and anger into pride. Charisma is not a personality characteristic, she argued, but an emotionally-oriented discursive action. As we show below, Donald Trump’s working class appeals employed very similar linguistic strategies.

Temporarily Shaming and Terrorizing America

Trump’s emotional discourse oriented rally audiences--at least temporarily--to feel ashamed of and fear for the nation. Such talk arguably resonated with working-class whites because of their tendency toward identifying with the nation and their suffering under bipartisan neoliberalism (Massey 2000). As those writing about working-class life point out (e.g., Vance 2016; Hochschild 2016), the white working-class has felt increasingly left behind, that the American dream is more fictional than ever before, and that their communities’ suffering is neglected by political elites. Trump’s rally rhetoric temporarily oriented people towards believing that they should no longer feel proud of their country. In doing so, he arguably tapped into existing feelings of alienation, fear, and shame in a fashion resembling the emotional tactics of white supremacist and right-wing movements (e.g., Blee 2002).

The most basic way Trump linguistically oriented people toward feeling national shame was by inserting slogans that painted the U.S. as being in ‘trouble,’ in ‘bad shape,’ and ‘losing.’ In Clear Lake, Iowa, Trump informed the crowd gathered before him that ‘our country is in trouble . . .

serious trouble.’ In West Palm Beach, he told his supporters: ‘When I declared my candidacy, I knew what bad shape our country was in. And believe me, all you have to do is look at world events.’ When describing why he ran for president, he declared in Manchester, NH, ‘Our country was in trouble.’ In Miami, he said, ‘Our country’s in trouble. A lot of people don’t know it, but our country’s in trouble.’ In Geneva, he said, ‘We’re losing everything.’ After mentioning the national debt, poverty, and crumbling infrastructure in Springfield, Trump summed it up with: ‘Bad Shape.’ Trump’s rally sloganeering constantly reminded audiences that America was in decline, implying national pride was a fading memory.

In Des Moines, Green Beret John Wayne Walding introduced Trump as ‘unapologetically American’ and primed the crowd for Trump’s emotional message: ‘Mr. Trump, he says things that may not make you feel good, but it is a better thing for this great country. And that’s what I care about.’ Later that evening, Trump said:

So I just say this: we are a country that doesn't win anymore. . . We don't win on trade. We don't win on the military. We don't beat ISIS. We don't do anything. We're not good. We are just not the same place. And . . . the rest of the world, [they] laugh at our stupidity. They cannot believe what's happening.

Echoing what he said at other rallies, here we can see how Trump encouraged audiences to think of the nation as not only losing ground, but as being losers in the eyes of other nations. As Cooley (1922) pointed out, imagining others negatively judging you evokes shame or embarrassment. The ‘looking-glass self’ was a social-psychological process Trump used, at least temporarily, to discursively orient people to feel ashamed as Americans. Trump’s emotional appeals thus depended on a degree of nationalism, an ideological resource that working-class communities have long used to buffer themselves from economic difficulties.

Trump often presented the US as being outdone and sometimes ridiculed by other nations. Speaking of the Russian autocrat, he declared in Pensacola, ‘Putin laughs at our leaders, and takes them to the cleaners again and again.’ ‘Russia has defied this Administration at every single turn. Putin has no respect for President Obama and has absolutely no respect for Hillary Clinton,’ said Trump in Philadelphia. In Clear Lake, he said, ‘We’re not respected [by other countries]. It’s funny. We’re like the big, fat bully that gets his ass kicked all the time (laughter).’ And in Panama City, Trump declared, ‘Other countries are eating our lunch right now. They’re eating our lunch. We’re going to become noncompetitive.’ By presenting other nations as disrespecting and dominating the U.S. in international affairs, Trump’s discourse suggested there was little to be proud of as a nation.

In addition to global relations, Trump often painted a dire picture of the current US economy, focusing mostly on working-class concerns of unemployment and wage stagnation. In West Palm Beach, Trump said, ‘Our gross domestic product, or GDP, is barely above 1 percent. And going down. (booing) Workers in the United States are making less than they were almost 20 years ago, and yet they are working harder.’ In Delaware, Ohio, he warned:

Right now our economy isn't growing practically at all. . . Many workers are earning less today than they were 18 years ago. They're working harder, they're working longer, but

they're making less and in some cases, they're working two and three jobs, but still taking home less money. It's ridiculous. [The economy is] the worst since the Great Depression.

