Trump's electoral speeches and his appeal to the American white working class[1]

Michèle Lamont 🆔, Bo Yun Park, and Elena Ayala-Hurtado

Abstract

This paper contributes to the study of social change by considering boundary work as a dimension of cultural change. Drawing on the computer-assisted qualitative analysis of 73 formal speeches made by Donald Trump during the 2016 electoral campaign, we argue that his political rhetoric, which led to his presidential victory, addressed the white working class's concern with their declining position in the national pecking order. He addressed this group's concern by raising their moral status, that is, by (1) emphatically describing them as hard-working Americans who are victims of globalization; (2) voicing their concerns about 'people above' (professionals, the rich, and politicians); (3) drawing strong moral boundaries toward undocumented immigrants, refugees, and Muslims; (4) presenting African Americans and (legal) Hispanic Americans as workers who also deserve jobs; (5) stressing the role of working-class men as protectors of women and LGBTQ people. This particular case study of the role of boundary work in political rhetoric provides a novel, distinctively sociological approach for capturing dynamics of social change.

Keywords: Recognition gap; white working class; moral boundaries; 2016 US presidential election; Donald Trump

Introduction

Social change figures prominently among the topics that interest social scientists. We add to the literature by investigating the transformation of symbolic boundaries as an engine of change. We focus on the 2016 election of Donald Trump as President of the United States as a case study of the role of boundary work in political rhetoric.

Social scientists have variously interpreted Trump's presidential victory as resulting from a mix of political, social, and economic dynamics such as: (1) an ongoing class struggle in the context of increasing economic and social inequality (Casselman 2017), with a focus on the 'revenge' of a downwardly mobile white working class that feels ignored by progressive elites; (2) racism and race resentment in a post-Obama era (McElwee 2017; Schaffner, MacWilliams, and Nteta 2017); (3) a backlash against international global competition, with undocumented Mexican immigrants as scapegoats (Abowd and Freeman 2007; Alden 2017); (4) fear of Muslims in an international context where terrorism has become more prominent (Pratt and Woodlock 2016; Lean 2017); and (5) a reassertion of traditional gender roles (Schaffner et al. 2017).

These explanations all concern aspects of the moral boundaries that white working-class Americans draw in relation to various groups:[2] the elite; ethno-racial and religious minorities; and women and sexual minorities. When considered together, these various explanations point to the role played by symbolic boundaries in Trump's election.[3] We analyse these boundaries through a content analysis of Trump's formal electoral speeches; we show that these capitalized on and appealed to workers' desire to assert what they believe is their rightful place in the national pecking order. Trump achieved this by (1) emphatically describing workers as hard-working Americans who are victims of globalization; (2) voicing their concerns about 'people above' (professionals, the rich, and politicians); (3) drawing strong moral boundaries toward undocumented immigrants, refugees, and Muslims; (4) presenting African Americans and (legal) Hispanic Americans as workers who also deserve jobs; and (5) stressing the role of working-class men as protectors of women and LGBTQ people. Many of these workers think of themselves as society's invisible and under-recognized 'backbone', who keep the American economy going, yet experience a recognition gap (Lamont 2017). They believe they 'deserve better' and ache to see the country recognize their value and contributions. During the 2016 presidential election, many of these workers rose in protest and anger to follow a man who promised them what they believed was their due after too many years of enduring abuse in silence.[4]

Manza and Crowley (2017) have argued that the Trump victory was 'facilitated by a broad-based appeal that centered on voters who have levels of education and income that are well above national and primary state averages'. Indeed, the majority of Trump's supporters were middle-class voters (Henley 2016). However, most analysts agree that white working-class Americans helped tip the balance: 67 percent of white voters without college degrees voted for the Republican candidate (Fidel 2016). This represents a margin larger than in any election since the 1980s (Tyson and Maniam 2016). As such, an analysis of the appeal that Trump had for this group is worthy of consideration.

Lamont (2000) documented the moral boundaries drawn by working-class Americans through in-depth interviews conducted in the early 1990s with white

and black male workers living in and around the New York suburbs.[5] Aspects of these symbolic boundaries, such as the men's boundary work toward women or 'people above', have remained relatively stable over the past decades; recent findings largely converge with and confirm the original findings. Meanwhile, boundaries toward immigrants seem more prominent today (e.g. Cramer 2016; Hochschild 2016; Williams 2017 for a synthesis). We argue that Trump capitalized on established boundaries in his appeal to workers, but also drew stronger boundaries toward undocumented immigrants, refugees, and Muslims, groups that gained salience in the last decades due to historical circumstances such as 9/11 and the Syrian civil war.

Our explanation for Trump's appeal for the working class mobilizes the twin concepts of 'resonance' and 'cultural power', developed by Griswold (1994); Wuthnow (1989); Schudson (1989); and McDonnell, Bail, and Tavory (2017). These authors capture the conditions that make a narrative or political discourse appealing to a public as a result of various characteristics such as its 'retrievability' (Schudson 1989) and 'pliability' or dialogical character (Wuthnow 1989). Our analysis posits that by targeting specific groups, Trump's rhetoric capitalized on white workers' desire to assert what they believe is their rightful place in the national pecking order in relation to these groups.[6] Trump also exploited the tensions that have grown since the post-2008 recession for workers in general, as a result of their downward mobility symbolized by the loss of homes (Rugh and Massey 2010) and jobs, in the context of growing concentration of wealth (Pfeffer, Danziger, and Schoeni 2013), intensified competition (Beck 2008), class segregation (Lichter, Parisi, and Taquino 2015), and globalization (Kemeny and Rigby 2012). These problems, combined with a perception of the growing influence of radical Islamic terrorism (Turner 2003), added to workers' sense of vulnerability and fed a desire to reassert what they view as their rightful place in the national pecking order.

This paper also makes a more theoretical contribution by proposing a boundary work approach to studying social change. In the first section, we briefly discuss this approach and its benefits. In the second section, we describe the boundary work of white working-class Americans toward 'people above' (e.g. professionals), and 'people below' (the poor and members of ethno-racial minorities) as it manifested itself in the early 1990s (drawing on Lamont 2000). This allows us to establish the orientations of white workers toward various groups, as manifested in their past boundary work. In the third section, we focus on how Trump oriented himself toward the working class in his electoral speeches by presenting himself as their voice and advocate; how he removed blame for their downward mobility by pointing to globalization as a structural force that negatively affected their social position; and how he drew boundaries toward 'people above' when distancing himself from traditional politicians, the rich, and professionals. Finally, we turn to the boundary work he performed toward immigrants (generally implicitly or explicitly defined as 'illegal'

immigrants), African Americans and Latinos, as well as women and LGBTQ people. We argue that Trump's speeches activated boundary work present in the earlier decades, but also singled out new scapegoats that have become salient in recent years (undocumented immigrants, Syrian refugees, and Muslims in particular). While our analysis focuses on the appeal Trump exercised on white workers in particular, at times we discuss factors that made him attractive to all American workers.

