TWITTER AND THE 2016 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF TWEETS AND MEDIA COVERAGE

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Dr. Andrew Spano, Thesis Adviser: _____
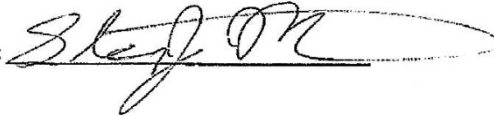
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Date: 21 DECEMBER 2015

Memo

To: Dr. Andrew J. Spano, Advisor, M.S.P.W.
From: Stephen J. McConnell, Candidate, M.S.P.W.
Subject: Twitter and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaign

Dear Dr. Spano,

The thesis incorporates my findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the pervasiveness and influence of political Twitter rhetoric on the media and the public. In the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, the thesis presents a new model to assess the rhetorical characteristics of a political tweet to determine whether the tweet is essentially meaningful or meaningless. Guided by the model, an analysis of the rhetorical characteristics of the tweets of four presidential candidates also produced quantitatively supported narrative evaluations of each candidate's rhetorical tendencies.

I subjected 75 tweets from each candidate to the model and this evaluation. The candidates were Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and Jeb Bush. I evaluated tweets each candidate posted on and after August 1, 2015. That evaluation revealed similarities and differences in their Twitter rhetoric. Some of those findings were significant, including the sheer frequency of ad hominem rhetoric from Trump in contrast to the other candidates. The thesis showed, however, that a bulk of the candidates' rhetoric is ambiguous and challenging to verify. The implications of this finding are significant and relevant: political Twitter rhetoric influences the public and the media. However, it is often challenging to verify the truth of the claims. It is easy to hedge, obfuscate, and lie on Twitter.

Political Twitter rhetoric influence on the media was the second research concern of this thesis. I sought to determine what type of rhetorical characteristic tends to trigger pervasive media coverage. The significance of that finding — that ad hominem Twitter rhetoric is frequently picked up by the media and disseminated to a global audience — is evident. Instead of quality political discourse, the public is inundated with character attacks and innuendo because of Twitter. Sadly, Twitter rhetoric disseminated by the media extends well beyond the Twittersphere. It is seen on televisions worldwide. It is redistributed on thousands of websites. It is printed in newspapers. It is quoted on talk radio.

A single tweet can become nearly ubiquitous, affecting public perceptions about the candidates and the U.S. presidential race. This thesis tracks part of this flow of Twitter rhetoric from source, the candidate, to source, the media. While not studying the influence of a tweet on the public mind, it reveals how a tweet enters the public consciousness and what type of tweet based on its rhetorical characteristics tends to scale to achieve that extent. If you should have any questions about this report, please contact me at (570) 561-6523.

Sincerely,
Stephen J. McConnell

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Foremost, I would like to thank Ashley Teatum. Without her guidance and love, I doubt I would have the passion and zeal to overcome the challenges I subjected myself to, nor would I have ever subjected myself to those challenges. I am greater than who I was because of her.

I would also like to thank Dr. Andrew J. Spano, who because of his knowledge, guidance, and honest assessments of my work I would not have been able to elevate my craft to this level.

Abstract

The unfettered dissemination of political rhetoric by politicians and the media through Twitter has far-reaching implications, beneficial and adverse. However, it is challenging to determine the truth or falsity of that rhetoric. This thesis presents a new model to subject tweets to empirical truth verification. That model is applied to a corpus of tweets posted on the Twitter accounts of four candidates in the 2016 U.S. presidential race. The model identifies an assortment of rhetorical characteristics that are inherent in each candidate's tweets. It also allows for the evaluation of the rhetorical tendencies of each candidate, as well as determining whether a tweet can be empirically verified. An analysis of the model's data revealed that all of the candidates' Twitter rhetoric is ridden with ambiguous language and claims that are difficult, if not nearly impossible, to verify. Furthermore, the model sought to establish what type of rhetorical characteristic tends to trigger pervasive media coverage. That analysis determined that ad hominem claims nearly always generate substantial media coverage while substantive statements are nearly always ignored.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Twitter is redefining how news and information is delivered and consumed. More than 500 million tweets are sent daily from 320 million active users across the world (Twitter, 2015). That volume comprises a global stream of rapidly communicated thoughts ranging from the mundane to updates on political affairs with global implications. It has also given journalists a tool to monitor events, enabling them to piece together news reports sourced from a single tweet. Journalists wait for the latest tweet from high-profile figures and even people on the street who break news for them to act on (Alejandro, 2010).

Americans embrace twitter. Among Americans, Twitter use is increasing with nearly one out of five adults on the platform in 2014 (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015). In addition, a new generation of voters, ages 18-29, who will have a major influence on the socio-political-economic landscape, are the platform's largest demographic of users (Duggan et al., 2015). Moreover, 36 percent of Twitter users visit daily and Twitter ranks third among all social media platforms in terms of daily interaction, according to Pew Research. In early 2015 in the U.S., there were 65 million Twitter users (Statista, 2015). That number is projected to exceed 69 million users by 2019.

Twitter impact on media. Twitter, the corporation, recognizes its role as the dominant news delivery vehicle among social media platforms. Recently, the company released a new feature called "Moments," which will let users experience "the best of what's happening on Twitter in an instant" (Twitter, 2015). This new feature is focused on improving the platform's news delivery experience. With a simple click of an icon, users can instantly "discover stories unfolding on Twitter" (Muthukumar, 2015). In two clicks, I accessed images, stories, and tweets about Hurricane Patricia and numerous media updates about church fires in St. Louis. In 2015, Twitter also released a live video-streaming app called Periscope that will add to the platform's newsgathering toolsets.

Media examines twitter influence. Twitter and the American Press Institute collaborated on a study that examined the relationship between Twitter and news consumption (Rosenstiel, Sonderman, Loker, Ivancin, & Kjarval, 2015). In a survey of more than 4,700 social media users, they found that Twitter users tend to read more news than users on other social media platforms. In their survey, 74 percent of respondents said they read news on Twitter daily. 86 percent said they use Twitter to receive news updates. 85 percent said they click on news links on the platform. Overall, the study found that users "get more news than they did before they joined the social network." 70 percent responded that Twitter is "a great way to get news … in real time." In addition, the platform helps them discover "new sources for news."

Beyond Tweeting

Twitter and politics. Twitter is abuzz with political conversations. The platform has become the 21st-century equivalent of the town forum, the ancient Greek's agora, the Roman's forum. The public gather on these abstract digital grounds to ponder and pontificate on the

issues affecting the nation. Politicians listen to the public discourse on Twitter and state their position on the issues. Journalists listen to the public and the politicians and decide whether what they said on Twitter is newsworthy. A single tweet from a high-profile candidate for office, especially if it is emotionally charged or controversial, will not only stir up a whirlwind of chatter in Twittersphere. It may also catch the eye of a journalist trolling Twitter for news.

Tweet to news story. A journalist will create a story from a single tweet, transforming a simple, short statement into a national conversation. However, the dissemination of that tweet to a wider audience beyond the Twittersphere often occurs without regard as to whether the statement was true or false. Also not taken into consideration is whether the tweet can subjected to any form of empirical verifiability. That is one focus of this thesis, evaluating the claims politicians make on Twitter for their rhetorical characteristics and evaluating how factually flimsy tweets get picked up by the media, thus influencing public opinion.

Tweets from four U.S. presidential candidates in the 2016 election cycle who are the subject of this thesis— Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and Jeb Bush — are particularly prone to mass dissemination by the media because of their tweets' perceived newsworthiness. But, as this thesis will show, their tweets are at times factually flimsy, empirically unverifiable, or vicious, unsubstantiated ad hominem attacks. Regardless of whether the tweet contains a substantial truth or carries a claim that could likely never be verified, the media will still report the tweet. This unfettered dissemination of political rhetoric by politicians and the media through Twitter has far-reaching implications, beneficial and adverse.

Twitter and media newsgathering. Media organizations and journalists have taken notice of the power and influence of Twitter, especially as a newsgathering tool. They are coming to grips with this new phenomenon in part because it is subverting the traditional consumption of news. Newsrooms and journalists must now embrace Twitter, even though it may run counter to ingrained newsgathering habits and institutional rigidity.

The American Press Institute provided six recommendations to publishers that are all based on one concern: the need to intertwine Twitter in newsgathering (Rosenstiel et al., 2015). The institute's recommendations urge publishers to make sure their journalists are on Twitter. They also urge journalists and editors to frequently post breaking news and links to articles on the platform. Failure to do so will likely mean hurting website traffic and online advertising revenue. It will also mean the loss of new website visitors who click on news updates posted on Twitter (Bullard, 2013).

Among major media organizations in the U.S., the use of Twitter in newsgathering and news dissemination is quite pervasive. Even publications that were initially resistant to it, like small community newspapers that are hampered by limited resources, have come to embrace it. I observed this resistance when I was a reporter for a daily newspaper in Scranton, Pennsylvania. As a story dissemination vehicle, Twitter is now a secondary media outlet for news organizations. It is also a source of information for them, a place where tips are gathered (Alejandro, 2010).

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Twitter and civic engagement. Increasingly, the 21st-century American receives a daily dossier of political news on their Twitter or Facebook feeds. According to the Pew Research Center, Americans are also turning to social media for political and civic engagement. 39 percent of Americans have performed some kind of civic or political activity on social media (Raine, Smith, Lehman, Schlozman, Brady, & Verba, 2012) Nearly 4 out of 10 social media users "like" or promote content that is politically oriented. Pew also found that 35 percent of social media users have used the platforms to mobilize voters. 31 percent of social media users have also urged others to act on a political or social issue that they favor.

In addition, Twitter users constantly read political news updates that are disseminated on the platform by media organizations and reporters. 72 percent of Twitter users reported that they turn to the platform for national and political news and 63 percent for international affairs (Barthel, Shearer, Gottfried, & Mitchell, 2015).

Figure 1: Pew Research Center Survey Data. July - August 2012.
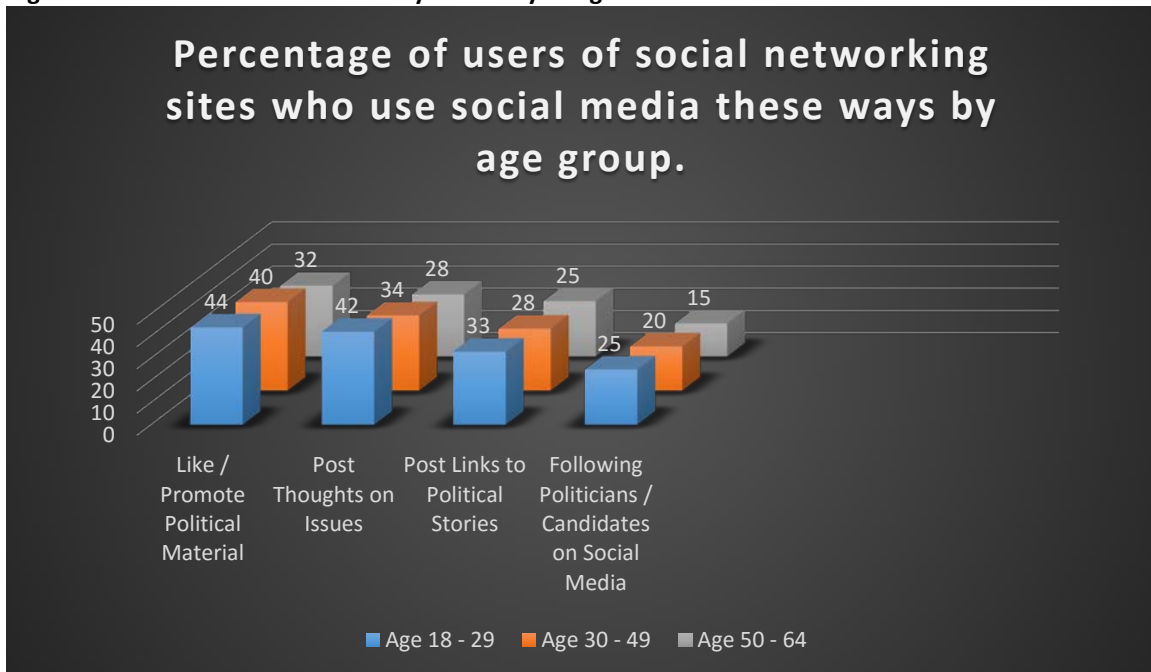
Twitter: future of news? Some have speculated whether Twitter could become the news media outlet of the future. Those speculations may not be unfounded. The evidence is clear and growing: one, previously referenced survey responses highlighted in this introduction; two, the media embrace of Twitter as a secondary media outlet; and three, corporate Twitter's recognition of its role in news delivery, as well as their development of tools to assist in that endeavor.

Referencing a study that explored the notion of Twitter as a news media outlet, Alejandro (2010) notes that "Twitter redefines and to some extent enlarges the definition of news media." A Twitter account, whether that of a journalist, a media organization, or even a

politician, is a news/media outlet, I argue. This argument is validated through observation. CNN's Breaking News Twitter account had 30.7 million followers as of October 23, 2015. The account itself is a subsidiary news outlet of the larger institution. It constantly projects media content to a national and global audience solely through that news outlet — the CNN Breaking News Twitter account. Likewise, Donald Trump's Twitter account has 4.65 million followers as of October 23, 2015. The account is a news outlet for Trump and his presidential campaign. It constantly projects media content (text and multimedia) to a national and global audience. Trump posts "news" about himself. Because of Twitter, Trump has become a news outlet.

Deeper Significance

Tweet to public opinion. The points made in the previous sections illustrate the primary focus of this thesis and the implications of the discussion that follows. So far, I have traced the rise of Twitter among the public and in the media. I also explored the intersection of the two: the American people are turning to social media, particularly Twitter as a source of news. In addition, the media is using Twitter as a newsgathering and news dissemination tool. The public reads and disseminates the media's tweets about news events and high-profile figures. The media reads and disseminates the public's tweets, including those tweeted by high-profile public figures. The media also disseminates their own tweets about stories they have developed about newsworthy figures and events. On occasion, those stories are written because of tweets from high-profile figures — what I call a tweet-triggering effect.

I have also defined how Twitter is a news outlet for the public, the media, and for high-profile figures like Donald Trump. That last point, Twitter as a news outlet for high-profile figures, is the departure point from the backdrop I developed thus far in this introduction and the entry point into the journey of the heart of the thesis and its implications: political Twitter rhetoric through the lens of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. Before I explain why the Twitter rhetoric of the presidential candidates will be subjected to a rhetorical analysis and how that analysis will be conducted, I will briefly discuss how high-profile presidential candidates have leveraged Twitter to become their own news outlets.

Twitter political rhetoric. Through Twitter, candidates project their thoughts and sentiments to a wider audience — the public and the media. In some cases, their tweets have triggered media coverage of their campaigns. Media coverage of their campaigns because of their tweets leaks into the public consciousness. The public is also exposed to the media's tweets about the candidates. They may click on links to stories posted on Twitter — stories that at times were triggered by a candidate's tweet. Moreover, campaign tweets that triggered the media to write a story extend beyond the Twittersphere into the public at-large.

The tweet-triggered media account may be published online, in a print newspaper, or broadcasted. People who do not know that Twitter exists will be subjected to these tweet-triggered stories. In addition, the public may follow the presidential candidates' Twitter accounts. Through that act, they will be exposed to a variety of updates about the campaign as well as opinions and statements from the candidates.

Candidates twitter spin. Candidates are acting as their own news outlets, projecting political rhetoric to millions of followers. Those followers encompass both the media and the public, who are exposed to a daily stream of campaign statements made on Twitter. The presidential candidates' audience reach is extraordinary. As of October 24, 2015, Donald Trump's official 2016 presidential race Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) had 4.65 million followers; Hillary Clinton, (@HillaryClinton), 4.55 million; Bernie Sanders, (@BernieSanders), 773,000 followers; and Jeb Bush, (@JebBush), 349,000 followers. While their tweets may or may not influence public and media opinion, the tweets expose both to the candidates' rhetoric.

Social media and political campaigns. The 2008 presidential campaign of then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama was the first large-scale political campaign in the U.S. to successfully leverage social media for positive political gains, as well as votes. Harris and Harrigan (2015) characterize that campaign as a "digital triumph" that "propelled social media onto the radar of marketers within commercial organizations worldwide." Through their use of social media and the internet, the Obama campaign essentially "created a new political constituency and raised a half billion dollars online." Their social media strategy also allowed voters to see an "unedited" view of the campaign by way of their edited social media content.

This example also illustrates how campaigns can now act as their own news outlets because of social media. Essentially, campaigns can reliably inform the public through their own message projection vehicle. They also subvert the traditional gatekeeper role of the media via social media. Who needs the media when they can be their own media? The success of the Obama campaign made it clear that these platforms are an essential tool for political communication — to reach audience and to circumvent the gatekeeper, the media. Today, social media is a key ingredient in the complex recipe of a U.S. presidential campaign. The Obama campaign opened this door in 2008 and proved how it can influence and reshape the electoral landscape. In 2016, there is no door, no option; it is reality. It is omnipresent. It is used by every presidential campaign aiming for the White House. For the candidates, Twitter is the digital stump where they can spout rhetoric and persuade voters — in 140 characters or less.