As we can see here, Trump not only presented himself as someone willing to talk about economic difficulties the working-class face, but also as someone who passionately cared about it. In Marshalltown, he claimed the unemployment rate and deficit were spiraling out of control: 'Our country is starving for jobs . . . \$19 trillion in debt, tremendous deficits, and the real number in [unemployment] is not 5.2%, it's probably in the 25% category.' In Panama City, he summed things up by saying, 'We don't put America first anymore. . . Our government ought to be ashamed of itself for allowing it to happen.' Overall, Trump narratively evoked various economic indicators--declining GDP, stagnating wages, unemployment, deficits--to convey to audiences that America was no longer a land of opportunity. The implication was clear: the nation's sputtering economic engine was nothing to be proud of, and we should not only feel anxious but we should also sympathize with those suffering the most.

Trump lamented the lack of iconic working-class jobs, especially in manufacturing and mining. 'We don't make things anymore,' he declared in Geneva. In Phoenix he said, 'We don't build anymore, and we don't make anything anymore, relatively speaking. Everything comes in from lots of different countries.' And again in Marshalltown: 'We are losing the base and manufacturing.' Trump talked about closing factories, stoking working-class unease and uncertainty among his supporters in Cincinnati: 'That's 15 factories closing a day on average in our country--going to other places.' In Delaware, Trump said, 'Your jobs have fled. Companies like Carrier are firing their workers and moving to Mexico. Ford is moving all of their small car production to Mexico.' In Springfield, Trump said: 'Just this year, Eaton corporation in Ohio closed its plant, laid off 152 workers and moved their jobs to Mexico.' And in Buffalo, 'NAFTA has been a disaster. Now we have a new one coming up, Trans-Pacific Partnership (boos) It is going to make NAFTA look like peanuts. . . It will be detrimental as hell to the people up here and all of the people in United States.' By emphasizing the decimation of blue collar jobs, Trump's rally rhetoric represented the economy as losing ground in ways that could evoke anxiety or fear among the working class, but also sympathy for their plight.

Trump also lumped fear into what Americans might feel ashamed about: violent crime, terrorism, and the military, which he talked about at virtually every rally. Referring to being criticized for his 'tone,' he declared in Green Bay: 'We need a tough tone. We have people being beheaded all over the Middle East and other places. We have crime that is rampant. We have people in the Middle East being drowned in steel cages. This is like medieval times.' In Delaware, Trump said, 'Nearly 3,500 people have been shot in Chicago since the beginning of the year, since January 1st. 3,500 people. That's worse than what you're reading about over in the Middle East in many cases. Homicides are up nearly 50 percent in Washington, D.C. And more than 60 percent in Baltimore, and it's getting worse.' In Toledo, he said, 'In recent days, terrorists have attacked in New York City, New Jersey, and Minnesota. And it's going to get worse.' In High Point, Trump said, 'Since 9/11, hundreds of immigrants and their children have been implicated in terrorism and terrorist-related activity within the United States.' Trump discussed the 'depleted military' during 24 rallies. Talking about Iran, Trump said in Hershey, 'Now they feel emboldened and they go and they harass our ships and they take our 10 sailors and humiliate the sailors, humiliate our country.' In Philadelphia, he said, 'Our Navy is the smallest it's been since World War I. Think of that.' In

short, Trump painted a picture of a nation susceptible to violence, orienting audiences toward shame and fear. Moreover, he painted the nation as not being able to defend itself from both internal and external threats.

Another way Trump created the impression that America was declining in ways that hurt the working-class's bottom line was by talking about Obamacare, which he did at 39 of 44 rallies. He said people were 'trapped in . . . job killing Obamacare' (Tallahassee), were 'being crushed by Obamacare' (West Palm), and that the 'so-called Affordable Care Act . . . is not affordable at all' (Cincinnati) and was, in fact, a 'catastrophe' (Las Vegas) and 'disaster' (Charleston). During virtually every rally in the last two weeks of the election, Trump talked about Obamacare insurance premiums 'surging' (Sarasota), going through a 'double digit hike' (Geneva), and having 'gone up almost \$5,000' (Toledo), '115%' (Concord), and 'through the roof' (Clear Lake). The following excerpt is from a rally most of the research team attended in Tallahassee:

As you know, it's just been announced that Americans are going to experience another massive double digit spike in Obamacare premiums, including more than a 100 percent increase in the great state of Arizona. They are going up over 100 percent, think of it (booing). And everybody's going to be going up like that. They gave a number of 25 percent average. They know that's not true. They wanted to try and get out of, you know--get out in front--they know that's not true. It's much more. You're going to have 60, 70, 80, 90 percent, increases in Obamacare. . . One in five Americans trapped in Obamacare will have only a single insurer to choose from. Lots of luck in that negotiation. Even Bill Clinton admitted Obamacare is the craziest thing I've ever seen in the world, (light applause) where people wind up paying, their premiums double and their coverage is cut in half. . . Insurers are leaving, companies are fleeing, jobs are being lost, wages are being slashed. It's killing our businesses, it's killing our small businesses, it's killing individuals, and it's no good.