Methods

The paper draws on a qualitative content analysis (using NVivo) of 73 formal speeches Trump delivered during the 2016 electoral campaign, including his acceptance speech right after his election.[7] Transcripts were assembled by and accessed through the American Presidency Project website, an authoritative source for the study of presidential speeches (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/2016_election.php).[8] We draw on 44 codes to identify frequencies of references to several groups that can be considered as flashpoints in American politics, such as the poor, immigrants, Muslims and LGBTQ people. We also consider more neutral groups such as workers. Our content analysis determines whether references to these groups were positive or negative, as well as their association with polarizing topics such as safety, the inner city and radical Islam. This is accomplished by using node matrices. A node matrix cross-tabulates the number of coded content (or nodes) across categories and captures the correlation between key terms.

We structure our argument around results summarized in several tables to which we refer throughout the paper. Table I shows the frequency of Trump's

Table I: *Selected word frequencies in the electoral speeches of Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign[a]*

Word	Count	Weighted percentage	Similar words
African Americans	230	0.19%	African,[b] Black(s)
Immigrants	364	0.31%	Immigrant(s), immigrate(d), immigration
Latinos	97	0.08%	Latino(s), Hispanic(s)
LGBTQ	33	0.03%	LGBTQ, LGBT, lesbian(s), gay(s)
Muslims	118	0.10%	Muslim(s), Islamic
Poor	76	0.06%	Poor, poorest, disadvantaged, low-income
Refugees	122	0.10%	Refugee(s)
Women	155	0.13%	Women, woman
Workers	217	0.18%	Worker, workers, workers', steelworkers, autoworkers, labor, laborers

[a]All mentions of a word are included in the frequency count, including several mentions of the word in a single sentence.
[b]While the word 'African' was included in this category, we verified that all mentions of this word referred to African Americans.

references to several groups, who are listed in decreasing order of salience: immigrants, African Americans, workers, women, refugees, Muslims, Latinos, the poor, and LGBTQ (see Table A.I in the Appendix).[9] Table II compares the salience of various groups in the boundary work found in interviews conducted with American workers in the early 1990s (Lamont 2000) to their salience in the boundary work performed in Trump's electoral speeches.[10] We use this table to speculate about the extent to which Trump's speeches may have resonated with workers today, positing a certain degree of continuity in their cultural

Table II: *Comparison of established boundary work of American workers in the early 1990s and the boundary work in Trump's electoral speeches*

	1993 (from Lamont 2000)	Trump's electoral speeches
African Americans	Frequent boundary work toward African Americans. Blackness is often conflated with hard-living and laziness.	**Divergence**: African Americans are explicitly described as needing protection from 'illegal' immigrants and the violence of the inner cities. Yet they are also stereotyped as poor.
Immigrants	Rarely mentioned. When they are, they are often viewed positively, as hard-working and family-focused people who are largely pursuing the American dream.	**Divergence**: Immigrants are often implicitly or explicitly lumped in a single category with 'illegal' immigrants and refugees (the campaign unfolded during the Syrian refugee crisis).
	No references to Muslims.	*Latino immigrants* are at times described as dangerous and harmful. They have killed innocent, 'forgotten' people. They also take jobs and benefits away from deserving Americans (particularly African Americans and Hispanics).
		Muslim immigrants and refugees are often assimilated with Islamic terrorists. They are dangerous to women and do not share American values. Refugees take resources away from deserving Americans.
LGBTQ	There are no references to LGBTQ people.	**Divergence**: LGBTQ people are described as needing protection from radical Muslims who do not share American values.
The poor	Strong boundaries are drawn against the poor who are often portrayed as lazy and wanting 'something for nothing'.	**Divergence**: References are often combined with the problems that ethno-racial minority groups, especially African Americans, face.
Women	No strong boundary work directed at women. The role of the provider and protector is essential for working-class men.	**Convergence**: Women generally portrayed positively; mostly in need of protection from Muslim terrorists.

orientation. Thus we focus on patterns of similarity and differences between working-class views and Trump's electoral rhetoric. For instance, while workers drew strong boundaries against the poor in the early 1990s, this group was not explicitly referred to in Trump's electoral speeches. Conversely, while undocumented immigrants, refugees, and Muslims were not a concern for workers 20 years ago, they were the most frequently mentioned group in Trump's electoral speeches. Table III provides more details on how Trump described various groups in his speeches: (1) he explained the weakened position of workers as caused by globalization, thus removing blame from them for their fate; (2) he raised the relative status of working-class men by reasserting traditional standards of working-class masculinity when describing women, and to some extent LGBTQ people, as groups in need of protection; and (3) he mobilized evaluation criteria that advantage workers in their own eyes (e.g., their respect for the law) and reinforced their position in the national pecking order by describing immigrants in negative terms. Table IV describes the frequencies of positive and negative references that Trump made concerning the different groups we focused on. For instance, it shows that while immigrants (both undocumented immigrants and Muslim refugees) are described negatively far more often than positively (74 times negatively versus 12 times positively), other groups are described more positively – for instance, African Americans are described positively 58 times and negatively only 9 times. Table V describes how often these various groups are referenced in association with important terms that are markers of position – with a neutral term such as 'job', and with negative referents such as 'poverty', 'inner city', 'safety', 'drugs', and 'Islamic terrorism'. It shows, for instance, that immigrants are most associated with jobs, safety, and Islamic terrorism, while African Americans are most associated with jobs and poverty, and women and LGBTQ people with Islamic terrorism.

It goes without saying that such a content analysis cannot capture all the euphemized ways through which divisive topics such as race and immigration are discussed in American politics (as documented for race by Mendelberg 2001). Nevertheless, we believe this content analysis is useful to capture Trump's formal electoral strategy as it pertains to boundary work toward groups. We regard each of Trump's statements about the groups under consideration as a speech act that contributes to an ongoing process of construction of group boundaries (Lamont, Beljean, and Clair 2014).