The convergence of politics and social media has spawned numerous studies. The studies attempt to deduce what this phenomenon means: for the public, the media, and the candidates. Political campaign consultants are also advising campaigns on their use of social media to make sure campaigns are projecting the best image and brand they can through these "news outlets." In the June 2015 issue of the Journal of Political Marketing, a U.S. consulting firm published a paper that outlined "new and old rules for 2016 presidential campaigns" (Ridder, 2015). The vast majority of the new rules are related to social networking and data analysis. Campaigns examine this data to quantify voter interests and to hone their social media messaging. Political communication today is "highly personalized and customized. Tip O'Neill's adage that 'all politics is local' no longer applies" (Ridder, 2015).

2016 U.S. Presidential Election

As of October 24, 2015, the four, 2016 U.S. presidential candidates that are the focus of this thesis have tweeted tens of thousands of times: @realDonaldTrump, 28,600 tweets; @BernieSanders, 4,010; @JebBush, 2,454; and @HillaryClinton, 2,247. Tweets sent on October 24, 2015 by all four candidates reached 10.3 million of their followers. Those tweets were also retweeted or favorited by tens of thousands of other Twitter users, expanding the reach of their Twitter postings. In addition, the media may reference one of their tweets in a news account, thus expanding the reach of their tweet beyond the Twittersphere and into minds of the segment of the American public that do not frequent Twitter.

Presidential candidates and twitter. Evident through observation is how the campaigns treat these platforms as their own news outlets. A single tweet may say something mundane or profound. Either way, it provides "news" to audience and to journalists monitoring these accounts for a morsel of information that may be turned into a story. For example, on October 24, 2015, Trump tweeted he wrapped up a speech in Jacksonville, Florida. That week, Clinton tweeted about a more serious topic: her Benghazi Congressional testimony. Constantly the campaigns tweet about the daily affairs of the candidate and the campaigns: their thoughts on an issue, a basic update about their plans for the day, a reaction to a hot-button story in the media.

But those statements contain more power and influence than what appears on the surface: a simple 140-character statement about something happening somewhere. A simple tweet can trigger media cycles and redirect media coverage to a candidate. This tweet-triggering effect has been highly pronounced in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign thanks in part to Trump, as well as increased media coverage of the presidential candidates' Twitter accounts in comparison to previous elections (Schreckinger, 2015; Barbaro, 2015; and Roy, 2015).

Trump and twitter. According to Newsday, "Donald Trump is using social media — especially Twitter — unlike any other 2016 presidential candidate. Or any before. His relentless use of social media to promote himself and bash opponents has been a key element in his bid in the race for the Republican presidential nomination" (Roy, 2015). Larry Sabato, a prominent University of Virginia political scientist, noted that Trump's use of Twitter to improve the prospects of his campaign is "not new" (Roy, 2015). However, Trump is "using Twitter as a two-by-four. It's a big part of his campaign and it's effective and it's free. And the media bites every time. And it generates tweets by others about him."

Even Trump recognizes Twitter's power and influence: "Now when I'm attacked I can do it instantaneously, and it has a lot of power" (Roy, 2015). According to Politico, "The GOP front-runner's campaign has set a new benchmark for engaging the press and public online. His tweets drive news cycles and his 15-second Instagram videos often earn enough media to perform the function of ad buys, but for free." Even Obama's former communications advisor, who was part of the president's successful social media campaign in 2008, credited the Trump

campaign's use of social media: Trump "is way better at the Internet than anyone else in the GOP which is partly why he is winning" (Schreckinger, 2015).

Trump, twitter, and media. Trump's tweets have triggered national and international media coverage. Just one tweet from Trump can trigger a reporter to write a narrative based on what he said on the platform. Trump's Twitter account has elevated his campaign, overshadowing his competitors and even issues. His Twitter account grew from 300,000 followers in 2011 to more than 4 million in 2015 thanks in part to a staffer who encouraged him to use Twitter (Schreckinger, 2015). Trump is not the only presidential candidate benefitting from Twitter. All of the other candidates that are the focus of this thesis have received varying degrees of media coverage because their tweets have triggered coverage. Aptly stated by a Newsday headline, the candidates are indeed "Racing Twitter to the White House" (Brenner, 2015).

Deconstructing twitter rhetoric. What is the deeper meaning of this convergence of public, media, and presidential politics on Twitter? Twitter has become a go-to source of news and information in our society. However, we often fail to ask ourselves how much *Truth* we are exposed to through the never-ending stream of updates we receive on the platform. Media, journalists, individuals, and high-profile figures — all of which because of Twitter are "news outlets" — are constantly delivering "news" to a wider audience in and beyond the Twittersphere. We are exposed to a deluge of rhetoric — some fiction, some fact, some faction — that we must sift through in an attempt to better understand our world and to help us make informed decisions at the polls.

We can easily drown in this flood of rhetoric. Often, the message we receive is very different from what was originally tweeted after the tweet is picked up by a news organization. The news organization spins it into a narrative, which is often their own interpretation of events. As a platform rising in prominence and influence, we must question its deeper meanings. We must try to understand how a high-profile politician can persuade the media to shine the spotlight on them through a tweet, leaving the other candidates in the shadows. We should have a sense of what kind of news the public should expect to receive because of the convergence of Twitter and the media. Is it lie or is it truth? Are journalists taking Twitter rhetoric at face value? Are they disseminating lies and political propaganda to a larger audience in and beyond the Twittersphere? A close examination of the language of Twitter is necessary because of the prominence, influence, and power of the platform.

Presidential race as case study. The 2016 U.S. presidential race provided me with an opportunity to observe the Twitter phenomenon in action and contain it to a static system for further examination and analysis. I could observe the production and dissemination of Twitter rhetoric. I could closely examine Twitter campaign rhetoric in an attempt to understand how Twitter may help or hinder us in understanding presidential candidates' positions and individual beliefs. I could examine whether Twitter introduces greater or lesser degrees of fact, fiction, or faction (blending of fact and fiction) into our lives.

I could understand how "news" is produced on Twitter: by an individual (a candidate) and by a media outlet who may or may not write a story based from a candidate's tweet. I could observe the non-linear flow of rhetoric through this digital ecosystem, individual Twitter account, media production of stories from tweets, and public impact. I could also observe and analyze the political rhetoric the public is exposed to from each candidate's Twitter account. Moreover, I could see how that small morsel of news is expanded into media narratives, potentially influencing public opinion. In addition, I could analyze what type of tweet triggers a media story.

Tweet Analysis Model

The tweets of Sanders, Trump, Clinton, and Bush provided me with an ideal closed system to observe political Twitter rhetoric and its impact on media. It also allowed me to extrapolate and analyze data generated from their rhetoric in an attempt to shed light on the themes raised in this introduction. To do this, however, I needed to construct a new model that would allow me to classify the candidates Twitter statements into rationale categories to generate data that could be evaluated to produce findings.

I also needed to devise a model that would help me cut through the political rhetoric to reach the core of the statement: its truth, its sensibility, or lack thereof, and the degree to which it could be empirically verified. Though tweets are short, they can still contain propaganda, falsity, and hearsay. They also contain a multitude of rhetorical characteristics that persuade overtly and subtly. Though superficially simple because of the 140-character limit, they still hold gravitas and offer various degrees of truth, including the potential to be utterly senseless propositions that can never be validated.

I developed a model, which will be explained in the Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model section of this paper, to cut through the political rhetoric to burrow within the marrow of the statement to ascertain the degrees of truth, or lack thereof, it held. Otherwise, I or anyone else, can be easily fooled by the surface rhetoric of a tweet where myth, lies, and faction reside in the careful (and manufactured) cobbling together of words. The model also gave me the opportunity to examine similarities and differences among the political rhetoric of the candidates: who was, for example, more prone to offer statements that contained a higher degree of validity, versus statements that merely attacked someone's character.

      Candidate twitter corpus. My analysis of the data derived from applying this model to 75 of each candidate's tweets made on and after August 1, 2015 essentially identifies the rhetorical characteristics of their tweets. This also helps reveal their rhetorical tendencies: their tendency to make flimsy claims or tendency to substantiate their claims. A candidate's body of tweets subjected to my model reveals a multitude of unique dimensions about their rhetoric: tendency to make fact-based statements or tendency to make claims that can likely never be proven to be true, or falsified, because of their inherent ambiguity.

Theoretical roots of model. My model is informed by several previous approaches, some of which attempted to cut through political rhetorical in part to identify and categorize rhetorical characteristics. I did not find an approach that sought to validate the "truthfulness" of a statement, however. I will introduce some of those previous approaches in the literature review section of this thesis. My model, however, is primarily inspired from the statement-verification analysis model developed by A.J. Ayer in *Language, Truth, and Logic*. I will summarize that model in Chapter 4 of this thesis. I decided to build my model from Ayer's system because it is perfectly suited for the analysis of short statements, or propositions, particularly synthetic propositions.

Billions of synthetic propositions can be found on Twitter. Nearly all of the statements made by the presidential candidates are synthetic. They are not self-evident. They hinge on external realities. However, I needed to modify Ayer's system, which is primarily concerned with philosophical discourse, and tailor it to Twitter and to political rhetoric. I also needed my model to produce data that would cut through political rhetoric while also identifying and describing its various facets: the use of emotional language, quantifying how many times a tweet revealed a candidate's specific position on an issue and so on. While Ayer's system is valuable, it is too limited for the purposes of this study.

Need to expose twitter rhetoric. I sought to expose the candidates' rhetoric for what it is, a barrage of empirically verifiable and unverifiable statements that the public and the media are constantly exposed to. I also wanted to see if I could peel back the political rhetoric and examine the data to reveal who the candidate truly is: Do they have a tendency to state facts or emotions? Do they attempt to tell truths, or do they equivocate? I developed a system to cut through the rhetoric, the surface meaning (words/content/ideas), and evaluate it to determine its truth potential, or lack thereof.

I also wanted to determine what type of tweet has a greater tendency to trigger media coverage. That would expose what type of news, because of a particular tweet, the public receives. The model provided a wealth of data on the rhetorical characteristics of the candidates' tweets. By quantifying and closely examining the rhetorical characteristics of their tweets, I was able to determine what type of tweet tends to trigger pervasive media coverage and what type of tweet tends to be greeted with silence.

In the Scope and Methodology section of the thesis, Chapter 3, I will explain how I analyzed the tweet-media triggering phenomenon and how I used my model to conduct this analysis. In that section, I will also discuss a survey I disseminated to media professionals and media students that asked them questions about the use of Twitter in the media, as well as in the 2016 presidential campaign. The survey confirms the importance of Twitter in newsgathering. It also, however, raises important questions about reporters' use of Twitter and whether they can even fact-check tweets they overwhelming said should be subjected to fact-checking.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of Twitter political rhetoric in the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, this thesis deconstructs the Twitter rhetoric of the candidates to reveal the various rhetorical methods and means they use to project messages to the public and media. It also reveals what rhetorical characteristics a tweet must contain in order to generate pervasive media coverage. Overall, the thesis urges us to scrutinize Twitter rhetoric and even question its value. It also urges us to greet Twitter rhetoric, whether from a presidential candidate's Twitter account or in the media, with extreme caution. The Twitter political rhetoric of the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign reveals why the public and the media should further question the value and validity of all Twitter rhetoric. This thesis will show why Twitter rhetoric should never be taken at face value, by the public or the media. However, this thesis will also show that at least when it comes to the media, it is often taken at face value while larger issues brought up on Twitter are sadly greeted with silence.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The academic literature has explored numerous topics concerning Twitter: how Twitter has altered newsgathering methods, as well as deeper examinations of politicians' use of Twitter and their Twitter rhetoric. This literature review, however, will focus solely on two areas of interest that are directly related to the two primary concerns of the thesis: Twitter rhetoric in politics and Twitter's influence on the media.

     Twitter rhetorical analysis models. In order to develop my Twitter rhetorical analysis model, I needed to explore other models analysis. I needed to gauge strengths and weaknesses in approach and decide whether I should adopt their models, innovate from them, or develop my own model. Ultimately, my model is part innovation and part amalgamation of various approaches noted in this literature review and in the next chapter where my model will be explained in depth. I noted that Ayer's empirical verification system served as the primary influence for my model. Because of the length of discussion required to describe how I incorporated elements of his approach, I will reserve that review for Chapter 4 of this thesis. Ayer's approach and my model are closely intertwined. For the purposes of clarity, I felt they would be best described in proximity. Essentially, Chapter 4 is an extension of this literature review.

In this literature review, I will note specific instances where these studies influenced my model. I also faced a unique context and challenge that required a departure from the studies described here. I needed to develop a model that would not only tease out the rhetorical characteristics of a single tweet. I also needed to develop a model in which I could identify particular rhetorical characteristics that triggered media coverage. I was not able to find a study that conducted that kind of assessment. The studies I found predominantly focused on one part of that concern: either a rhetorical/content analysis of tweets or tweet incorporation in media

articles. I was not able to find a study that bridged the two primary concerns of this thesis, a deconstructive analysis of Twitter rhetoric, as well as media articles triggered by that rhetoric. However, my evaluation of studies that focused on each concern provided a variety of approaches enabling me to bridge those two concerns. This literature review is divided by those concerns.

Twitter Rhetoric Models

Summary of findings. During my literature review, I found a number of studies that analyzed the content and rhetoric of tweets from political campaigns. (Da Silva, Hruschka, & Hruschka, 2014; Schroedel, Bligh, Merolla, & Gonzalez, 2013; Sousa & Ivanova, 2012). This secondary research provided a methodological and theoretical foundation to build from and modify in order to develop my model. While the examination of the confluence of Twitter, rhetoric and media is a relatively new endeavor in the literature, several innovative models have been built that examine this intersection. Some are solely qualitative analyses, some are solely quantitative analyses, and some are a mixture of both methods.

Overall, there exist a range of approaches: no singular method appears to permeate the literature, nor does there appear to be any foundational model yet. Primarily, this literature review was undertaken to get a sense of data extraction models and methods, including categorization and coding of tweets. The conclusions of the studies were insignificant to the overarching concern, developing my own model and analytic techniques.

Political twitter rhetoric in Spain. In "Campaigning on Twitter: Towards the 'Personal Style' Campaign to Activate the Political Engagement during the 2011 Spanish General Elections," Median and Munoz (2013) examined Twitter use by candidates of two leading political parties. Mainly, they determined how often candidates reiterate public agenda issues on Twitter, or if they resort to projecting their own agendas. They also wanted to determine how often the candidates directly interacted with voters on Twitter and what kind of campaign messages they published on Twitter. To do this, they designed an empirical system of analysis based on the content of the tweets. That analysis, quantitative and qualitative, involved examining more than 3,000 tweets from the candidates over a 16-day period. They coded the tweets based on various quantitative indicators, including frequency of social interaction and tweets, and tracking follower counts. They also identified the main topic of each tweet, the frequency of retweets, and the use of links.

U.S. presidential twitter rhetoric. Sousa and Ivanova (2012) built a model to analyze the Twitter rhetoric of President Barack Obama from January 2009 to May 2011. They analyzed 1,094 tweets from the president's official Twitter account. They used software to determine the frequency of word repetitions. They found that personal references such as "we," "you," and "they" were frequently used, as well as time and space references, and demonstratives. The study sought to understand the president's "digital rhetorical space on Twitter."

Austrian media and influencers. Ausserhofer and Maireder (2013) conducted an ambitious study that examined 145,356 tweets, 1,375 newspaper articles, and Twitter user data. That analysis was predominantly concerned with political rhetoric in the Austrian Twittersphere. Broadly, they wanted to determine who is tweeting about domestic politics in Austria. To do this, they identified political tweeters and their profession, gender, and political orientation. From that sample, they determined how "political actors" (journalists, politicians, experts, and citizens) are using Twitter, whether as a broadcast medium or to interact with others. In addition, they scrutinized issues discussed in the Austrian political Twittersphere and defined the extent of that discussion. They also determined if there was a relationship between Twitter discussion and newspaper coverage.

They collected tweets containing political language and linked those tweets to 1,657 Twitter accounts. That number was eventually whittled down to 374 users. Then, they used a program to track tweets posted by these users from October 2011 and January 2012. They also collected newspaper articles from Austria's six largest publications and compared political content they found in the articles to political discussions in their Twitter corpus.

Twitter and German politics. Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, and Welpe (2010) used text analysis software to conduct a content analysis of more than 100,000 tweets. They wanted to determine if the messages referred to a political party or a politician in the context of a German federal election, partly to "investigate whether Twitter is used as a forum for political deliberation and whether online messages on Twitter validly mirror offline political sentiment." They also examined whether Twitter can predict election results and if Twitter can reveal voters' political affinities. Tweets analyzed were posted by users between August 2009 and September 2009.

They collected tweets that referenced the six parties of the German parliament, and tweets from a select group of prominent politicians. To extract sentiment data from the tweets, they used a program called LIWC2007. That program assesses emotional, cognitive, and linguistic characteristics of a body of text. According to the study's authors, this software identifies words "belonging to empirically defined psychological and structural categories" and the degree in which they appear in the corpus. Words such as "maybe" and "guess" are classified as words signifying "tentativeness," and thus classified in that psychological category. For their study, they focused on 12 dimensions and sentiments: future and past orientation, positive and negative emotions, sadness, anxiety, anger, tentativeness, certainty, work, achievement, and money. I adopted some of these categories for my model. I coded the presidential candidates' tweets based on future orientation, past orientation, as well as emotive language containing positive and negative qualities.

Crowdsourcing tweets. Mohammad, Zhu, Kiritchenko, and Martin (2015) used crowdsourcing to code tweets based on several characteristics including sentiment, emotion, purpose, and style. The tweets involved the 2012 U.S. presidential election. They gathered more than 100,000 crowdsourced codings from 3,000 annotators. They gathered tweets posted

between August 2012 and September 2012, containing hashtags related to the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign.