Here we can see how Trump represented the Affordable Care Act as a shameful disaster threatening the financial well-being of Americans. The emotional message was clear: Americans should fear Obamacare because it was failing, becoming unaffordable, costing jobs, lowering wages, and killing businesses and human life.

Channeling Anger towards Elites

A culture of individualism and the ideology of the American Dream often leads people to blame themselves for their lack of economic success. This can add a layer of emotional difficulty over and above the general unease and psychological distress that researchers have long found associated with being poor and working class (e.g., Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Of course, the middle class can also experience anxiety in the form of 'the fear of falling' (Ehrenreich 1989). Trump's talk, however, directed audiences to reorient these feelings of national shame and fear into anger at the political elites he framed as responsible for economic troubles. In doing so, his discourse took the form of a melodrama in which citizens were victims of incompetent and maleficent political villains.

Trump's rally rhetoric often encouraged audiences to feel angry towards the elites who supported trade policies that encouraged outsourcing US manufacturing jobs. Trump declared in Grand

Rapids: ‘The political class in Washington has betrayed you. They have uprooted your jobs, your communities, and [t]hey put up new skyscrapers in Beijing while your factories in Michigan were crumbling. These are our politicians.’ In West Palm Beach, Trump said, ‘The political establishment has brought about the destruction of our factories, and our jobs, as they flee to Mexico, China and other countries all around the world. Our just-announced job numbers are anemic . . . Take a look at what's going on. (audience yelling) They [politicians] stripped away these towns bare, and raided the wealth for themselves.’ In talking about decimation of decent working class jobs in Buffalo, Trump more explicitly encouraged his audience to transform shame and fear into anger: ‘Do not get scared and do not feel guilty. It is not your fault. It is politicians representing all of us who have no clue. Totally incompetent. These are people that represent us at the highest level including the president of the United States (boos) and look at what has happened here.’ Trump talked about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 31 of our 44 transcribed rallies. In Springfield and elsewhere Trump explicitly blamed the Clintons for NAFTA’s role in devastating the working-class:

We are living through the greatest jobs theft in the history of the world. . . What our politicians have allowed to happen to this area [and] all areas of our country, NAFTA, TPP, they want to approve. (booing) A disaster. Ohio has lost one in four manufacturing jobs since NAFTA--a deal signed by Bill Clinton and supported strongly by Hillary. Remember, every time you see a closed factory or wiped out community in Ohio, it was essentially caused by the Clintons . . . We've lost 70,000 factories since China entered the World Trade Organization. Another Bill and Hillary backed disaster.

Trump clearly gives the working class, especially those in communities with shuttered factories and pervasive poverty, someone to pin the blame on. The implication was that economic problems were not caused by ‘our nation’ or the communities most affected or even the corporations pursuing profits. Instead, Trump’s narrative emphasized that the lack of jobs, opportunities, and associated crises were caused by the political establishment, especially his opponent. Trump’s discourse oriented working-class audiences to feel righteous anger at the villainous destroyers of their communities, and others to feel empathy for the victims.

Trump’s rally theatrics also oriented audiences to feel anger toward political elites by painting the lack of decent and dignified work as resulting from politicians’ overregulation of business. In Miami, he declared that ‘regulations are choking and killing our businesses and stopping our businesses from hiring people--jobs.’ In Green Bay and elsewhere he explained that ‘Hillary wants to significantly expand regulations.’ He told crowds in Manchester, ‘She supports radical regulations that puts Americans out of a job, and that raise the price of their energy bills. You all see it! You all see it--beyond anything that you thought would ever, ever happen.’ By painting Clinton as wearing the boot crushing American prosperity, Trump oriented workers to feel angry at his opponent for increasing joblessness and utility costs.