Given that this paper only analyses the salience of these groups in the context of the electoral campaign, it represents only one stage in a broader project that would tackle how Trump depicted such groups in less formally staged communications in the context of the presidential campaign (e.g. in his tweets and off-the-cuff comments) as well as the meanings he assigned to these groups in his post-election informal comments, executive orders, official statements, and in

Table III: *How Trump framed various groups*

Working-class men	Muslims, refugees, and immigrants	African Americans and Latinos	Women and LGBTQ
Recognition: Trump presents himself as their advocate and aims to restore their dignity and voice in the political sphere. He removes blame by pointing to the impact of globalization on deindustrialization. **Economic situation**: Trump claims he will give back to those who are deserving by bringing back 'jobs, jobs, jobs'. He plans to get rid of regulations hurting workers and to eliminate trade agreements. **People above**: Trump demarks himself from condescending professionals, the rich and politicians.	**Illegality**: The most explicit boundary making is with 'illegal immigrants' and refugees. **Jobs**: Trump describes illegal immigrants as taking away jobs from American workers and receiving benefits that should go to legal residents. **Safety**: Trump emphasizes safety and the threat of Islamic terrorism. **Terrorism**: Trump repeatedly points to the threat of Islamic Terrorism. **Values**: The main reason Trump gives for rejecting refugees is their un-American values.	**Jobs**: Trump often brings up how illegal immigrants take away jobs from African Americans and legal Latinos' jobs. **Protection**: African Americans are not to blame; they are victims who need to be protected. Trump repeatedly claims that he will make a safer America *for all Americans*. **Safety**: Trump emphasizes the need for safety in the inner cities. These groups are often tied to discussions of poverty and crime.	**Competence**: Trump often mentions women's competence at work: he speaks about how he surrounds himself with competent women, for instance in the Trump Organization. However, Hillary Clinton is repeatedly described as an incompetent female politician who should be blamed for child poverty. **Protection**: Women and LGBTQ are almost exclusively mentioned as groups that we should value and who need to be protected against Muslims and refugees who do not share 'American' values.

Table IV: *Node matrix of positive and negative descriptions of various groups in Donald Trump's electoral speeches during the 2016 presidential campaign[a]*

	Positive references	Negative references
African Americans	58	9
Donors	5	111
Hispanics	6	6
Immigrants	12	74
LGBTQ	7	0
Politicians	2	97
Women	18	5
Working class	19	1

[a]Statements pertaining to each of the groups under consideration were coded as positive or negative. Many statements were neutral and were not included in this count. The counts in Table IV are lower than in Table I because Table IV reflects negative statements, while Table I reflects mentions of words.

the policies he promoted. Such an analysis would systematically consider the euphemized ways he gestured toward the low-income African Americans by alluding to ghettos, inner cities, Detroit, or Chicago, to mention only a few possible referents. Many of his electoral speeches offer a far more positive picture of the groups he aimed to appeal to than do his informal comments and post-election statements. For instance, while he praised women as competent and referred to the need to protect them against Muslim terrorists in his formal speeches, he frequently made informal sexist comments against women, particularly his opponent, and became especially notorious for a previously unreleased video where he bragged about being demeaning to, and violent/domineering toward, women (in reference to his ability to get them to let him 'grab them by the pussy').

A boundary approach to social change

Social scientists approach the analysis of social change from a variety of different perspectives. However, most have not systematically considered the role that boundary work plays in bringing about social change from the perspective of sociological theory building. A micro boundary-work approach that focuses on how individuals and groups make judgments about their position in relation to other groups is an essential complement to more meso-level institutional studies of how social and symbolic boundaries can drive social change. For instance, Starr (1992) and Loveman (2014) explore the role that the state plays in shaping social categories and investigate the rules that the state employs to make and use these categorizations. While these scholars suggest that boundaries, history, and politics are closely aligned, we complement their work by considering how political rhetoric contributes to the creation of symbolic boundaries.

Table V: *Node matrix of association between groups and themes in the electoral speeches of Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign*

	Jobs	Poverty	Inner cities	Safety	Drugs	Islamic terrorism
African Americans	80	61	10	23	0	1
Latinos	12	5	2	1	0	1
Immigrants	41	10	4	24	4	59
LGBTQ	0	0	0	1	0	10
Women	3	1	1	3	0	12
Working class	14	3	0	0	0	0

Boundaries of various types permeate the social world, whether spatial (Hwang 2015), ethno-racial (Pachucki et al. 2007; Wimmer 2013), religious (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006), national (Anderson 1983), or based on gender and sexual differences (Epstein 1996). Boundary work feeds hierarchies of worth and status as individuals create categorizations and distinctions between people (Bourdieu 2014; Lamont 1992). Symbolic boundaries, in turn, are an important condition for the creation of social boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Indeed, Lamont, Beljean, and Clair (2014) describe how cultural processes such as racialization and stigmatization affect the unequal distribution of resources. In the case in point, Trump's activation of symbolic boundaries that aligned with those of white working-class Americans – particularly toward groups to which they hold themselves superior, such as undocumented immigrants – constitute speech acts that bolstered and helped consolidate workers' sense of their legitimate positioning in relation to other groups (Blumer 1958). These speech acts allowed workers to reaffirm and uphold their superior status in the symbolic realm, and these beliefs can in turn influence their claim on resources and how they distribute the resources they control (e.g. by making working-class jobs available to kin, as shown in DiTomaso's (2013) study of how whites pass on privileges).

It should be noted that our analysis foregrounds meaning-making processes that other approaches tend to ignore or downplay. We aim to connect micro-level meaning-making (how individuals make sense of their social position) with meso-level cultural frames reflected in the political discourse produced by leading politicians, who can be conceptualized as influential cultural intermediaries (Eyal and Buchholz 2010). Their boundary work has the potential to resonate with voters' frustrations and sense of moral worth, as well as with the boundaries they draw toward other groups on these bases. We thus aim to improve our understanding of the conditions for activations of symbolic boundaries at the intersection between the micro and meso societal levels (also Hall and Lamont 2013). We believe this contribution can help social scientists make sense of how depressed social status feeds populism abroad (see Gidron and Hall 2017; and Bonikowski 2017).

The cultural world of white working men in the early 1990s

Sociologists have repeatedly found that working-class Americans define their worth in moral terms (Gans 1962; Halle 1984; Kefalas 2003; Lamont 2000; and Cherlin 2014). In a context of slim opportunities for upward mobility and socio-economic success, these workers build their self-worth around their ability to keep the world in moral order, as manifested in their hard work and capacity to survive under difficult conditions, pay their bills, keep their children out of trouble, and care and provide for others. Indeed, based on interviews conducted with workers in the early 1990s, Lamont (2000) describes the 'disciplined self' that most white and many black working-class men embrace as based on hard work and commitment, upholding family responsibilities, and performing the role of the provider and protector. Although some workers are pragmatists and willingly adapt moral ideals to the exigencies of everyday life, a number express a strong disapproval of people who have 'low moral standards'. For a small subset, religious beliefs, including those related to abortion and homosexuality, support a more traditional moral worldview.

