

Examining the plausibility of Donald Trump's denial of responsibility for the 2020 assault on the U. S. Capitol: A dual-agency model of identity leadership and engaged followership

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Abstract

This paper develops a dual-agency model of leadership which treats collective phenomena as a co-production between leaders and followers. The model integrates work on *identity leadership* and *engaged followership* derived from the social identity tradition in social psychology. In contrast to binary models in which leaders *or* followers are seen to have agency, this argues that leaders gain influence by framing the agency of their followers and defining the parameters of their action but leaving space for creativity in how their goals are accomplished. Followers in turn, exhibit their loyalty and attachment to the leader by competing to be most effective in advancing these goals. We illustrate the model by drawing on a range of sources, most notably the events of 6th January 2021 when Donald Trump's exhortations to his supporters that they should 'fight' to 'stop the steal' of the 2020 election was followed by an attack on the Capitol. We argue that it is Trump's willing participation in this mutual process of identity enactment, rather than any instructions which may (or may not) have been contained in his speech, that should be the basis for assessing his influence on, and responsibility for, the assault.

Keywords: identity leadership, engaged followership, social identity, destructive collective action, plausible deniability

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The storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 was a brazen and unprecedented attack on American Democracy that struck the country at its political heart (Luke, 2021; Moore, 2021). Motivated by a desire on the part of supporters of President Trump to overturn the certification of the 2020 presidential election that he had lost, the attack followed a call by Trump for his supporters to come to Washington to attend a rally to “Stop the Steal” (i.e., from their perspective, Trump supporters were attempting to stop the stolen election that Trump claimed he had won). More specifically, Trump’s tweets had urged his followers to attend a “Save America” rally, announcing “Big protest in D.C. on January 6th. Be there, will be wild!” (December 19, 2020) and “JANUARY SIXTH, SEE YOU IN DC!” (December 30, 2020).

Trump was the last of a series of speakers to address the rally and did so at around noon on January 6th. He spoke of the need to “fight like hell [or] you’re not going to have a country anymore” (Naylor, 2021). Approximately an hour later (10 minutes before his speech had ended), security officers and temporary barricades on the east and west sides of the Capitol building were attacked and breached by Trump supporters. By 1.30 pm the police had been overwhelmed and a large crowd began to invade the Capitol building. The ensuing insurrection left five people dead.

In the wake of this violence, many commentators argued that the violent and unlawful actions of the insurrectionists were clearly a response to Trump’s instructions and that what they did was both intended and endorsed by him (Naylor, 2021). Accordingly, while, later in the day, Trump sent a broadcast message urging protestors to “go home”, he also reassured

them “we love you, you’re very special”, adding in a subsequent Tweet that they were “great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long” (Beer, 2021; Moreau, 2021; Wolf, 2021).

Later though, once the consequences of the attack had become clear, Trump distanced himself from his followers’ actions — claiming that they had “defiled the seat of American democracy” (Kumar & Choi, 2021). And although Trump was subsequently impeached by the House of Representatives for incitement of insurrection, the Senate was unable to secure the two-thirds majority required for his conviction. A key sticking point was the argument that, while Trump may have made strong calls to action, these were non-specific. In particular, there was no explicit instruction to attack the Capitol. Hence, for some Senators, Trump’s personal responsibility for inciting the insurrection could not be proven. Indeed, in his defence, Trump’s lawyers argued that the insurrectionists had acted “of their own accord” since his references to the need to fight were “figurative” and “could not be construed to encourage acts of violence” (Goldiner & Sommerfeldt, 2021). Trump’s biographers have also noted that rather than being planned, those sections of his speech in which he urged supporters to “march over to the Capitol” were unscripted and off the cuff (Wolff, 2021).

Analytically, this approach rests on a binary view of leader–follower relations in which leaders are akin to puppet-masters who either influence their followers directly or not at all. Equally, followers are either passive and entirely dependent on leaders or entirely independent of them. This leaves no space for a more nuanced relationship in which leaders can frame the actions of followers without totally determining them and followers can be influenced without entirely losing their own agency.

Politically, in the absence of direct instructions, this binary approach also allows leaders to make a case for their own *plausible deniability* should their followers act in ways that attract condemnation. This concept has a long history that is often traced back to Henry

II's response to the murder of Thomas à Becket by four of his loyal followers after they had heard the king mutter "will no one rid me of this meddlesome priest?" (Hodges, 2020, p.139). More recently, the concept was popularized in the mid-1970s by investigations of the U.S. Senate's Church Committee which found that the CIA had plotted a number of assassinations (most famously of Cuba's Fidel Castro during the Kennedy administration) but that because no President was ever directly involved, they could deny knowledge of it (Poznansky, 2020). In this way, plausible deniability provides a narrative that can be invoked by leaders (and others) to protect them from responsibility for the consequences of their actions. At the same time too, the narrative is powerful precisely because it is ambiguous or "slippery" (Poznansky, 2020, p.1). In particular, this is because the culpability of leaders is always a matter of inference and attribution, and hence often a matter of heated debate (as in the Trump case; see Wolff, 2021).

In this paper we explore the January 6 Insurrection and the dynamics of destructive collective action using a social identity approach. The core of this approach is precisely to challenge a binary view of leadership in which either leaders have complete agency and followers none or else leaders have no agency and leaders are completely autonomous. In contrast, we advance a dual-agency model of *identity leadership and engaged followership* in which both leaders and followers have influence over each other without being totally constrained by the other.

More specifically, on one side of this equation, leaders seek (a) to build and advance a sense of social identity ('us'-ness) that they share with followers, (b) to identify goals associated with that identity, and then (c) to outline (not necessarily in specific terms) the actions necessary for achieving those goals. On the other side of the equation, engaged followers (a) embrace this same sense of shared social identity, (b) understand what they need to do to advance those group goals, and then (c) 'work towards' those goals and their

leaders through action that is both enthusiastic and creative, and in turn impacts back on the leader in helping to shape their ongoing leadership (Haslam et al., 2019; Reicher et al., 2012). To illustrate this model, we analyse the rally of 6th January and the assault on Capitol Hill — focusing on both the Trump speech and the reactions of followers before, during and after the assault. The model is represented schematically in Figure 1.

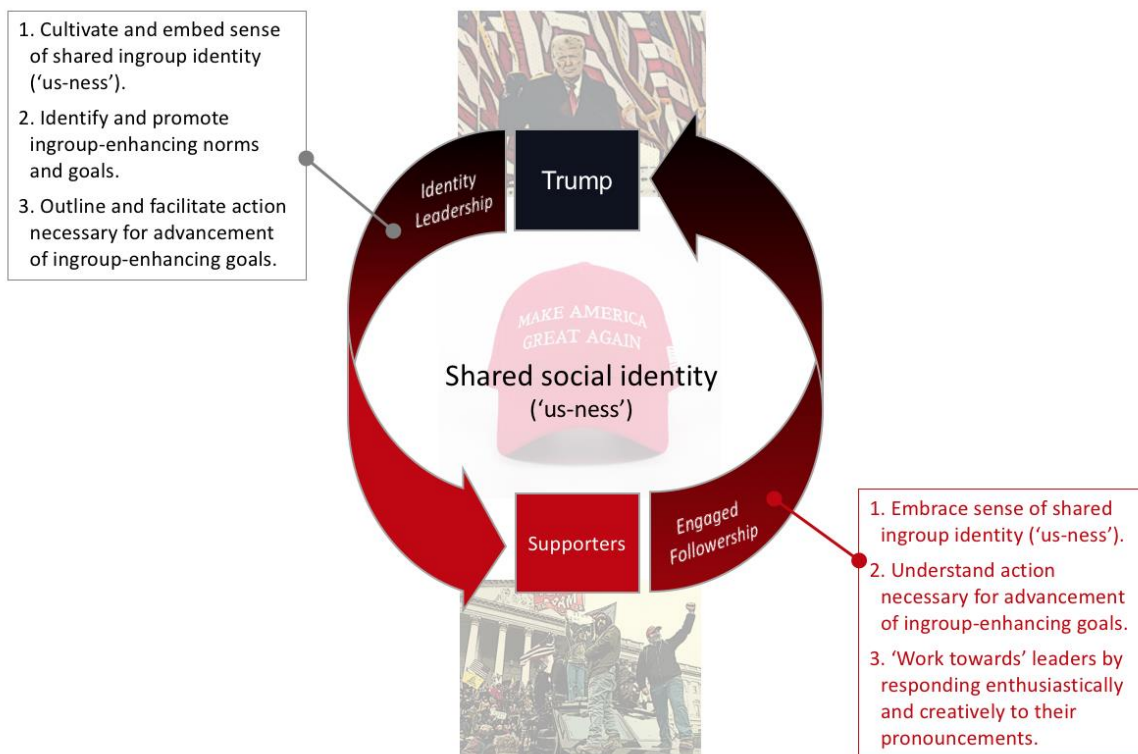


Figure 1. Schematic representation of the dual-agency model of identity leadership and engaged followership as it pertains to the Capitol Hill attack (adapted from Haslam et al., 2019, 2020)

This dynamic relationship between leaders and followers has the capacity to unleash powerful collective forces (Haslam et al., 2011; Van Bavel & Packer, 2020). And while these can be very destructive, this is not necessarily the case. One can, for example, observe the same dynamics in the leadership of Emmeline Pankhurst, Jacinda Ardern, and Martin Luther King Jr. (e.g., see Reicher et al., 2019). Moreover, followers themselves will rarely

understand their actions in destructive terms. Instead, they typically perceive both the guidance of their leader and the objectives they are pursuing as virtuous and are willing to undertake extreme actions because, for them, the ends justify the means. Indeed, precisely how destructive (vs. constructive) the actions arising from this relationship are understood to be will often be a topic of polarized debate between followers and proponents of different perspectives (Xiao et al., 2016). Nevertheless, in instances where followers' actions are widely condemned, it is precisely the fact that those actions are so creative (and clearly not just the result of 'following orders'), that provides leaders with plausible deniability.

In what follows, we first outline and illustrate the dual-agency model. We then reflect on its implications for explanations of (destructive) leadership and (destructive) collective action more generally. Finally, we map out a research agenda for investigating these processes more systematically.

Identity leadership: Creating and advancing 'us'

As set out in *The New Psychology of Leadership*, identity leadership refers to leaders' capacity to influence and mobilize others by virtue of their ability to represent, advance, create and embed a sense of social identity that they share (Haslam et al., 2020; Steffens et al., 2014). This analysis emerges from a large body of research in social psychology inspired by social identity and self-categorization theories (after Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). These two theories centre on the idea that humans have the capacity to — and indeed do frequently — define themselves not only as individuals (i.e., in terms of *personal identity* as 'me' and 'I', with unique traits, tastes and qualities) but also as members of social groups (i.e., in terms of *social identity* as 'we' and 'us'; e.g., 'us conservatives', 'us Trump supporters'). Critically, it argues not only that social identities are every bit as real and important to us as personal identities, but also that the psychological understandings of self that result from internalising social identity are qualitatively distinct from those which flow

from personal identity. This is primarily because they restructure social relations in ways that give rise to, and allow for the possibility of, collective behavior (Turner, 1982). In particular, when we perceive another person to share the same social identity as us (i.e., to be part of our psychological ingroup) we see them as part of our self rather than as ‘other’ and this is a basis not just for a sense of social connection to them but also for shared perception and coordinated social action (Haslam, 2001; Van Bavel & Packer, 2021).

As a specific form of group behavior, the relevance of social identity for the analysis of leadership centres around three key ideas. These relate to the argument that leaders answer three key questions for their followers: (a) who are “we” and what are we trying to achieve? (b) who and what stands in our way (and how are “they” stopping us)? (c) what are we going to do as a consequence? In order for their answers to gain traction, leaders must also explain why followers should listen to them — the principal answer being that those leaders are best placed to represent the group and its interests.

The first of these ideas relates to the fact that when (and to the extent that) people define themselves in terms of a given social identity they are motivated to see that ingroup (‘us’) as positively distinct from comparison outgroups (‘them’; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Just as Democrats want to see themselves as different from and better than Republicans, so Republicans want to see themselves as different from and better than Democrats (Greene, 2004). Moreover, both are motivated to act in ways, and will respond positively to leaders, who help to make this true (Fowler & Kam, 2007; Platow et al., 1997; Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001). At the same time, precisely what ‘better’ means always depends on the content of group identity (that is, the things that ‘we’ value) which in turn is a function of the comparative context in which leaders and followers find themselves — and part of the leader’s job is to clarify this too (even, and perhaps especially, when this might otherwise be hard to do; e.g., see Putra et al., 2021). Often this can be a matter of reverse engineering such

that the leader represents their achievements as realisations of the group's most treasured goals.

This can be clearly seen in Donald Trump's speech to the January 6th 'Stop the Steal' rally (Naylor, 2021; reproduced in the Supplementary Materials). As he had done repeatedly from before his 2016 election, Trump focussed on American exceptionalism (distinctiveness) and all that he had done to 'make America great again', while at the same time making salient the enemies (both internal and external) who had sought to thwart him (Bender, 2021; Gutsche, 2018; Leonnig & Rucker, 2021; Reicher & Haslam, 2017). What is more, the 'fact' that Trump represents 'America' and 'American interests' while his opponents are Anti-American is used to buttress the argument that his defeat in an American election cannot be legitimate and must have been a 'steal'. In contesting the election, Trump is therefore standing up for his country once again.

Along the lines of previous research, we can analyze Trump's speech to quantify his efforts to make a shared social identity salient and relevant. Indeed, alongside multiple effusive references to the ingroup (seen in 340 mentions of 'we', 'us' and 'our'), Trump made almost as many (in fact, 322) references to the various outgroups by which he and his supporters were threatened and against which they were fighting ('they' and 'them'— Democrats, 'weak' Republicans, the media — who were all understood to be unAmerican). In ways hypothesized by self-categorization theory, this would be expected both to heighten the salience and distinctiveness of the ingroup (Branscombe et al., 1999; Turner et al, 1994) and to make an extreme ingroup position — grounded in Republican values of strength and martial prowess and mobilized against those who were seen to be unAmerican — more attractive (Gaffney et al., 2014; Turner & Haslam, 2001).

The overall patterning of this discourse can be seen from the Leximancer analysis presented in Figure 2. Leximancer performs algorithm-based content analysis to transform

lexical co-occurrence information from natural language into semantic patterns. As such, it abstracts key themes from the text and identifies the relationships between them in ways that are easily replicated (Sotiriadou et al., 2014; Smith & Humphries, 2006). Details of the analysis are presented in the Supplementary Materials, but as can be seen from Figure 2, this identifies key themes of Trump's speech as centring on the contestation of the election result by a President valiantly serving his country but set against oppositional sources of fraud and corruption (notably Democrats and the media) who were standing in the way of election victory and undermining American democracy. Interestingly, these align closely with themes that Humphrey (2021) identifies in the full corpus of 20,301 Tweets that Trump had posted since his election to office in 2016¹. In the speech itself, this 'us-them' opposition was exemplified by statements of the following form:

Our fight against the big donors, big media, big tech, and others is just getting started. This is the greatest in history. There's never been a movement like that.

We must stop the steal and then we must ensure that such outrageous election fraud never happens again, can never be allowed to happen again. But we're going forward. We'll take care of going forward.