Trump also claimed that the political elites knowingly harmed not only the working class, but that they--especially Hillary Clinton--unfairly stigmatized working men and women. In Cincinnati, he said, ‘Hillary Clinton thinks you're deplorable and irredeemable--and irredeemable might be worse, it means you can't help yourself. I call you hard working American patriots . . . In our country, 47 million Americans are in poverty and 45 million Americans are on food stamps,

amazing right? In this day and age. This is the legacy of President Obama and Hillary Clinton.’ In Geneva, he said, ‘Washington insiders . . . look down on hardworking people who make a very honest . . . living.’ In Manchester, Trump said, ‘Drain the swamp! Hillary has shown contempt for the working people of this country. Her campaign has spoken horribly about Catholics and Evangelicals and so many others (booing).’ In such accounts, Trump painted the politicians as not only causing economic suffering but also as othering those suffering: Hillary Clinton kicks you when you’re down. The emotional implication was that those targeted should be righteously angry at her and the rest of the political establishment.

Throughout the campaign Trump also blamed political elites for misusing and weakening the military and neglecting veterans. Regardless of his presentation style, the content of the such talk targeted both a key employer of the working class and a bit of the glory, esteem, and national pride that many warriors and their friends and family bask in. The wars that risked and took lives, returned wounded warriors, and were justified with lies, said Trump, were primarily Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and other political elites’ fault. His account oriented people to feel angry at elites whom he portrayed as uncaring and life-destroying villains. Addressing a Philadelphia crowd, the former reality TV celebrity uttered:

Unlike my opponent, my foreign policy will emphasize diplomacy, not destruction. Hillary Clinton’s legacy in Iraq, Libya, and Syria has produced only turmoil and suffering and death. Her destructive policies have displaced millions of people, then she has invited the refugees into the West with no plan to screen them. Including--veteran healthcare costs--and this was just announced and read over the last couple of weeks--the price of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will total \$6 trillion. We could have rebuilt our country over and over again. Yet, after all this money spent and lives lost, Clinton’s policies as Secretary of State have left the Middle East in more disarray than ever before. Not even close. Had we done nothing, we would have been in a much better position. Meanwhile, China has grown more aggressive, and North Korea more dangerous and belligerent. . . . Sometimes it has seemed like there wasn’t a country in the Middle East that Hillary Clinton didn’t want to invade, intervene in or topple. She is trigger-happy and very unstable.

By portraying political elites and opponents as ‘trigger-happy,’ incompetent, and fiscally irresponsible warmongers, Trump presented Clinton and company as deserving of righteous anger. Political elites threatened the lives of the enlisted and the valor of those who have served and the culture of patriotism. Audiences who found such stories credible were discursively oriented to feel anger at elites and empathy for their victims rather than national shame.

Trump often blamed political elites, especially his presidential opponent for causing harm to military veterans. He told the following story at a rally in Ohio:

Hillary oversaw massive cuts to the military budget and said the problems at the V.A. are not widespread. Oh, they are really widespread. The veterans have been treated so badly. So badly. She said they are not widespread, right? Tell that to a veteran that waits in line for nine days and can't see a doctor.

By portraying elites as weakening the military and lying about and enabling veterans’ substandard

health care, Trump rhetorically guided audiences--especially the patriotic, to despise the villainous elites and feel empathy for less protected soldiers and neglected veterans.

Trump also discursively transformed fear into anger by blaming the political establishment and immigrants for crime, violence, terrorism and unrest in the Middle East. For example, in Henderson Trump told a crowd:

Any government that does not protect its own people is a government unworthy and unfit to lead. Countless Americans who have died in recent years would be alive today if not for the open border policies of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. The perpetrators were illegal immigrants with criminal records a mile long, but who did not meet the Obama administration's priority for removal.

Promising Respect and Pride

At rally after rally, Trump oriented people to not only feel angry at elites, but he promised that they would feel secure, happy, and proud if they elected him president. Such emotional promises are often effectively used by politicians and social movements alike. Barack Obama's 2008 U.S. presidential campaign sloganeering and promotions, for example, emphasized 'hope,' and researchers found that the extent to which people said Obama gave them hope before the election strongly predicted voting for him (Finn & Glaser 2010).

During Trump's campaign rallies, he sometimes used explicit emotional discourse to reorient live and online audiences to feel good by promising pride and happiness. For example, addressing a crowd in Miami he promised: 'Folks, you're going to be so proud. You're going to be so proud. We're going to make America great again. You're going to be so happy and you're going to be so proud of your country again.' In Tallahassee he declared, 'We will be so proud of our country again.' 'Vote for Donald Trump. You're going to see something and you'll be so happy. You'll be so thrilled. (cheering).' In Sarasota the day before the election, Trump said:

You have one day to make every dream you ever dreamed for your country come true. You have one magnificent chance to beat the corrupt system and deliver justice. You will deliver justice for every forgotten man, forgotten woman and forgotten child in this nation . . . We will start winning again and winning like you've never seen before, [I] tell you. We're going to win again.