As summarized in Table II, Lamont argues that white working-class men develop a moral matrix, which helps them maximize their worth in relation to 'people above' and 'people below'. The relationship that working-class Americans have to 'people above' is ambivalent. On one hand, working-class men in the 1990s often expressed respect for economic success, and when queried about possible heroes, a number mentioned Donald Trump due to their belief that 'becoming rich' is proof of intelligence. At the same time, Lamont (2000: 107) found that 75 percent of her respondents were critical of the morality of 'people above', who are perceived as too self-centred and ambitious, lacking in sincerity, and not concerned enough 'with people'.

This antagonism toward people above is likely to have been fed by growing inequality and limited possibilities for upward mobility for the working class; Chetty et al. (2017) found that the percentage of children who earn more than their parents has fallen from 92 percent among those born in 1942 to 50 per cent among those born in 1984. This antagonism is also fed by opposition to the government, which is perceived as untrustworthy and as serving the interests of the rich and middle class (e.g. Hetherington and Rudolph 2015). Thus, the resentment of white working-class Americans extends toward the urban professionals who lead privileged, easy lives and are perceived as looking down on 'real people' (Eliasoph 2017); and toward the government, for creating policies that benefit unworthy people (Cramer 2016) and for enabling a class of undeserving public sector employees with cushy jobs.

Workers' disciplined selves are salient when they define who they are in contrast to 'people below', the poor, whom they regard as lazy and lacking discipline. They particularly look down on those who lack self-reliance, who are 'looking for something for nothing'. They stigmatize the poor, welfare

recipients, the homeless, and even 'renters' for their moral and economic failings; they believe these people have 'given up'. They define themselves as able to face adversity, and want to hold low-income people to the same standard to which they hold themselves. Thus, many prefer psychological/individualist explanations of poverty over structural ones (Lamont 2000). More recent studies are consistent with these findings (e.g. Hunt 2007). Government-based programmes such as the Affordable Care Act of 2010, food stamps, and Affirmative Action irritate this group of workers, as they feel that the government gives preferential treatment to those who are only slightly worse off than them, but not more deserving (Hochschild 2016).

Sociologists have consistently found significant elements of racism in the moral boundaries that white working-class Americans draw. For instance, they oppose the 'hard living' that they often associate with African Americans with 'decent', stable living that they associate with whites (Rieder 1985; Kefalas 2003). Lamont shows how white workers often regard African Americans as seeking handouts and lacking self-reliance. Some also perceive them as lazy and irresponsible, characteristics which are seen as feeding poverty and out-of-wedlock childbirth. Hochschild (2016) describes how southern white working-class Americans feel that they have been standing in line to 'get their turn' while African Americans cut in line thanks to Affirmative Action policies. In contrast to the African Americans that they perceive as law breakers, white workers believe they 'follow the rules', a belief that grounds their sense of worth.

Finally, immigrants (legal or undocumented) were rarely mentioned by the working-class men discussed by Lamont (2000), many of whom felt indifferent toward them. In the rare instances where they were mentioned, they were often described positively, as legal immigrants who aim to live the American dream. We will see that the new frames were frequently associated with immigration by 2016: immigrants are the most salient group in Trump's speeches (with 364 mentions), and they are most often associated with 'Islamic terrorism', jobs, and safety (in decreasing order of importance).

The electoral rhetoric of Donald Trump and his boundary work

We now turn to various aspects of Trump's electoral speeches to argue that these resonated with the yearning for recognition of white working-class Americans wishing to raise their relative status in relation to groups they judge as less worthy. First, however, we consider how Trump contributed to destigmatizing workers by praising their virtues, as well as by removing blame as he repeatedly pointed to the structural causes of their downward mobility. Second, we consider Trump's boundary work in relation to 'people above' and 'people below', and relate it to workers' boundary work described in the previous section.

Finally, we consider how Trump portrayed several groups in relation to whom workers draw boundaries: (a) immigrants (legal and undocumented); (b) African Americans and Hispanics; and (c) women and LGBTQ people (for male workers only). Table III provides a summary of the content of his speeches regarding these different groups.

Trump's electoral strategy: bridging the recognition gap and channelling the white working class

In his speeches, Trump repeatedly referred to and spoke to all workers. Terms related to workers appeared 217 times in the 73 speeches we analysed, which makes this group one of the most frequently mentioned categories, after immigrants (364 mentions) and African Americans (230 mentions) (Table I). Trump aimed to win the vote of American workers by repeatedly presenting himself as the only presidential candidate who truly cared about them. For instance, in a speech delivered in Dimondale, Michigan on 19 August 2016, he explicitly claimed to give a voice to the forgotten workers:

> It's going to be a victory for the people, a victory for the wage-earner, the factory worker. Remember this, a big, big victory for the factory worker. They haven't had those victories for a long time. A victory for every citizen and for all of the people whose voices have not been heard for many, many years. They're going to be heard again. [Applause.]

Again, in a speech directed toward workers in Asheville, North Carolina on 12 September 2016, he promised: 'I will be your champion in the White House'.

Trump also argued that he would restore white American workers to their rightful place – making America great *again* – by re-establishing workers as the heirs of the American dream. Most famously, in response to Clinton's contemptuous comment about the 'deplorables' who supported Trump (see Reilly 2016), Trump stated:

> While my opponent slanders you as deplorable and irredeemable, I call you hard-working American patriots who love your country and want a better future for all of our people. You are mothers and fathers, soldiers and sailors, carpenters and welders. You are Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. Above all else, you are Americans – and you are entitled to leadership that honors you, cherishes you, and defends you. Every American is entitled to be *treated with dignity and respect* in our country [italics added].

This speech captures how Trump aimed to provide workers with recognition and dignity. It is worth noting that in his acceptance speech as the presidential nominee at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland on 21 July 2017, he explicitly pledged to 'respect the dignity of work and the dignity of working people'.

Most importantly, Trump promised to provide what workers need and want: 'jobs, jobs, jobs!' In fact, the word 'jobs' was mentioned 1,036 times in the 73 speeches we coded – making it one of the most frequently used.[11] For instance, at the announcement of his candidacy in New York City on 16 June 2015, Trump claimed that he would reverse decisions supporting international trade to bring back lost jobs: 'I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created . . . I'll bring back our jobs from China, from Mexico, from Japan, from so many places. I'll bring back our jobs and I'll bring back our money.' He often directly addressed high-skilled working-class people who lost employment due to globalization (Worstall 2016) and promised to repeal the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other international trade deals that workers perceive as damaging to their interests. He also committed to scaling back many safety and environmental regulations, which he described as destroying jobs (Berenson 2016).

By focusing on globalization as a source of deindustrialization, Trump repeatedly framed the problems experienced by working-class Americans as structural and removed blame from them. We know from the literature on stigma that 'removing blame' is a crucial step for destigmatization (Link and Phelan 2001; Clair, Daniel, and Lamont 2016). He condemned the impact of globalization on work conditions when he declared in New York City on 22 June 2016: 'This is not a rising tide that lifts all boats. This is a wave of globalization that wipes out our middle class and our jobs. We need to reform our economic system so that, once again, we can all succeed together, and America can become rich again.'