¹ Humphrey (2021) identifies five themes in Trump's Tweets that speak directly to the present analysis: 1. The true version of the United States is beset with invaders; 2. Real Americans can see this; 3. I (Trump) am uniquely qualified to stop this invasion; 4. The establishment and its agents are hindering me; 5. The U.S. is in mortal danger because of this.

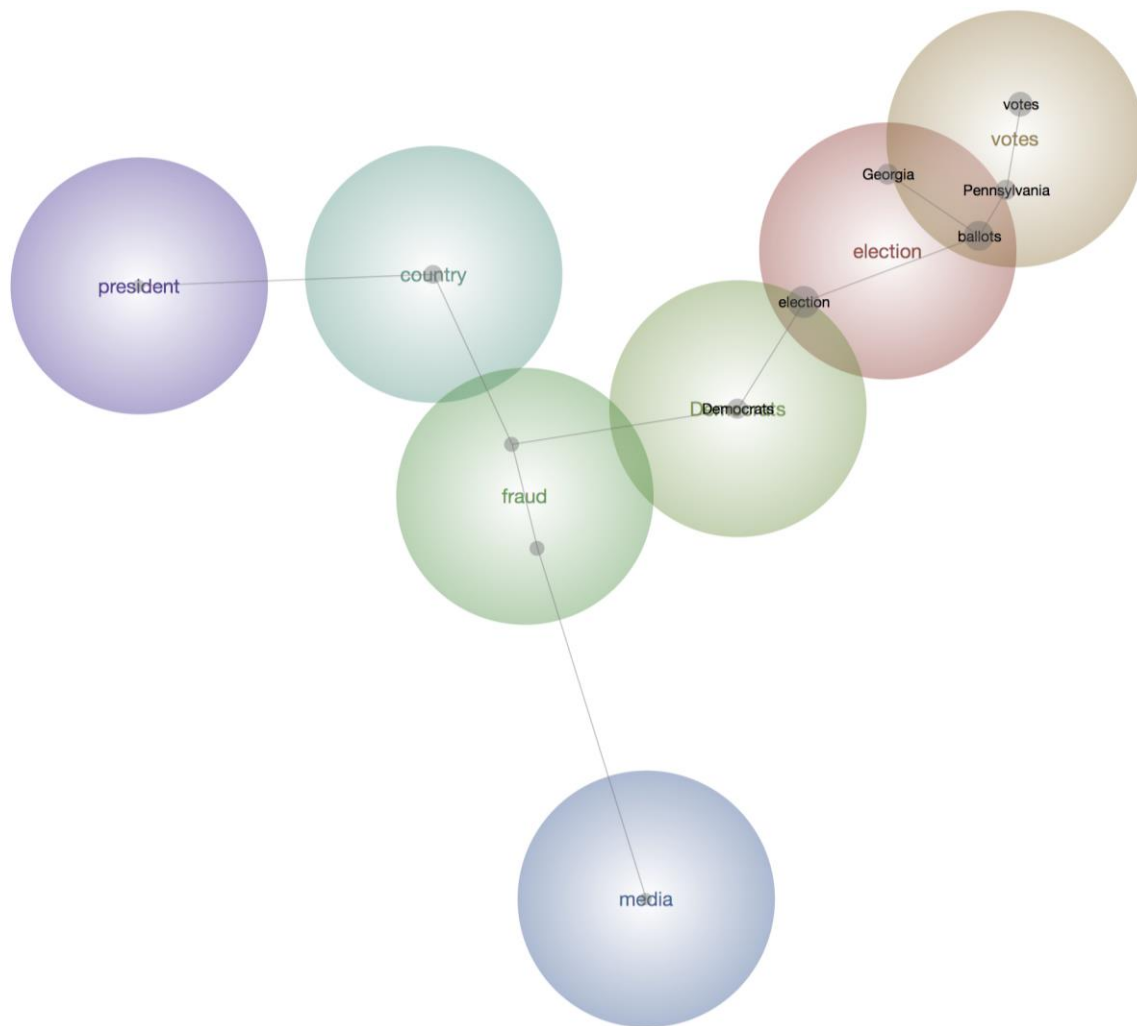


Figure 2. Leximancer analysis of President Trump's address to the 'Stop the Steal' rally prior to the attack on Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021.

The second idea that is relevant to leadership relates to the fact that the process of coming to define the self in terms of a particular social identity is bound up with social context (Oakes et al., 1994; Turner et al., 1994). In particular, a given social identity is more likely to be a basis for perception and action if it has been a basis for self-definition in the past (so that it is accessible) and if it allows people to make sense of themselves in the present situation they confront (so that it is fitting; McGarty, 1999). Again, then, leaders have a key role to play in defining this context in ways that ensure that particular social self-categorizations make sense for group members (Reicher et al., 2005).

In Trump's case, alongside positive references to his supporters that reminded them who they are and what they stand for (and what they do *not* stand for), this involved repeatedly reminding them that their ingroup identity was as American patriots defined by shared victimhood (in ways discussed by Reicher et al., 2008). Elsewhere, victimhood has been shown to be a particularly potent tool for mobilizing group members to engage in destructive collective action (Pärnamets et al., 2019) and the rhetoric of collective victimization has been found to resonate with Trump's supporters (Brady et al., 2019; being also the focus for a range of conspiracy theories; Sternisko et al., 2020). Critically, in the process, it created a cohesive ingroup category by invoking enemies that 'we' need to fight against:

All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they're doing. And stolen by the fake news media. That's what they've done and what they're doing. We will never give up, we will never concede.

Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore and that's what this is all about. And to use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with: We will stop the steal.

The third idea relates to the capacity for social identity to shape both perception and behavior by providing a basis for *social influence* (Turner, 1991). When people define themselves in terms of a given social identity they are motivated both to understand what that identity entails and to act accordingly. What does it mean to be a Republican, and as a Republican what policies should you support? And, more particularly, in a world where there are multiple answers to such questions, to whom should you look for answers? The obvious answer is other people with whom you share social identity (e.g., other Republicans; Wang et al., 2021).

But this alone is not enough, since clearly within groups there are multiple perspectives and positions (e.g., as put forward by representatives of different Republican

factions). So which of these should you listen to and which should you ignore? The answer suggested by self-categorization theory is those who are most representative of the social identity — or, in the language of categorization theory (after Rosch, 1978) those who are most *prototypical* of the group (i.e., those seen to be most representative of what defines ‘us’; Hogg, 2001; Turner & Haslam, 2001). Importantly, rather than being a reflection simply of similarity to other ingroup members, prototypicality reflects the essence of the group in ways that make the prototypical leaders extraordinary rather than ordinary (Haslam et al., 2011). It follows, then, that a person should be more capable of exerting influence over others (i.e., in a better position to *do leadership*) the more prototypical they are of a salient shared social identity. Indeed, this can be thought of as a key principle of identity leadership (Haslam & Reicher, 2016).

Consistent with this principle, meta-analyses confirm that leaders garner more support, wield more influence, and are seen as more charismatic the more prototypical they are of the group they lead (Barreto & Hogg, 2017; Steffens et al., 2021). At the same time, though, as well as being *of* the group, leaders also need to be seen as being *for* the group. In particular, they need to be seen to place the interests of the group above their own personal interests (Grace & Platow, 2015). If you are a Republican you need to be seen as a true believer in the Republican cause rather just a career politician ‘in it for yourself’.

Alongside a narrative that increases leaders’ prototypicality by casting them as enemies of the political establishment (i.e., career politicians) this is a rhetorical strategy that has become central to the rise of an ‘anti-politics’ that is the hallmark of populist and anti-democratic leaders, (Eatwell & Goodwin, 2018). And, again, it was very much in evidence in Trump’s Capitol Hill speech. Here Trump was at great pains to remind the crowd of all that he and his administration had achieved for them:

We created Space Force, We, we, we. Look at what we did. Our military has been totally rebuilt. So we create Space Force which, by and of itself, is a major achievement for an administration. And with us it's one of so many different things.

So we've taken care of things, we've done things like nobody's ever thought possible. And that's part of the reason that many people don't like us, because we've done too much.

But leaders do not just wait around until they happen to be prototypical of a particular group and are in a position to advance its cause. Instead, as the above excerpts from Trump's speech attest, they work actively and creatively both to create a sense of shared social identity amongst their followers and to ensure that this sense of identity is one that they are well placed to represent and promote. In this sense, leaders need to be *entrepreneurs of identity* (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) who make a case for their own leadership in social identity-based terms (Reicher et al., 2005). One particularly potent way in which they do this is through references to 'we' and 'us' that speak to, and help to create, a sense of shared identity between them and their audiences (Donnellon, 1996; Steffens & Haslam, 2003). This indeed was one of the most salient features of Trump's Capitol Hill address — where, as we noted above, in a speech of 10,940 words he used 340 collective pronouns (i.e., one every 32 words). By way of comparison, a study of the 34 Australian elections that have been held since Federation in 1901 found that winning candidates used these same collective pronouns once every 79 words whereas losing candidates used them once every 136 words (Steffens & Haslam, 2013). In his rhetoric, Trump was therefore leveraging identity leadership far more than historically successful politicians.

Ultimately, though, leaders' visions of shared identity are only compelling to the extent the vision is made real for followers. Accordingly, effective leaders shape not only their own performance but also that of would-be followers. This involves them acting as *identity impresarios* to create structures that bring group values to life and thereby translate

the idea of ‘us’ into material reality (Haslam et al., 2011). This process is exemplified by collective events and activities (e.g., meetings, conventions, demonstrations and festivals) in which people are encouraged to act out the leader's vision of group values and experience the power of social identity for themselves. Importantly too, part of this same impresarioship centres on the process of setting out of plans for group advancement and progress (Wegge & Haslam, 2003). These create a collective agenda for followers that they can subsequently pursue independently and in ways that appear fitting for the particular circumstances they confront.

As was true of the many other popular rallies that were one of the hallmarks of Trump’s candidacy and Presidency, the Capitol Hill rally was a supreme feat of identity impresarioship (Reicher & Haslam, 2017). As we observed of those earlier events:

A Trump rally is a dramatic enactment of a particular vision of America. Or rather, it enacts how Trump and his followers would like America to be. In a phrase, it is an *identity festival* that embodies a *politics of hope* (Reicher & Haslam, 2017, p.29)

The setting out of goals that he and his supporters might achieve together was also a key feature of Trump’s address to the ‘Save America’ rally:

So we're going to, we're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. I love Pennsylvania Avenue. And we're going to the Capitol, and we're going to try and give. The Democrats are hopeless — they never vote for anything. Not even one vote. But we're going to try and give our Republicans, the weak ones because the strong ones don't need any of our help. We're going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country. So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Above and beyond specific leader traits and styles (e.g., those associated with transformational leadership and authentic leadership), research suggests that the various elements of identity leadership that we have explored above make a significant contribution to a leaders’ ability to influence and mobilize groups across a wide range of social contexts. In particular, programmatic research in more than 20 countries has shown that, together, the

four components of identity leadership predict leaders' ability to secure the support of followers (van Dick et al., 2018) and to stimulate innovation and creativity in those followers (Bracht et al., 2021). Importantly too, the potency of these elements of identity leadership is not restricted to specific contexts (e.g., those where observers might judge leadership to be clearly 'bad' or else clearly 'good').

Nevertheless, researchers have argued that in order for identity leadership to be effective, it is important that leaders construe the goals towards which a group is working as both vital and virtuous. In precisely this vein, another central feature of Trump's address to those who went on to attack the Capitol was his insistence on the righteousness of their cause:

As this enormous crowd shows, we have truth and justice on our side. We have a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts. We love our country. We have overwhelming pride in this great country and we have it deep in our souls. Together, we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people and for the people.

But it is telling too that in bringing his speech to its conclusion, Trump reminded them not only of the good work they were doing to fight 'bad' actors and forces (to which he referred 16 times), but also of the challenges that this "dirty business" presented:

Together, we will drain the Washington swamp and we will clean up the corruption in our nation's capital. We have done a big job on it, but you think it's easy. It's a dirty business. It's a dirty business. You have a lot of bad people out there.

In common with other leaders who have steeled their followers for the hard realities of conflict (see Haslam et al., 2019), it is clear that Trump needed to prepare his supporters for the fact that the omelette they were going to make would require them to break some eggs.

Engaged followership: Working towards 'our' leader

Yet while Trump drummed up enthusiasm and whetted his supporters' appetite for action, he did not provide them with explicit instructions as to what to do. Instead he set them

a goal (to ensure that the election results were not certified and thereby to ‘stop the steal’) without specifying how that goal should be achieved. Equally, Trump invoked values of strength, determination and a willingness to fight for justice (using the word ‘fight’ 20 times) without indicating who they should fight or how (e.g., with words or with weapons). He didn’t tell anyone to storm the barricades, to invade the speaker’s office, or to assault police and security guards. There were therefore no specific instructions to be violent. In this way, it is apparent that the relationship between Trump and his followers was not akin to that between a puppet master and his puppets. Indeed, Woolf (2021) suggests that Trump appeared to be genuinely surprised when told of some of the specific actions of his followers. Thus, when his Chief of Staff, Mark Meadows talked to Trump about walking to the Capitol he at first failed to understand the suggestion, then exclaimed “I didn’t mean it literally” (2021, p. 228).

So what exactly was the nature of the translational process here? As set out above, the answer rests on an analysis of leadership which sees this not as individual-focused process which arises simply from the psychology and behavior of an individual leader, but rather as a *group process* which necessarily involves and engages followers (Haslam et al., 2011). Indeed, if leadership is understood as the process through which one or more members of a group influence and motivate other group members to contribute to the achievement of group goals (Rost, 2008), then it follows that *without followership there can be no leadership* (Bennis, 1999; Platow et al., 2015).

More particularly, social identity theorists have argued that effective leadership rests on a process of *engaged followership* in which followers work hard and creatively to rise to the challenges set out by a leader whose cause they identify with (Haslam et al., 2011; Reicher et al., 2012). Here, too, followers pursue a given agenda because it is consonant with a social identity that they share with their leader and hence informed by intrinsic motivation

in ways suggested by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; but note that the self that is the source of motivation in our analysis is social rather than personal; Ellemers et al., 2004; Kachanoff et al., 2020; Platow & Grace, 2020).

Critically, this means that leaders are often effective *precisely because they do not tell followers what to do*. Speaking to this point, it is significant that in Milgram's 'Obedience to Authority' research when the experimenter prods participants to continue by telling them "you have no other choice, you must continue" (Prod 4) none of them do (a point confirmed in replication studies and in analogue experiments that explore this issue more forensically; Berger et al., 2011; Haslam et al., 2014). We will return to this research later. For now, the key point to note is that, contrary to the idea that followers are moved by orders (the message that is customarily taken from Milgram's research), giving people orders is a peculiarly *ineffective* way of securing their compliance. Instead, people are most compliant when they are invited to *cooperate* in a joint enterprise that allows them to experience self-determination and to exercise agency. Thus Haslam et al. (2014) observed that of the four prods that Milgram used to urge participants on, the one that was most effective was the one that encouraged them to continue in the interests of science (i.e., Prod 2: "The Experiment requires that you continue"). Indeed, in his experimental notes, Milgram made very similar observations, noting that:

Cooperation implies a certain willingness to perform the action or help out, a certain internal desire to assist, while obedience implies an action that is totally in response to a command, with no motivational support from inner sources.... Even in this experiment we must disguise the character of obedience so that it appears to serve a productive end. Therefore we are not dealing with 'blind obedience'.... For every command is justified as serving some productive end. (Milgram, Box 46, Yale archive; cited in Haslam et al., 2015, pp.57-58)

As Figure 1 suggests, this process of engaged followership can be broken down into three core components. The first of these is the requirement for followers to embrace and

internalize the sense of social identity ('us-ness') that the leader is promoting. If they do not, they are likely to stand on the sidelines, if not withdraw altogether (Browning, 1992; Reicher & Haslam, 2006).