Like many contemporary religious organizations seeking to recruit and sustain commitment of followers (Wilkins 2008), Trump promised an emotional transformation. Trump will usher in a new era of pride and happiness.

Such hope mongering often centered on bringing back jobs. He explicitly promised to bring 'jobs back' or 'bring/take back (our/your) jobs' 87 times during the 44 transcribed rallies. Often his rhetoric constituted promises without plans. In Grand Rapids, for example, Trump told a rally crowd: 'When I win, on November 8, I am going to bring your jobs back to America. (cheers and applause) . . . The long nightmare of jobs leaving Michigan will be coming to a rapid end. We will make Michigan the economic envy of the entire world once again.' Similarly, in West Palm Beach,

he said political elites had ‘taken our jobs away out of our country never to return unless I'm elected president. (Cheering and chants of Trump! Trump!).’ Trump’s promises of working class jobs were often intertwined with nationalism. As Trump said in High Point, NC:

We will rebuild our roads, our bridges, our tunnels, highways, airports, schools and hospitals. American cars will travel the roads; American planes will soar the skies; and American ships will, again, patrol the seas. (cheering) . . . American steel will send those new skyscrapers into the clouds. American hands will rebuild this nation and American energy, harvested from American sources, will power our nation. ("Yeah!") American workers will be hired to do the job. (cheering) We will put new American steel into the spine of this country. I will fight for every neglected part of our nation--every single part of this great nation. And I will fight to bring us together as one American people. (cheering) Imagine what our country could accomplish if we started working together as one people, under one God, saluting one flag. (cheering and chanting “USA! USA!”).

Here Trump emphasized creating manufacturing and construction jobs, emphasizing ‘America’ ten times, rhetorically climaxing with Christian nationalism. In doing so, Trump’s discourse emotionally oriented the audience to feel hopeful for their economic future and collective national pride.

Trump also constructed narratives about saving jobs for the ‘forgotten’ working-class. Sometimes he made simple, confident declarations: ‘Your companies won’t be leaving Ohio under a Trump administration’ (Delaware) and ‘I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created’ (Clear Lake). Other times he offered plans, such as promising to punish companies that moved jobs out of the country with tariffs. In Springfield, he promised ‘Under my contract, if a company wants to fire their workers, move to Mexico, or other countries, and ship their products back into the United States, we will put a 35% tariff on those products. And, folks, just in case you have any questions, when that happens, you're not losing your companies anymore.’

Trump also promised to create new jobs by doing away with regulations designed to protect the environment or workers rights. Trump said in Delaware: ‘We will eliminate every unnecessary job killing regulation.’ This message was repeated across the nation, most notably in Ohio, Nevada, North Carolina, Florida, and Pennsylvania. He often suggested that eliminating regulations would support working class jobs: In Atkinson, for example, he declared:

Our plan will end excessive federal regulations that are harming fisherman on the sea coast, you know all about that. They're making it impossible. They're making it [impossible] for the miners, for the fishermen. They're making it impossible for the steelworkers with all the dumping of steel all over the place. We will become a rich nation again--a truly rich nation.

His anti-regulation discourse often drew on leash imagery. He told a crowd in Herschel, ‘We will unleash America's energy, including shale, oil, natural gas and clean coal. (cheering) We will put our miners back to work. We will put our steel workers back to work (cheering).’ In Des Moines, he said: ‘So we're going to unleash American energy, we're going to put those jobs back like you have not seen in your lifetimes.’ Overall, such rhetoric offered hope that the working class would

be revitalized if enough people voted for Trump.

In addition to regulations, Trump promised jobs and riches through negotiating better trade deals, essentially ending or slowing U.S. participation in neoliberal games. In Miami, he said he would, ‘negotiate trade deals that put America first. Then there is no limit to the number of jobs we can create and the amount of prosperity we can unleash.’ In Buffalo, he promised: ‘We’re going to make the greatest trade deals ever made. We’re going to become so strong, so powerful, so rich, and you are going to be so proud of our country again. We are not going to be the dummies anymore (cheering).’ ‘We are going to renegotiate NAFTA to get a fair deal for our workers. And it will be a fair deal, and if it’s not, we’ll terminate and we’ll start all over again,’ he promised in Toledo. In Des Moines, he said, ‘That means we’re going to negotiate trade deals to protect our farmers, help them export their goods, and make money doing it . . . and grow family farming in America (applause).’ He confidently proclaimed in Cincinnati, ‘If I win, day one, we’re going to announce our plans to totally renegotiate the worst trade deal ever made, NAFTA. (applause) If we don’t get what we want in that renegotiation, we will leave NAFTA and start over and get ultimately a much, much better trade deal.’ With such promises, Trump presented himself as the dealmaker-in-chief who would save farmers and factory workers alike. For communities affected by the loss of such jobs, Trump’s promises evoked hope that they would soon be able to pridefully provide for their families.