They also collected tweets that mentioned the words, "Obama," "Barack," and "Romney." Questions asked crowdsourced participants to determine the tweets' emotional characteristics: whether it expresses an emotional attitude or response to something; whether it has no emotional content; the characteristics of its language; whether it is a simple statement, an exaggeration, or a rhetorical question; its purpose; and whether it was posted to vent, agree, support, motivate, or ridicule. I incorporated some of these characteristics into my model, including whether the tweet merely expressed a simple statement, which I call a basic proposition. I also incorporated a coding category for "no emotional content" in my model. In addition, I included ad hominem category, which is similar to their "ridicule" and "criticize" attributes.

It appeared to be a complex undertaking for the authors to determine the emotional sentiments of tweets. A single tweet can contain positive and negative emotional qualities. Subjective judgments cloud clear definition of either characteristic. I recognized this challenge in my model. Though short in character length, a Tweet can contain either no emotions, one emotion or a multitude of them. I created categories to capture that emotional array, coding based on positive or negative qualities or a mixture of emotional attributes.

U.S. house of representatives. Hong (2013) examines whether Twitter adoption by members of the U.S. House of Representatives improves or diminishes campaign fundraising. She collected Twitter data from 195 active Twitter accounts of Congressional representatives between June 8, 2011 and June 22, 2011. The data included the date of their Twitter posts, their number of followers, they number of users they followed, and the number of posts they made during that time span. She also collected campaign finance data.

U.S. 2012 presidential campaign. Hong and Nadler (2012) examine whether Twitter use by candidates influences the attention they receive online. They focused on the Twitter activities of the following candidates running for president in 2012: Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, Jon Huntsman, Ron Paul, Rick Perry, and Rick Santorum. Tweets and associated data they collected spanned 22 days in late December 2011 and early January 2012. They monitored how many times the candidates tweets were "mentioned," or referenced, on Twitter and how many times the candidates were referenced in major media outlets. They attempted to find a correlation between Twitter mentions and media mentions. This approach provided fodder to my model and tweet media triggering assessments. However, their tracking of "mentions" of the candidates in the media is not based on their tweets. It is just based on the mere mention of them or their campaign in the media — and not the actual tweet engaging the triggering.

Ultimately, they sought to "contribute to the discussion of whether, and to what extent, the political use of Twitter has the potential to impact public agenda and opinion." That is a major concern of my thesis. In addition, one of their findings is directly related to my thesis. They found that politicians' use of Twitter affects whether they are mentioned in mass media: "This

positive association implies that some journalists may take 'cues' from the politicians' tweets when they decide to mention a politician in their news articles. That is, a politician's Twitter activities may influence how journalists frame their news articles."

Today, Twitter triggering of media attention is relatively common. The authors speculate on this in their finding, though in fairness their paper was published in 2012, well before Twitter became tethered to media coverage and media coverage tethered to Twitter.

Quantitative tweet analysis. Da Silva, Hruschka, and Hruschka (2014) acknowledge the challenge of tweet sentiment analysis: "tweets are very short and often show limited sentiment cues." It is also difficult to determine the emotive characteristics of a tweet, since a significant number of them appear to be neutral and not emotionally charged. In my model, I recognized these challenges, particularly the prevalence of emotionally neutral tweets. To account for that characteristic, I created a "neutral" category: a tweet displaying neither emotionally positive nor emotionally negative characteristics, but still expressing an emotion, though subtly and neutrally, is coded as neutral.

For their model, they also avoid the use of the so-called "six universal emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise." Similarly, I felt that the range of human experience extends beyond the categorical hovel of six universal emotions. In addition, a classification system based on these types of emotions is error prone. To me, disgust can be a form of anger and surprise a form of happiness or sadness. The potential for subjective error during coding is increased in a system based from emotions subject to interpretation. That interpretation is further confused by the individual's conception of the meaning of those emotions. Occam's razor must be applied.

Their model is driven by complex mathematical computation coupled with linguistic analysis to analyze a large volume of data. One of their samples comprised 3,238 tweets gathered during the first Obama-McCain presidential television debate in September 2008. Tweets were coded as either emotionally positive, negative, mixed, and others. In my model, I adopted the "mixed" category for my emotional-sentiment analysis, as well as the positive and negative categories. This system of analysis is less error prone because it involves a lesser degree of subjective interpretation. It is less error prone to deduce whether a statement or experience is positive, negative, neutral, or mixed. It is more error more to deduce the sentiment of a statement or experience based upon a reductionist palette of six universal emotions that are all subject to varying degrees of interpretation.

Aristotelian Twitter analysis. Johnson (2012) assessed presidential candidate Mitt Romney's tweets from February 1, 2012 to May 31, 2012. She conducted a mostly qualitative examination of 161 of his tweets partially through an Aristotelian lens, Aristotle's rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos. Her assessment determined he built credibility (ethos), expressed reasoning (logos), and sought to "emotionally connect" (pathos) with his audience. A rhetorical analysis of tweets can be just as illuminating in contrast to other intensively, quantitatively driven studies highlighted in this literature review.

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In addition, somewhat similarly, I used data my model produced to conduct qualitative assessments of the candidates' tweets. Qualitative assessment informed by quantitative data is informative, objective, and evidence-based, producing evidence-based narratives that reduce error-prone subjective outcomes.

Early assessments of Twitter rhetoric. Golbeck, Grimes, and Rogers (2010) examined more than 6,000 Twitter posts from U.S. Congressional representatives. This type of study, a close examination of Twitter content, particularly in a political context, was a relatively new endeavor for its time. They examined demographics (party affiliation and home state), post frequency, and Twitter message content. They collected the 200 most recent tweets from congressional representatives. They coded for whether the tweet, for example, was directed at another member of Congress, if it was directed to an "external" target outside Congress, like a constituent, if it was a personal message, like a holiday greeting, or if it discussed official business, a reference to a vote or a speech, for example. They also coded for the following dimensions: if the message conveyed a fact, an opinion, or a position on an issue. I incorporated some of these coding distinctions in my model, including whether a tweet contained a fact, a position on an issue, and a sentiment (or emotion).

Twitter and Media Use

Summary of findings. In this section, I present four studies examining the convergence of Twitter and media. These studies provide theoretical foundation and context to my approach and assessment of what type of tweets tend to trigger media analysis, found in Chapter 6 of the thesis.

Twitter alters newsgathering model. Parmelee (2013) asserts that Twitter has reshaped the "norms and practices of political reporters and editors." During the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign, he interviewed reporters at newspapers in the U.S. From his interviews, he found that Twitter altered newsgathering practices "in part because Twitter is considered more consequential for their job than any other form of social media, including Facebook." Twitter affected how they gather news and even how they write stories. Twitter also helped reporters find and track breaking news, crowdsource for information, and enabled them to maintain "awareness remotely of the activities and thoughts of individuals deemed important for news stories."

One journalist commented that Twitter "has replaced Facebook as far as the 'first' depository for news. … I signed up for Facebook originally just to be able to follow certain candidates. I found it interesting when the Florida Supreme Court started sending out press releases that said, 'You might get this information quicker if you follow us on Twitter.'" In addition, supervisors encouraged reporters to use Twitter: "tweet and tween often," one reporter commented. One reporter also noted that Twitter "has replaced other newsgathering tools as the first place to go for news." In addition, it has helped journalists find sources by monitoring Twitter chatter when news breaks. As one reporter pointed out: "…I follow a bunch of political

science professors who were tweeting out the exit poll results. Well, that was perfect. I would compare what they were saying. I would retweet what they did, then I would go to my tweets, my stream, double check the stuff on Google, and put it in the story. Now, it's just not from any bum, this is from political science professors I know."

Twitter also assists reporters with intelligence gathering, "an opportunity to seemingly be in several places at once, so they can maintain awareness of what newsmakers, sources, colleagues and other individuals are up to." This "intelligence" may give journalists story "ideas or affect how existing stories are covered."

Twitter-triggered news content. Moon and Hadley (2014) studied media content produced because of Twitter. Their analysis of content from seven major media outlets in 2010 and 2011 found that "journalists embraced Twitter as a new channel for information gathering." Broadcast news, in particular, frequently cited Twitter as a primary or exclusive source. This was partly due to economic efficiency, they found. Twitter is a cheap newsgathering tool: "the greater the concern among news professionals about economic efficiency, the more they become interested in new technology. The Internet and its offspring are expected to be key factors leading to changes in the traditional journalistic routine formed by information subsidy. Simply put, the Internet reduces the time and effort of journalists in reporting."

Citing a 1973 content analysis of articles published in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, they noted that study found 58 percent of the news was "derived from routine channels such as official proceedings, press releases, and press conferences." To show how much that reliance on traditional sources has changed, Moon and Hadley (2014) in 2010 and 2011 conducted another evaluation of content produced by seven media outlets: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, Fox News Network, and CNN. Using keyword "twitter" in the LexisNexis Academic database, they collected all stories longer than 100 words that included that keyword in the body of the story. They then coded the stories based on its topic, the type of news story, whose Twitter account was cited in the news story, and whether Twitter was used as a primary source.

They found that 946 newspaper stories and broadcast news reports used Twitter as a news source: "This means the seven media published or aired 11.2 stories per day using information from Twitter." They also found that Twitter was used as the sole source in 35.5 percent of the stories in their sample, or 336 stories. In stories with multiple sources (610 stories), 153 stories (25 percent) used Twitter as a primary source. Broadcast news also used Twitter as a primary source to a greater degree compared to newspapers: "TV used Twitter as a sole source in 301 stories (50.8%) while newspapers did in only 34 stories (9.7%)." Regarding political news stories, "among 376 domestic or international political stories, 316 stories cited specific Twitter accounts as sources." The Twitter accounts of members of Congress "were most frequently cited as news sources in newspapers" compared to broadcast news. These findings appear quaint in 2015, but that does not undermine the value of the study. Their approach reveals the existence of the media/Twitter convergence and the degree to which it occurs.

Newspapers and twitter: quotable tweets. The convergence of media and Twitter was evident in 2010. In "Social Media as beat: Tweets as a news source during the 2010 British and Dutch elections," Broersma and Graham (2012) found that tweets were often quoted in newspaper coverage. Politicians were also able to construct persuasive tweets that became "quotable tweets" in the newspapers. However, this trend comes with potential repercussions: "In the future, the reporter who attends events, gathers information face-to-face, and asks critical questions might instead aggregate information online and reproduce it in journalism discourse thereby altering the balance of power between journalists and sources." They speculated about Twitter turning into "a beat: a virtual network of social relations of which the journalist is a part with the purpose of gathering news and information on specific topics."

They also noticed how journalists were using tweets from the public to provide public opinion to their stories, "while messages of politicians might be interesting to add color to a story." They also found instances where tweets could trigger news "or contain something newsworthy, or the newsworthiness can be in the process: in the interaction between various agents on Twitter." They argued that when social networks offer those uses for journalists, they become social media beats: "Journalists have discovered that Twitter is a cheap, quick, and easy-to-work beat for getting information." However, the implications of that reliance on Twitter are significant: "We argue that this increasing use of tweets as quotes in news texts has important implications for the power balance between journalists and politicians."

All those speculations are pervasive in the media today. They are also directly related to the heart of this thesis: the mere replication of Twitter messages by the media without subjecting them to verification. This alternative newsgathering method arrives when the field, particularly print journalism, is facing a severe financial crisis. During their study, they found "journalists complain about the newsroom turning into a 'copy factory'; instead of actively making news, journalists are circulating ready-made stories with little time for investigation or even fact checking." That causes the "usage of sources that are easily available and already familiar to journalists."

Enter Twitter: "Twitter is a rich arsenal for journalists in search of quotes from prominent news sources like politicians." During the 2010 British and Dutch elections, 24 percent of British candidates and 48 percent of Dutch candidates "shared their thoughts, visions, and experiences" on Twitter. This offered an "easy-to-access service for journalists who could follow individual politicians and the interaction between them in a blink." Candidates seized the opportunity: "Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte stated that the interaction between old and new media was very attractive to politicians: 'What we do on social networks leads to extra attention on television and in the newspapers.'"

However, Broersma and Graham (2012) noted the downsides of this trend, particularly for journalists and the public they are charged with protecting: "On the other hand, this form of one-way communication (instead of bargaining between reporters and politicians) gives the latter (politicians) more control over news discourse." They noted one politician who refuses to

talk to journalists. For that politician, "reporters are thus dependent on his sayings in press releases and — increasingly — on Twitter without having the possibility to set the news agenda, ask questions, or go further into his statements."

In their content analysis of published newspaper articles during the elections, they found instances of tweets triggering news stories because the tweets "themselves were newsworthy." They also found that tweets were usually quoted in full: "To some extent, this implies that politicians gain control over news discourse: journalists rely on a statement from a politician without contacting him or her, thereby abandoning their power to critically question the source and the possibility to check the information in the tweet." This reflects a clear shift in power from journalist to politician, as well as an abdication of the media's responsibility to fact-check information. As Broersma and Graham (2012) note, "the rise of tweets as a source might shift the power balance between journalists and politicians in benefit of the latter. Since tweets are almost exclusively quoted entirely, a well-chosen utterance on Twitter can reach the electorate without being mediated by professional journalists and generate a lot of publicity."

Conclusion

This literature review reveals two core themes: one, there is a wide range of rhetorical and content analysis models to devise a unique model from; two, there is a keen interest in Twitter influence on the media. The literature also raises some serious concerns: one, whether tweets are being subjected to verification; two, and related to that point, the shift in power from reporters to politicians because of Twitter. Politicians now have the first and last word because of Twitter. However, there appears to be a lack of studies focusing on what type of tweet triggers media coverage. A number of studies exist that examine the rhetorical characteristics of a tweet. The connection between rhetorical characteristics and if particular rhetorical characteristics trigger media coverage appears to be unexplored.

Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology

Summary

The research methodology of this thesis is derived from its primary focus: the effect of Twitter rhetoric on the media and the public. Since Twitter is a standout source of news and information for the media and the public, this research is motivated by a need to understand the flow of Twitter rhetoric from source (or "news outlet") to media to potentially influencing public opinion. The 2016 U.S. presidential race provides an opportunity to pause the flow of Twitter rhetoric and develop a system to examine and analyze its flow, power, and influence from news source, a presidential candidate, to widespread media coverage of a tweet. That is the broad concern of this thesis: to understand the how, and why, a single tweet can achieve that scale.

To understand that how and why, a model must be developed to break down the rhetorical characteristics of a tweet in the context of Twitter rhetoric among 2016 U.S. presidential

candidates. While the model I developed may be applied to other Twitter contexts, this thesis and the model is geared toward examining the political Twitter rhetoric of the candidates. It is also tailored to measuring the potential for that rhetoric to trigger widespread media coverage.

Focus of research methodology. The research methodology of this thesis to determine its findings, which are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, are concerned with one central focus. That focus is to strip away the varnish, or propaganda, of the candidates' statements to reveal the underlying structures of the rhetoric — its rhetorical characteristics. From an examination of the body of Twitter rhetoric from each candidate, whereby the rhetorical characteristics are identified and coded in my model, quantitatively supported impressions of the candidates also begin to surface. Those impressions, for example, include their tendency to engage in repetitive character attacks, or their tendency to make statements that would be incredibly challenging to verify. Patterns begin to emerge through an examination and analysis of a candidate's tweets through the model's rhetorical lens, one that is not concerned with exactly what is being said (I am pro-life; I am not pro-life). Rather, the model is concerned with the degree to which the statement can be verified — its verification potential, not what is said and whether what is said is true.

This thesis is concerned with identifying and finding those patterns and others — the degree of emotional language used (positive, negative, or a mixture), the frequency to which a definitive political position is made. It is not concerned with engaging in a subjective review of the merits of the statements or other error prone subjective interpretations. Instead, the research methodology and the model is concerned with developing a system to engage in a systematic and objective coding of tweets based on rhetorical characteristics: for example, frequency of times a value or position was stated, or whether a candidate's Twitter rhetoric is more future oriented, rather than present and evidence-based. If it is future oriented, it is problematic to verify the degree of truth in the statement because it is speculative. The statement has not yet occurred.

Revealing rhetorical tendencies. The quantity of various rhetorical characteristics used by the candidates generates a primary-data supported portrait of the candidate that is subject to qualitative review through narrative, backed by data. In other words, data from the model enables narrative impressions to be formed of the candidates: their rhetorical tendencies, their willingness to stick to statements of fact that may be easier to substantiate rather than statements of value that are challenging to verify.

I will explain this model in depth, including the various rhetorical characteristics the tweets were coded for, in Chapter 4 of this thesis. That chapter will thoroughly explain the intellectual heritage of the Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model. Briefly, the model is built from Ayer's empirical verification model as applied to propositions (or statements), largely explained in his work, *Language, Truth, and Logic*. However, no model, not even Ayer's or those referenced in the literature review, could satisfy what this thesis seeks: a close examination of the rhetorical characteristics of Twitter rhetoric and what particular characteristics tend to trigger pervasive, or scant, media coverage. I also needed to tailor the model to political rhetoric.

I needed to develop an examination and data extraction methodology that could measure that phenomenon and particular context to arrive at sound quantitative and quantitative findings. The studies noted in the literature review tended to explore one side of the concern: either a rhetorical or content analysis of tweets or a content analysis of media articles in which tweets appeared. I did not encounter a study that bridged the two concerns, while also seeking to comprehensively understand their convergence: that being, the interaction between political Twitter rhetoric and media coverage of that political Twitter rhetoric. I also did not find a study that explored why certain tweets from politicians tend to get more traction in the media.