Amongst the Trump supporters who assembled on Capitol Hill it is clear, however, that few had any such qualms and that their sense of shared social identity was generally very high. Indeed, many of these supporters came to the rally with their social identity "pre-loaded", and ready to enact — not least because those who attended had self-selected to do so on the basis of high identification (Grayer et al., 2021). This was captured by journalists who mingled with supporters before and during the event and documented their widespread enthusiasm. Amongst other things it was reflected in the crowd's apparel (e.g., "Keep America Great" hats, "Trump 2020" badges), their banners (e.g., Trump campaign flags; Dunleavy, 2021; Quito & Shendruck, 2021) and rallying cries (e.g., "Stop the Steal", "God Bless America", "U.S.A., U.S.A.!", Barry et al., 2021; Mogelson, 2021). On social media too, the most frequently used terms in the user biographies of those who responded to hashtags related to the rally (e.g., "#stopthesteal") were "love" and "Trump" (Hitkul et al., 2021, p.10).

Most tellingly, though, it is clear that the audience did not merely listen to Trump's address but were active participants in it (Atkinson, 1984). At the most basic level, this meant that they responded enthusiastically ("Yeah!") when Trump posed various rhetorical questions (e.g., "Today, for the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our Constitution, and for the sake of our children, we lay out the case for the entire world to hear. You want to hear it?"; Naylor, 2021). At various other points they also interjected with apposite retorts and commentary (e.g., "Bullshit! Bullshit!" when Trump shared his thoughts about voter fraud in Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Georgia; "Send it back!" when Trump indicated that this was what Vice-President Pence needed to do with the bill to certify the election result).

Yet the strongest signals of the crowd's identification with Trump and his cause were the points at which they interrupted his speech to affirm their fealty. In this way, the speech was punctuated with spontaneous outpourings of support and love for the President, that led him on several occasions to pause and acknowledge the cries of "We love Trump!", "We love you!" and "Fight for Trump! Fight for Trump!" (Naylor, 2021). As Trump himself said later:

It was a loving crowd... There was a lot of love. I've heard that from everybody. Many, many people have told me that was a loving crowd. (Goerzen, 2021)

But as well as identifying with their leader, in order for their actions to have concerted force and direction, followers also need to have a shared understanding of the goals they are working towards. The second element of engaged followership thus centres on followers' efforts to spell out and clarify those goals. As we have already seen, Trump's own address to the crowd (and many of his previous pronouncements) gave his supporters a clear idea of the general ends they were working towards and why. Nevertheless, supporters needed to work out the practical implications of this and his earlier messages for themselves. There is considerable evidence that this is something they did through discussion and exchange of ideas on various social media platforms (notably Parler, Gab and 4chan; Frenzel, 2021; Heilwell & Ghaffary, 2021). They were already starting to do this in the lead up to the rally, but interest in the specifics of insurrection grew dramatically in the wake of Trump's speech. For example, the data analytics company Zignal Labs noted that social media posts mentioning unrest-related terms spiked at 3pm on the afternoon of January 6, just after Trump's speech had ended (Heilwell & Ghaffary, 2021).

As the following examples suggest, Hitkul et al.'s (2021) analysis of the content of posts on Parler and Twitter on the day of the insurrection also points to the fact that demonstrators were keen both to reaffirm their support for Trump's cause and to signal their intentions to others:

MAGA PATRIOTS please support Trump and storm the Capitol and Congress properly.!! We will install Truml [sic] as our Lord and savior, PRESIDENT FOR LIFE... because we won the election!! THIS TIME WE TAKE THE CAPITOL WITH GUNS bcs it is not fair we lost DESTROY AMERICA OR TRUMP STAYS PRESIDENT... its the most patriotic thing to do...#maga

I proudly stand with President Trump and I will fight to the death to ensure the sanctity of our Republic...

This goal-clarifying activity was also captured by journalists who infiltrated the crowd and accompanied them as they advanced on the Capitol. These are typified by following comments:

At the end of the day, you mark my word, we will plant our flag on the desk of Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. And Donald J. Trump if it boils down to it. (reported by Barry et al, 2021)

There's gonna be a war. I'm ready to fight. (reported by Mogelson, 2021)

Analysis of the themes of protestors' discourse (as captured by the journalists cited above) also suggests that these picked up on those in Trump's address but gave them more a specific focus. This can be seen in Figure 3 which presents the Leximancer analysis of comments made by 64 protestors reported in articles by Barry et al. (2021), Mogelson (2021) and Pennacchia (2021). Details of this analysis are again presented in the Supplementary Materials, but this reveals a focus on "war" and "battle" against the "corrupt" and in defence of "America", with "Nancy" as a concrete focus for the conflict with Democrats.

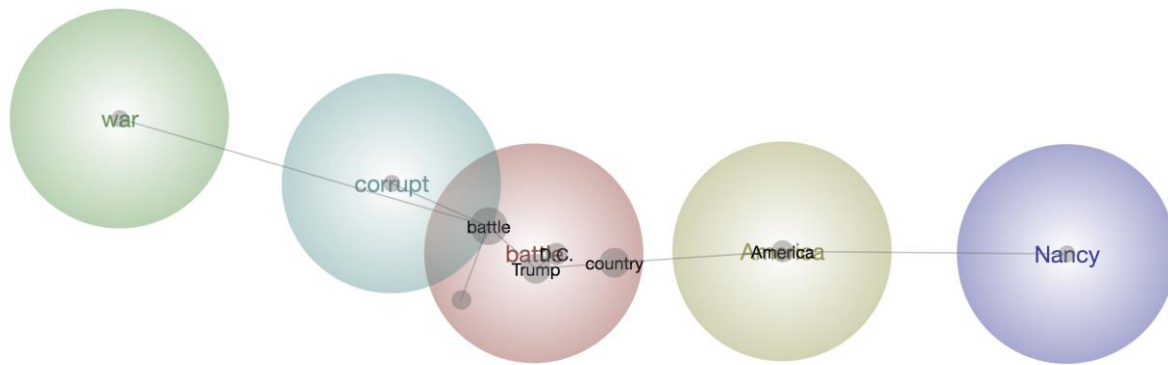


Figure 3. Leximancer analysis of Trump supporters' comments in the wake of the attack on the U.S. Capitol

Note: Analysis based on protestors' comments sourced from Barry et al. (2021), Mogelson (2021), and Pennacchia (2021).

What, though, were followers *actually to do*, in pursuit of these plans? This is a point on which leaders themselves are often relatively mute. In particular, in discussing the dynamics of the Nazi regime, the British historian Ian Kershaw makes the point that when it came to telling supporters how to enact his vision for the Third Reich, Hitler was reluctant to issue directives that had any level of detail. He quotes one of Hitler's adjutants recalling that:

[The Führer] spent most afternoons taking a walk, in the evening straight after dinner, there were films.... He disliked the study of documents. I have sometimes secured decisions from him, even ones about important matters, without his ever asking to see the relevant documents. He took the view that many things sorted themselves out on their own if one did not interfere. (Kershaw, 1993, p.105).

Kershaw observes, however, that it was this very lack of explicit directives that gave the Nazi project its dynamism (see also Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Rees, 1993). Speaking to this point, he cites the observations of a rank-and-file Nazi functionary that:

Everyone who has the opportunity to observe it knows that the Führer can hardly dictate from above everything which he intends to realise sooner or later. On the contrary, up till now everyone with a post in the new Germany has worked best when he has, so to speak, worked towards the Führer. Very often and in many spheres it has been the case — in previous years as well — that individuals have simply waited for orders and instructions. Unfortunately, the same will be true in the future; but in fact it is the duty of everybody to

try to work towards the Führer along the lines he would wish. Anyone who makes mistakes will notice it soon enough. But anyone who really works towards the Führer along his lines and towards his goal will certainly both now and in the future one day have the finest reward. (Kershaw, 1993, p.116, emphasis added).

The third feature of engaged followership is thus that rather than being told what to do, followers take it upon themselves to “*work towards*” the vision of their leader. This is a stimulus for creativity and innovation in the face of the novel challenges that they necessarily confront. Critically, though, the forms of creativity and innovation that followers display are informed by the *normative content* of the social identity by which they are motivated and the associated goals to which they are working (Haslam et al., 2012).

History provides manifold case studies of these processes at work. One of the most telling concerns a man often held up as the textbook example of the bureaucratic killer (one who thoughtlessly but efficiently carries out orders, no matter how toxic): Adolf Eichmann. Yet against the idea that Eichmann was merely a compliant functionary, recent biographies show how he gained advancement by pursuing Hitler’s broad goals of deporting and murdering Jews with ingenuity, creativity and zeal (Cesarani, 2004; Stangneth, 2014). Moreover, what is true of Eichmann is true more generally of Hitler’s bureaucrats. As Lozowick memorably puts it:

Eichmann and his ilk did not come to murder Jews by accident or in a fit of absent-mindedness, nor by blindly obeying orders or by being small cogs in a big machine. They worked hard, thought hard, took the lead over many years. They were the alpinists of evil. (2002, p.279; cited in Haslam et al., 2009, p.617).

Creativity and innovation are equally apparent when it comes to lesser (but still serious) acts of toxic followership. For example, they can be seen in the resourcefulness of Volkswagen engineers when developing a device to circumvent environmental regulations by lowering diesel emissions during laboratory testing (Ewing, 2015), in the ingenuity of News Corp journalists when discovering ways to obtain information about unsuspecting people on

whom they wanted to discover ‘dirt’ (Davies, 2014), and in the various schemes devised by Enron accountants to manipulate financial reporting practices in ways that concealed liability and debt (McLean & Elkind, 2003; Swartz & Watkins, 2003).

Turning to another (in)famous example of toxicity in the psychological research literature, the Stanford Prison Experiment, it is apparent that here the cruelty that the guards meted out to prisoners was a reflection of their creative interpretation and implementation of briefings given by Zimbardo and his Experimenters (Bartels, 2019). Thus rather than tell the Guards to brutalize the prisoners, Zimbardo informed them that “We’re going to take away their individuality in various ways. In general what all this leads to is a sense of powerlessness” (1992, cited in Bartels, 2019, p.781). And for their part, in order to act upon this information, the guards needed to read creatively between the lines. As one of their victims observed, “If I had been a guard, I don’t think it would have been such a masterpiece. If I had been a guard I don’t think I would have had such imagination” (Zimbardo, 1992; cited in Haslam et al., 2007, p.619).

Likewise, when they arrived at the Capitol, Trump’s supporters were minded to do much more than simply paint by numbers. Nevertheless, as they mounted their assault on the building and its occupants their actions were informed by a clear sense of shared identity and of the norms and goals associated with that identity. Far from being indiscriminate, their violence therefore sought out targets that had clear meanings in relation to those identities (in ways discussed by Reicher, 1984). Principal amongst these were the Democratic Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi and Vice-President Pence — the latter having been identified as by Trump as a key obstacle to his progress who needed to be persuaded to “do the right thing” and “come through for us”. Thus after working with his fellow insurrectionists to break down the door of the Senate chamber and finding the leather chair reserved for the Vice-President, one triumphant Trump supporter declared:

I'm gonna take a seat in this chair, because Mike Pence is a fucking traitor. I'm not one to usually take pictures of myself, but in this case I think I'll make an exception (cited in Mogelson, 2021).

In all of this too, Trump's supporters invoked his assumed wishes as justification for their actions (with Trump himself saying later that he was sympathetic to their calls to "Hang Mike Pence"; Reuters, 2021). This was seen, for example, when, after clarifying that Ted Cruz was an ally of Trump's, one of the number who had invaded the Senate chamber observed "Cruz would *want* us to do this, so I think we're good" (Mogelson, 2021). Likewise, another announced "Our President wants us here" (Barry et al., 2020).

Aligned with the understanding that Trump had promulgated, at the heart of these actions there was also a clear understanding that — notwithstanding the destructiveness and violence of the insurrectionists — the cause they were advancing was, for them, profoundly virtuous and noble. Indeed, this sense of virtue appears to have been consolidated by the fact that as well as being justified by the necessity of fighting for Trump in order to defend a threatened ingroup, destructiveness and violence were understood to be selective and focused rather than meaningless and random (Reicher, 1987). At multiple points this meant that protestors engaged in collective self-policing to channel their energies in what they saw as appropriate ways (Stott et al., 2007). Thus after breaking into the Capitol several of the throng reminded their fellow insurgents to make sure their actions were suitably targeted — reminding each other "Don't trash the place. No disrespect" (Mogelson, 2021).

This crusader-like sense of self-righteousness is perhaps seen most clearly in the reflections of Patrick Rodriguez, one of the insurrectionists who was subsequently identified and brought in for interrogation by the FBI. In the course of this, he offered up the following commentary in defence of his actions:

I thought that we were going to save this — I thought we were going to do something. I thought that it was not going to end — happen like that. I thought that Trump was going

to stay President and they were going to find all this crooked stuff and were going to — I mean, we found out that — we thought that we did something good. We were getting Nancy ... [We thought] we could just bust everything and find the truth and it'll be all exposed and we'll see that she's corrupt or some kind of evidence. And we thought we were being a — we were part of a bigger thing. We thought we were being used as a part of a plan to save the country, to save America, save The Constitution, and the election, the integrity. (cited in Pennachia, 2021)

For Trump supporters, then, far from being a day of shame and infamy, this was a day of vindication, empowerment and glory. The reason for this was that they had been able to play a meaningful role in translating their leader's stirring vision into material reality — as part of what one described as “the most awe-inspiring and inspirational and incredible thing I have seen in my entire life” (Mogelson, 2021). As another succinctly put it, “We are here. See us! Notice us! Pay attention!” (Barry et al., 2021).

Implications and the importance of identity content

Thus far our analysis has suggested that the events of January 6 (and others like them) represent the outcomes of generic processes of effective identity leadership and the engaged followership it engenders. On this basis one might conclude that identity leadership (and perhaps social identity more generally) is a dangerous force that needs to be suppressed or at least diffused. Yet, as we have already noted, the problem with this inference is that in many other contexts identity leadership — and the social identity that it marshals — is essential for emancipation and progress. In particular, there is abundant evidence that it is central to the development of resistance movements that emerge to challenge tyranny and oppression (Langbein, 1994; Mandela, 1994; see Haslam & Reicher, 2012). And more generally, there is considerable evidence that it is a driver of individual, group and organizational success — for example, in fields of business, enterprise, health and sport (Lee et al., 2021; Steffens et al., 2014; Stevens et al., 2021; van Dick et al., 2019).