Trump also resonated with workers due to his rhetorical style. Workers repeatedly praised Trump for voicing ideas or making statements that many middle-class people perceive as illegitimate or not politically correct. Thus, a trucker who was a Trump supporter called for 'no more political correctness' since political correctness was 'taking away your freedom of speech, pretty much' (Geller and Godar 2016). In fact, many workers appreciated Trump's enthusiasm for 'speaking truth to power' and believed that through him, they could be heard at last. Astonishingly, this group came to see Trump as uniquely capable of channelling their worldview, despite the giant social and economic gap separating them from the candidate.

Trump's boundary work toward 'people above'

In a further effort to appeal to workers despite this gap, Trump repeatedly expressed his preference for this group over 'people above', as he did in Pensacola, Florida on 9 September 2016 when he declared: 'I've spent my professional life among construction workers, bricklayers, electricians, and plumbers. I feel more comfortable around blue collar workers than Wall Street

executives.' Similarly, at a rally in Erie, Pennsylvania on 12 August 2016, he announced:

> And that's why the steelworkers are with me, that's why the miners are with me, that's why the working people, electricians, the plumbers, the sheet-rockers, the concrete guys and gals, they're all – they're with us. . . . And I liked them better than the rich people that I know. I know a lot of rich people. It's true. They're better. I like them better.

Trump favoured populist policies and positioned himself as an outsider to the political arena and as the defender of 'common men'. In a speech in Green Bay, Wisconsin on 5 August 2016, he declared: 'I'm not a politician, proudly. I'm not part of the system. I ran against the system.' Several times, including in Bedford, New Hampshire on 29 September 2016, he proclaimed himself to be an 'outsider fighting for you'. In fact, in many of the speeches we analysed, Trump critiqued both established politicians in general and Hillary Clinton in particular for their impotence, corruption, and disdain for the common man – he referenced these politicians negatively 97 times over the course of his speeches. This self-presentation resonated closely with white working-class Americans' views of the government, which they often frame as being in cahoots with wealthy donors (Cramer 2016). As suggested in Table II, para-doxically, Trump's status as a wealthy businessman helped him appeal to white working-class Americans. As we saw in the previous section, although white working men disapprove of the morals of wealthier people, many admire money-making as a demonstration of brains and know-how (Lamont 2000). Williams (2017) suggests that white working-class Americans are more likely to feel fascination for the very rich, with whom they have less contact, than for professionals and public officials, whom they often think treat them poorly. Thus Trump's enormous wealth and fame as a successful businessman may have played in his favour when it came to appealing to the working class.

   With the exception of the unnamed wealthy donors whom Trump described as supporting Clinton and corrupt politicians (he described these wealthy donors negatively 111 times),[12] Trump criticized professionals less frequently than politicians. In fact, he occasionally highlighted his friendships with physi-cians and other experts when seeking to legitimize his policies (as he did at the announcement of his candidacy while discussing healthcare). Nonetheless, through mild criticisms of these groups, Trump separated himself from them and performed the magic of symbolically narrowing the gap between himself and white working-class Americans. For instance, he marked his distance from executives in a speech delivered in Warren, Michigan on 31 October 2016, where he said: 'If Ford, or another company, announces they want to move their jobs to Mexico or another country, then I will call the executives – and tell them that we will charge a 35% tax when they try to ship their products back across the border.'

Trump's boundary work toward those lower in the pecking order

Trump's electoral speeches also appealed to the white working class because they were a vehicle for boundary work toward groups that white working-class men typically view as inferior to or below them: immigrants; African Americans and Hispanic Americans; and women and LGBTQ people. Thus, Trump's speeches performed as speech acts that affirmed workers' superior standing and symbolically raised their status in relation to these groups. Before discussing these, we explore how Trump referred to the poor, who were frequently mentioned by Lamont's working class respondents (2000).

The poor

In Trump's 73 speeches, the issue of poverty was mentioned less frequently than other prominent topics such as immigration or threat from outsiders: the term appears 130 times. Of Trump's statements about poverty, 61 explicitly concern African Americans, 5 concern Latinos, 10 concern immigration, and only 43 concern poverty – with no connection to any specific group (see Table V).[13] This is inconsistent with workers' boundary work as documented in the early 1990s, when references to the poor were very frequent, as this group was faulted for being welfare-dependent. Explicitly demeaning the poor may have been incompatible with Trump's broad populist strategy.[14] Indeed, he explicitly presented himself as the defender of the poor against Clinton's agenda; for instance, in West Bend, Wisconsin on 16 August 2016, he claimed that 'The Hillary Clinton agenda hurts poor people the most' and that he was 'going to give the people their voice back'. In fact, Trump ended most of his 73 speeches by reassuring the audience that he would bring wealth back into the country and improve the voters' economic situation (as in 'We will make America wealthy again!'; 'We will make America strong again!'; 'We will make America great again!'; and 'We will make America safe again!').

However, the number of times Trump referred to the poor grows considerably larger if one also takes into consideration his comments referring to 'Chicago' and 'Detroit' (code words used to discuss low-income black communities), and violence in poor urban neighbourhoods. In fact, Trump frequently bundled poverty and race together, as he used inner city poverty to discuss the poor specifically in racialized terms. This is illustrated by the conclusion of a speech given in Charlotte, North Carolina on 26 October 2016, where he states:

> I want to go into the inner cities, the poor rural communities, and the failing schools, and I want to work on a national plan for revitalization. I'm tired of the excuses from our politicians. I'm tired of being told what can't be done. I'm tired of people asking Americans to defer their dreams to another day, but really another decade.

Immigrants

Immigrants are the group Trump most often referenced in his electoral speeches, with 364 mentions, including 74 negative and 12 positive references (Tables I and IV). For its part, immigration was mentioned 118 times, and 'illegal immigration' 30 times. Of the immigrant groups, Trump most often targeted refugees (with 122 mentions)[15] and Latinos (with 97 mentions) (Table I).[16] Keeping these numbers in mind, we consider how he portrayed each of these groups in his speeches.

Trump often described immigrants as a potential threat to American people. Indeed, as shown in Table V, immigrants were most often discussed in relation to Islamic terrorism (59 mentions) and threat to safety (24 mentions), with 48 mentions of undocumented immigrants in association with Islamic terrorism.[17] Such strong anti-immigrant boundaries are at odds with the national tradition, inscribed in the myth of the American dream, to welcome immigrants in search of a better life into the country. This tradition has remained powerful despite repeated waves of nativism and xenophobia throughout American history (Chavez 2008).