Therefore, I was left with one option, innovation, based upon previous approaches. I will explain the rationale behind that innovation, the founding of that innovation upon previous approaches, and the data the model provides through coding of various tweet rhetorical characteristics in the next chapter of this thesis. In the next section, I will explain the political rhetoric from the candidates I captured and why. How that political Twitter rhetoric was subjected to analysis will be explained in the next chapter.

Ultimately, the model and the analysis of its data were used to determine the rhetorical characteristics of the candidates' tweets. That data also created data informed narratives about the candidates' rhetorical tendencies. Those findings, one of two primary research prongs of this thesis, are presented in Chapter 5, "Results and Findings from Model." These efforts paint a truer portrait of the candidate — that which lies beneath the surface of their Twitter rhetoric.

Candidates subject to analysis. I collected tweets from four U.S. presidential candidates. I limited the study sample to Sanders, Trump, Clinton, and Bush partly because of time constraints. For fairness and to ensure that I would have a variety of rhetoric to subject to analysis, I selected two candidates from each major party, Democrat and Republican. At the time this thesis was being researched and developed, Sanders and Clinton were the evident Democratic front-runners for the nomination. I knew they were highly unlikely to drop out of the race, thus ensuring their Twitter rhetoric would not be silenced.

Similarly, Trump and Bush were among a group of front-runners when this thesis was considered. In some polls, they were the clear front-runners. In other polls, Bush, particularly, was a toss-up. However though they were among a group of several Republican candidates who had the potential to secure the nomination, I determined they were the least likely to drop out of the race based on media accounts, polls, past behavior, and reputation. These predictions turned out to be correct.

Data collection rationale. I needed to determine when it would be reasonable to pause the flow of Twitter rhetoric from those candidates, gather a study sample, and subject it to analysis. I also needed to determine how large that sample should be, with size dictated by three factors primarily: one, ensure the sample was adequate to surface similarities and differences in the rhetorical characteristics of the candidates; two, ensure my analysis could be

conducted within stringent time constraints; and three, ensure I would not face any technological difficulties because of sample size.

Quantity and time rationale. I gathered 75 tweets from each candidate beginning on August 1, 2015. 75 tweets offered a representative sample that allowed for the emergence of a plethora of primary data in which similarities and differences among the candidates could be clearly discerned. In addition, I did not want any contextual event to influence the selection of my data; thus, though seemingly arbitrary, I selected August 1 because it represented a clear starting point and it was not tied to or influenced by any contextual occurrence that could potentially skew the data.

Some tweets were excluded from analysis. Mainly, the candidates' retweets of other users' tweets were excluded, as well as clearly repetitious tweets. I examined tweets that offered new political rhetoric, or variants of, from the candidates. Anything that fell outside that scope was excluded. These tweets were gathered by tapping into the so-called "Twitter Firehose" — Twitter's API, using a Python programming script. Through the script, I collected select data from each candidate's official presidential race Twitter account. That data included the date and time stamp of the tweet, the full tweet sent at that date and time, and a link, if present. With the help of a computer-programming expert, I used this method because other programs and methods to collect historic Twitter data is error prone: tweets are excluded or a variety of excess data is included that is not applicable to this study. Data collected from each candidate through the Twitter API was funneled into spreadsheets and organized into various columns for analysis in a static environment. Their Twitter rhetoric could now be examined in isolation.

Media methodology and survey. I also needed to examine the affect of political Twitter rhetoric triggering media coverage, the other primary research prong of this thesis. To determine this triggering effect, I conducted a randomized selection of the candidates' tweets to see which triggered pervasive digital media coverage and which triggered scant, or nonexistent, coverage. However, the precise determination of pervasiveness of coverage cannot be determined due to technological limitations. Currently, there are no means to measure how much media coverage a tweet generates. Twitter abandoned development of a feature they were intending to release that would measure it.

Because of its ability to scour a wide extent of the web, there is only one reliable measure: Google. I tested other programs and search engines, including LexisNexis and one designed specifically to find media articles. None of them reliably returned the quantity of tweet-triggered articles that Google did. However, precise quantification of media articles triggered because of a tweet through Google is impossible. Google does not crawl every page of the web. Google also returns repetitive results: the same article based on a tweet could appear in a number of digital media outlets, especially if it was written by a wire service and widely disseminated. Google also returns results based on marketing and optimization metrics. Therefore, I had to develop a simple and reliable system for classification and coding purposes.

Scant-pervasive coding system. It is obvious when a tweet triggers pervasive online media coverage. The Google search returns innumerable articles from multiple media outlets that referenced the tweet or wrote stories about it. If a tweet triggered a highly evident and noticeable media response on Google, I coded it as pervasive. If a Google search of a tweet triggered "scant" — an observable inverse of pervasive, three or less references in major media — I coded it as "scant." I also utilized Google Advanced search to increase search return accuracy. I inserted the tweet text into the "all these words" field and filtered the results to English language returns only. In addition, I excluded bloggers and websites that clearly did not have a newsgathering function, or journalistic orientation. I also excluded articles from media outlets that published stories that merely did a "roundup" of candidates' various tweets. The tweet needed to be an integral part of the narrative or referenced in the narrative.

Tweets from each candidate were randomly selected, then subjected to this triggering analysis. I could not subject all the tweets to analysis, 300 in the sample, because of time constraints. In addition, I felt a randomized selection would prevent bias: I would be prevented from selecting tweets I felt would trigger pervasive or scant media coverage. Those findings — presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis — were able to determine that the only rhetorical characteristic that guarantees pervasive media coverage is an ad hominem attack. Meanwhile, if a candidate makes a policy statement or public position on an issue, it rarely receives media coverage. Those findings were derived from subjecting five randomly selected tweets from each candidate to this methodology. The tweets were selected using a randomization algorithm on an Excel spreadsheet.

Survey to media professionals. I distributed a 10-question survey to media professionals and media students concerning the use of Twitter in the field and the U.S. presidential race. Depending on responses selected, the survey comprises 8 to 10 questions. The heart of it, and where implications arise, is this prompt: "Journalists must fact check a presidential candidates' tweets before using them in a story." More than half of the respondents strongly agreed that journalists must fact-check a presidential candidates' tweets before using them in a story. However, ad hominem attacks are factually flimsy and ridden with subjectivity, but they receive the most pervasive coverage. Can a reporter legitimately fact-check a character attack? That it was said by someone at some time, yes. That the claim is true is difficult, if not impossible, to verify.

The next chapter is an explanation of the Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model: its intellectual history, its rationale, and how it was applied to the study sample to generate primary data. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 will present the findings of the research methods and primary thesis concerns described here. Chapter 7 will offer a summary of the findings, a conclusion, and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Tweet Rhetorical Analysis Model

It is challenging to uncover the truthfulness of a statement no greater than 140 characters. But within that statement, there are characteristics of truth, fiction, faction, and even fantasy that

can surface when a strict, objective system of rhetorical analysis is applied to a tweet. However, this thesis must contend with not only a rhetorical analysis of a tweet. It must also contend with the need to make a determination as to what rhetorical characteristics tend to trigger media coverage. Two problems need to be solved and examined with one model: a rhetorical analysis method and model that provides plausible explanations to both problems. In addition, the model must avoid superficial analysis. A marginal understanding of the rhetorical dimensions of a tweet must be avoided to prevent the generation of a poor quantity and quality of data to draw conclusions from.

Foundational Theory

An Aristotelian approach similar to what Johnson (2012) utilized to cohere the appeals of pathos, logos, and ethos to Mitt Romney's tweets during the 2012 presidential race will not overcome the challenges posed by this thesis. However, any model that seeks to understand the rhetorical nature of any statement should be at least be superficially informed by the Aristotelian appeals of pathos, logos, and ethos. Nearly all knowledge and analysis of rhetoric in Western systems of thought stems from this root. Rhetorical speech acts almost always contain those appeals: the "ethical, derived from the moral character of the speaker," the "emotional, the object of which is put the hearer into a certain frame of mind," and the "logical, contained in the speech itself when a real or apparent truth is demonstrated," Freese (1982) notes in in his introduction to his translation of Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric*. Those conceptions of rhetoric are time tested, a solid foundation in which all-rhetorical examinations in nearly all contexts should be built upon.

Ethos as persuasive appeal. An analysis of a speech act should involve an assessment of the "moral character of the speaker," or ethos, as defined by Aristotle (Rhetoric, I, II, 3-7). The speaker "persuades by moral character when his speech is delivered in such a manner as to render him worthy of confidence." The speech may be instilled with values, ethics, morality, and credibility, thus infusing the speech with ethos and making it a more effective rhetorical appeal. The ethos of the speech itself, the means of moral persuasion, the values instilled in the speech by "persons of worth" ascertain our "absolute" confidence. Aristotle argued that ethos "constitutes the most effective means of proof" — a finding that I hold to. For that reason, my model includes moral and ethical value assessments of Twitter rhetoric.

Pathos as persuasive appeal. Following an assessment of a speech act's ethos, an Aristotelian rhetorical examination involves determining how that speech act put the "hearer into a certain frame of mind," or pathos (Rhetoric, I, II, 3-7). How does an orator, writer, or politician rouse emotion by speech? Aristotle rightly recognized that the "judgements we deliver are not the same when we are influenced by joy or sorrow, love or hate." The various shades of emotion incorporated into a speech influence our reaction to the speech act to varying degrees.

Logos as persuasive appeal. The value of the speech itself is also gauged through the facts it contains, what "it proves or seems to prove," or logos (Rhetoric, I, II, 3-7). What facts

substantiate the emotional intensity of the speech? What facts support what is said? What facts support the values or convictions of the speaker or writer? This is logos: the logic, evident or underlying, laden within the speech. Aristotle said a rhetorician "must be capable of logical reasoning, of studying characters and the virtues, and thirdly the emotions — the nature and character of each, its origin, and the manner in which it is produced" (Rhetoric, I, II, 3-8). I concur and argue that the examiner of rhetoric — and those who seek to build systems of rhetorical analysis — must clearly understand these divisions and incorporate them, even tangentially, into any model that seeks to tease out these main divisions of rhetoric. It is also a foundation for the exploration of more subtle rhetorical characteristics.

Applied to modern contexts. In agreeance with Aristotle, I also find that rhetoric — and the examination of a particular piece of rhetoric — is the "faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever" (Rhetoric, I, I, 14-II). That "any subject whatever" applies to discovering the means of persuasion within any context or medium from which the rhetorical act is being made for — tweet to white paper to inauguration speeches. In addition, the rules of rhetoric and rhetorical analysis "are not applied to any particular class of things." It is an open-ended discovery, applied to a multitude of subjects and contexts. It is flexible, as flexible as language. Systems of rhetorical analysis are created to better understand rhetoric and its various permutations, many of which extend beyond Aristotle's classifications. Aristotle provided that foundation for rhetorical discovery and a number of open doors for interpretation and execution of that discovery: the means, the methods, and the diversity of contexts and subjects to which that discovery can be applied.

Aristotle applied to twitter. Studies like Johnson (2012) have applied Aristotelian appeals to tweets and shown that it is a practical solution to Twitter rhetoric analysis. There are other elements of Aristotle's systemization of rhetoric that can be applied to Twitter to better understand the underlying rhetorical characteristics of a tweet: the variety of other rhetorical building blocks that provide the underlying foundation to the house of words that appear on the surface. For example, Aristotle also identified the assortment of emotions that a statement can contain, including anger, slight, mildness, love, friendship, fear, shame, shamelessness, favor, benevolence, and pity. In addition, Aristotle understood the importance of time in rhetoric, judgment of "things to come," and the past (Rhetoric, I, III, 4-6). Aristotle classifies time into three distinct speech acts: the deliberative, in which the speaker "exhorts or dissuades, always advises about things to come;" the forensic speech act, which references the past, "things done that one party accuses and the other defends;" and the epideictic, or the present, "the existing condition of things that all those who praise or blame have in view."

A comprehensive model of rhetorical analysis that is attempting to identify the variety of rhetorical characteristics within a statement, the rhetorical building blocks of that statement, must assess the varying degrees of emotions infused in a speech act. Because of the range of emotions that can be infused in a speech act, that model must cover a wide swath of that range. In addition, a comprehensive rhetorical analysis must also consider the time in which the argumentation refers to: past, present, future, or an amalgamation. Not all arguments are drawn from past evidence, nor do all arguments speculate about future scenarios. Effective

arguments also draw their evidence from all three-time references, past, present, and future. Time, according to Aristotle, is a form of argumentation in and of itself. Since it is a form of argumentation, it must be included in a model that is conducting an extensive rhetorical analysis of a statement.

Aristotle to A.J. Ayer

Aristotle is one foundation from which my model springs from and others as well, either directly or tangentially. An Aristotelian review of rhetoric has spanned time and been applied to new forms of rhetoric, including Twitter rhetoric. However, this lens is a narrow one, blinding the many other possibilities of a rhetorical and truth assessment examination of a tweet. Even Aristotle noted that "the function of rhetoric, then, is to deal with things about which we deliberate, but for which we have no systematic rules" (Rhetoric, I, II, 11-13). Rhetoric contains a plentitude of formulations, techniques, styles, and approaches that make precise systemization of it difficult, if not impossible. The analysis of such a flexible, indefinite system may need to be assessed by multiple, flexible models.

Past models and new interpretations. Several models have been developed, building from Aristotle's foundation or creating new conceptual examinations of rhetoric. It is open to interpretation, how one constructs a system to interpret and understand rhetoric. Alterations in the delivery of rhetoric and forms of persuasion have occurred with the flow of time and the subsequent rise of new technologies. These technologies have given rise to new forms of communication for rhetoric to be delivered upon. Rhetoric must be shaped to those technologies. Rhetoric does not and will never deal with "any one definite class of subjects" for it contends with the impossibly undefinable, limitless expanse of human experience and ceaseless innovations upon which that rhetoric can be delivered upon and shaped to (Rhetoric, I, I, 12-14). Rhetoric is forever evolving, tailoring itself to the contexts it must be delivered to, the mediums it must be delivered upon, and the situations it must contend with.

However, that is not to say that an Aristotelian conception of rhetoric is obsolete or useless. It is neither, but it is a foundation in which new, flexible systems of rhetorical analysis must be built upon. Aristotle recognized the permeability of rhetoric, as it had to be shaped to meet the needs and the ends of a given rhetorical situation using the available and known means of persuasion to do so. The means of persuasion — ethos, logos, pathos; time; the varying use of emotive charge — can still effectively inform a model of rhetorical analysis today, even as applied to an examination of political Twitter rhetoric.

Modifying aristotelian rhetorical assessments. Modification and extension of Aristotelian lenses of rhetoric is required, especially when contending with new technologies, rhetorical realities, and rhetorical contexts, particularly political rhetoric as conveyed within the linguistic constraints of Twitter. Aristotle's systemization of rhetoric was tailored to the speech acts of his day, generally oration. His system was not created to assess short statements, especially 140-character tweets. In addition, sometimes a tweet is just a mere assemblage of words that offers little to no substance or new knowledge. Some may argue it is not even a

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statement, or a proposition. It is merely something said at a given point in time, surely not rhetoric.

Any model attempting to tease out the rhetorical characteristics of a tweet must contend with those realities: that a tweet may say nothing or that a tweet may contain a complex integration of multiple rhetoric characteristics including some of Aristotle's classifications. On its surface, a tweet, yes, is just a few words cobbled together to say something or relatively nothing. A tweet can contain a plethora of rhetorical forms or none. A tweet offers that expanse or a mere keyhole of reality. A rhetorical analysis model designed to assess tweets faces that struggle, to define several characteristics, or none. The challenge is creating a model that has that flexibility and range. Innovation is in order, as well as applying that innovation to a unique rhetorical situation, Twitter rhetoric, particularly political Twitter rhetoric. An Aristotelian conception of rhetoric is too constricted of an optic to observe a true, expansive portrait of Twitter rhetoric.

Alternative approaches to rhetorical analysis. Several models and approaches have been developed that attempt to extract meaning beyond the surface level of a tweet: the mere assemblage of words. Various models have focused on assessing both Twitter content and Twitter rhetoric tied to various political contexts in the U.S. and in Europe. For a platform that came of age in 2006, it is not surprising these studies are innovative and varied, built upon past practices though generally new and untested, tested only in the given experiment or problem for which they were developed for. They vary in complexity and simplicity. As noted in the literature review, some studies blend quantitative and qualitative approaches. Some models have also subjected tweets to light qualitative review in the context of the election for which they were composed. However, like most studies that attempt to answer an unanswered research question, the models are all tailored to address their particular research dilemma. They innovate based upon need, but they also innovate to substantial or marginal degrees based upon prior approaches.

Necessity for model innovation. My Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model is built to address two unique issues and the tie between them. I needed to create a model to address these issues, but one that was founded upon past models: from Aristotle to current academic literature. My model needed to be founded on solid past theory to increase its legitimacy. However, the need to innovate is quite clear, though innovation must occur based upon sensible past systems of analysis. Pushing the need to innovate, I was unable to find a study that addressed the two primary concerns of this thesis: develop a tool to assess the multitude of underlying characteristics of a tweet and to test if certain "rhetorical building blocks" trigger pervasive or scant media coverage.

As part of that two-fold challenge, I was also interested in ascertaining the degree of truth in each tweet. That being, I was interested in determining whether tweets can be subject to some form of verifiability testing. I desired to develop a system of tweet analysis that would assess the degree of truth, or degree of fiction, of a statement based upon the ability to verify its truth or fiction in observation or reality — essentially, an empirical assessment. I wanted to avoid

assessing the truth of a statement in a subjective sense based on, for example, an individual's or society's beliefs or values.