The general point here is that, because it mobilizes social identity, identity leadership is a source of social *power* (Turner, 2005; van Bavel & Packer, 2021). It is how that power is crafted and then wielded upon which matters of virtue hinge. The first point to note here is that whenever identity leadership is a basis for a group to achieve power — and a sense of recognition through that power — it is likely to be celebrated by members of that group as evidence of good leadership. Indeed, as we have observed, a key reason for this is that even when their objectives are cruel and vicious, leaders go — and need to go — to considerable lengths to convince would-be followers and backers that this is not the case (Haslam et al., 2019). There was thus a direct connection between Trump’s assertion that “we have truth and justice on our side” and insurrectionist Rodriguez’s conviction that “I thought I was a good guy” (Pennacchia, 2021).

There is a danger, though, if necessary psychological relativism bleeds into social and political relativism (Oakes et al., 1994). To say that all people understand the causes for which they fight to be good, does not mean that they actually are. So what distinguishes ‘good’ identity leadership from ‘bad’ identity leadership? Before attempting to answer this, it is worth noting that the more general form of this question (what makes leadership good or bad?) has stood as a perennial problem for leadership scholars (e.g., Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown et al., 2006; House & Howell, 1992). In large part this reflects the fact that within the leadership literature there is a general tendency to assume that effective leadership is good leadership (Alvesson et al., 2016). However, Cuella (2003) points to “the Hitler problem” as evidence that this is not the case. That is, it is possible to argue that Hitler was effective, but to the extent that he was, this led only to tyranny and terror.

From a social identity perspective, then, the problem with Hitler was not that he engaged in identity leadership in ways that secured engaged followership. Rather, it was that the *content* of the social identity that he mobilized was one that fuelled hatred, oppression

and ultimately genocide. In particular, the vision of German ‘Volk’ that he and his followers subscribed to was one that progressively (a) constructed a tightly defined ingroup, (b) identified selected outgroups as external to that ingroup, (c) represented those outgroups as a threat to ingroup identity, (d) championed the ingroup as uniquely good, and (e) celebrated the eradication of the outgroup as necessary for defence of the ingroup (Reicher et al., 2008). As a result, Hitler’s Nazis came to see violence as the supreme expression of ingroup virtue (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; Fiske & Rai, 2014; Koonz, 2003).

It was a functionally identical model of ingroup identity, we suggest, that underpinned the violence that unfolded on Capitol Hill. Indeed, all five of the above elements can be identified in the statements by Trump and his supporters that we have already quoted (see also Humphrey, 2021). Moreover, the peak expression of this identity can be observed in statements of the following form made by those who were living the identity out within and around the occupied Capitol building (cited by Mogelson, 2020):

We’re gonna take this country back — believe that shit. Fuck Black Lives Matter. What y’all need to do is take your sorry asses to the ghetto.

It’s time for us to start saying another word again. A very important word that describes the situation we’re in. That word is ‘parasite.’ What is happening in this country is parasitism. It is the American people, and our leader, Donald Trump, against *everybody else* in this country and this world.

So, yes, it was identity leadership that brought these followers to this point. But it was not any old identity leadership. Rather it was a peculiarly pernicious brand, borne of a Manichean vision of who we are, of who we want to be, and of who stops us from achieving that.

Avoiding confirmation bias: Counterfactual and deviant case analysis

As we stressed at the outset, our aim in this paper has been to lay out a model of leader–follower relations which accords agency to both parties and which shows how leaders

achieve influence less by constraining followers through the provision of specific instructions than by enabling their creativity through the setting out of general goals. We have used a range of illustrations, most notably the relationship between Donald Trump and the self-styled ‘patriots’ who stormed the Capitol. We would stress that these examples were intended not as ‘proof’ of our model but rather as a means of clarifying otherwise abstract concepts. Nonetheless, there is a real danger that such an approach can lead to confirmation bias (McSweeney, 2021). Consequently it is critical to ‘stress test’ our approach by considering the conditions where we would and wouldn’t expect it to work and to consider its applicability beyond the specific case of Donald Trump (Gerring & McFermoot, 2007; Gibbert et al., 2014). In other words we need to consider some counterfactuals and deviant cases.

Conceptually, our account suggests that the ability of leaders to inspire engaged followership depends upon two key factors. The first is that leaders and followers must share a salient social identity such that followers see leaders as ‘one of us’. Where they don’t, the leader (however adored by the ingroup) will have little appeal and is more prone to be actively repudiated. This is encapsulated in Milgram and Toch’s (1969) famous observation that riot police are unlikely to be swept away by a crowd demagogue. It is equally encapsulated in the fact that Democrats are bemused by the appeal of Trump and assume that his followers must be either bad or stupid people (Plutzer & Berkman, 2021).

More systematic evidence on the relationship between identity leadership, identification with the leader and leader influence comes from some more unlikely sources that we have already alluded to — notably the willingness (a) of teachers to administer shocks to a learner in Milgram’s (1963, 1974) ‘Obedience to Authority’ studies, and (b) of guards to brutalize prisoners in the Stanford Prison Experiment (Haney et al., 1973). In both these paradigms, the experimenters had to do a considerable amount of work to make the

goals of the research appear virtuous and noble so that participants would identify with them. In Milgram's case this work centred on the effort he put into ensuring that the experimental set-up (and, in particular, the shock machine) looked appropriately scientific (Russell, 2011), and into devising an experimental cover story that stressed the role the studies would play in advancing scientific understanding of the learning process (Gibson, 2013; Haslam & Reicher, 2017; Russell, 2014). Similarly, Zimbardo's experimenters recognised that guards needed a reason to be cruel to prisoners. Thus when a guard proved unwilling to be sufficiently "tough", Zimbardo's Warden urged him on by saying:

If you need an excuse, and I think most of us do really, it is so we can learn what happens in a total institution . . . And we want to know about them. So that we can, we can get on the media and, um, and, and into press with it. And, and, and say "Now look at what, what this really about". (cited in Haslam et al., 2019, p.817).

Importantly, this identity entrepreneurship underpinned participants' willingness to engage in destructive behaviour in both of these contexts. Thus in the Milgram paradigm, participants prove much more willing to follow destructive instructions when they identify with the source of those instructions (the scientists and the community they represent; Haslam, et al., 2014; Reicher et al. 2012). But as a corollary, participants are much more reluctant to continue if the context or instructions undermine their identification with the experimenter or the science (e.g., because the experimenters argue, or the study is conducted in a commercial office rather than a university laboratory; Blass, 2004; Reicher et al., 2012). Likewise, in the SPE Guards who were unconvinced by the experimenters' claims about the study's scientific merits were wont to disengage (Haslam et al., 2019; Le Texier, 2019). The key point, here, then, is that before followers are willing to do harm, they first need to be persuaded by leaders that this is a *good* thing to do. And the more egregious the harm, the more important it is for leaders to justify it.

The second factor which is critical to the success of identity leadership is grounded not in the ingroup relationship between the leader and followers but in the relationship of consonance or dissonance between what the leader proposes and the content of group identity. On the one hand, we have done much work examining the way leaders seek to construe themselves and their proposals as exemplifying and realising what the group is all about (e.g., see Haslam et al., 2011). Out of many examples, one of the most powerful is Franklin Roosevelt's famous 'whistle-stop tour' during the 1932 Presidential election campaign. Roosevelt's advisors counselled against this on the grounds that this would expose his disability (he was thought to have polio and could only move slowly and painfully in leg braces). In the event, though, Roosevelt was able to use the performance of overcoming his disability on the tour as a metonym for his ability to overcome American economic paralysis during the depression — a theme reflected in the well-known lines from his 1933 inaugural address following a landslide victory in which he secured over 57% of the vote: "the only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance" (cited in DiNunzio, 2014, p. 82).

As well as a wealth of evidence that points to other leaders gaining influence by assimilating proposals to identities, there is also some evidence of Trump failing to mobilize his audience with proposals that are at odds with the identity they share. Most memorably, this was seen at a rally in Alabama in August 2020 when he recommended that his supporters get vaccinated (having previously railed against various COVID measures as an affront to American freedoms and 2nd amendment rights; Hornsey et al., 2020):

I value your freedoms, I really do. You gotta do what you have to do. [*Crowd cheers*]

But I recommend take the vaccines. I did it — it's good. Take the vaccines.

[*Some people in the crowd boo*]

No, that's OK. That's alright. You got your freedoms. But I happen to take the vaccine. If it doesn't work you'll be the first to know.

[Booing intensifies]. (Smith, 2021).

Unsurprisingly, this was the last time that a Trump rally featured an attempt by the President to deliver a pro-vaccination message to his supporters (Spencer, 2021).

To round this discussion out, we can also turn our attention from the conditions of success and failure in identity leadership to consider the agency and creativity of engaged followers more generally. We have already given a number of accounts of such creativity which suggest that those who assaulted the Capitol were far from unique. But these were general examples rather than specific incidents, they related to people acting alone rather than together, and they were limited to toxic behaviours. So let us conclude this section with a somewhat more detailed description of the constructive agency of crowd members as framed by an identity leader. It relates to a November 1985 Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration in London attended by the second author. Due to an upsurge of struggle in South Africa, the demonstration was far bigger than expected and only just fitted into Trafalgar Square where it concluded with speeches. Many protestors were jammed up against the South African embassy, defended by the police. Conflict began to break out, stones were thrown.

At that point the civil rights leader Jesse Jackson was talking. He paused from his script and pointed towards the embassy. He denounced the conflict and argued that it was in the interests of the apartheid regime since any violence would dominate the headlines and distract from the message of the demonstration. He then urged demonstrators to stop fighting, to link hands and to chant the key demand of the Movement: 'Free Nelson Mandela'. Demonstrators complied. The conflict subsided. The chant was taken up throughout the crowd. Moreover, when Jackson then tried to continue with his speech, he was drowned out by the crowd and forced to join them in calling 'Free Nelson Mandela'.

On the one hand, then, Jackson influenced the crowd by drawing on his understanding of group identity — both marginalising conflict for silencing the group voice and uniting

crowd members around an articulation of the key group demands. But on the other hand, though they took up the chants on Jackson's suggestion, demonstrators did not simply act as directed. They embraced the chanting as their own. They used it to silence Jackson and to force him to join in with them. So both leader and followers exercised agency — followers influenced leaders as much as vice-versa.

Limitations and an agenda for future research

The events that unfolded on Capitol Hill are consistent with a large and growing body of research which speaks to the power of identity leadership and engaged followership to energize groups and turn them into the engines of history (Reicher & Haslam, 2013). However, while each of the elements of this analysis have been subjected to rigorous empirical test elsewhere (including experimental research), it remains the case that we are not in a position to point definitively to the causal importance of these processes in the events we have described (Antonakis et al., 2010). Yet while qualitative research cannot do this (and typically does not aim to; Bryman & Burgess, 1994), it provides rich insight into the way that leadership and followership *actually work*.

The potential for a rich interactive analysis in which the actions of each party frame the understandings and actions of the other is pointed to by the various illustrations we have discussed most notably those related to the events of 6th January. Yet, rich as they are, these illustrations are based on post-hoc analysis drawing principally on second-hand sources. The power of the analysis would clearly be greater if they were based on contemporaneous studies and more systematic data sources. In particular, there would be value in a more fine-grained analysis of the way that followers respond to leaders' speeches and of the ways in which they invoke the leader in devising and accounting for their own actions. Ideally too,

the present analysis would be replicated in other contexts where the arguments presented above can be treated as pre-registered hypotheses to be tested and, where necessary, refined.

In line with this objective, there would also be value in abstracting some of the key points that we have set out above and subjecting them to more focused experimental investigation. Along these lines, Bartels (2018) showed that it was possible to confirm the importance of the role that Zimbardo's briefing of his guards played in the violence they subsequently visited upon prisoners by exposing participants to different versions of the briefing and asking them how oppressively they thought they were meant to behave (see also Carnahan & McFarland, 2007). As expected, when participants were exposed to the briefing that Zimbardo gave his guards, they were far more likely to think that they were meant to be hostile than was the case when they were given a briefing that only presented basic information about the study. On this basis the researchers concluded that Zimbardo played a key role in sanctioning the abuse that was seen in the SPE. Clearly it would be possible to conduct conceptually similar studies to isolate the impact that Trump's identity leadership had in motivating his supporters to behave as they did in Washington D.C in the wake of his election loss. At a more granular level, it would also be instructive to examine the particular role played by different aspects of leaders' definition of ingroup identity (e.g., the five components identified by Reicher et al., 2008).

A number of studies of this form are currently underway as part of a global effort to better understand the mechanics of identity leadership and the ways in which it can be directed, misdirected and derailed (e.g., Bracht et al., 2021; Maskor et al., 2020). Part of this work will also need to examine the attributions that we make to leaders and groups, and those that leaders themselves make, in the face of different collective outcomes (cf., Meindl et al., 1985). In particular, when are we inclined to hold leaders accountable for the crimes their groups commit and when do we let them off the hook (noting that in this case, as in many

others, there was a reluctance to bring leaders to trial — this in part being a reflection of the limitations of the legal system; Petterson, 2021)? When and why do we believe their claims (e.g., those made by Murdoch, Zimbardo and Trump) that they are “shocked and appalled” by their group’s misdeeds and their protestations that they had no part in them? (Brown, 2011; Reicher, 2021). If plausible deniability is the price we pay for keeping the ‘romance of leadership’ alive, at what point does that price become too high (Fisk, 2021)?

Concluding comment

The function of Hitler's charismatic Führer position could be said to have been threefold: that of unifier, of activator, and of enabler in the Third Reich (Kershaw, 1993, p. 113)

In his address to his assembled supporters before they mounted their assault on the Capitol, President Trump assured them that “I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down, we're going to walk down”. As Mogelson (2021) notes, in the event, Trump did not actually accompany protestors as they progressed down Pennsylvania Avenue, (and, according to Wolff, 202, probably never intended to). Nevertheless, *psychologically*, he *was* with them by virtue of the specific sense of shared social identity that he had cultivated and that they had internalized.

Moreover, the crimes that some of those supporters went on to commit were not just committed in Trump’s name, but as part of the enactment of that same social identity. In this, they represented the creative ‘working through’ of a collective project inspired by the President’s very effective identity entrepreneurship and identity impresarioship. Without these it is inconceivable that the attack on the Capitol would have had the ferocity that it did or indeed that it would have taken place at all.

At the same time, though, it is important to recognize that Trump was no puppet master and that his followers were far more than puppets. Instead, in the sense implied by Kershaw (1993), Trump was the unifier, activator, and enabler of his followers during the

dark events of January 6, 2021. As such, rather than eclipsing or sublimating their agency, he framed and unleashed it.

To account for this dynamic, it is apparent that we need a theoretical account of destructive collective action which centres on the fact that leadership is a co-production between leaders and followers which recognises and respects the agency of both. Not least, this is because it is as a willing party to this identity based co-production that Donald Trump's denial of responsibility for the storming of the Capitol is ultimately *implausible*.

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Supplementary Materials

- 1. Trump's Capitol Hill Speech** (from Naylor, 2021)
- 2. Statements from Trump's supporters** (from Barry et al., 2021; Mogelson, 2021; Pennacchia, 2021)
- 3. Details of Leximancer analysis**

1. Trump's Capitol Hill Speech (from Naylor, 2021)

Well, thank you very much. This is incredible.