Trump particularly defined Latino immigrants in negative terms. In his announcement of his candidacy for presidency on 16 June 2015, he famously said of Mexican immigrants – without specifying whether legal or undocumented: '[t]hey're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.' Trump often described them as 'coming over the border', and overwhelmingly labelled them as 'illegal' – indeed, he used the words 'illegal immigrant(s)' 100 times in the 73 speeches we analysed.[18] He often framed undocumented Mexican and other Latino immigrants as dangerous, criminal drug-dealers and as people who come to the US to steal jobs and sponge off the system. For instance, in a speech delivered in Phoenix, Arizona on 31 August 2016, he played into white working-class Americans' fears by cataloguing murders committed by illegal Latino immigrants, including 'the case of 90-year-old Earl Olander, who was brutally beaten and left to bleed to death in his home, 90 years old and defenseless. The perpetrators were illegal immigrants with criminal records a mile long, who did not meet Obama administration standards for removal'.

Trump frequently blamed these presumed 'illegal' immigrants for taking advantage of 'the system'.[19] In particular, at a rally in Chester Township, Pennsylvania on 22 September 2016, he criticized Hillary Clinton for 'giv[ing] Obamacare to illegal immigrants' – an unacceptable benefit from the perspective of self-reliant workers who support this programme with their hard-earned taxes and resent 'illegal' immigrants who benefit without contributing. In a later speech delivered in Warren, Michigan, on 31 October 2016, Trump once again criticized his opponent for spending money on 'illegal immigrants' when he declared 'as the people of Detroit suffer, Hillary wants to spend trillions of

dollars on government benefits for illegal immigrants and refugees'. Through such references, Trump made a zero-sum competition between American workers and immigrants more salient and fed a desire among workers to reassert their superior position. For instance, he played into ethnic competition when he pointed repeatedly at the jobs and benefits that immigrants 'stole' from Americans, declaring in West Bend, Wisconsin on 16 August 2016: 'Now [Hillary Clinton] is proposing to print instant work permits for millions of illegal immigrants, taking jobs directly from low-income Americans. I will secure our border, protect our workers, and improve jobs and wages in your community.'

Trump sometimes lumped undocumented immigrants and Syrian refugees together, in contrast to Hillary Clinton who advocated welcoming the latter for humanitarian reasons. He stressed that such a policy would create new pressures on public funding and divert resources from displaced and downwardly mobile workers and their children.

Trump also often associated all Muslim immigrants with potential Islamic terrorists. For instance, in a speech given in Phoenix, Arizona on 29 October 2016, he equated immigrants to criminal aliens when he stated: 'When Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State, she allowed thousands of the most dangerous criminal aliens in the world to go free inside America because their home countries wouldn't take them back. These were people guilty of murder, assault, rape, and all manner of violent crime.' In remarks delivered in High Point, North Carolina on 20 September 2016, he discussed the 'Islamic terrorist attacks in Minnesota and New York City, and in New Jersey' and declared that they 'were made possible because of our extremely open immigration system, which fails to properly vet and screen the individuals or families coming into our country.'

Explicit references to Muslims were likely to be particularly evocative for the working-class families whose children make up the majority of those serving abroad in the military (Lutz 2008). The fact that some of their relatives lost their lives in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria also served as a powerful emotional reminder of the legitimacy of drawing strong boundaries toward this group. Trump came to regard this group as standing for all that is un-American when he said: 'We will screen out anyone who doesn't share our values and love our people. Anyone who believes Sharia law supplants American law will not be given an immigrant visa. If you want to join our society, then you must embrace our society, our values and our tolerant way of life.'[20]

Trump's boundary work was accentuated by his deep concern for physical/spatial boundaries, and particularly by his enthusiasm about the construction of a wall separating the US from Mexico. He first presented his idea of building a wall on the US–Mexican border during his candidacy announcement speech on 16 June 2015 and continued to expand on this theme to great effect throughout his presidential campaign. He also voiced ardent support for stronger border

control (symbolizing stronger policing of symbolic boundaries through spatial boundaries).

African Americans and Hispanic Americans

Trump referred to African Americans far more frequently than he did Latinos (with 230 mentions as compared to 97). He mostly mentioned both in relation to economic issues. As shown in Table V, 80 of the mentions pertaining to African Americans had to do with jobs, while 61 had to do with poverty, 23 with safety, and 10 with 'inner cities.' These references were mostly positive: in fact, African Americans were mentioned positively 58 times (versus 9 times negatively), while Hispanic Americans were referred to positively 6 times (versus 6 times negatively).[21] This is at odds with the more negative anti-black boundaries workers drew in the early 1990s. However, it is compatible with a populist strategy which would aim to attract all workers who are victims of globalization.

Hence Trump described black workers as a group that worked hard for the country, who should be 'celebrated and cherished' and need protection against illegal immigrants who take their jobs and benefits (as stated in Everett, Washington on 30 August 2016). He aimed to appeal to them by stating on numerous occasions that African Americans would be 'too smart' to vote for Hillary Clinton. He also promised that he would put them 'on the ladder for success': 'Every African American citizen in this country is entitled to a government that puts their jobs, wages, and security first'.[22] He also aimed to provide this group with recognition. As he declared in a speech delivered in Dimondale, Michigan, on 19 August 2016:

> The African American community has given so much to this country. They fought and died in every war since the Revolution. They've lifted up the conscience of our nation in the long march towards civil rights. They've sacrificed so much for the national good. Yet, nearly 4 in 10 African American children still live in poverty ... In a Trump administration, all workers of all colors will get priorities for jobs in their own country, which is about time. I want higher wages for African Americans, for Hispanic Americans, and for all Americans.

Again, in High Point, North Carolina on 20 September 2016, Trump proposed a solution to African Americans living in poverty:

> To the African American community, I say: vote for Donald J. Trump. I will fix it – I will bring back your jobs, I will fix your schools, and I will fight for you as no one ever has before.

These hard-working African Americans were typically depicted as victims whose safety and living conditions needed to be protected. However, Trump never identified their aggressors by name, with the exception of the Democratic

Party, which Trump repeatedly described as having 'failed them.' By 2016, making explicitly racist comments toward blacks would significantly lower the electoral potential of a presidential candidate.[23]

Despite Trump's positive discourse about African Americans in his formal speeches, his electoral rhetoric resonated with symbolic boundaries that white working-class Americans draw toward ethno-racial minority groups. Breaking away from Obama's inclusive slogan of 'Yes, *we* can!' [italics added], Trump constantly referred to these groups as 'they', as if to separate them from broader society (Graham 2016) and overlook the differences within the different groups he talked about. By referring to African Americans as 'the blacks', Trump repeatedly portrayed this group as a homogeneous whole – this tendency to overlook internal differentiation is one of the characteristics of stereotyping (Macrae and Bodenhausen 2000).