If something can be reasonably observed, or reasonably validated, through experience, it can thus be reasonably proven to be true or false, objectively, without subjecting the statement to subjective interpretation or judgment as a truth test. In a sense, a statement is truer if it contains the potential to validate its truth. If it is senseless, or cannot be reasonably verified, it may be a lie, or it can never be proven to be a lie, thus making it less true, or containing lesser degrees of truth because it likely cannot be proven true. The reason for this interest in truth verification, in addition to addressing the other research questions, is simple: a presidential candidate posts a tweet that is then potentially disseminated by the media to a large audience within and beyond Twittersphere. A single tweet has the power, influence and potential to affect the sentiments and perspectives of wide swaths of the population in the U.S. and internationally.

However, many of these tweets, some of which are utterly empirically unverifiable and devoid of facts, generate pervasive media coverage. For reasons unknown, the media has at times abdicated its role as gatekeeper by publishing tweets that likely could never be verified, even though journalists are ethically obligated to fact-check their sources. Tweets devoid of factual content, or tweets that could never be verified because the statements they contain are unverifiable, are published seemingly without concern to their potential influence on the public. The Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model establishes a method to determine the degree of truth, or lack thereof, laden in a tweet through whether that "truth" or statement can be reasonably verified through experience or observation.

Innovation based upon ayer's analysis. The Tweet Truth-Verification Analysis Model is based on the system of proposition verification created by Ayer, described at length in his work *Language, Truth, and Logic*. The system Ayer created to verify whether a proposition, or statement, can be factually validated through empirical means is a more powerful tool of statement and rhetorical analysis than Aristotelian classifications. However, my model is still built upon Aristotle's core classifications of rhetoric, namely whether the rhetoric of a presidential candidate is tinged with logos, pathos, and ethos. I also subject the tweets to an extensive assessment of their emotive characteristics, a core concern of Aristotle. Aristotle informs this model, but Ayer is the primary foundation from which it is built. However, innovation of his model was still necessary. Similar to the dilemma posed with applying Aristotelian methods to Twitter, Ayer's methods must also be modified to some degree in order to tailor the model to the particular context of this situation and the problems that need to be resolved. That innovation required me to expand upon Ayer's system to fit my unique context, understanding the correlation between Twitter political rhetoric from presidential candidates and media coverage of that rhetoric.

Summary of ayer's system. Ayer's concern with exposing the truth of a statement through empirical verification is a solid model to build my model from. Here, I will not deconstruct the entirety of Ayer's theory and model. I will broadly summarize, however, some

of his methods and statement classifications that are central to the development of my model. Those classifications partially informed how I coded tweets for the rhetorical characteristics they contained: analytic statement, synthetic statement, basic proposition, value characteristics (moral/ethical), whether a statement was senseless and so on.

Tweets as propositions. Ayer's system is perfectly suited for an analysis of Twitter rhetoric because a tweet is a proposition, or a statement, that may be either true or false and that can be subjected to verification. Ayer's theory of statement verifiability — also known as the verification principle — centers on whether a statement can or cannot be reasonably verified through experience or observation.

He defined a statement that can be conclusively verified — such as I saw a bird sitting atop a utility pole — a basic proposition (Ayer, 1946, p. 177). A basic proposition is a statement that offers really nothing beyond the notion of nothing ventured, nothing gained. It is a basic statement of a given situation observed at a moment in time. It is irrefutable. Twitter is overridden with basic propositions, simple statements of present experience that offer only the ordinary, nothing extraordinary: "I am buying ice cream," for example. I will return to this point in the specific description of my model. But Ayer's classification of statements into empirically verifiable or unverifiable statements and the concept of a basic proposition are incorporated in my model. Those concepts are integral to its overarching framework.

The model is predominantly underpinned by the following concepts. That being, a proposition contains "literal meaning if and only if the proposition it expressed was either analytic or empirically verifiable" (p. 171). In a later revision of his work, Ayer substituted the word "statement" for "proposition" because proposition denotes other meanings, especially in philosophical discourse (p. 174). I use those words interchangeably in this thesis. Essentially, they mean one thing: a statement made or a published tweet.

Tweets and empirical verification. I treat tweets as statements subject to empirical verification, making them synthetic statements as opposed to analytic statements, which is self-contained logic. A statement contains "factual content," and is coded as such, if it is empirically verifiable and thus, a synthetic statement (p. 146). In other words, the statement must have some relation or attachment to observable reality, either directly observable or the potential to observe it (via hypothetical rocket ship or through the deduction of a set of highly plausible observable experiences) in order for it to contain plausible factual content. If it does not, then the statement or tweet is meaningless (and is coded as such). It has no attachment to reality, nor can it ever hope to be proven in experience. It is not truth; it is not fiction; it is not fact, it is not lie; it is meaningless or senseless, as classified in my model.

Rationale of ayer's system and twitter. The reasoning for this form of analysis, subjecting tweets to their potential to be empirically verified in experience or observation, is simple. I needed to create a model to cut through political rhetoric on Twitter in order to first, understand its rhetorical characteristics, and second, evaluate the statements being made not as to their face value (myself determining their truth or fiction), but rather their potential to be

substantiated or validated in observable experience. This is an objective test or means of validation without anyone conducting the validation or substantiating the claims being made through secondary research or subjective proclivities. This assessment stays within the hovel of the tweet. The assessment never extends beyond the statement itself.

As such, the value of the claim is of no concern to this model, or even its factual content in the sense of verifying that factual content to determine, for example, if a presidential candidate is lying in a tweet. That form of analysis is error prone and could be infected with subjective assessments that will ultimately lead to a statement being evaluated as to its truth or fiction through the prism of the evaluator (their mind, their ideology, their beliefs, their political preferences). If I am a staunch believer in Democratic ideology, I will likely believe many Republican assessments of the role of government in society are wrong. Conversely, if I am a staunch believer in Republican ideology, I will likely believe many Democratic assessments of the role of government in society are wrong. These types of superficial assessments must be avoided. Evaluating presidential candidate Twitter rhetoric through those lenses will be an error prone endeavor, mostly because of subjective influences.

This model seeks to strip away the external meanings of the language — the direct message projected through an assemblage of words — to assess the raw constructions of the language, its rhetorical characteristics, its rhetorical building blocks. The surface statement itself is not evaluated. Rather, the building blocks of which that surface statement is constructed are evaluated: whether it is a synthetic statement, or a basic proposition; whether it is plausibly empirically verifiable or not; whether it is conveying a value or an emotion. Moreover, the coding of that body of political Twitter rhetoric through my Ayer-inspired model causes impressions to surface about the candidate and their body of rhetoric. These impressions are not based on the surface rhetoric itself. Rather, the impressions are based on the constituent parts of the rhetoric utilized and how those parts when quantified through coding add up to a whole or impression of the candidate's rhetorical tendencies, as the findings of this thesis will show.

Analytic-synthetic distinction. Before I delve into the specific applications of Ayer's theory in my model and deviations from his theory, I will summarize Ayer's distinction between analytic and synthetic statements. I code for this distinction in my model. Ayer defined analytic statements as containing their own self-contained logic, not requiring observable experience to verify them. As Ayer stated, a statement is analytic if "its validity depends solely on the definitions of the symbols it contains, and synthetic when its validity is determined by the facts of experience" (p. 73). In other words, an analytic statement is similar to axioms in geometry: the axioms, or analytic statements, define the logic that defines the self-contained system.

Empirical verification is not required because the "facts" or "situations" are not subject to interpretation or truth verification. Analytic propositions cannot be "confuted in experience" because analytic propositions "do not make any assertion about the empirical world" (p. 80) Synthetic propositions, however, are subject to verification in external reality as they are not self-contained systems. They exist from and because of observable phenomenon. A statement

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is synthetic "when its validity is determined by the facts of experience" (p. 73). Ayer uses this synthetic statement to illustrate his point: "There are ants which have established a system of slavery." From the statement (A is B), "we cannot tell whether it is true or false merely by considering the definitions of the symbols which constitute it" unlike an analytic statement in which its truth would be evident from the symbols which constitute it (A is A). We need reality or observable phenomenon to determine the validity of the statement of whether ants have indeed established a system of slavery. Conversely, an analytic statement regarding this example would be, "either some ants are parasitic or none are" (p. 73). The facts or logic is contained within the statement. Verification is not necessary. Ayer's definition of analytic and synthetic statements is essential to my model and coding of tweets.

New Model

My model contains points of similarity, points of difference, and points of innovation with previously mentioned systems. The broad summary of Ayer's theory and the definitions and categories of analytic, synthetic, and basic propositions are wholly incorporated without alteration into the model. There are other elements from his classifications of statements not described in this broad summary that will be described in the specific description of the model that follows. However, Ayer's system is not a perfect solution to address the issues the thesis seeks to sort out. Like Aristotle, Ayer did not create his model to identify the multitude of rhetorical characteristics in tweets. In addition, Ayer was not attempting to create a system to surface meanings and rhetorical characteristics from a body of tweets to paint a "rhetorical portrait" of a political candidate or to connect rhetorical characteristics of a tweet to media coverage.

But his system to subject statements to a truth test hinging on whether they can be empirically verified or not can be applied to Twitter content. Tweets are statements and they are statements subject to verification. Moreover, political statements made on Twitter should be subjected to a similar test as to whether they can be verified in reality, or whether they are bogus. But Aristotle's and Ayer's systems of rhetorical assessment, as well as all of the other models mentioned in the literature review, are foundations and guides to developing a more thorough and comprehensive model for this unique context and situation. Herein lies the innovation, based on past methods of rhetorical assessment.

　　　　Summary of methods. My analysis codes for a wide range of rhetorical characteristics, a wider extent than previously discussed systems. 75 tweets from each presidential candidate were examined and coded for the following rhetorical characteristics that I will define and describe in the remainder of this chapter. Since my model is built upon Ayer's verification principle and includes some of his classifications, I will note where I incorporated his classifications, where I needed to deviate, and where I created new categories that Ayer, Aristotle, or others noted in the literature review did not conceive. These classifications are nearly all founded on past systems of rhetorical analysis. I created a few new classifications to fit this particular context and research concern. I will note when I created a category and briefly state why I did so.

System of coding. I tracked and quantified my coding of rhetorical characteristics in a spreadsheet. For each classification described below, if the tweet contained that quality, it received one point. A tweet can contain a number of rhetorical characteristics. Therefore, it may receive multiple one-point quantifications, which gives rise to a variety of rhetorical characteristic data for each particular tweet. Adding up that data for 75 tweets for each of the four candidates provides a variety of data for finding similarities and contrasts among the rhetoric of the candidates. However, a tweet can only receive one point for each category, even if the tweet contained multiple instances of the same category. I decided to code for the appearance of the characteristic and not for the number of times it appeared in a tweet. This would skew the data since a tweet can contain a number of positive emotive characteristics, for example, thus tipping the prominence of that characteristic over all others. All characteristics are equally important.

The findings of this analysis are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of the literature review. The findings were derived from the following rhetorical characteristics, which were coded in a spreadsheet, quantified, and analyzed. Note: Individual dimensions of analysis are divided into sections below.

Model Divisions

Analytic. The tweet is essentially a tautology, A is A, or as described by Ayer, its validity depends solely on the definitions of the symbols it contains.

Synthetic. The tweet can be reasonably or potentially verified in experience or observation as described by Ayer. It records an actual or possible observation, past, present or future. It may also contain A is B logic. It can be "confirmed or discredited in actual sense-experience" and "every synthetic proposition, however it may have been arrived at, must be subject to the test of actual experience" or the potential to be able to conceivably test that experience (p. 92). Example from sample: On economic growth, the fact that Paul Krugman disagrees with me warms my heart.

Subclasses of fact/issue-based synthetic statements. If a tweet is determined to be a synthetic statement, it will be coded for the following characteristics in this dimension of analysis: binary, statement of position-fact, referential, ambiguous, pseudo-concept. These characteristics test the factual grounding of the statement (logos), such as whether it refers to a specific position on a policy in an absolute sense (an unequivocal yes/no-binary statement) or it makes indirect reference to a political position. These categories were created to tease out distinctions among the candidates' rhetoric. Pseudo-concept is part of Ayer's system of analysis. I modify his definition of pseudo-concept to fit the given context and because of

partial disagreement with his definition. That will be explained in a following subsection. In addition, a tweet may be coded for several of these distinctions.

Binary. The tweet contains a highly evident, yes/no position on a political situation, issue or factual situation. It does not contain conditional verbs, for example, "could." The language is direct, clear, and contains no ambiguity. The candidate clearly and directly expresses their position, not subject to interpretation: I support "x" initiative, I do not support "y" initiative. I hold the binary classification in this context to be the highest degree of truth. The media and public are given a direct statement from the candidate about a clear and present issue. The candidate directly expresses the action to be taken in direct language: "I will defund Medicare." Example from sample: In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP (Planned Parenthood) and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs

Statement of position-fact. A statement is made about a position or factual situation though it may contain conditional language and is distinct from a binary. A political position, factual situation, or issue is addressed, though the language is not entirely direct and may be vague. It may contain some ambiguous language in contrast to a binary. Example from sample: @BarackObama this deal paves the way to Iran getting the bomb & gives $150bn to the mullahs. That's not leadership.

Referential. The statement refers to a specific position, ideology, object, political party, individual, making their view or position distinct. A distinction is made between the candidate and an idea or between candidates. Someone or something is distinctly referred to, thus making it referential. Example from sample: .@POTUS is right. We can't wait for another generation to tackle climate change. Our future depends on what we do today & in the next decade.

Ambiguous. It is difficult or challenging to determine the candidate's specific view on the issue, position, or situation even though they are making a statement about an issue, position, or situation. It may also be difficult or extremely challenging to prove empirically what they are stating. Because of this, it is a lesser form of factual truth. The statement may contain loaded language or ambiguous terminology (words that contain many meanings depending on who you ask). The statement does not provide clear, concrete plans. These statements are more sweeping in nature and do not cite specific policy or a specific event. They are not referential, nor binaries. They include broad terms, like "immigration" or "rights." They discuss situations broadly, not specifically. They do not offer specific policy prescriptions. Example from sample: We must transform immigration from a broken system into one that benefits every American.

Pseudo-concept. The statement of fact, issue, or position also contains a value (empirically verifiable fact + value). That value may be a personal belief, a collective belief, a moral or ethical conviction, or a personal judgement on a political issue. A fact is blended with an individually or collectively held value in politics and society: voting rights, equal pay, abortion rights. In this study, a pseudo-concept generally contains the prevailing values of

American society, or a segment of American society. The statement may be a platitude, contain belief in a platitude, or contain platitude qualities. Thus, it may contain empty terminology: "I believe America needs strong leadership." Ayer defined pseudo-concepts as the presence of an ethical symbol in a statement, which he believed added nothing to the statement's factual content. Ayer, however, held that a pseudo-concept is a "genuine synthetic" statement though he believed they are unverifiable (Ayer, 1946, pp. 109-110) Because of this, it is a lesser form of factual truth, though I hold that a pseudo-concept can be verified, albeit it will be challenging to do so. Example from sample: Voting rights, equal pay, immigration reform, LGBT equality, see more of what we're fighting for on Pinterest.

Strong. A tweet that is a synthetic statement will be coded as a strong statement, weak statement, or fringe statement based on the ease or challenge to empirically verify it. Of all of Ayer's distinctions, these categories are open to interpretation because of the inherent non-restrictiveness of his definition of strong and weak statements and his lack of defining strict criteria for each classification. Ayer defined a strong statement as one that can be "conclusively established in experience" (p. 18). Meanwhile, a weak statement is one in which the "experience to render it" is "probable." Ayer hinged some of this criterion on time, for example a statement concerning the past is "highly probable" because it can plausibly be empirically verified.

However, Ayer considered future statements to be "pseudo-propositions" and unverifiable, "emotionally significant" but "not literally significant" (p. 16). I hold to this logic partially by classifying statements that refer to present and past events as strong statements. However, I arrived at my own interpretation of his distinctions of strong and weak statements because of the lack of criteria in his definitions of those distinctions. That said, a strong statement can be conclusively verified in experience, past or present. A strong statement is relatively clear and is usually relatively easy to prove. It is not vague and it refers to subjects, objects, situations, or facts that can readily prove it. It may also contain a substantiation to the claim. Example from sample: A photo we had to share: @Wellesley's Alumnae Ultimate team (named for Hillary!) plays in extra-appropriate uniforms.

Weak. I classify a weak statement as one that may be challenging to prove in reality, or through empirical methods. The statement may not be readily found in experience. A tweet from Jeb Bush that was classified as weak illustrates this definition: "We need a President who will go everywhere, speak to everyone, unite, not divide." That may be true, but it is also difficult, if not impossible, to prove the truth of the statement in experience because it is speculative, subjective, and refers to a wide universe of potentialities, places and individuals. It is also unlikely that we will have a president that will "go everywhere" and "speak to everyone" and because of that will unite, not divide. It is also vague, thus it is difficult to validate. A weak statement, however, may contain clear references, subjects, and objects that can potentially be observed in reality or proven empirically, but it will be challenging to do so because the experience could be unique to a particular individual or class of individuals. It will also likely not

include a substantiation to the claim. <u>Example from sample</u>: Fighting to dismantle voting rights, health care, and living wages? That doesn't sound like the right to rise.