Media will not show the magnitude of this crowd. Even I, when I turned on today, I looked, and I saw thousands of people here. But you don't see hundreds of thousands of people behind you because they don't want to show that.

We have hundreds of thousands of people here and I just want them to be recognized by the fake news media. Turn your cameras please and show what's really happening out here because these people are not going to take it any longer. They're not going to take it any longer. Go ahead. Turn your cameras, please. Would you show? They came from all over the world, actually, but they came from all over our country.

I just really want to see what they do. I just want to see how they covered. I've never seen anything like it. But it would be really great if we could be covered fairly by the media. The media is the biggest problem we have as far as I'm concerned, single biggest problem. The fake news and the Big tech.

Big tech is now coming into their own. We beat them four years ago. We surprised them. We took them by surprise and this year they rigged an election. They rigged it like they've never rigged an election before. And by the way, last night they didn't do a bad job either if you notice.

I'm honest. And I just, again, I want to thank you. It's just a great honor to have this kind of crowd and to be before you and hundreds of thousands of American patriots who are committed to the honesty of our elections and the integrity of our glorious republic.

All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they're doing. And stolen by the fake news media. That's what they've done and what they're doing. We will never give up, we will never concede. It doesn't happen. You don't concede when there's theft involved.

Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore and that's what this is all about. And to use a favorite term that all of you people really came up with: We will stop the steal. Today I will lay out just some of the evidence proving that we won this election and we won it by a landslide. This was not a close election.

You know, I say, sometimes jokingly, but there's no joke about it: I've been in two elections. I won them both and the second one, I won much bigger than the first. OK. Almost 75 million people voted for our campaign, the most of any incumbent president by far in the history of our country, 12 million more people than four years ago.

And I was told by the real pollsters — we do have real pollsters — they know that we were going to do well and we were going to win. What I was told, if I went from 63 million, which we had four years ago, to 66 million, there was no chance of losing. Well, we didn't go to 66, we went to 75 million, and they say we lost. We didn't lose.

And by the way, does anybody believe that Joe had 80 million votes? Does anybody believe that? He had 80 million computer votes. It's a disgrace. There's never been anything like that.

You could take third-world countries. Just take a look. Take third-world countries. Their elections are more honest than what we've been going through in this country. It's a disgrace. It's a disgrace.

Even when you look at last night. They're all running around like chickens with their heads cut off with boxes. Nobody knows what the hell is going on. There's never been anything like this.

We will not let them silence your voices. We're not going to let it happen, I'm not going to let it happen.

(Audience chants: "Fight for Trump.")

Thank you.

And I'd love to have if those tens of thousands of people would be allowed. The military, the secret service. And we want to thank you and the police law enforcement. Great. You're doing a great job. But I'd love it if they could be allowed to come up here with us. Is that possible? Can you just let him come up, please?

And Rudy, you did a great job. He's got guts. You know what? He's got guts, unlike a lot of people in the Republican Party. He's got guts. He fights, he fights.

And I'll tell you. Thank you very much, John. Fantastic job. I watched. That's a tough act to follow, those two. John is one of the most brilliant lawyers in the country, and he looked at this and he said, "What an absolute disgrace that this can be happening to our Constitution."

And he looked at Mike Pence, and I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so.

Because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election. All he has to do, all this is, this is from the number one, or certainly one of the top, Constitutional lawyers in our country. He has the absolute right to do it. We're supposed to protect our country, support our country, support our Constitution, and protect our constitution.

States want to revote. The states got defrauded. They were given false information. They voted on it. Now they want to recertify. They want it back. All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify and we become president and you are the happiest people.

And I actually, I just spoke to Mike. I said: "Mike, that doesn't take courage. What takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage." And then we're stuck with a president who lost the election by a lot and we have to live with that for four more years. We're just not going to let that happen.

Many of you have traveled from all across the nation to be here, and I want to thank you for the extraordinary love. That's what it is. There's never been a movement like this, ever, ever. For the extraordinary love for this amazing country, and this amazing movement, thank you.

(Audience chants: "We love Trump.")

By the way, this goes all the way back past the Washington Monument. You believe this? Look at this. That is. Unfortunately gave, they gave the press the prime seats. I can't stand that.

No. But you look at that behind. I wish they'd flip those cameras and look behind you. That is the most amazing sight. When they make a mistake, you get to see it on television. Amazing. Amazing. All the way back.

And don't worry, we will not take the name off the Washington Monument. We will not cancel culture.

You know they wanted to get rid of the Jefferson Memorial. Either take it down or just put somebody else in there. I don't think that's going to happen. It damn well better not. Although, with this administration, if this happens, it could happen. You'll see some really bad things happen.

They'll knock out Lincoln too, by the way. They've been taking his statue down. But then we signed a little law. You hurt our monuments, you hurt our heroes, you go to jail for 10 years, and everything stopped. You notice that? It stopped. It all stopped.

And they could use Rudy back in New York City. Rudy. They could use you. Your city's going to hell. They want Rudy Giuliani back in New York. We'll get a little younger version of Rudy. Is that OK, Rudy?

We're gathered together in the heart of our nation's capital for one very, very basic and simple reason: To save our democracy.

You know most candidates on election evening and, of course, this thing goes on so long. They still don't have any idea what the votes are. We still have congressional seats under review. They have no idea. They've totally lost control. They've used the pandemic as a way of defrauding the people in a proper election.

But you know, you know, when you see this and when you see what's happening. Number one, they all say, "Sir, we'll never let it happen again." I said, "That's good. But what about eight weeks ago?" You know they try and get you to go.

They said, "Sir, in four years, you're guaranteed." I said: "I'm not interested right now. Do me a favor, go back eight weeks. I want to go back eight weeks. Let's go back eight weeks."

We want to go back and we want to get this right because we're going to have somebody in there that should not be in there and our country will be destroyed and we're not going to stand for that.

For years, Democrats have gotten away with election fraud and weak Republicans. And that's what they are. There's so many weak Republicans. And we have great ones. Jim Jordan and some of these guys, they're out there fighting. The House guys are fighting. But it's, it's incredible.

Many of the Republicans, I helped them get in, I helped them get elected. I helped Mitch get elected. I helped. I could name 24 of them, let's say, I won't bore you with it. And then all of a sudden you have something like this. It's like, "Oh gee, maybe I'll talk to the president sometime later." No, it's amazing.

They're weak Republicans, they're pathetic Republicans and that's what happens.

If this happened to the Democrats, there'd be hell all over the country going on. There'd be hell all over the country. But just remember this: You're stronger, you're smarter, you've got more going than anybody. And they try and demean everybody having to do with us. And you're the real people, you're the people that built this nation. You're not the people that tore down our nation.

The weak Republicans, and that's it. I really believe it. I think I'm going to use the term, the weak Republicans. You've got a lot of them. And you got a lot of great ones. But you got a lot of weak ones. They've turned a blind eye, even as Democrats enacted policies that chipped away our jobs, weakened our military, threw open our borders and put America last.

Did you see the other day where Joe Biden said, I want to get rid of the America First policy? What's that all about? Get rid of. How do you say I want to get rid of America First? Even if you're going to do it, don't talk about it, right? Unbelievable what we have to go through. What we have to go through.

And you have to get your people to fight. And if they don't fight, we have to primary the hell out of the ones that don't fight. You primary them. We're going to. We're going to let you know who they are. I can already tell you, frankly.

But this year, using the pretext of the China virus and the scam of mail-in ballots, Democrats attempted the most brazen and outrageous election theft and there's never been anything like this. So pure theft in American history. Everybody knows it.

That election, our election was over at 10 o'clock in the evening. We're leading Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, by hundreds of thousands of votes.

And then late in the evening, or early in the morning, boom, these explosions of bullshit.

And all of a sudden. All of a sudden it started to happen.

(Audience chants: "Bullshit.")

Don't forget when Romney got beat. Romney, hey. Did you see his? I wonder if he enjoyed his flight in last night. But when Romney got beaten, you know, he stands up like you're more typical, "Well, I'd like to congratulate the victor." The victor? Who is the victor, Mitt? "I'd like to congratulate." They don't go and look at the facts. No, I don't know. He got, he got slaughtered. Probably, maybe it was OK, maybe it was. But that's what happened.

But we look at the facts and our election was so corrupt that in the history of this country we've never seen anything like it. You can go all the way back.

You know, America is blessed with elections. All over the world they talk about our elections. You know what the world says about us now? They said, we don't have free and fair elections.

And you know what else? We don't have a free and fair press. Our media is not free, it's not fair. It suppresses thought, it suppresses speech and it's become the enemy of the people. It's become the enemy of the people. It's the biggest problem we have in this country.

No third-world countries would even attempt to do what we caught them doing. And you'll hear about that in just a few minutes.

Republicans are, Republicans are constantly fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back. It's like a boxer. And we want to be so nice. We want to be so respectful of everybody, including bad people. And we're going to have to fight much harder.

And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a, a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution.

Now, it is up to Congress to confront this egregious assault on our democracy. And after this, we're going to walk down, and I'll be there with you, we're going to walk down, we're going to walk down.

Anyone you want, but I think right here, we're going to walk down to the Capitol, and we're going to cheer on our brave senators and congressmen and women, and we're probably not going to be cheering so much for some of them.

Because you'll never take back our country with weakness. You have to show strength and you have to be strong. We have come to demand that Congress do the right thing and only count the electors who have been lawfully slated, lawfully slated.

I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard.

Today we will see whether Republicans stand strong for integrity of our elections. But whether or not they stand strong for our country, our country. Our country has been under siege for a long time. Far longer than this four-year period. We've set it on a much greater course. So much, and we, I thought, you know, four more years. I thought it would be easy.

We've created the greatest economy in history. We rebuilt our military. We get you the biggest tax cuts in history. Right? We got you the biggest regulation cuts. There's no president, whether it's four years, eight years or in one case more, got anywhere near the regulation cuts.

Used to take 20 years to get a highway approved, now we're down to two. I want to get it down to one, but we're down to two. And it may get rejected for environmental or safety reasons, but we got it down to safety.

We created Space Force, We, we, we. Look at what we did. Our military has been totally rebuilt. So we create Space Force which, by and of itself, is a major achievement for an administration. And with us it's one of so many different things.

Right to Try. Everybody know about Right to Try. We did things that nobody ever thought possible. We took care of our vets, our vets. The VA now has the highest rating, 91%. The highest rating that it's had from the beginning, 91% approval rating. Always, you watch the VA, it was on television every night, people living in a horrible, horrible manner. We got that done. We got accountability done. We got it so that now in the VA, you don't have to wait for four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks, four months to see a doctor. If you can't get a doctor, you go outside, you get the doctor. You have it taken care of and we pay the doctor.

And we've not only made life wonderful for so many people, we've saved tremendous amounts of money, far secondarily, but we've saved a lot of money. And now we have the right to fire bad people in the VA. We had 9,000 people that treated our veterans horribly. In primetime, they would not have treated our veterans badly. But they treated our veterans horribly.

And we have what's called the account, VA Accountability Act. And the accountability says if we see somebody in there that doesn't treat our vets well or they steal, they rob, they do things badly, we say: "Joe you're fired. Get out of here." Before you couldn't do that. You couldn't do that before.

So we've taken care of things, we've done things like nobody's ever thought possible. And that's part of the reason that many people don't like us, because we've done too much.

But we've done it quickly and we were going to sit home and watch a big victory and everybody had us down for a victory. It was going to be great and now we're out here fighting. I said to somebody, I was going to take a few days and relax after our big electoral victory. 10 o'clock it was over. But I was going to take a few days.

And I can say this. Since our election, I believe, which was such a catastrophe, when I watch. And even these guys knew what happened. They know what happened. They're saying: "Wow, Pennsylvania's insurmountable. Wow, Wisconsin." Look at the big leads we had, right. Even though the press said we would lose Wisconsin by 17 points. Even though the press said, Ohio's going to be close, we set a record; Florida's going to be close, we set a record; Texas is going to be close, Texas is going to be close, we set a record.

And we set a record with Hispanic, with the Black community, we set a record with everybody.

Today we see a very important event though. Because right over there, right there, we see the event going to take place. And I'm going to be watching. Because history is going to be made. We're going to see whether or not we have great and courageous leaders, or whether or not we have leaders that should be ashamed of themselves throughout history, throughout eternity they'll be ashamed.

And you know what? If they do the wrong thing, we should never, ever forget that they did. Never forget. We should never ever forget.

With only three of the seven states in question, we win the presidency of the United States. And by the way, it's much more important today than it was 24 hours ago, because I don't. I spoke to David Perdue, what a great person, and Kelly Loeffler, two great people, but it was a setup.

And you know, I said, "We have no backline anymore." The only backline, the only line of demarcation, the only line that we have is the veto of the president of the United States. So this is now, what we're doing, a far more important election than it was two days ago.

I want to thank the more than 140 members of the House. Those are warriors. They're over there working like you've never seen before. Studying, talking, actually going all the way back, studying the roots of the Constitution, because they know we have the right to send a bad vote that was illegally gotten.

They gave these people bad things to vote for and they voted because what did they know? And then when they found out a few weeks later, again, it took them four years to devise this screen.

And the only unhappy person in the United States, single most unhappy, is Hillary Clinton. Because she said: "Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Change the votes, 10,000 in Michigan. You could have changed the whole thing." But she's not too happy. You know, you don't see her anymore. What happened? Where's Hillary? Where is she?

But I want to thank all of those congressmen and women. I also want to thank our 13, most courageous members of the U.S. Senate. Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Josh Hawley, Kelly Loeffler.

And Kelly Loeffler, I'll tell you, she has been, she's been so great. She worked so hard. So let's give her and David a little special hand because it was rigged against them. Let's give her and David.

Kelly Loeffler, David Purdue. They fought a good race. They never had a shot. That equipment should never have been allowed to be used, and I was telling these people don't let him use this stuff.

Marsha Blackburn, terrific person. Mike Braun, Indiana. Steve Daines, great guy. Bill Hagerty, John Kennedy, James Lankford, Cynthia Lummis, Tommy Tuberville, the coach, and Roger Marshall. We want to thank them. Senators that stepped up, we want to thank them.

I actually think though, it takes, again, more courage not to step up, and I think a lot of those people are going to find that out and you better start looking at your leadership, because your leadership has led you down the tubes.

You know, we don't want to give \$2,000 to people. We want to give them \$600. Oh, great. How does that play politically? Pretty good? And this has nothing to do with politics, but how does it play politically?

China destroyed these people. We didn't destroy. China destroy them, totally destroyed them. We want to give them \$600 and they just wouldn't change.

I said give them \$2,000, we'll pay it back. We'll pay it back fast. You already owe 26 trillion, give them a couple of bucks. Let them live. Give them a couple of bucks. And some of the people here disagree with me on that, but I just say, "Look, you've got to let people live."

And how does that play though? OK. Number one, it's the right thing to do. But how does that play politically? I think it's the primary reason, one of the primary reasons, the other was just pure cheating. That was the primary, super primary reason. But you can't do that, you got to use your head.

As you know, the media has constantly asserted the outrageous lie that there was no evidence of widespread fraud. Have you ever seen these people? While there is no evidence of fraud. Oh, really? Well, I'm going to read you pages. I hope you don't get bored listening to it. Promise? Don't get bored listening to it, all those hundreds of thousands of people back there. Move them up, please, yeah.