During most rallies, Trump also made citizens feel protected by supporting the military, police, immigration forces, and veterans. ‘We are going to support the men and women of law enforcement. We’re going to rebuild our very depleted military and we are going to take care of our great veterans,’ he succinctly promised in Henderson. In Las Vegas, he declared, ‘To be a rich country, we must also be a safe country. We’ll support local police and federal law enforcement in an effort to aggressively reduce surging crime (cheering and whistling).’ In Phoenix, he simply stated, ‘We will reduce surging crime and support the incredible men and women of law enforcement.’ In Geneva, he announced: ‘We will also repeal the Obama-Clinton defense cuts and rebuild our badly depleted military, the greatest people on earth. We will build new advanced aircrafts at places like Wright Patterson Air Force base and we will change our foreign policy.’ Trump often linked rebuilding the military explicitly with creating working-class jobs. In Atkinson, for example, he declared:

Our Navy is the smallest it has been since World War I, you believe that? We will build the 350 Navy ships that our country needs, and really is requesting, which means lots more work for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. (applause) Right? Great shipyard, not too busy, but it’s a great shipyard. We’ll make it busy. And you know, things like that--number one, we’re building our defense, it also puts our great people to work, right? It’s great. We’ll also expand the center of excellence at Portsmouth to recruit a large number of skilled craftsmen like pipefitters and welders that we need to expand our fleet. I’m honored to have the endorsement of more than 200 top admirals and generals and 22 Medal of Honor recipients. I was with them last night (applause) near Fort Bragg.

Here you can see how Trump not only promised that supporting the military would create working-class jobs, but also that his candidacy was endorsed by glorified warriors, orienting audiences to trust him. In Henderson, he claimed: ‘We have such tremendous support from the veterans group,

from law enforcement. . . We just had the endorsement from the Fraternal Order of Police, which represents massive amounts of police. (applause).’ And in Phoenix Trump said, ‘We have tremendous military support, unbelievable military support, and having, as you know, General Flynn here . . . Incredible guy (applause).’ By emphasizing support from the military and police and complementing them as ‘incredible guy(s),’ Trump oriented audiences to feel hopeful that he would restore glory to those working with and within organizations of state violence and social control.

At nearly every rally, Trump not only transformed fear of immigrants and refugees into anger towards elites, but also instilled confidence in himself as the person who would protect them. In Marshalltown, for example, ‘I feel we have to stop illegal immigration. When I announced I was running for president, I did this on June 16, I brought up illegal immigration. This would not even be talked about if I did not bring it up.’ In Cincinnati, he put it bluntly: ‘Let me state this as clearly and as nicely as I can: I am going to keep radical Islamic terrorists the hell out of our country (applause).’ He put this another way in Clear Lake when portraying himself, unlike Hillary, as having the energy to win the so-called war on terror: ‘We need high energy. (cheers) Do you think ISIS wants to know about low energy? You have to knock the hell out of them. Boom, boom, boom.’ In Clear Lake, Iowa, Trump uttered, ‘We’re going to win on militarily. We are going to knock the shit out of ISIS.’ His grammatical incorrectness and profanity added some ‘authenticity’ to his tough guy performance, which discursively reoriented the fear of violent victimization towards pride in carrying out violence against the internationally othered. He also promised freedom from fear by changing immigration policies. For example, in Springfield, Trump declared:

We don't want ISIS in our country. . . I only want to admit people who will support this country and love its people. So important. Keeping our families’ safe is the highest obligation of the President of the United States. A Trump administration is going to suspend immigration from terror-prone regions and we will suspend the Syrian refugee program. That was easy. We’re not going to take the risk when it comes to the safety of the American people. No longer.

Regardless if presenting himself as a tough guy willing to unleash violence or a more rational man willing to engage in bureaucratic nationalism, Trump oriented voters to feel hopeful that he would restore American pride and protect citizens from the alleged immigrant-based cultural and violent threats. The discursive walls he built were as important as the physical one he promised.