Fringe. I added the fringe category to Ayer's distinctions. I classify fringe statements as statements that are extremely challenging to verify in reality or through observation. They may contain ambiguous symbols, platitudes or vapid statements that cannot be readily found in reality or observation ("The key to happiness is freedom") or they are statements of the future, containing predictive elements. It will be nearly impossible, though not entirely impossible, to substantiate these claims because they are too vague, ambiguous or abstract to be substantiated. I partially hold to his interpretation that future statements are unverifiable because they have not yet occurred in experience.

However, it is possible the statement may be verified, or proven, at some future point in time. Therefore, it may not be false in the future, yet it is still a fringe claim because what is stated has not yet occurred. I also felt that because of the potential misinterpretations that can occur between classifying a statement as strong or weak, in part because of Ayer's open-ended definitions of those types of statements, I needed to add a third category to mitigate that interpretation by setting clearer boundaries and distinctions between strong and weak statements. <u>Example from sample</u>: Despite the false @nytimes story about Jeb Bush being happy with the Trump surge, he fell more than anybody and is miserable.

Emotive. The emotive classifications in my model represent a slight deviation from Ayer's system of statement analysis, which elevates verifiable facts as the highest form of truth. To Ayer, emotional significance is "not literally significant" and expressions of emotion are often neither true nor false. (pp. 16, 27, 104). I agree and disagree. I agree that emotional statements are not always synthetic statements. Some emotional statements cannot be subjected to empirical verification.

A senseless statement, however, may be senseless, but it may express an emotion no matter how senseless that statement or emotion is. Moreover, an empirically verifiable fact can be conveyed in a statement that contains emotion. To me, an empirically verifiable synthetic statement containing emotional sentiment is literally significant and a factual statement that is provable in reality, thus making it synthetic, even though it has emotive characteristics. The synthetic statement is merely built upon this added rhetorical building block. Also, Ayer's system of analysis was built to engage in a deconstruction of philosophical discourse. He sought to expose the emotionally plagued language of often-poetic metaphysical discourse. He needed to develop a model tied to empirical verification: one that sought to expose statements containing "no literal meaning" because they were driven by emotion, and less by facts.

A deviation from his theory built upon an Aristotelian conception of rhetoric, as well as other Tweet analysis models that measured emotional sentiments, was a necessary addition to my model. I needed to examine the emotional characteristics of a tweet because sentiment is part of that matrix of rhetorical choices and techniques that comprise a tweet, especially in a

political context. I coded for the following emotive characteristics. A tweet may also contain one or several of the following characteristics and be coded as such.

Positive. The tweet contains positive emotional language or emotionally charged positive words, such as a call to action, or a rallying cry. These words may be used to stir or rouse emotions in the positive sense. <u>Example from sample</u>: Let's defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

Negative. The tweet contains negative emotional language or emotionally charged negative words. These words may be used to stir or rouse emotion in the negative sense. <u>Example from sample</u>: Certain types of guns exclusively used to kill people, not for hunting, should not be sold in America.

Neutral. The tweet contains emotional language, but it does not have an overt positive or negative emotional charge. However, it is an evidently emotional statement and it may be intended to stir or rouse emotions. <u>Example from sample</u>: It came out that Huma Abedin knows all about Hillary's private illegal emails. Huma's PR husband, Anthony Weiner, will tell the world.

Mixture. The tweet contains a mixture of positive and negative emotive words.

Ad hominem. A tweet that attacks the character of an individual or organization or a retaliation against a person or organization (a body of individuals), rather than attacking the claim directly. This category was added because it is prevalently used in political rhetoric. This definition from the Oxford English Dictionary guided my coding of ad hominem statements: "By attempting to disprove an argument or proposition by attacking the beliefs or character of the person proposing it. Subsequently also in extended use: with respect to a particular person or group, rather than the matter in hand."

Statement of fact-emotion. I measured the frequency in which a candidate expressed a statement containing an empirically verifiable fact, a statement containing an emotion, or a statement that contained fact and emotion. The tweets were coded for the following subclasses. This category, ultimately arising from innovation and slight deviation upon past approaches, was created to gauge the frequency of use of factual or emotional statements among the candidates. It is a pathos-logos measure.

Statement of fact. The tweet contains an empirically verifiable fact.

Statement of emotion. The tweet expresses an emotional sentiment or contains an emotional charge.

Statement of fact and emotion. The tweet is a hybrid of fact and emotion.

Statements of value. The tweet contains a statement reflecting a value. Those values may include moral, ethical, aesthetic, pseudo-concepts, or a platitude. Ayer classified value statements as "genuine synthetic propositions" but he felt that if the statement of value expresses an emotion, or if it is not scientific, then it is "not in the literal sense significant" (p. 104). These statements are "simply expressions of emotion which can be neither true or false." I agree and disagree. I hold that a value can potentially be proven in experience. A candidate may state that they believe in Christian values. Those statements can be proven in experience or through observation by observing the candidate enter a Catholic church and get down on their knees to pray. However, I agree with Ayer that statements of value are a problematic form of truth and error prone when it comes to empirical verification. I may see a candidate pray, but do they genuinely believe in Christ?

I hold that statements of value are a lesser form of truth than binaries or substantiated factual truth proven through experience (a statement of fact). However, I do not believe statements of value should be dismissed because of the difficulty they pose with empirical verification. Just because a statement cannot be absolutely proven does not mean it should be dismissed. In addition, Aristotle cites ethos as one of three primary rhetorical appeals. The moral character of the speech is a form of persuasion. Infusing a speech with values, ethics, and morals are essential ingredients to successful rhetoric. Value statements are also important to the rhetorical context I am examining. That examination is informative because it reveals the willingness of a candidate to express values, morals, or ethics.

Moral. The tweet contains a moral sentiment or statement. I used the Oxford English Dictionary definition to guide this assessment: "Of or relating to human character or behavior considered as good or bad; of or relating to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, desires, or character of responsible human beings." This classification is also distinct from ethics in that it contends with an individual moral code that may be based on an external moral framework. It is also religious in sentiment.

Ethical. The tweet contains an ethical sentiment or statement. I used the Oxford English Dictionary definition to guide this assessment: "Of or relating to moral principles, esp. as forming a system, or the branch of knowledge or study dealing with these." To distinguish this from the moral classification, this coding is based on an individual's acknowledgment of an external source to guide behavior rather than stating their own personal beliefs, morals, and convictions. It is also not a religious sentiment, or supernatural. It is based on worldly ethical codes, for example, governance, or fiduciary responsibility.

Aesthetic. An aesthetic judgement is made about someone or something. I used the Oxford English Dictionary definition to guide this assessment: "The philosophy of the beautiful or of art; a system of principles for the appreciation of the beautiful, etc.; the distinctive underlying principles of a work of art or a genre, the works of an artist, the arts of a culture." Essentially, the tweet will make a judgment of beauty.

Pseudo-concept. The tweet contains an empirically verifiable fact and a value.

Platitude. The tweet contains an abundance of ambiguous or abstract language, empty words, or a political platitude, that appears to reveal a value or a belief in something or some cause. <u>Example from sample</u>: Make America Great Again.

Statement of time. Both Ayer and Aristotle note the significance of time in statements. I coded tweets based on whether the tweets were referring to the past, present, future, or two or more points in time.

Statement of present. A tweet refers to a present situation.

Statement of past. A tweet refers to a past situation.

Statement of future. A tweet refers to a future situation.

Statement of present-past-future. A tweet refers to two or more points in time.

No time. The tweet contains no apparent reference to time.

Basic proposition. The tweet is a synthetic statement and empirically verifiable, but it offers no new knowledge. It reveals little about the candidate, their views, beliefs, ideology. As Ayer stated, a basic proposition "is, in short, a case of 'nothing venture, nothing lose" (p. 178). Something is said, but nothing is really expressed: "I am at the grocery store with Sally." It is the "mere recording of one's present experience." Basic propositions are also "verified conclusively" because they directly describe a present situation and observation (p. 177). Social media is overridden with basic propositions.

Ambiguous. A determination cannot be made as to the rhetorical characteristics of the tweet as applied to this model.

Senseless. The tweet cannot be empirically verified or proven in experience. It cannot be shown to be true or false. It is as Ayer states "literally senseless" — sense experience cannot validate it. To be classified as senseless, the tweet may be too vague, abstract, or completely devoid of factual content.

Chapter 5: Results and Findings from Model

Introduction

This section of the thesis provides the results of subjecting the study sample of 75 tweets from each presidential candidate to the tweet rhetorical analysis model (see Appendix A, B, C, and D for each candidate's tweets). The model produced an abundance of data, some of which falls outside the scope of this review. The quantitative and qualitative review will be condensed into six themes. Those themes are position-based factual tweets, statement strength, emotive qualities, use of fact-emotion, value statements, and time orientation. Separate from these themes, I will also briefly summarize each candidate's use of basic propositions, ambiguous and senseless statements. The candidates will be examined in the following order: Sanders, Trump, Clinton, and Bush. The analytic category will be excluded from this review. Only one tweet was coded as analytic.

This section will reveal the candidates' rhetorical tendencies with their Twitter rhetoric. The quantitative data — generated from coding the tweets for particular rhetorical characteristics — reveals the candidates' personalities or assertions on issues, for example. That includes how likely or unlikely they are to take a position. It also includes how often they tend to spout statements that have little to no potential to be empirically validated because the statements are ridden with ambiguous language. A review of the quantitative data of the tweets' rhetorical characteristics supports a qualitative narrative and assessment of the tweets. That narrative and assessment will be illustrated by visuals of the data and frequent references to the data, as derived from the model by subjecting the tweets to the various dimensions of rhetorical characteristics as described in the previous chapter.

Ultimately, the model and review in this chapter seeks to understand whether the statements made by the candidates contain the potential to be verified, or contain higher degrees of verification and truth, in addition to a plethora of rhetorical characteristics. This model and review has no concern for whether the candidate is ultimately "right" or "wrong." It is purely a rhetorical review, all contained within the hovel of the tweet. With the first candidate under review, Sanders, I will explain the rationale behind the respective classifications of particular tweets. After Sanders, I will explain less and evaluate more, providing a brief assessment of the impression the tweets are projecting. In some cases, I will avoid reiterating some of the qualities that were used to make that determination. However, on occasion, explanation may be in order. Following the examination of the six themes, I will provide a rhetorical assessment summary of each candidate's Twitter rhetoric. Following that review, I will compare and contrast the candidates' Twitter rhetorical characteristics. The entire study sample will be subjected to comparative analysis.

Bernie Sanders: Rhetorical Assessment

Position-based factual tweets. The vast majority of Sanders' tweets state a position on a political event, issue, or fact. 56 of the 68 empirically verifiable synthetic statements he made

(82 percent) stated a position. However, Sanders does not always use direct, ambiguous free language. Examples include "It's an outrage that millions of women in this country are forced back to work after giving birth," "People are working 40 hours a week and cannot afford to feed their families. That has got to change," and "Certain types of guns exclusively used to kill people, not for hunting, should not be sold in America." Though these statements directly address situations and contexts it is either not directly clear what he intends to do, or what positions he directly intends to take. While "it's an outrage" that women must work after giving birth, Sanders does not clearly state what right women should be afforded beyond expressing outrage. A situation or position is addressed, but it is unclear what he will do to address it. The vague use of the pronoun "it" also causes that indefiniteness. What should be done about guns is qualified by the use of the word, "should."

While Sanders tweets are overwhelming position oriented, he rarely states a position in a direct, "yes/no" format that would fall under the "binary" classification of the model. Though he states positions on factual situations, events, concerns, and ideas, similar to the prior examples, he rarely uses definite language, a hypothetical example being, "I will dismantle Obamacare when I become president."

In my model, that hypothetical example would be considered a binary. The intention of the statement and the effect of it beyond the statement are unequivocal. Only 7 percent of Sanders' verifiable tweets (68 tweets that are synthetic statements) were classified as binaries. Those include "Health care is a right, not a privilege," "Today, millions of Americans are now

Figure 2: Sanders, Position-Based Factual Tweets

working for totally inadequate wages. We must raise the minimum wage to a livable wage," and "The only long-term solution to America's health care crisis is a single-payer national health care program."

In these examples, we have three examples of specific positions made. Sanders clearly states in a "yes/no" binary fashion with no equivocation, no use of ambiguity, no overreliance on emotional language, such as "outrage," that health care is a right and not a privilege. His position on the issue is direct. His intentions are also clear: Americans have a right to health care. Sanders also directly calls for a rise in minimum wages: a definitive verb, "must," tied to an observable reality, wages. In addition, he directly states that American health care can only be saved through a single-payer national system. Though a synthetic statement that may or may not be true, that statement can be verified or observed in reality, past and present. Facts exist somewhere as other single-payer systems have been created at some time to verify the
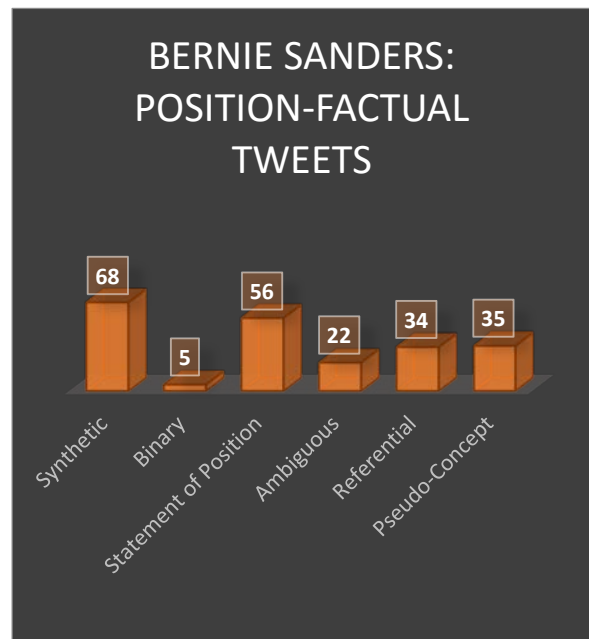
statement's validity, or lack thereof, even though it has a bit of future orientation. Phenomenon can be observed. It may not be true, but it is a claim that can be related to evidence.

However, Sanders' tweets in this category also contain ambiguous and pseudo-concept language (the meshing of fact and his own values or that of his political party). 32 percent of his 68 synthetic statements contain ambiguous language, while about 51 percent of the 68 synthetic statements intermingle an empirically observable event (a fact) with a personal value or commonly held political value. Ambiguous statements include "While insurance and drug companies make huge profits, Americans spend more and get less than people from any other nation," and "Despite the central role they play in our economy, undocumented workers are reviled by many for political gain and shunted into the shadows." The ambiguity of the first statement resides in its lack of specificity: general references to insurance, drug companies, and Americans. Sanders statement includes a broad sweep of observable phenomenon. There is no substantiation, citation of fact, or direct reference to company x, or company y. Verification is challenging. In addition, it is unclear what positions he is taking with these statements: they are mere statements, ambiguous in nature and thus difficult to subject to verification.

Statements that contain pseudo-concepts include "When you tell a woman that she cannot control her own body, that's extremism," and "We need leadership that is prepared to rally the American people and to take on the wealthy special interests that wield so much power." These statements address situations that can be subjected to verification, or they contain reference to some type of factual situation or circumstance that is observable in reality. However, these statements also contain his political values pertaining to the "power" of special interests and women's right to "her own body." These may be values that are commonly held, universally shared, or not, but they are values. These are not strictly logical statements or substantiated claims that bolster the ability to observe or prove them in reality. In fact, these claims could be false in some contexts and among different perspectives.

Statement strength. 68 of Sanders' 75 tweets contained verification potential, thus they were synthetic and they had the potential to be observed in reality, past, present, and future. Of the 68 that were subject to the statement strength dimension in the model, nearly 47 percent were classified as weak, 25 (37 percent) as strong, and 11 (16 percent) as fringe. Weak statements are difficult to prove through observation because they often lack substantiation. They may be platitudes or other sweeping statements that while potentially true, they are equally difficult, though not impossible, to subject to verification. In some contexts or perspectives, they may even be false. They may also be laced with ambiguity, or charged language. Sanders' weak statements include "Free speech does not equal the ability of people to buy elections" and "Real change takes place when millions of people stand up and say enough is enough, and create a political revolution from the ground up."

Compared to weak statements, strong statements are substantiated to a greater degree or make clear reference to some present observable phenomenon. Basic propositions — a basic statement of fact or present circumstances — usually always fall under this category. It can be challenging to dispute a strong statement because they contain clear references to concrete

situations, or circumstances. Strong statements are not by nature definitely true (nor does this examination of rhetorical characteristics seek to validate truth but rather to define its potential for verification). However, they contain an adequate amount of reference points or concrete facts to assist the validation of the claim and further substantiation. Sanders' examples of strong statements include "We must fundamentally rewrite our trade policy so that American products, not American jobs, are our No. 1 export," and "The #VotingRights Act is a critical civil rights law that protects voters, and is as necessary today as it was in the era of Jim Crow."

Conversely, fringe statements are highly challenging to prove, and potentially impossible, because they may be speculative and future oriented, or contain highly ambiguous language with little to no reference points or concrete subjects. Ultimately, they contain little to no substantiation or concrete reference points. Fringe statements are usually riddled with abstract language, language that is too vague to make a determination as to what the statement is attempting to purport or what is the defined means and methods by which the situation will be resolved or improved because of the candidate. The claims are likely sweeping in nature and challenging to prove. The proof also may only reside in the future. Sanders rarely used language that contained these qualities, with the bulk of his statements having the potential to be proven true rather than being nearly impossible to be proven true or false. However, fringe statements were identified. Examples of Sanders' fringe statements include "When you look at basic necessities of life there must be a guarantee that people receive what they need in order to live a dignified life," and "Oh. It was just a movie trailer." What do people need to live a dignified life? What does Sanders consider the necessities of life? What exactly constitutes that guarantee? The statement is overridden with ambiguity and broad, sweeping statements; thus, it is fringe. The second statement speaks for itself.