All they, all these people, don't get bored, don't get angry at me because you're going to get bored because it's so much.

The American people do not believe the corrupt, fake news anymore. They have ruined their reputation. But you know, it used to be that they'd argue with me. I'd fight. So I'd fight, they'd fight, I'd fight, they'd fight. Pop pop. You'd believe me, you'd believe them. Somebody comes out. You know, they had their point of view, I had my point of view, but you'd have an argument.

Now what they do is they go silent. It's called suppression and that's what happens in a communist country. That's what they do, they suppress. You don't fight with them anymore. Unless it's a bad story. They have a little bad story about me, they make it 10 times worse and it's a major headline.

But Hunter Biden, they don't talk about him. What happened to Hunter? Where's Hunter? Where's Hunter? They don't talk about him. They'll watch, all the sets will go off. Well, they can't do that because they get good ratings. Their ratings are too good. Now, where's Hunter? You know.

And how come Joe is allowed to give a billion dollars of money to get rid of the prosecutor in Ukraine? How does that happen? I'd ask you that question. How does that happen? Can you imagine if I said that? If I said that it would be a whole different ballgame.

And how come Hunter gets three and a half million dollars from the mayor of Moscow's wife, and gets hundreds of thousands of dollars to sit on an energy board, even though he admits he has no knowledge of energy? And millions of dollars up front.

And how come they go into China and they leave with billions of dollars to manage. "Have you managed money before?" "No, I haven't." "Oh, that's good. Here's about 3 billion." No, they don't talk about that.

No, we have a corrupt media. They've gone silent. They've gone dead. I now realize how good it was if you go back 10 years, I realized how good, even though I didn't necessarily love them, I realized how good. It was like a cleansing motion, right?

But we don't have that anymore. We don't have a fair media anymore. It's suppression. And you have to be very careful with that and they've lost all credibility in this country.

We will not be intimidated into accepting the hoaxes and the lies that we've been forced to believe.

Over the past several weeks, we've amassed overwhelming evidence about a fake election. This is the presidential election. Last night was a little bit better because of the fact that we had a lot of eyes watching one specific state, but they cheated like hell anyway.

You have one of the dumbest governors in the United States. And you know when I endorsed him, and I didn't know this guy, at the request of David Perdue, he said, "Friend of mine's running for governor." "What's his name?" And you know the rest. He was in fourth place, fifth place. I don't know, he was, he was doing poorly. I endorse him, he went like a rocket ship and he won.

And then I had to beat Stacey Abrams with this guy, Brian Kemp. I had to beat Stacey Abrams. And I had to beat Oprah, used to be a friend of mine. You know, I was on her last show, her last week, she picked the five outstanding people. I don't think she thinks that any more. Once I ran for president, I didn't notice there were too many calls coming in from Oprah. Believe it or not, she used to like me. But I was one of the five outstanding people.

And I had a campaign against Michelle Obama and Barack Hussein Obama, against Stacey.

And I had Brian Kemp, who weighs 130 pounds. He said he played offensive line in football. I'm trying to figure that out. I'm still trying to figure that out. He said that the other night, "I was an offensive lineman." I'm saying: "Really? That must have been a very small team." But I look at that and I look at what's happened and he turned out to be a disaster. This stuff happens.

You know, look, I'm not happy with the Supreme Court. They love to rule against me. I picked three people. I fought like hell for them. One in particular, I fought. They all said, "Sir, cut him loose." He's killing the senators. You know, very loyal senators, they're very loyal people, "Sir, cut him loose, he's killing us, sir, cut him loose." I must have gotten half of the senators.

I said: "No, I can't do that, it's unfair to him and it's unfair to the family. He didn't do anything wrong." They made up stories, they're all made-up stories. He didn't do anything wrong. "Cut him loose, sir." I said, "No, I won't do that. We got him through." And you know what, they couldn't give a damn. They couldn't give a damn. Let him rule the right way.

But it almost seems that they're all going out of their way to hurt all of us and to hurt our country. To hurt our country.

You know, I read a story in one of the newspapers recently how I control the three Supreme Court justices. I control them. They're puppets.

I read it about Bill Barr, that he's my personal attorney. That he'll do anything for me. And I said, "You know, it really is genius." Because what they do is that, and it makes it really impossible for them to ever give you a victory, because all of a sudden Bill Barr changed. If you hadn't noticed. I like Bill Barr, but he changed, because he didn't want to be considered my personal attorney.

And the Supreme Court, they rule against me so much. You know why? Because the story is — I haven't spoken to any of them, any of them, since virtually they got in — but the story is that they're my puppets. Right? That they're puppets.

And now the only way they can get out of that because they hate that it's not good in the social circuit. And the only way they get out is to rule against Trump. So let's rule against Trump. And they do that. So I want to congratulate them.

But it shows you the media's genius. In fact, probably if I was the media, I'd do it the same way. I hate to say it. But we got to get them straightened out.

Today, for the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our Constitution, and for the sake of our children, we lay out the case for the entire world to hear. You want to hear it?

(Audience responds: "Yeah")

In every single swing state, local officials, state officials, almost all Democrats, made illegal and unconstitutional changes to election procedures without the mandated approvals by the state legislatures.

That these changes paved a way for fraud on a scale never seen before. I think we go a long way outside of our country when I say that.

So, just in a nutshell, you can't make a change or voting for a federal election unless the state legislature approves it. No judge can do it. Nobody can do it. Only a legislature.

So as an example, in Pennsylvania, or whatever, you have a Republican legislature, you have a Democrat mayor, and you have a lot of Democrats all over the place. They go to the legislature. The legislature laughs at them, says we're not going to do that. They say, thank you very much and they go and make the changes themselves, they do it anyway. And that's totally illegal. That's totally illegal. You can't do that.

In Pennsylvania, the Democrat secretary of state and the Democrat state Supreme Court justices illegally abolished the signature verification requirements just 11 days prior to the election.

So think of what they did. No longer is there signature verification. Oh, that's OK. We want voter ID by the way. But no longer is there a signature verification. Eleven days before the election they say we don't want it. You know why they don't want to? Because they want to cheat. That's the only reason.

Who would even think of that? We don't want to verify a signature?

There were over 205,000 more ballots counted in Pennsylvania. Think of this, you had 205,000 more ballots than you had voters. That means you had two. Where did they come from? You know where they came from? Somebody's imagination, whatever they needed.

So in Pennsylvania, you had 205,000 more votes than you had voters. And the number is actually much greater than that now. That was as of a week ago. And this is a mathematical impossibility unless you want to say it's a total fraud.

So Pennsylvania was defrauded. Over 8,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were cast by people whose names and dates of birth match individuals who died in 2020 and prior to the election. Think of that. Dead people, lots of dead people, thousands. And some dead people actually requested an application. That bothers me even more.

Not only are they voting, they want an application to vote. One of them was 29 years ago, died. It's incredible. Over 14,000 ballots were cast by out-of-state voters, so these are voters that don't live in this state.

And by the way, these numbers are what they call outcome-determinative, meaning these numbers far surpass. I lost by a very little bit. These numbers are massive, massive.

More than 10,000 votes in Pennsylvania were illegally counted, even though they were received after Election Day. In other words, they were received after Election Day. Let's count them anyway.

And what they did in many cases is, they did fraud. They took the date and they moved it back so that it no longer is after Election Day. And more than 60,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were reported received back. They got back before they were ever supposedly mailed out. In other words, you got the ballot back before you mailed it, which is also logically and logistically impossible, right?

Think of that one. You got the ballot back. Let's send the ballots. Oh, they've already been sent. But we got the ballot back before they were sent. I don't think that's too good, right?

Twenty-five thousand ballots in Pennsylvania were requested by nursing home residents, all in a single giant batch, not legal, indicating an enormous, illegal ballot harvesting operation. You're not allowed to do it, it's against the law.

The day before the election, the state of Pennsylvania reported the number of absentee ballots that had been sent out. Yet this number was suddenly and drastically increased by 400,000 people. It was increased, nobody knows where it came from, by 400,000 ballots, one day after the election.

It remains totally unexplained. They said, "Well, ah, we can't figure that." Now, that's many, many times what it would take to overthrow the state. Just that one element. Four hundred thousand ballots appeared from nowhere right after the election.

By the way, Pennsylvania has now seen all of this. They didn't know because it was so quick. They had a vote. They voted. But now they see all this stuff, it's all come to light. Doesn't happen that fast. And they want to recertify their votes. They want to recertify. But the only way that can happen is if Mike Pence agrees to send it back. Mike Pence has to agree to send it back.

(Audience chants: "Send it back.")

And many people in Congress want it sent back.

And think of what you're doing. Let's say you don't do it. Somebody says, "Well, we have to obey the Constitution." And you are, because you're protecting our country and you're protecting the Constitution. So you are.

But think of what happens. Let's say they're stiff and they're stupid people, and they say, well, we really have no choice. Even though Pennsylvania and other states want to redo their votes. They want to see the numbers. They already have the numbers. Go very quickly. And they want to redo their legislature because many of these votes were taken, as I said, because it wasn't approved by their legislature. You know, that, in itself, is legal. And then you have the scam, and that's all of the things that we're talking about.

But think of this. If you don't do that, that means you will have a president of the United States for four years, with his wonderful son. You will have a president who lost all of these states. Or you will have a president, to put it another way, who was voted on by a bunch of stupid people who lost all of these states.

You will have an illegitimate president. That's what you'll have. And we can't let that happen.

These are the facts that you won't hear from the fake news media. It's all part of the suppression effort. They don't want to talk about it. They don't want to talk about it. In fact, when I started talking about that, I guarantee you, a lot of the television sets and a lot of those cameras went off. And that's a lot of cameras back there. But a lot of them went off.

But these are the things you don't hear about. You don't hear what you just heard. I'm going to go over a few more states. But you don't hear it by the people who want to deceive you and demoralize you and control you. Big tech, media.

Just like the suppression polls that said we're going to lose Wisconsin by 17 points. Well, we won Wisconsin. They don't have it that way because they lost just by a little sliver. But they had me down the day before, Washington Post/ABC poll, down 17 points.

I called up a real pollster. I said, "What is that?" "Sir, that's called a suppression poll. I think you're going to win Wisconsin, sir."

I said, "But why don't they make it four or five points?" Because then people vote. But when you're down 17, they say, "Hey, I'm not going to waste my time. I love the president, but there's no way."

Despite that, despite that, we won Wisconsin. It's going to see. I mean, you'll see. But that's called suppression because a lot of people when they see that. It's very interesting. This pollster said, "Sir, if you're down three, four, or five people vote. When you go down 17, they say, 'Let's save. Let's go and have dinner and let's watch the presidential defeat tonight on television, darling.'"

And just like the radical left tries to blacklist you on social media. Every time I put out a tweet, that's, even if it's totally correct, totally correct, I get a flag. I get a flag.

And they also don't let you get out. You know, on Twitter, it's very hard to come onto my account. It's very hard to get out a message. They don't let the message get out nearly like they should. But I've had many people say, "I can't get on your Twitter." I don't care about Twitter. Twitter's bad news. They're all bad news.

But you know what, if you want to, if you want to get out a message and if you want to go through Big tech, social media, they are really, if you're a conservative, if you're a

Republican, if you have a big voice, I guess they call it shadow banned, right? Shadow banned. They shadow ban you, and it should be illegal.

I've been telling these Republicans, get rid of Section 230. And for some reason, Mitch and the group, they don't want to put it in there and they don't realize that that's going to be the end of the Republican Party as we know it, but it's never going to be the end of us. Never. Let them get out. Let, let the weak ones get out. This is a time for strength.

They also want to indoctrinate your children in school by teaching them things that aren't so. They want to indoctrinate your children. It's all part of the comprehensive assault on our democracy, and the American people are finally standing up and saying no. This crowd is, again, a testament to it.

I did no advertising, I did nothing. You do have some groups that are big supporters. I want to thank that, Amy, and everybody. We have some incredible supporters, incredible. But we didn't do anything. This just happened. Two months ago, we had a massive crowd come down to Washington. I said, "What are they there for?" "Sir, they're there for you."

We have nothing to do with it. These groups are for, they're forming all over the United States. And we got to remember, in a year from now, you're going to start working on Congress and we got to get rid of the weak Congress, people, the ones that aren't any good, the Liz Cheneys of the world. We got to get rid of them. We got to get rid.

You know, she never wants a soldier brought home — I brought a lot of our soldiers home. I don't know, somewhat like it. They're in countries that nobody even knows the name, nobody knows where they are. They're dying. They're great, but they're dying. They're losing their arms, their legs, their face. I brought them back home, largely back home. Afghanistan, Iraq.

Remember, I used to say in the old days: "Don't go in Iraq. But if you go in, keep the oil." We didn't keep the oil. So stupid. So stupid these people. And Iraq has billions and billions of dollars now in the bank. And what did we do? We got nothing. We never get. But we do actually, we kept the oil here or we get, we did good.

We got rid of the ISIS caliphate. We got rid of plenty of different things that everybody knows and the rebuilding of our military in three years. People said it couldn't be done. And it was all made in the USA, all made in the USA, best equipment in the world.

In Wisconsin, corrupt Democrat-run cities deployed more than 500 illegal, unmanned, unsecured drop boxes, which collected a minimum of 91,000 unlawful votes. It was razor-thin, the loss. This one thing alone is much more than we would need. But there are many things.

They have these lockboxes. And, you know, they'd pick them up and they disappear for two days. People would say where's that box? They disappeared. Nobody even knew where the hell it was.

In addition, over 170,000 absentee votes were counted in Wisconsin without a valid absentee ballot application. So they had a vote, but they had no application, and that's illegal in Wisconsin. Meaning those votes were blatantly done in opposition to state law and they came 100% from Democrat areas such as Milwaukee and Madison, 100%.

In Madison, 17,000 votes were deposited in so-called human drop boxes. You know what that is, right? Where operatives stuff thousands of unsecured ballots into duffle bags on park benches across the city, in complete defiance of cease-and-desist letters from state legislature.

Your state legislatures said don't do it. They're the only ones that can approve it. They gave tens of thousands of votes. They came in in duffle bags. Where the hell did they come from?

According to eyewitness testimony, Postal Service workers in Wisconsin were also instructed to illegally backdate approximately 100,000 ballots. The margin of difference in Wisconsin was less than 20,000 votes. Each one of these things alone wins us the state. Great state. We love the state. We won the state.

In Georgia, your secretary of state who, I can't believe this guy's a Republican. He loves recording telephone conversations. You know, that was? I thought it was a great conversation personally. So did a lot of other. People love that conversation because it says what's going on.

These people are crooked. They're 100%, in my opinion, one of the most corrupt, between your governor and your secretary of state. And now you have it again last night. Just take a look at what happened. What a mess.

And the Democrat Party operatives entered into an illegal and unconstitutional — unconstitutional settlement agreement that drastically weakened signature verification and other election security procedures.

Stacey Abrams. She took them to lunch. And I beat her two years ago with a bad candidate, Brian Kemp. But they took, the Democrats took the Republicans to lunch because the secretary of state had no clue what the hell was happening. Unless he did have a clue. That's interesting. Maybe he was with the other side.