Trump also engaged in a rhetoric of hope when promising to fix the healthcare system. At every rally, he promised to ‘repeal and replace’ the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which he framed as failing and costly. This was seen most clearly in Concord, North Carolina when he declared: ‘I’m asking for your vote so we can replace Obamacare and save health care for every family in North Carolina, and frankly in the United States.’ He had this to say in Des Moines: ‘We’re going to get rid of Obamacare and come up with great, great, powerful, wonderful healthcare.’ As suggested here, he often tried to instill hope by promising he would ‘come up’ with rather than present a plan, although sometimes he invoked the language of free enterprise to promise lower costs:

Folks, we're going to have so many options. We're going to have so many great plans.

We're going to have plans that you don't even know what--there's going to be so much competition. We're going to get rid of the borders. We're going to go get rid of the lines--the artificial lines that are put there to make the insurance companies rich, so they have no competition. You're going to have . . . great health care, and it's going to be at a tiny fraction of what you're paying right now, so just remember. (Phoenix).

This rhetoric suggests that if elected, Trump would not only improve the healthcare industry, but also reduce costs. Saving money was arguably especially poignant among working-class families spending a disproportionate share of their income on healthcare. After discussing the rising costs of health care, he told a Tallahassee crowd, 'We are going to repeal it and we're going to replace it and we are going to get you great, great health care at a fraction of the cost.' Similarly, in Delaware he said, 'And we are going to repeal and replace Obamacare. . . . you're going to have great health care at a fraction of the cost, OK?' Although he focused little on how he might actually do this, he often spoke with such confidence and authority that his emotional promises seemed plausible, especially to those who had experienced rising insurance premiums.

Trump's rhetoric often evoked hope by painting himself and his audience as part of a movement that represented *all* Americans. In Phoenix, for example, 'Our movement represents all Americans--thank you--from all backgrounds and all walks of life.' In Springfield, he claimed, 'I will fight for every American of every background in every stretch of this nation.' In Dimondale, he contrasted himself with his opponent as follows: 'Hillary Clinton is a legacy of death, destruction, and terrorism. America deserves a better legacy. I am the change agent. I am the change agent. (applause and chants of 'Trump! Trump!') I am your messenger.' In Delaware, he claimed, 'I am going to fight for every citizen of every background, from every stretch of this nation. (cheering) I'm going to fight for every child living in poverty.' By presenting himself as a 'messenger' for people of 'all walks of life,' Trump's words provided hope for a working class who had been thrown under the bus of bipartisan neoliberalism.

Trump's emotional promises embedded in his appeals often approached patriotic pandering, which promised to restore national pride. He presented a vision of every citizen united under the same banner, values, and beliefs at nearly every rally. For example, in Henderson, he said: 'Imagine what our country could accomplish if we started working together as one people, under one God, saluting one American flag. Can you imagine?' This vision was often the prelude into how he ended rallies--a ritualistic appeal of hopefulness that promised national pride, economic security, and freedom from fear. For example, in Lakeland, he uttered:

We are going to make America strong again. (chants of 'USA! USA!') We are going to make America safe again. We are going to make America rich again. And we are going to make America great again. (the crowd joined in and shouted this last line). Thank you, God bless you everybody. God bless you. God bless you.

Conclusion

Political commentators and theorists often ask why many working class people appear to vote against their interests, and Trump's 2016 U.S. election victory was no exception (e.g., Taub 2017). Listening deeply to Trump's words suggests that part of the reason lies in how his emotional

discourse oriented audiences to (1) temporarily feel ashamed about and fearful for their country and their neglected place in it; (2) feel righteous anger at political elites by blaming them for class-based suffering and widespread threats; and (3) feel hope for change that would bring personal happiness, national pride, and economic and physical security. Trump's emotional discourse repeatedly focused on working-class economic needs, promising blue-collar jobs by dismantling neoliberal trade deals and punishing U.S. corporations manufacturing abroad, or promising financial well-being by getting health care costs under control and increasing wages. He not only presented himself as sympathetic to class-based social troubles, but he valorized blue-collar workers and the police, military personnel, and veterans. And he generally framed his anti-immigrant proposals as fostering physical safety and job security. Such talk, if seen as authentic and credible, emotionally oriented audiences to support Trump.