Trump also appealed to the boundaries that the white working class has historically drawn toward African Americans by associating them with violence and poverty. For instance, in West Bend, Wisconsin on 16 August 2016, Trump talked about 'the disservice to poor African American residents who are hurt by the high crime in their communities'; he stressed that '[t]he main victims of [inner city] riots are law-abiding African American citizens living in these neighborhoods'. He also repeatedly emphasized a need for stronger police presence in such neighbourhoods. For instance, in Dimondale, Michigan on 19 August 2016, he proclaimed: 'Law and order will be restored and the poorest places in our country will know safety and peace again.' These declarations resonate with white working-class men's association of African Americans and violence, and their concerns with protecting women and children by keeping the dangers that loom in their environment at bay. There is little doubt that such comments acted as dog whistles for Trump's more racist supporters. While he remained silent concerning the black victims of police violence, Trump repeatedly mourned the loss of police lives and warned that 'America's police and law enforcement personnel are what separates civilization from total chaos – and the destruction of our country as we know it.'[24]

Trump developed a parallel strategy to discuss Hispanic Americans who are legal immigrants or citizens. In Charlotte, North Carolina on 18 August 2016, he made the same promise he made to African Americans: 'Jobs, safety, opportunity. Fair and equal representation. This is what I promise to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and all Americans.' Similarly decrying the poverty levels that Latinos face, Trump made the following comments in his speech in Austin, Texas on 23 August 2016: 'Another 2 million Latinos have joined the ranks of those in poverty. Incomes for Latino households have declined by nearly $1,000 under President Obama. The number of Latino children living in poverty increased by 15 percent.' However, as we saw, Trump drew strong boundaries toward immigrants, particularly those crossing the border from Mexico or Central America. The cultural and, in many cases, national, ties

between Hispanic Americans and these groups can explain the paucity of positive references to this group in Trump's formal electoral speeches.

Women and LGBTQ

Trump's electoral speeches sometimes referred to gender, in no small part because a woman, Hillary Clinton, ran as a presidential nominee for one of the two major political parties for the first time ever (Dann 2016). Trump's references to gender were often an opportunity to symbolically raise the status of men as providers and protectors of this group.

As shown in Table I, women are the fourth most frequently mentioned group, with 155 mentions, coming after immigrants (364 mentions), African Americans (230 mentions), and workers (191 mentions). Trump typically described this group in a positive manner (as motherly, competent, etc.). Yet women were also often described as needing protection from foreign 'evil' forces. Indeed, as shown in Table V, they were most associated with Islamic terrorism (12 times in relation to Islamic terrorism and 3 times in connection to safety as opposed to 1 time in relation to poverty and 3 times in relation to jobs). As an example, in a speech delivered in Florida two months before the election, Trump claimed that his administration would 'be a voice for all people who are oppressed, including the millions of women being oppressed by radical Islam.' Through this and many other speeches, Trump made salient the role of 'protector' that is central to working-class men's concept of masculinity (Sherman 2009) and which he himself embraced as their representative. This resonates with the boundary work that white American workers aimed at women, as documented in the early 1990s.

LGBTQ people were almost never mentioned in the interviews with workers conducted in the early 1990s. In contrast, they appear in Trump's electoral speeches, although they are only mentioned 33 times (the least frequent of the groups we coded for), and these references are generally and surprisingly positive. Similarly to women, Trump described LGBTQ people as a group in need of protection from others, particularly from refugees and Muslims. For instance, in a speech delivered in Manchester, New Hampshire on 13 June 2016, he suggested that 'Hillary Clinton can never claim to be a friend of the gay community as long as she continues to support immigration policies that bring Islamic extremists to our country who suppress women, gays, and anyone who doesn't share their views'. Trump was the first GOP nominee to declare that he would support the LGBTQ community (Sanders 2016).

Conclusion

That an unusual politician, albeit a genius marketer, was able to appeal to a particular audience does not explain the full puzzle of Trump's electoral victory in

2016. Yet it goes a long way toward explaining the crucial role that white workers played in tipping the electoral balance, as it has been shown that these downwardly mobile white workers are the very group whose vote changed most compared to past presidential elections (Hout 2017; Cherlin 2016). This is why it is crucial that social scientists pay heed to this group's boundary work at a time when its economic, social, and political positions have pivoted in significant ways.

Scholars and journalists alike have avidly debated whether Trump's triumph in the 2016 presidential election should be explained by economic factors or enduring racism (e.g. Casselman 2017). While both sides present compelling arguments, we believe that this way of framing the question is somewhat misguided and that both camps have missed a critical dimension that ought to be taken into consideration: how Trump was able to appeal to white working-class Americans' quest for recognition in the context of their downward mobility. While addressing this gap required making salient the structural character of the economic changes that have transformed the lives of these workers, it also required drawing strong moral boundaries toward undocumented immigrants, refugees, and Muslims, and making salient workers' high status characteristics in their role as protectors of women. The systematic appeals of Trump's rhetoric to the various facets of the workers' quest for recognition can only be captured by considering the full set of boundaries that his presidential speeches made salient or left latent.

Trump brought the politically marginalized white working class back to the voting booth by cultivating differences (Lamont and Fournier 1992); that is, by reinforcing the boundaries drawn toward socially stigmatized groups. This was accomplished by repeatedly insisting on the moral failings of these groups (in the case of refugees and undocumented immigrants) as well as by making these groups more one-dimensional, by stereotyping them as in need of protection (for African Americans and women). Trump accomplished all this by using strong language that seemed 'authentic', 'in your face', and 'anti-pc', and particularly resonated with frustrated white working class Americans eager to 'tell truth to power'. Thus, Trump acted as an influential cultural agent who knew how to tap into latent and less latent symbolic boundaries that already existed among white working-class Americans in the early 1990s (Lamont 2000).

At the same time, through his electoral speeches, Trump also transformed existing symbolic boundaries by legitimizing the view that workers had of their superior position in American society (which Blumer calls 'sense of group positioning'). This paper does not assess the impact of Trump's boundary work, but future research could consider changes in symbolic boundaries in the aftermath of the Trump presidency. This would require considering not only the boundaries he drew in his formal electoral speeches, but also how his legislation, policies, as well as post-election formal and informal utterances affect the extent to which various segments of American society are viewed as worthy and given

full cultural citizenship. Future research should also consider the impact of changing symbolic boundaries on social boundaries, as they manifest themselves on residential segregation between racial groups, or in the occupational attainment of immigrants.