Emotive qualities. Sanders' tweets contained a range of emotive qualities from positive to negative. Only one tweet was classified as ad hominem. Overall, his tweets were coded for 48 emotive rhetorical characteristics that included positive, negative, neutral, mixture, and ad hominem qualities. Negative language dominated, with 41 percent of tweets with emotive qualities containing a negative charge. Tweets coded as containing positive language or a positive emotive charge included "When you look at basic necessities of life there must be a guarantee that people receive what they need in order to live a dignified life" and "Open to all Americans over 65 years of age, Medicare has been a resounding success since its introduction 48 years ago." Words that convey positive emotions in these
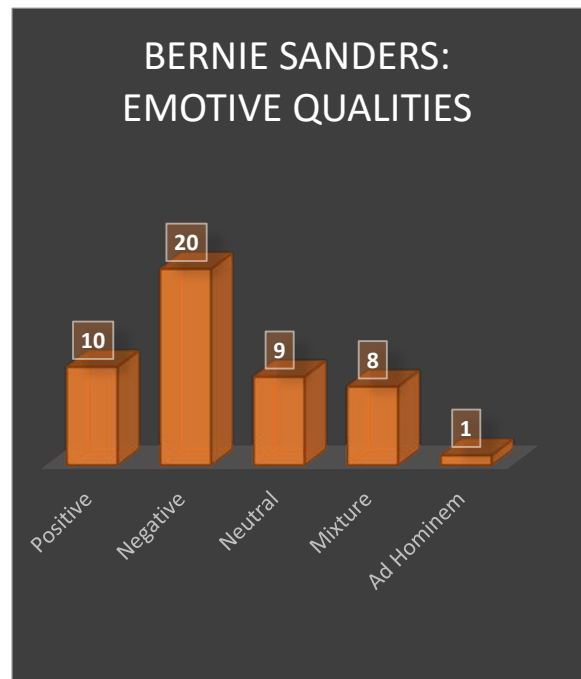

Figure 3: Sanders, Emotive Qualities

examples include, "dignified life," "guarantee," and "resounding success."

Conversely, examples of tweets containing negative language or conveyance of negative charge include "The current campaign system is corrupt and amounts to legalized bribery," and "Is our democracy being destroyed when one family can spend $900 million to buy elections?" These tweets rely on hard negative language to persuade and appeal to audience, words like "corrupt," "legalized bribery," "destroyed," and "buy elections." This language rouses emotions and relies more so on rousing those emotions than appealing through facts, substantiation, and other forms of logos.

Sanders also uses neutral emotive language that does not align entirely with positive or negative charge, for example: "Today is the 50th anniversary of the #VotingRights Act but conservatives are trying to roll back the clock on one of our fundamental rights," and "Financial institutions cannot be an island unto themselves, standing as huge profit centers outside of the real economy." Neutral emotive words, such as "huge profit centers" and "roll back," convey emotional charges to stir audience, but they contain neither evident negative nor positive emotive qualities. However, they have that punch and impact of emotive sentiment and contain the varied emotive connotations that words like "roll back" and "profit centers" conveys.

Sanders uses ad hominem attack in one instance. It is marginal at best and arguably a fringe case. He calls Wall Street workers "crooks" in this tweet: "I find it strange that the kid who smokes marijuana gets arrested but the crooks on Wall Street get off scot free." Clearly, he attacks the character of a Wall Street worker as crook and fails to substantiate how he arrived at that conclusion of their character. It is a dangerous statement in that it can be applied to anyone who works on Wall Street, but it is also arguably harmless. It does not directly attack the character of an individual. However, the statement attacked an institution or a collection of people. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, that is an ad hominem attack.

Use of fact-emotion. Of Sanders' 75 tweets, 71 of them contained either a factual or emotive characteristic or both. The bulk of the tweets subject to this analysis contained both a fact and an emotion, 37 tweets. That means each of those tweets conveyed a fact and an emotion. However, Sanders' tweets contained a greater degree of factual content compared to emotive quantities — 25 tweets coded as containing only factual characteristics and 9 tweets coded as containing only emotive qualities.

Value statements. Sanders' tweets are devoid of moral and ethical rhetoric. Only one tweet was coded as containing a moral reference: "Is it morally appropriate that 99% of all new income is going to the top 1%?" However, like the other candidates' tweets subjected to this model, Sanders' tweets contained an abundance of platitudes (beliefs represented in abstract language) and pseudo-concepts (intermingling of fact and personal or collective value).

40 of Sanders' tweets were coded as containing some sort of platitude: "Who would've believed it? @RandPaul is right. Yes we can fight *terrorism and protect the U.S. Constitution*," and "We must remember that the *struggle for our rights is the struggle of a lifetime*. Our time to fight is now." Meanwhile, 36 tweets were coded as containing a pseudo-concept, "While insurance and drug companies make huge profits, Americans spend more and get less than people from any other nation," and "The #VotingRights Act is a critical civil rights law that protects voters, and is as necessary today as it was in the era of Jim Crow."

A tweet may be classified as both pseudo-concept and platitude, in that it expresses a value of the candidate or a commonly held one, as well as a

Figure 4: Sanders, Value Statements

fact, while also containing stock phrases, stereotypical conceptions of a fact or situation, described in ambiguous language. For example, this statement made by Sanders was classified as both platitude and pseudo-concept: "When you look at basic necessities of life there must be a guarantee that people receive what they need in order to live a dignified life." This statement contains a fact and a value, as well as language that is abstract and ambiguous, in addition to words that are oft-repeated, the "basic necessities of life" needed to "guarantee" that people get what they need to "in order to live a dignified life." The qualities of platitude exist, oft-repeated language, words, and phrases that are often devoid of substantiation, meaning, and concrete situations. An example of another Sanders tweet that was coded as both: "Free speech does not equal the ability of people to buy elections." The statement contains a fact (that can be subjected to verification) and a value, the value of free speech and the concern of whether that commonly held value could be bought.

However, the statement also contains the qualities of a platitude, oft-repeated phrases, or concepts that are devoid of meaning or specificity. Meanwhile, this statement was coded as a platitude — "Much of the corporate media is prepared to discuss everything except the most important issues facing our country" — because it is an oft-repeated phrase. It does not express a value held by Sanders: that is not explicitly clear in this statement. It is a pure and simple statement of fact (subject to verification despite its ambiguity). It is also an oft-repeated mantra, "the corporate media" and their failure to express the "most important issues facing our country." As with any platitude, turning to that particular example, those "important issues" are not defined and "corporate media" can mean many things. It can be verified, but it is challenging to do so because the statement can be interpreted in many ways because of its ambiguity and sweeping nature.
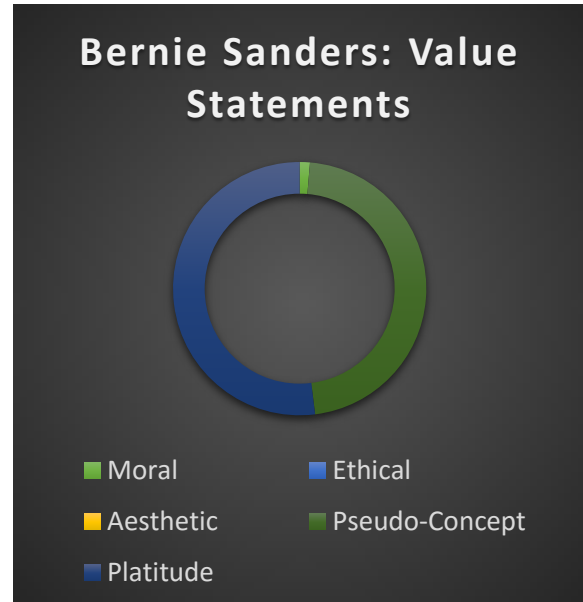
Time orientation. 74 of Sanders tweets were coded for their time orientation. One tweet was excluded from this analysis because it appeared to contain the qualities of an analytic and synthetic statement and not subject to further examination. Since analytic statements are self-contained logic, they require little to no further assessment of their verification potential. The majority of Sanders' statements are based in the present (55 percent). Sanders rarely refers to the past. Only one tweet made mention of a past event: "Some of us didn't believe Bush and Cheney on Iraq. We voted NO. That was the right vote." Overall, Sanders' Twitter rhetoric is focused on the now: "The average chief executive in America now makes nearly 300 times more than the average worker," and "Today is the 50th anniversary of the #VotingRights Act but conservatives are trying to roll back the clock on one of our fundamental rights." By focusing on the present, his Twitter statements avoid speculation: they rarely speculate on the future or make sweeping speculative statements and deductions about the past.
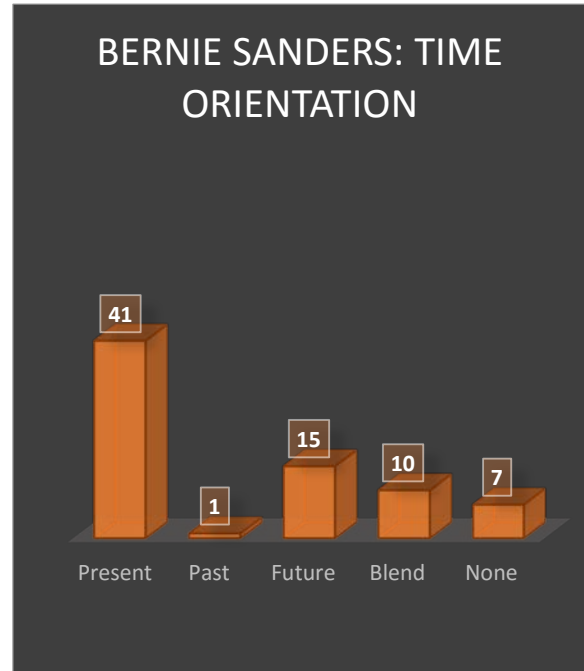

Figure 5: Sanders, Time Orientation

Other categories. 10 of Sanders' tweets were classified as basic propositions. Those tweets generally stated the obvious, what was happening at a given moment in the campaign. They are a simple statement regarding something, happening somewhere, for example, "Tom Hanks. Finally. Somebody who makes some sense." This tweet did not offer new knowledge, question old knowledge, or challenge notions. Six tweets were classified as senseless. It would be impossible to relate the tweet text to a sense experience, for example, "Will any Republican talk about the need to raise the current starvation minimum wage of $7.25 an hour?" and "Will the GOPers talk about why the U.S. is the only major nation not to guarantee health care to all as a right?" Contextually, I understand the meaning of the statements because it was published during a presidential debate. However, this analysis is not a contextual examination. Therefore, the tweets are senseless as they cannot reasonably be subject to verification since it is unclear what would be subject to verification in those examples, as they are questions that are broad, unclear, and vague.

Bernie Sanders: Rhetorical Assessment Summary

Sanders' Twitter rhetoric is relatively clear and direct. However, it is not free of the trappings of loose logic nor statements that are challenging to verify. For the most part, Sanders' tweets represent factual situations and make relatively clear references to political positions. Of the 68 tweets that were coded as synthetic statements, 50 percent referred to a specific concept, position, or idea. Many of his statements had the potential to be observed or verified with

relative ease. However, Sanders often suffused his statements of "fact" with values: values that either he or others hold, including his political party and Americans in general. These values can be subject to verification, but as Ayer noted values are not so much a form of truth, but rather a pseudo-truth. They are a truth of a person or a collection of individuals. The statement may not be a truth of universal scale, however. In addition, it is challenging to subject a value to truth verification because values tend to be subjective. My values or personal truths differ from someone else's values or personal truths.

While Sanders' Twitter rhetoric is driven by fact-based scenarios or references, those scenarios or references are often intermingled with values as to why that direction or "factual situation" is "believed" to be a better alternative rather than substantiating or providing that proof as to why that is the better direction. Substantiation is lacking, making it difficult though not impossible to verify the validity of his claims. Despite this, the logos orientation of his Twitter sample is a strength, not a weakness in terms of truth verification potential. His reliance on ethos could also be considered a strength, despite the inherent difficulty with verifying some of his values through observation.

Sanders' Twitter rhetoric also benefits from a strong emphasis on present situations and circumstances. He rarely speculates on the future, and his place and effect on that future. His rhetoric contends with matters of today, which simplifies verification of his statements. However, the addition of values, personal and commonly held, diminishes that verification potential. Ultimately, Sanders' Twitter corpus projects an impression of an ideas and values candidate though his ideas and values are often unsubstantiated and so intertwined with the his statements of fact that it is difficult to separate them and come to a reasonable conclusion as to its level of truth. He also uses emotional appeals carefully. His Twitter rhetoric does not rely on it, nor does it refuse to use emotive appeals. The emotive qualities of the rhetoric are in the backdrop. The logos, or facts, are in the forefront.

Donald Trump: Rhetorical Assessment

　　Position-based factual tweets. 73 of Trump's tweets were coded as synthetic, therefore containing verification potential. But, therein lies the issue: *the degree* of verification potential. Trump's tweets evaluated through this dimension of the model revealed that he only marginally makes statements that contain a "factual basis" — that explicitly, or even indirectly, refer to a political issue, a concern, a policy, or some form of fact, position-based concept that could be empirically verified.

16 of his 73 Twitter synthetic statements (22 percent) stated some form or variant of a political position, articulated an idea/policy, or contained a fact related to the context of politics and the election. Those statements of position-fact included the following tweets: "I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Brothers. Puppets?" and "So many 'politically correct' fools in our country. We have to all get back to work and stop wasting time and energy on nonsense!"

Of those 16 fact-position based tweets, 9 of them contained ambiguous language. They have the potential to be observed and they articulate a position or idea. However, those tweets do so in language that is vague and abstract, and that would be difficult to substantiate or observe in reality. Examples of those ambiguous tweets include "I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Brothers. Puppets?" and "I look forward to tonight's 'debate' -- but look far more forward to making America great again. It can happen!" The first statement is speculative since Trump assumes that "all" Republican candidates will be begging for money. The second statement claims, without substantiation, that he will make "American great again" and that, speculatively, it "can happen"— without defining how it will happen.

Also of the 73 synthetic tweets, only about 10 percent (7 tweets) refer to a specific subject, concept, political idea, or draw a point of contrast or similarity with a party, politician, or policy (*referential category*). These tweets are grounded in some form of concrete referential reality. Examples of those tweets include: "Enough is Enough- no more Bushes!", "The #IranDeal is a catastrophe that must be stopped. Will lead to at least partial world destruction … make Iran a force like never before," and "I want talented people to come into this country to work hard and to become citizens. Silicon Valley needs engineers, etc." Though these tweets are laden with strong emotional language, which diminishes verification potential, they do articulate specific points of reference to concrete realities or observable phenomenon.
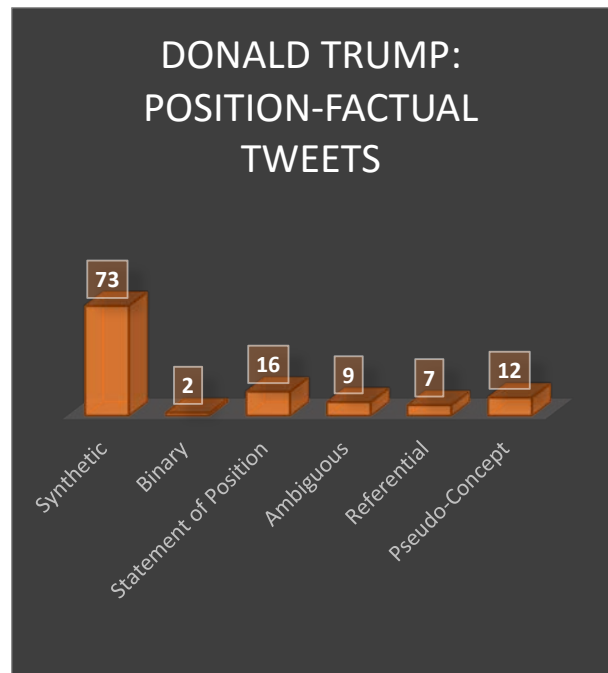

Figure 6: Trump, Position-Based Factual Statements

Values are also little utilized in his tweets. A small fraction of his tweets — 16 percent of the 73 synthetic statements — are classified as pseudo-concepts (12 tweets). However, Trump's Twitter rhetoric contains a greater number of tweets classified as pseudo-concept than containing direct referential references. Examples of Trumps' pseudo-concept tweets are "The #IranDeal is a catastrophe that must be stopped. Will lead to at least partial world destruction (and) make Iran a force like never before," "Again, illegal immigrant is charged with the fatal bludgeoning of a wonderful and loved 64 year old woman. Get them out and build a WALL!" and "When foreigners attend our great colleges and want to stay in the U.S., they should not be thrown out of our country." Here, facts that can be subject to verification are intermingled with values Trump evidently holds or believes in. The Iran deal is bad because Trump believes it will lead to "world destruction." Trump also expresses his beliefs, or personal values, about immigration: "get them out" of the country. However, while the expression of fact (logos) and value (ethos) is evident in these statements, Trump provides scant substantiation in some of these statements.