But we've been trying to get verifications of signatures in Fulton County, they won't let us do it. The only reason they won't is because we'll find things in the hundreds of thousands. Why wouldn't they let us verify signatures in Fulton County, which is known for being very corrupt. They won't do it. They go to some other county where you would live.

I said, "That's not the problem." The problem is Fulton County, home of Stacey Abrams. She did a good job, I congratulate her. But it was done in such a way that we can't let this stuff happen. We won't have a country if it happens.

As a result, Georgia's absentee ballot rejection rate was more than 10 times lower than previous levels because the criteria was so off.

Forty-eight counties in Georgia, with thousands and thousands of votes, rejected zero ballots. There wasn't one ballot. In other words, in a year in which more mail-in ballots were sent than ever before, and more people were voting by mail for the first time, the rejection rate was drastically lower than it had ever been before.

The only way this can be explained is if tens of thousands of illegitimate votes were added to the tally. That's the only way you could explain it.

By the way, you're talking about tens of thousands. If Georgia had merely rejected the same number of unlawful ballots as in other years, they should have been approximately 45,000 ballots rejected. Far more than what we needed to win, just over 11,000. They should find those votes. They should absolutely find that. Just over 11,000 votes, that's all we need. They defrauded us out of a win in Georgia, and we're not going to forget it.

There's only one reason the Democrats could possibly want to eliminate signature matching, opposed voter ID, and stop citizenship confirmation. "Are you a citizenship?" You're not allowed to ask that question, because they want to steal the election.

The radical left knows exactly what they're doing. They're ruthless and it's time that somebody did something about it. And Mike Pence, I hope you're going to stand up for the good of our Constitution and for the good of our country. And if you're not, I'm going to be very disappointed in you. I will tell you right now. I'm not hearing good stories.

In Fulton County, Republican poll watchers were ejected, in some cases, physically from the room under the false pretense of a pipe burst. Water main burst, everybody leave. Which we now know was a total lie.

Then election officials pull boxes, Democrats, and suitcases of ballots out from under a table. You all saw it on television, totally fraudulent. And illegally scanned them for nearly two hours, totally unsupervised. Tens of thousands of votes. This act coincided with a mysterious vote dump of up to 100,000 votes for Joe Biden, almost none for Trump. Oh, that sounds fair. That was at 1:34 a.m.

The Georgia secretary of state and pathetic governor of Georgia, have reached, although he says I'm a great president. You know, I sort of maybe have to change. He said the other day, "Yes, I do. I disagree with president, but he's been a great president." Good, thanks. Thank you very much.

Because of him and others, you have Brian Kemp. Vote him the hell out of office, please. Well, his rates are so low. You know, his approval rating now, I think it just reached a record low.

They've rejected five separate appeals for an independent and comprehensive audit of signatures in Fulton County. Even without an audit, the number of fraudulent ballots that we've identified across the state is staggering.

Over 10,300 ballots in Georgia were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match Georgia residents who died in 2020 and prior to the election.

More than 2,500 ballots were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match incarcerated felons in Georgia prison. People who are not allowed to vote.

More than 4,500 illegal ballots were cast by individuals who do not appear on the state's own voter rolls.

Over 18,000 illegal ballots were cast by individuals who registered to vote using an address listed as vacant, according to the Postal Service.

At least 88,000 ballots in Georgia were cast by people whose registrations were illegally backdated.

Sixty-six thousand votes, each one of these is far more than we need. Sixty-six thousand votes in Georgia were cast by individuals under the legal voting age.

And at least 15,000 ballots were cast by individuals who moved out of the state prior to November 3 election. They say they moved right back. They moved right back. Oh, they moved out, they moved right back. OK. They missed Georgia that much. I do. I love Georgia, but it's a corrupt system.

Despite all of this, the margin in Georgia is only 11,779 votes.

Each and every one of these issues is enough to give us a victory in Georgia, a big beautiful victory. Make no mistake, this election was stolen from you, from me and from the country.

And not a single swing state has conducted a comprehensive audit to remove the illegal ballots. This should absolutely occur in every single contested state before the election is certified.

In the state of Arizona, over 36,000 ballots were illegally cast by non-citizens. Two thousand ballots were returned with no address. More than 22,000 ballots were returned before they were ever supposedly mailed out. They returned, but we haven't mailed them yet.

Eleven thousand six hundred more ballots and votes were counted, more than there were actual voters. You see that? So you have more votes again than you have voters.

One hundred and fifty thousand people registered in Maricopa County after the registration deadline. One hundred and three thousand ballots in the county were sent for electronic adjudication with no Republican observers.

In Clark County, Nevada, the accuracy settings on signature verification machines were purposely lowered before they were used to count over 130,000 ballots.

If you signed your name as Santa Claus, it would go through.

There were also more than 42,000 double votes in Nevada. Over 150,000 people were hurt so badly by what took place. And 1,500 ballots were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match Nevada residents who died in 2020 prior to November 3 election. More than 8,000 votes were cast by individuals who had no address and probably didn't live there.

The margin in Nevada is down at a very low number, any of these things would have taken care of the situation. We would have won Nevada, also. Every one of these we're going over, we win.

In Michigan, quickly, the secretary of state, a real great one, flooded the state with unsolicited mail-in ballot applications sent to every person on the rolls in direct violation of state law.

More than 17,000 Michigan ballots were cast by individuals whose names and dates of birth match people who were deceased.

In Wayne County, that's a great one. That's Detroit. One hundred and seventy-four thousand ballots were counted without being tied to an actual registered voter. Nobody knows where they came from.

Also, in Wayne County, poll watchers observed canvassers rescanning batches of ballots over and over again, up to three or four or five times.

In Detroit, turnout was 139% of registered voters. Think of that. So you had 139% of the people in Detroit voting. This is in Michigan. Detroit, Michigan.

A career employee of the Detroit, City of Detroit, testified under penalty of perjury that she witnessed city workers coaching voters to vote straight Democrat while accompanying them to watch who they voted for. When a Republican came in, they wouldn't talk to him.

The same worker was instructed not to ask for any voter ID and not to attempt to validate any signatures if they were Democrats. She also told to illegally, and was told, backdate ballots received after the deadline and reports that thousands and thousands of ballots were improperly backdated. That's Michigan.

Four witnesses have testified under penalty of perjury that after officials in Detroit announced the last votes had been counted, tens of thousands of additional ballots arrived without required envelopes. Every single one was for a Democrat. I got no votes.

At 6:31 a.m. in the early morning hours after voting had ended, Michigan suddenly reported 147,000 votes. An astounding 94% went to Joe Biden, who campaigned brilliantly from his basement. Only a couple of percentage points went to Trump.

Such gigantic and one-sided vote dumps were only observed in a few swing states and they were observed in the states where it was necessary.

You know what's interesting? President Obama beat Biden in every state other than the swing states where Biden killed them, but the swing states were the ones that mattered.

They're always just enough to push Joe Biden barely into the lead. We were ahead by a lot and within a number of hours we were losing by a little.

In addition, there is the highly troubling matter of Dominion Voting Systems. In one Michigan county alone, 6,000 votes were switched from Trump to Biden and the same systems are used in the majority of states in our country.

Senator William Ligon, a great gentleman, chairman of Georgia's senate judiciary subcommittee. Senator Ligon, highly respected, on elections has written a letter describing his concerns with Dominion in Georgia.

He wrote, and I quote, The Dominion Voting Machines employed in Fulton County had an astronomical and astounding 93.67% error rate. It's only wrong 93% of the time in the scanning of ballots requiring a review panel to adjudicate or determine the voter's interest in over 106,000 ballots out of a total of 113,000.

Think of it. You go in and you vote and then they tell people who you supposed to be voting for. They make up whatever they want. Nobody's ever even heard.

They adjudicate your vote. They say, Well, we don't think Trump wants to vote for Trump. We think he wants to vote for Biden. Put it down for Biden.

The national average for such an error rate is far less than 1% and yet you're at 93%. The source of this astronomical error rate must be identified to determine if these machines were set up or destroyed to allow for a third party to disregard the actual ballot cast by the registered voter.

The letter continues. There is clear evidence that tens of thousands of votes were switched from President Trump to former Vice President Biden in several counties in Georgia.

For example, in Bibb County, President Trump was reported to have 29,391 votes at 9:11 p.m. Eastern time, while simultaneously Vice President Joe Biden was reported to have 17,213. Minutes later, just minutes, at the next update, these vote numbers switched with President Trump going way down to 17,000 and Biden going way up to 29,391. And that was very quick, a 12,000 vote switch all in Mr. Biden's favor.

So, I mean, I could go on and on about this fraud that took place in every state, and all of these legislatures want this back. I don't want to do it to you because I love you and it's freezing out here. But I could just go on forever. I can tell you this.

(Audience chants: "We love you.")

So when you hear, when you hear, while there is no evidence to prove any wrongdoing, this is the most fraudulent thing anybody has, this is a criminal enterprise. This is a criminal enterprise. And the press will say, and I'm sure they won't put any of that on there, because that's no good. And you ever see, while there is no evidence to back President Trump's assertion.

I could go on for another hour reading this stuff to you and telling you about it. There's never been anything like it.

Think about it. Detroit had more votes than it had voters. Pennsylvania had 205,000 more votes than it had more. But you don't have to go any. Between that, I think that's almost better than dead people if you think, right? More votes than they had voters. And many other states also.

It's a disgrace that the United States of America, tens of millions of people, are allowed to go vote without so much as even showing identification.

In no state is there any question or effort made to verify the identity, citizenship, residency or eligibility of the votes cast.

The Republicans have to get tougher. You're not going to have a Republican Party if you don't get tougher. They want to play so straight. They want to play so, sir, yes, the United States. The Constitution doesn't allow me to send them back to the States. Well, I say, yes it does, because the Constitution says you have to protect our country and you have to protect

our Constitution, and you can't vote on fraud. And fraud breaks up everything, doesn't it? When you catch somebody in a fraud, you're allowed to go by very different rules.

So I hope Mike has the courage to do what he has to do. And I hope he doesn't listen to the RINOs and the stupid people that he's listening to.

It is also widely understood that the voter rolls are crammed full of non-citizens, felons and people who have moved out of state and individuals who are otherwise ineligible to vote. Yet Democrats oppose every effort to clean up their voter rolls. They don't want to clean them up. They're loaded.

And how many people here know other people, that when there are hundreds of thousands and then millions of ballots got sent out, got three, four, five, six, and I heard one, who got seven ballots. And then they say you didn't quite make it, sir.

We won in a landslide. This was a landslide. They said it's not American to challenge the election. This the most corrupt election in the history, maybe of the world.

You know, you could go third-world countries, but I don't think they had hundreds of thousands of votes and they don't have voters for them. I mean no matter where you go, nobody would think this.

In fact, it's so egregious, it's so bad that a lot of people don't even believe it. It's so crazy that people don't even believe it. It can't be true. So they don't believe it.

This is not just a matter of domestic politics — this is a matter of national security.

So today, in addition to challenging the certification of the election, I'm calling on Congress and the state legislatures to quickly pass sweeping election reforms, and you better do it before we have no country left.

Today is not the end, it's just the beginning.

With your help over the last four years, we built the greatest political movement in the history of our country and nobody even challenges that.

I say that over and over, and I never get challenged by the fakeness, and they challenge almost everything we say.

But our fight against the big donors, big media, big tech, and others is just getting started. This is the greatest in history. There's never been a movement like that.

You look back there all the way to the Washington Monument. It's hard to believe.

We must stop the steal and then we must ensure that such outrageous election fraud never happens again, can never be allowed to happen again.

But we're going forward. We'll take care of going forward. We've got to take care of going back. Don't let them talk. OK, well, we promised. I've had a lot of people. Sir, you're at 96% for four years. I said I'm not interested right now. I'm interested in right there.

With your help, we will finally pass powerful requirements for voter ID. You need an ID to cash a check. You need an ID to go to a bank, to buy alcohol, to drive a car. Every person should need to show an ID in order to cast your most important thing, a vote.

We will also require proof of American citizenship in order to vote in American elections. We just had a good victory in court on that one, actually.

We will ban ballot harvesting and prohibit the use of unsecured drop boxes to commit rampant fraud. These drop boxes are fraudulent. Therefore, they get disapp — they disappear, and then all of a sudden they show up. It's fraudulent.

We will stop the practice of universal unsolicited mail-in balloting.

We will clean up the voter rolls that ensure that every single person who casts a vote is a citizen of our country, a resident of the state in which they vote and their vote is cast in a lawful and honest manner.

We will restore the vital civic tradition of in-person voting on Election Day so that voters can be fully informed when they make their choice.

We will finally hold big tech accountable. And if these people had courage and guts, they would get rid of Section 230, something that no other company, no other person in America, in the world has.

All of these tech monopolies are going to abuse their power and interfere in our elections, and it has to be stopped. And the Republicans have to get a lot tougher, and so should the Democrats. They should be regulated, investigated, and brought to justice under the fullest extent of the law. They're totally breaking the law.

Together, we will drain the Washington swamp and we will clean up the corruption in our nation's capital. We have done a big job on it, but you think it's easy. It's a dirty business. It's a dirty business. You have a lot of bad people out there.

Despite everything we've been through, looking out all over this country and seeing fantastic crowds. Although this, I think, is our all-time record. I think you have 250,000 people. 250,000.

Looking out at all the amazing patriots here today, I have never been more confident in our nation's future. Well, I have to say, we have to be a little bit careful. That's a nice statement, but we have to be a little careful with that statement.

If we allow this group of people to illegally take over our country because it's illegal when the votes are illegal when the way they got there is illegal when the states that vote are given false and fraudulent information.

We are the greatest country on Earth and we are headed and were headed in the right direction.

You know, the wall is built. We're doing record numbers at the wall. Now, they want to take down the wall. Let's let everyone flow in. Let's let everybody flow in. We did a great job in

the wall. Remember, the wall, they said it could never be done. One of the largest infrastructure projects we've ever had in this country, and it's had a tremendous impact, that we got rid of catch and release. We got rid of all of this stuff that we had to live with.

But now, the caravans, I think Biden's getting in, the caravans are forming again. They want to come in again and rip off our country. Can't let it happen.

As this enormous crowd shows, we have truth and justice on our side. We have a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts. We love our country.

We have overwhelming pride in this great country and we have it deep in our souls. Together, we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Our brightest days are before us. Our greatest achievements, still away.

I think one of our great achievements will be election security. Because nobody until I came along had any idea how corrupt our elections were.

And again, most people would stand there at 9 o'clock in the evening and say I want to thank you very much, and they go off to some other life. But I said something's wrong here, something is really wrong, can have happened.

And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.

Our exciting adventures and boldest endeavors have not yet begun. My fellow Americans, for our movement, for our children, and for our beloved country.

And I say this despite all that's happened. The best is yet to come.

So we're going to, we're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. I love Pennsylvania Avenue. And we're going to the Capitol, and we're going to try and give.

The Democrats are hopeless — they never vote for anything. Not even one vote. But we're going to try and give our Republicans, the weak ones because the strong ones don't need any of our help. We're going to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.

So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue.

I want to thank you all. God bless you and God Bless America.

Thank you all for being here. This is incredible. Thank you very much. Thank you.