From a more theoretical perspective, future research should also consider what we gain from speaking of the creation and transformation of symbolic boundaries as opposed to using the language of 'racism.' One advantage is that the language of boundaries allows us to simultaneously tap changes as they are experienced by a wide range of groups who experience stigma based on various types of characteristics (not just phenotype). While there is great value in analysing Trump's victory as caused by racial resentment, we believe that a boundary-based perspective enables us to analyse exclusion as it manifests itself around different kinds of signals.

Given its changing social position, the working class has the potential to contribute profoundly to reshuffling the current political landscape – not only in the United States, but also in Europe, where it remains among the main supporters of right or far-right populist politicians (Gidron and Hall 2017). This is one more reason why capturing social change through the use and transformation of symbolic boundaries is a promising approach for future research on electoral outcomes. Under the influence of neoliberalism, the boundaries drawn by the French working class have also changed dramatically since the 1990s (Lamont and Duvoux 2014) and in other European countries, in ways that are similar to and different from changes in the United States. Broad and consistent trends are captured by comparing the changing boundaries toward the poor and Muslims under the influence of neoliberal policies in Western and Eastern Europe (Mijs, Bakhtiari, and Lamont 2016), as well as the progressive inclusion of women and ethno-racial and religious groups in and greater exclusion of the poor from social and cultural membership across advanced industrial societies (Bloemraad et al. 2017). We invite social scientists to join us in making sense of the changes ahead.

We further appeal to sociologists to focus on the resonance of Trump's speeches from the audience's perspective. Our data does not allow us to analyse the audience's responses and emotional reactions to different parts of Trump's speeches nor to analyse in detail which aspects of Trump's speeches resonated most with his audience. For the purpose of this paper, we hypothesize that Trump's speeches resonated because of white workers' definition of worth in relation to other groups that Trump discussed. Future research should investigate how Trump's boundary work was shaped relationally by that of other politicians, such as Hillary Clinton. By more intently and systematically examining boundary work in electoral contests, it may be possible to significantly improve our understanding of social change and of the role of political rhetoric in transforming shared definitions of cultural membership – of who is in and who is out. This is a crucial question for the future of inclusive democracies.

Notes

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2. For the present purpose, we define the working class based on occupation and education: it includes employed low-status white collar workers (in sales, services, etc.) and blue collar workers with a high school degree.

3. Symbolic boundaries refer to 'the conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space' (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168).

4. We do not have psychological data to address whether working-class anger and resentment are expressions of a need for recognition. For the purpose of this paper, we posit this relationship.

5. This study also used national surveys to determine the extent to which this group of interviewees represented American workers in general.

6. This paper does not address how this resonance and cultural power are exercised – for instance, the relative role of retrievability and dialogical meaning in shaping responses. Moreover, since we do not have data on the reception of Trump's speeches, we cannot draw detailed conclusions on how successful it was. However, we take the popularity of Trump among white working-class voters as evidence that his rhetoric resonated with this group.

7. These speeches were delivered between 16 June 2015 (the day Trump announced his candidacy) through 9 November 2016 (the day of the election). This paper does not take into consideration tweets and other informal statements and remarks made during the electoral campaign. It does not consider comments that Trump made on these groups after the election.

8. We excluded an incomplete excerpt that was only a paragraph long.

9. While the coding key was developed based on pre-established codes, we revisited the categories with the benefit of inductive analysis as the research progressed.

10. Of all ethno-racial groups, Trump's electoral speeches only directly referenced African Americans and Hispanic Americans. They include no mention of Asian Americans, Native Americans, or other groups.

11. Other most frequently mentioned words are quite generic: 'going', 'people', 'country', 'Clinton', 'Hillary', and 'American'.

12. His infrequent positive references to his own donors describe them as working citizens and Americans.

13. While the count of Trump's references to 'poverty' is based on a simple word frequency count, the counts for connections of poverty to specific ethno-racial groups are based on statements that often include several mentions of the word 'poverty' (but are counted as one occurrence).

14. In the 1990s, the strong boundaries against the poor were tied to Bill Clinton's campaign promise to incentivize individuals to 'choose' work over welfare (Vinik 2016); indeed, stronger work requirements were instituted through the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act in 1996. By the 2016 presidential campaign, boundary work was mostly targeting immigrants and xenophobia became more visible than strong boundaries directed at low-income populations.

15. Many of these refugees were Syrians in particular as the Syrian crisis was unfolding during the 2016 presidential campaign.

16. Mentions of specific groups are not included in the total mentions for immigrants (see the Appendix for the coding key). Trump additionally referred to Muslims in a more veiled way through comments on Middle Eastern conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iran.

17. Deportations of Mexican immigrants have been on the rise, with more than 2.5 million people deported under Obama's administration. As reported on 29 August 2016 by ABC News based on governmental data, 'the Obama administration has deported more people than any other president's administration in history' (Marshall 2016).

18. This is consistent with the trend documented in Steinberg (2004)'s analysis of the labelling of Latino immigrants in the media.

19. We found 26 mentions of illegal Mexican immigrants taking advantage of the healthcare system.

20. Direct quote from Charlotte, North Carolina on 18 August 2016.

21. This stands in sharp contrast with Trump's depiction of illegal Latino immigrants, wherein 74 references were negative as opposed to 12 positive comments. Here, the positive descriptions included references to hard-workingness and diligence, while negative depictions included a variety of pejorative comments including describing this group as rapists or murderers and emphasizing their usurpation of American jobs.

22. Direct quote from Trump's speech in Charlotte, North Carolina on 26 October 2016.

23. This can be contrasted with George Wallace's racial rhetoric in his 1968 run for the presidency – openly segregationist, Wallace was similarly populist and focused on the problems of the 'typical man' (Elliott 2016).

24. Direct quote from a speech in Virginia Beach, Virginia on 11 July 2016.

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Appendix

Table A.I: *Selected coding key for referent groups*

Codes used	Words and synonyms coded
African Americans	African American(s), African American communit(ies), Black(s)
Drugs	Drug(s)
Hispanics	Hispanic American(s), Hispanic(s), Hispanic communit(ies), Latino/a/s
Immigrants	Immigrant(s), Immigrate(d), Aliens
Inner cities	Inner cit(ies)
Islamic terrorism	Islamic terrorism, Radical Islamic terrorism, Radical Islamic terrorists, Terrorism, Terrorists, Jihad, Radical Islam, Radical ideology, Radical Islamic terror
Jobs	Jobs, Job, Employed, Employment
LGBTQ	Gay, Lesbian, LGBT, LGBTQ
Muslims	Muslim(s), Islamic
The poor	Poor, Disadvantaged, Low-income
Poverty	Poverty, Poor, Food stamp
Safety	Safety, Safe, Security, National security, Local security
Refugee	Refugee(s)
Women	Woman, Women
Workers	Worker(s), Working class, Steelworkers, Labor, Laborer(s)