Our analysis builds on the study of emotional politics by applying the concepts of emotional discourse and management to analyze politicians' working-class appeals. Our approach unpacks the often unspoken 'preferred emotional orientations' (Loseke 2009) embedded in political discourse. Our analysis supports Ost (2004) and Scheff and Retzinger (1991), who argued that politicians, especially populist ones, often gain support by evoking anger at establishment elites and outsiders. Our findings similarly support Marmor-Lavie and Weimann (2006), who found right-wing Israeli parties often appeal to anger, fear, and hope, although Trump also encouraged people to feel sympathy for those victimized by neoliberal policies, corporatized healthcare, and violent crime. Similarly to how George W. Bush constructed his 'September 11th Story' (Loseke 2009), Trump's emotional working-class appeals often took the form of a melodrama, in which there were clear victims (the working class), villains (Hillary Clinton and the political establishment), and heroes (Trump and his 'movement'). Reflecting social movement scholarship (Young 2001; Schrock et al. 2004; Wesielewski 1985), our analysis shows how Trump's discourse often temporarily evoked unwanted emotions (fear, shame, hopelessness), channeled it into righteous anger against political opponents, and hopefully promised pride, security, and happiness on the condition he was victorious in the election.

It is important to note that we have looked at just one communication channel through which political candidates communicate to the public, namely campaign rallies. Future work might compare the emotional discourse of social media posts, traditional media interviews, debates, advertisements, etc. Furthermore, as political strategists increasingly develop varied messages targeting different social groups and geographic populations, a more nuanced analysis may reveal how emotional scripting is differently designed to resonate with diverse groups. In addition, by only examining data from campaign rallies, we cannot know which of his appeals had the most effect on motivating working-class supporters--although our analysis shows rally audiences often responded emotionally to his messaging. And by analyzing the texts rather than the videos of the rallies, we were unable to systematically examine Trump's own emotion-laden performances such as his hand gestures, tone of voice, and facial expressions, which seemed to prime audience response. Future research on working-class appeals should thus compare political rhetoric with interviews of working-class voters, video analyses of candidate presentations, and different modes of communication. It would also be useful to compare the emotional discourse of political opponents (see Marmor-Lavie and Weimann 2006).

Suggesting that working-class voters were emotionally motivated to support Trump should not be interpreted as meaning they are more easily emotionally manipulated or needier than others. All human beings have socially constructed existential needs to feel pride, joy, togetherness, and security. As long as we retain our capacity to feel, politicians and other influencers--including marketers and activists--will craft messages designed to emotionally resonate with targeted audiences. As technologies and strategies of emotional persuasion and control become more sophisticated and intrusive, those hoping for economic justice and a resilient democratic culture must become more emotionally sophisticated ourselves if we hope to have a chance against those who appear to care so little about either.

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Appendix

Donald Trump's Campaign Rally Transcripts

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1/9/16	Clear Lake, Iowa	10/05/16	Henderson, Neva
1/26/16	Marshalltown, Iowa	10/11/16	Panama City, Florida
1/28/16	Des Moines, Iowa	10/12/16	Lakeland, Florida
2/19/16	Charleston, South Carolina	10/13/16	West Palm Beach, Florida
2/22/16	Las Vegas, Nevada	10/13/16	Cincinnati, Ohio
3/19/16	Phoenix, Arizona	10/20/16	Delaware, Ohio
4/18/16	Buffalo, New York	10/25/16	Tallahassee, Florida
5/27/16	San Diego, California	10/27/16	Geneva, Ohio
7/11/16	Virginia Beach, Virginia	10/27/16	Springfield, Ohio
8/5/16	Green Bay, Wisconsin	10/29/16	Phoenix, Arizona
8/18/16	Charlotte, North Carolina	10/31/16	Las Vegas, Nevada
8/19/16	Dimondale, Michigan	10/31/16	Grand Rapids, Michigan
8/25/16	Manchester, New Hampshire	11/1/16	Valley Forge, Pennsylvania
8/31/16	Phoenix, Arizona	11/2/16	Miami, Florida
9/7/16	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	11/3/16	Concord, North Carolina
9/9/16	Pensacola, Florida	11/4/16	Hershey, Pennsylvania
9/10/16	Miami, Florida	11/4/16	Atkinson, New Hampshire
9/11/16	Cleveland, Ohio	11/5/16	Tampa, Florida
9/13/16	Des Moines, Iowa	11/6/16	Sioux City, Iowa
9/19/16	Fort Myers, Florida	11/7/16	Sarasota, Florida
9/20/16	High Point, North Carolina	11/7/16	Manchester, New Hampshire
9/21/16	Toledo, Ohio	11/7/16	Grand Rapids, Michigan