2. Statements from Trump's supporters

Note: Numbers identify independent supporters

- a) From Pennacchia, R. (2021). Capitol rioter may claim Trump authorized his tasing of officer. *Wonkette* (October 18). Retrieved from: www.wonkette.com/capitol-rioter-claims-trump-authorized-his-tasing-of-officer-fanone

1 Daniel Rodriguez: Like, what are the consequences of, like, trying to overthrow a President or something, you know? And then I find myself in that position like that. Like, first I'm trying to be the good guy. I think I'm the good guy. I want to be the good guy. Now I'm, like, the bad guy.

Daniel Rodriguez: And now it's like I just went after the President of the United States? Like, that is not a joke. That's something, like -- hello? Like, what was I thinking? What am I doing? Like, snap out of it. Like, you're going after the highest office out there. Like, you're delusional. What is -- what was wrong with you?

Daniel Rodriguez: Like, FBI, CIA, Secret Service, like all these agencies and marshals and whatever's -- whoever's out there, it's like now I'm on their -- the enemy list of all them. I didn't -- that's how stupid I am. I didn't realize -- I don't know. I just didn't think it was going to turn out like this. I thought the good -- I thought was -- who I thought the good guys were, the good guys were going to win. And I thought I was a good guy. Wanted to be a good guy.

Daniel Rodriguez: The preparations were for BLM and Antifa. We thought that they were going to go -- we thought we were going to hit it like a civil war. There was going to be a big battle. This is what I thought. [...]

Daniel Rodriguez: I thought there was going to be a big battle in -- I thought that there was going to be battles across the country. I thought that there was going to be fighting, for some reason, in different cities and I thought that the main fight, the main battle, was going to be in D.C. because Trump called everyone there. And then I thought that that was going to bring BLM and Antifa there, and it was going to be, like, a big battle. That's what I really thought. They didn't -- that's not what happened.

Daniel Rodriguez: I thought that we were going to save this -- I thought we were going to do something. I thought that it was not going to end -- happen like that. I thought that Trump was going to stay President and they were going to find all this crooked stuff and were going to -- I mean, we found out that -- we thought that we did something good.

Daniel Rodriguez: We were getting Nancy -- somebody was -- it was rumored that Nancy Pelosi got her laptop stolen and that they found all this evidence on it and it was a secret plan. We were, like -- it was, like, a -- it was a -- were a distraction. We were put there to go distract and so somebody can go get Pelosi's laptop and then get all the intel.

Daniel Rodriguez: And then we could just bust everything and find the truth and it'll be all exposed and we'll see that she's corrupt or some kind of evidence. And we thought we were being a -- we were part of a bigger thing. We thought we were being used as a part of a plan to save the country, to save America, save The Constitution, and the election, the integrity.

- b) From Mogelson, L. (2021). Among the insurrectionists. *The New Yorker* (January 25).
Retrieved from: www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/01/25/among-the-insurrectionists

I = Insurrectionist

C = Crowd

AF = American First

PB(C) = Proud Boy (Crowd)

Trump: “bullshit.”

C1: “Bullshit! Bullshit!”

2 I1: “There’s gonna be a war.”

I1: “I’m ready to fight,”

3 I2: “No weakness!”

C2: “We’re storming the Capitol!”

4 I3 (Combat skills instructor): “It’s coming.”

5 I4: “They need help!” “It’s us versus the cops!”

6 I5: “We lost the Senate—we need to make a stand *now*,”

7 I6: “You are traitors to the country!”

8 I7: “Why can’t *I* work? Where’s my ‘pursuit of happiness’?”

C3: “Hang Mike Pence!”

C4: “We need to retreat and assault another point!” “Hold the line!” they “Storm!”

9 I8: “Shoot the politicians!”

10 I9: “Fight for Trump!”

C5: “Where’s the traitors?” “Bring them out!” “Get these fucking cocksucking Commies out!”

April Crowd in Michigan: “Treason!”

April Crowd in Michigan: “Let us in!”

11 I10: “We will *not* be denied.” “Whose house? *Our* house!”

12 I11: “Stand down,” “You’re outnumbered. There’s a fucking million of us out there, and we are listening to Trump—your boss.”

13 I12: “We can take you out,”

14 I13: “We love you guys—take it easy!”

15 AF1: “America first!”

16 AF2: “Nancy, I’m *ho-ome!* ”

17 AF3: “1776—it’s now or never.”

18 I14: “Where the fuck *are* they?”

19 I14: “Where the fuck is Nancy?”

20 I15 “While we’re here, we might as well set up a government,”

21 AF4: “Praise God!”

22 I16: “Take everything! Take all that shit!”

23 I17 (**Larry Rendall Brock, Jr**): “No!” “We do not take anything.”

24 AF4: “Donald Trump is the emperor of the United States . . .”

25 I18 (**Mr Black**): “Hey, get out of that chair,”

I18: “We’re a democracy,”

AF4: “Bro, we just broke into the Capitol,” “What are you talking about?”

I17: “We can’t be disrespectful.” “You have to understand—it’s an I.O. war.”

26 I19: “He was gonna sell us out all along—look! ‘Objection to counting the electoral votes of the state of Arizona.’ ‘Oh, wait, that’s actually O.K.’”

27 AF5: “He’s with us,”

28 I20: “There’s gotta be something in here we can fucking use against these scumbags.”
“Cruz would *want* us to do this, so I think we’re good.”

I18: “This don’t look big enough,” “This can’t be the right place.” “Don’t trash the place. No disrespect.”

I18: “I’m gonna call my dad,”

29 I21 (**Jacob Chansley – Qanon Shaman**): “We got ’em right where we want ’em! We got ’em by the balls, baby, and we’re not lettin’ go!”

I21: “*Fuckin’ A*, man,”

I18: “I’m good, thank you,” “I got shot in the face with some kind of plastic bullet.”

I18: “We will,” “I been making sure they ain’t disrespectin’ the place.”

I21: “I’m gonna take a seat in this chair, because Mike Pence is a fucking traitor,” “I’m not one to usually take pictures of myself, but in this case I think I’ll make an exception.”

30 I22: “This is so weird—like, you should be stopping us.”

31 I23 (**Fuentes**): “It is *us* and *our* ancestors that created everything good that you see in this country,” “All these people that have taken over our country—we do not need them.”

C6 “Take it back

32 I23: “It’s time for us to start saying another word again,” “A very important word that describes the situation we’re in. That word is ‘parasite.’ What is happening in this country is parasitism.” “It is the American people, and our leader, Donald Trump, against *everybody else* in this country and this world.” “Make no mistake about it, The system is our enemy.”

I23 “That is disgusting! I don’t want to see that!,” “Shame!”

I23 “take this country back by force,”

Dec 12 (I think)

33 PB1: “We are going to own this town!” “I wanna see Trump drive by and give us one of these.”

PBC1: “Let’s take Black Lives Matter Plaza!”

34 PB2 (**Richard Schwetz**): “Fucking pussies!”

35 PB3: “They’re here now, but eventually they won’t be. And we’re gonna take this country back—believe that shit. Fuck Black Lives Matter.” “What y’all need to do is take your sorry asses to the ghetto.”

PBC2: “Fight for Trump!”

36 PB4: “He’s going to look different tomorrow.”

37 PB5: “This is sodomy!”

PBC3: “Fuck the fags!”

PBC4: “Whose streets?”

PBC4: “*Our* streets!”

38 PB6: “Hey, that’s Christian,”

Jan 6th

I21: “heavenly Father” “send a message” “tyrants, the communists, and the globalists.” “I praised the name of Jesus on the Senate floor. That was my goal. I think that was God’s goal.”

Million Maga March

Louie Gohmert (Republican Congressman): “This is a multidimensional war that the U.S. intelligence people have used on other governments,” “You not only steal the vote but you use the media to convince people that they’re not really seeing what they’re seeing.”

C: “We see!”

Jan 6th

39 I24: “I will not let this country be taken over by globalist communist scum!” “They want us all to be slaves! Everybody’s seen the documentation—it’s out in the open!”

I24: “You *know* what’s right,” “Just like these people know what’s right.”

PBC5: “Uhuru!” “Proud of Your Boy”

40 PB7: “Fuck George Floyd! Fuck Breonna Taylor! Fuck them all!”

41 I25: “We scared them off—that’s what we did, we scared the bastards,”

42 C7: “Fuck the blue!”

43 I26: “We have guns, too, motherfuckers!” “With a lot bigger rounds!” “If we have to tool up, it’s gonna be over. It’s gonna come to that. Next week, Trump’s gonna say, ‘Come to D.C.’ And we’re coming heavy.”

44 I27: “We need to come back with guns,” “One time with guns, and then we’ll never have to do this again.”

45 I28: “This is the old media,” “This is what it looks like. Turn off Fox, turn off CNN.”

46 I29: “Start makin’ a list! Put all those names down, and we start huntin’ them down, one by one!”

I29?: “Traitors to the guillotine!”

I29?: “They won’t be able to walk down the streets!”

I23: “This is the best thing that can happen, because it’s destroying the legitimacy of the system.” “the most awe-inspiring and inspirational and incredible thing I have seen in my entire life.”

I29: “We are at war. . . . Mobilize in your own cities, your own counties. Storm your own capitol buildings. And take down every one of these corrupt motherfuckers.”

c) From Barry, D., McIntire, M., Rosenberg, M. (2021). 'Our President wants us here': The mob that stormed the Capitol. *New York Times* (January 9). Retrieved from: www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/us/capitol-rioters.html

I = Insurrectionist

C = Crowd

Q = QAnon

01 I1: "We're not backing down anymore,"

C1: "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!"

02 I2 (Kevin Haag): "We are here. See us! Notice us! Pay attention!"

I2: "Should I get down on my knees and ask for forgiveness?" "I am asking myself that question."

03 I3 (Cory Griffin): "blood running out of that building" "You want to say that that was a mob? You want to say that was a violence? No, sir, no, ma'am, no. We could have a Second Amendment rally on those same steps that we had that rally yesterday. You know, and if we do, then it's going to be a sad day, because there's going to be blood running out of that building. At the end of the day, you mark my word, we will plant our flag on the desk of Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer," "And Donald J. Trump if it boils down to it."

Online discussions

04 PB1: "Pack a crowbar,"

05 Q1: "Does anyone know if the windows on the second floor are reinforced?"

06 Q2 (Thad Williams): "Patriots, if you need financial help getting to DC to support President Trump on January 6th, please go to my website,"

Freedom Plaza

07 Michael Flynn: "The members of the House of Representatives, the members of the United States Senate, those of you who are feeling weak tonight, those of you that don't have the moral fiber in your body, get some tonight," "Because tomorrow, we the people are going to be here and we want you to know we will not stand for a lie."

Jan 6th

08 I3 (Scott Cyganiewicz): "I'm happy, sad, afraid, excited," "It's an emotional roller coaster."

Social media

Mr Griffin: “You can imagine the emotion that ran through people when we get that word,”
“And then we get down to the Capitol and they have all the inauguration set up for Joe Biden.”

Mr Griffin: “What do you think was going to happen?”

Jan 6th

09 I4 (Jeff): “There’s a lot of people here willing to take orders,” “If the orders are given, the people will rise up.”

10 I5: “Keep moving forward! Fight for Trump, fight for Trump!”

11 I6: “Military Tribunals! Hang them!”

12 I7: “Arrest Congress!”

13 I8: “Whose way?”

C2: “Our way!”

14 I9: “Hey what’s the Senate side?” “Where’s the Senate? Can somebody Google it?”

C3: “Hell No, Never Joe” “Stop the Steal” “God Bless America” “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

15 I10 (Derrick Evans): “Derrick Evans is in the Capitol!”

16 I11 (Mr Griffin): “a great day for America.” “we came peacefully,” “Believe me, we are well armed if we need to be.”

17 I12: “We wait and take orders from our president”

I2: “We are representing the 74 million people who got disenfranchised,” “We are still out here. We are a force to be reckoned with. We are not going away.”

18 I13: “Well, he can go home to his Mar-a-Lago estate,” “We gotta go back to our businesses that are closed!”

3. Details of Leximancer analysis

a) Trump’s January 6th speech

When the contents of Trump’s speech (as transcribed in Section 1 above, minus the crowd responses) are submitted to Leximancer this identifies the following concept seeds (proper nouns are in bold and italics):

<input type="checkbox"/> bad	<input type="checkbox"/> individuals	
<input type="checkbox"/> ballots	<input type="checkbox"/> love	
<input type="checkbox"/> believe	<input type="checkbox"/> match	
<input type="checkbox"/> birth	<input type="checkbox"/> media	
<input type="checkbox"/> cast	<input type="checkbox"/> names	
<input type="checkbox"/> country	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>pennsylvania</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> dates	<input type="checkbox"/> people	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>democrats</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> president	
<input type="checkbox"/> down	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>republicans</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> election	<input type="checkbox"/> rid	
<input type="checkbox"/> fraud	<input type="checkbox"/> take	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>georgia</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> thank	
<input type="checkbox"/> happen	<input type="checkbox"/> things	
<input type="checkbox"/> happened	<input type="checkbox"/> thousand	
<input type="checkbox"/> history	<input type="checkbox"/> thousands	
<input type="checkbox"/> hundreds	<input type="checkbox"/> time	
<input type="checkbox"/> illegal	<input type="checkbox"/> totally	<input type="checkbox"/> voter
<input type="checkbox"/> illegally	<input type="checkbox"/> vote	<input type="checkbox"/> votes

Removing indeterminate nouns and verbs from this list leaves the following seeds:

<input type="checkbox"/> ballots
<input type="checkbox"/> country
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>democrats</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> election
<input type="checkbox"/> fraud
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>georgia</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> media
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>pennsylvania</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> president
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>republicans</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> vote
<input type="checkbox"/> voter
<input type="checkbox"/> votes

From these, Leximancer analysis (with the following settings: Visible concepts: 33%, Theme size: 33%, Rotation 180°) generates the concept map presented in Figure 2

b) Comments by Trump’s supporters

When the comments of insurrectionists (as transcribed in Section 2 above) are submitted to Leximancer this identifies the following concept seeds (proper nouns are in bold and italics):

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>america</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> battle	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>capitol</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> chair	
<input type="checkbox"/> corrupt	
<input type="checkbox"/> country	
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.	<input type="checkbox"/> need
<input type="checkbox"/> day	<input type="checkbox"/> people
<input type="checkbox"/> desk	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>president</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> down	<input type="checkbox"/> stand
<input type="checkbox"/> everything	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>storm</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> fight	<input type="checkbox"/> streets
<input type="checkbox"/> fucking	<input type="checkbox"/> take
<input type="checkbox"/> gonna	<input type="checkbox"/> thought
<input type="checkbox"/> happen	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>trump</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> million	<input type="checkbox"/> used
<input type="checkbox"/> motherfuckers	<input type="checkbox"/> war
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>nancy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> word

Removing indeterminate nouns and verbs from this list leaves the following seeds:

<input type="checkbox"/> <i>america</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> battle
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>capitol</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> corrupt
<input type="checkbox"/> country
<input type="checkbox"/> D.C.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>nancy</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>president</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>trump</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> war

From these, Leximancer analysis (with the following settings: Visible concepts: 33%, Theme size: 25%, Rotation 90°) generates the concept map presented in Figure 3