Statement strength. Of the 72 tweets subjected to the statement strength dimension of analysis, 44 percent (32 tweets) were coded as weak statements, 24 percent (17 tweets) as fringe statements, and 32 percent (23 tweets) as strong statements. Trump's fringe statements almost always are devoid of substantiation, albeit they contain the slight potential to be empirically verified. However, it will be nearly impossible to do so. His fringe statements are typically opinion: personal conjectures about reality or circumstances, which have a fringe relation to reality. Examples of Trumps' fringe statements include "Do you notice that Hillary spews out Jeb's name as often as possible in order to give him status? She knows Trump is her worst nightmare," "....Dopey @krauthammer should be fired," and "@FrankLuntz, your so-called 'focus groups' are a total joke. Don't come to my office looking for business again. You are a clown!"

Frank Luntz may be a clown, but he may be a clown only in the eyes of Trump. The statement is speculative and thus fringe. Trump also surmises that Trump is Clinton's worst nightmare. That may be true and the statement can be subjected to verification though it will be immensely difficult to do so. However, Trump is speculating upon observable phenomenon that at best he can only speculate about and will likely never himself prove: Clinton's thoughts. On occasion, Trump's Twitter sample contains strong statements with strong empirical potential. Examples of his strong statements include "Poll: Trump Leads GOP Field Among Hispanics, Records 34% Favorability," and "Wow, CNN just said that Donald Trump won the DEBATE, connected best with audience. Also, Time, Drudge, Newsmax, N.Y.Times and more!" Whether the statements are true or false — Trump's subjective determinations here — falls outside the scope of the model. That aside, Trump substantiates his statements with references to observable phenomenon, actual evidence.

His weak statements include "The hatred that clown @krauthammer has for me is unbelievable … causes him to lie when many others say Trump easily won debate," "Roger Ailes just called. He is a great guy and assures me that Trump will be treated fairly on @FoxNews. His word is always good!" and "Why is @RandPaul allowed to take advantage of the people of Kentucky by running for Senator and Pres. Why should Kentucky be back up plan?" The statements contain a mixture of substantiation and no substantiation, elements that can be potentially observed in reality, perhaps readily, and elements that would be challenging to observe in reality.

Emotive qualities. Trump's tweets were coded for 76 emotive characteristics. The number of tweets found to contain ad hominem characteristics was substantially greater than all of the other candidates combined. Trump's positive tweets tended to be congratulatory either toward himself, friends, media publications that lauded him, or the campaign. They were rarely directed toward policy or politics, for example, "Wow! Such a wonderful article from fantastic people--my great honor!", "Wow! What a great honor from @DRUDGE_REPORT," and ".@OMAROSA You were fantastic on television this weekend. Thank you so much you are a loyal friend!" 30 percent of the tweets that were coded for the dimensions of this category contained positive emotive language, or a positive charge.

Similarly, 30 percent of the tweets contained negative language, or a negative charge. However, tweets containing negative emotive language had a tendency to attack someone, a body of individuals, or an institution: "@FrankLuntz is a low class slob who came to my office looking for consulting work and I had zero interest. Now he picks anti-Trump panels!", "So many 'politically correct' fools in our country. We have to all get back to work and stop wasting time and energy on nonsense!," and "Truly weird Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky reminds me of a spoiled brat without a properly functioning brain. He was terrible at DEBATE!"

The negative language in Trump's tweet is obvious. That negative language fuels the tweets that attack people and institutions, particularly the media: "Small crowds at @RedState today in Atlanta. People were very angry at EWErickson, a major sleaze and buffoon who has saved me time and money" and "I just realized that if you listen to Carly Fiorina for more than ten minutes straight, you develop a massive headache. She has zero chance!" These two ad hominem attacks are also fringe statements because of their speculative nature on the contexts and individuals they refer to.

DONALD TRUMP: EMOTIVE QUALITIES

Figure 7: Trump, Emotive Qualities

Use of fact-emotion. 71 of Trump's tweets were coded for containing a fact, an emotion, or a combination of fact and emotion. The bulk of Trump's tweets contained either emotive characteristics (19 tweets) or factual-emotional hybrids (36 tweets). Only 16 tweets, 23 percent, were coded for containing factual material.

Value statements. Trump's tweets are relatively valueless. The tweets rarely contain his values, the prevailing sentiments of his party, or Americans in general. None of his tweets was coded for containing moral, ethical, or aesthetic statements. Only 11 tweets contained pseudo-concepts (a fact in addition to a value). Only 9 tweets contained a platitude. Some tweets were coded as containing both pseudo-concept and platitude: "My H-1B reform plan will transform program so it delivers for country, not lobbyists, and will have bipartisan support" and "The polls have been really amazing - we are all tired of incompetent politicians and bad deals!" Trump integrates oft-repeated America political platitudes in these statements, "incompetent politicians," "bipartisan support," and the near universal shunning of lobbyists. Yet he also expresses fact, or potentially observable phenomenon, by providing some substantiation and concrete references: "H-1B reform plan," and a reference to the polls. He also expresses his values about visa reform and lobbyists. These are rare expressions of ethos, however.
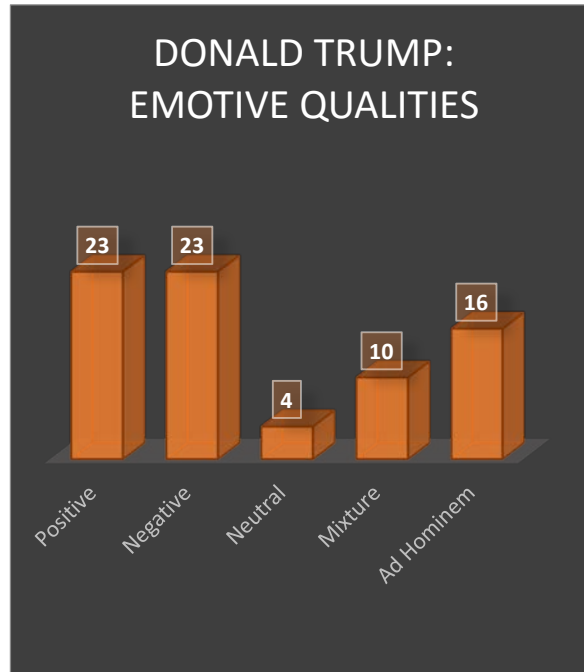
54

Time orientation. Trump's Twitter rhetoric contains a mixture of time references. However, his tweets often refer to the past or incorporate multiple time references. Of the 75 tweets coded, 28 percent contained a reference to a past event: "@AP and @HuffingtonPost should change their fraudulent story to say THAT I DROPPED @NBC (and) The Apprentice to run for President!" and "Small crowds at @RedState today in Atlanta. People were very angry at EWErickson, a major sleaze and buffoon who has saved me time and money."

Trump also tends to describe how past events, or his recollection of past events, affect present reality, for example, "@FrankLuntz, your so-called 'focus groups' are a total joke. Don't come to my office looking for business again. You are a clown!"
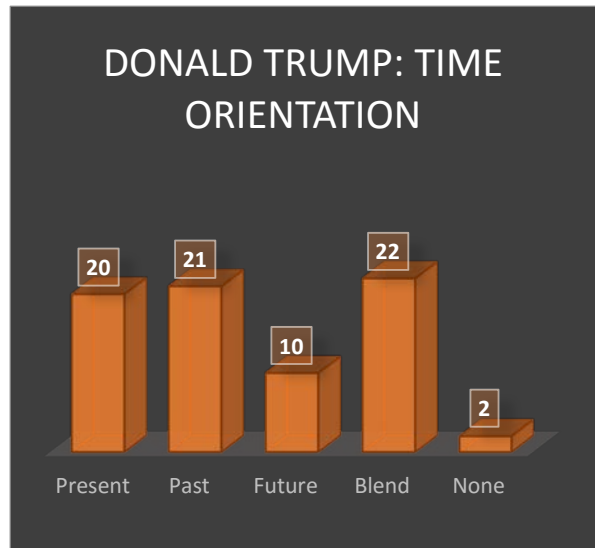

Figure 8: Trump, Time Orientation

DONALD TRUMP: TIME ORIENTATION

Present	Past	Future	Blend	None
20	21	10	22	2

Other categories. A significant number of Trump's tweets were basic propositions. 40 percent of the 75 tweets subjected to analysis were coded as basic propositions. The tweets offered little to no new knowledge. Examples of Trump basic propositions include "LIVE on #Periscope: Good morning Iowa! Let's #MakeAmericaGreatAgain" and "I really enjoyed being at the Iowa State Fair. The crowds, love and enthusiasm is something I will never forget."

Donald Trump: Rhetorical Assessment Summary

Subjecting Trump's rhetoric to empirical verification is a complex endeavor. Many of his claims are weak or fringe in statement strength. They tend to include little to no elements that can assist empirical verification. The tweets lack factual references. They lack even mere relation to a political position or factual concern. Only two of Trump's tweets were coded as binaries, clear unequivocal statements of action, policy articulation or intention in which the listener/reader knows exactly how Trump will act on the subject or his precise thoughts on it. His two binaries are "If I am elected President I will immediately approve the Keystone XL pipeline. No impact on environment and lots of jobs for U.S." and "The #IranDeal is a catastrophe that must be stopped. Will lead to at least partial world destruction (and) make Iran a force like never before." However, the latter statement is riddled with bombastic language, which runs throughout most of Trump's Twitter rhetoric. The heavy emphasis on emotionally-driven rhetoric often lacks substantiation, thus making the claims fringe. They rouse not the mind (logos), but the emotions (pathos).

Most of Trump's Twitter rhetoric is devoid of logos and ethos. It lacks substance or a factual basis that can be subjected to empirical verification. Being devoid of values means that little is known about what Trump believes in or how his beliefs inform his actions or thoughts. With the

exception of the binaries mentioned here and a few other examples, Trump's rhetoric rarely alludes to a position, or takes a position. If a position is taken, the rhetoric is ambiguous and abstract. Overall, it highly challenging to validate many of Trump's claims. Nearly a quarter of his synthetic tweets could likely never be empirically validated. Those tweets are opinionated, ad hominem attacks (16 tweets) against an individual or an institution. While those attacks could potentially be proven, they are utterly flimsy, fringe claims that could likely never be validated. The sentiments expressed in those claims may only exist in his mind. They may rouse the senses, but they do not offer new knowledge or perspective on the candidate beyond his proclivity for tirade.

Hillary Clinton: Rhetorical Assessment

      Position-based factual tweets. Clinton's tweets are predominantly factual in orientation. They tend to be grounded in a concrete experience: a political issue or a position on an issue. Her tweets are for the most part derived from, or based on, observable phenomenon. Of the 72 synthetic statements subjected to this dimension of analysis, nearly 60 percent (43 tweets) stated a position, addressed a political issue, or focused on a fact-based situation (*statement of position-fact*). Those tweets covered a range of factual situations that can be subject to verification: "Voting rights, equal pay, immigration reform, LGBT equality, see more of What We're Fighting For on Pinterest," "We need to make sure there's accountability on Wall Street so there can be prosperity on Main Street," and "Cost won't be a barrier to an education. Debt won't hold you back."

In addition, 24 tweets (33 percent) concretely refer to an idea, policy, or political position (*referential classification*). Those tweets contain various degrees of substantiation or are free of ambiguous language: "Hillary stands with Planned Parenthood. Add your name if you do," "Access to health care should be a right, not a privilege for those who can afford it," and "Watch live: Hillary is laying out her plan to make college affordable & relieve the crushing burden of student debt." Her rhetoric is relatively clear: positions are made and she refers to concrete ideas.

However, Clinton's Twitter rhetoric is not without ambiguity. While she states positions and refers to concrete ideas that can be subjected to verification, some of her tweets contain abstract, ambiguous language that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. 25 percent of her tweets (18 of 72

HILLARY CLINTON: POSITION-FACTUAL TWEETS

Synthetic: 72
Binary: 1
Statement of Position: 43
Ambiguous: 18
Referential: 24
Pseudo-Concept: 36

Figure 9: Clinton, Position-Based Factual Tweets

synthetic statements) were coded as ambiguous. Examples of her ambiguous tweets include: "Yesterday, Hillary spoke at @NatUrbanLeague on systemic racial inequality in America and
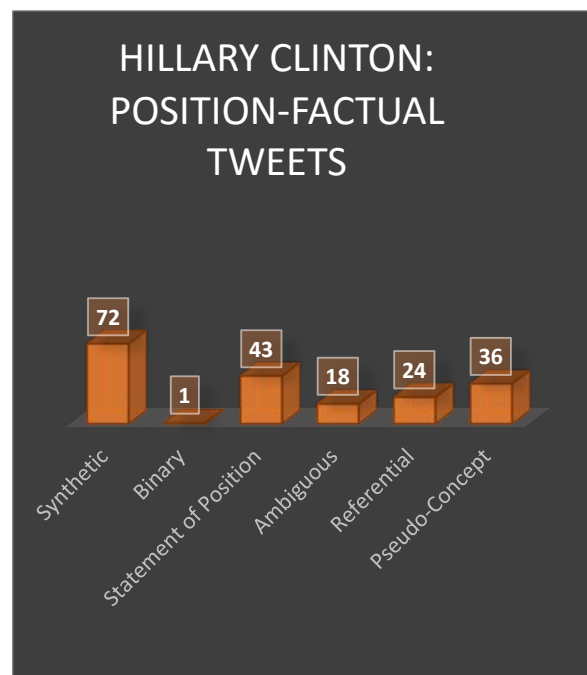
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how we can help fix it," "We can't go on like this. We are better than this. Things must change," and "We should change how we think about business." These statements lack substantiation or direct references to specific policies or specific ideas that can facilitate the empirical verification of these claims. Clinton states "we can help fix" racial inequality, but she does not say how that will be achieved. She also relies on a conditional verb, "can," to articulate that sentiment. It is not a definitive statement. In addition, Clinton states "things must change" and that "we should change" business. However, she never states how or why that change should be enacted or what precisely should be done.

In addition to ambiguity, a significant number of Clinton's tweets are pseudo-concepts (fact + value). 50 percent of her 72 tweets subjected to this dimension of analysis contained the intermingling of fact and value: her values, that of her party or collectively held. Examples of those tweets include: "50 years after the Voting Rights Act, we can't let anyone undermine America's promise: Everyone's voice and vote count," "If GOP attacks on @PPFA feel like an assault on women's health, it's because they are," and "Join Hillary's fight to build an America where we don't leave anyone out or anyone behind." Hillary expresses three values here: preventing the undermining of the Voting Rights Act, protecting women's health, and her desire to build an America where no one is left behind. Though these are all admirable values, they are values, even if they are commonly held. A segment of the population would also disagree with these values. Despite the merits of these values, the determination of their ultimate truth is subject to extensive and potentially challenging verification.

Statement strength. Clinton's statements tend to be strong and not difficult to prove empirically. Of her 72 synthetic tweets subject to this dimension of analysis, 51 percent (37 tweets) were classified as strong statements, 39 percent (28 tweets) as weak statements, and nearly 10 percent (7 tweets) as weak statements. However, many of Clinton's strong statements benefit from being basic propositions. Clinton posts frequent campaign updates, including whereabouts or donation requests. Tweets displaying these characteristics are coded as strong statements. They are relatively easy to verify, for example, "Hillary's pinning her way across America! Follow her on the campaign trail," "4,000,000 followers. Wow! Thanks for joining us #TeamHillary wouldn't be the same without you," and "Are you on Team Hillary? Chip in $1 to support this campaign, and get your official limited-edition supporter card"

However, some of Clinton's tweets were coded as strong statements because of their clarity, directedness toward an issue or concern, and overall lack of ambiguity. Subjecting these tweets to empirical verification is not a difficult task: "Hillary is proud to #StandWithPP," "If GOP attacks on @PPFA feel like an assault on women's health, it's because they are," and "Cost won't be a barrier to an education. Debt won't hold you back. Read Hillary's plan." The statements contain direct references to experiences or substantiation of the claims, all based in observable phenomenon.

However not all of Clinton's statements are strong. Weak statements litter her Twitter rhetoric: "Lifting the embargo doesn't set back the advance of freedom. It advances freedom," and "Fighting to dismantle voting rights, health care, and living wages? That doesn't sound like the

right to rise." The statements contain ambiguous language that means many things to many different people: "freedom," "voting rights," health care," and "living wages." Despite their weakness, they can be subject to verification, even though that verification may be challenging. That said, the rarity of her fringe statement use is a strength. Examples of fringe statements include "We can't go on like this. We are better than this. Things must change," and "@POTUS is right. We can't wait for another generation to tackle climate change. Our future depends on what we do today & in the next decade." The first statement is ambiguous, thus fringe. The second statement is borderline in that it could be coded as a weak statement because it contains references to the president's current position. It also addresses a subject that is widely studied, thus easing empirical verification. However, it is speculative, thus fringe, because of its future orientation. It is predictive.

Emotive qualities. Clinton's Twitter rhetoric is notable among the candidates for its non-emotive qualities. Her tweets were coded for 39 emotional characteristics, with the bulk of her tweets containing positive emotional language or a positive charge. In this dimension of analysis, 51 percent of her tweets were coded for positive emotive qualities.

In contrast, only 15 percent of her tweets containing emotive qualities conveyed negative language or a negative charge. Clinton's negative tweets are also relatively tame: "I'm tired of women being shamed and blamed and dismissed. When you attack women's health, you attack America's health," "If GOP attacks on @PPFA feel like an assault on women's health, it's because they are," and "Republicans are systematically...trying to stop millions of American citizens from voting. What part of democracy are they afraid of."

In these tweets, Clinton stirs fear, shaming, and blaming. However, this negative rhetoric is a whimper, compared to Trump. Also, none of Clinton's tweets were coded for containing ad hominem characteristics.
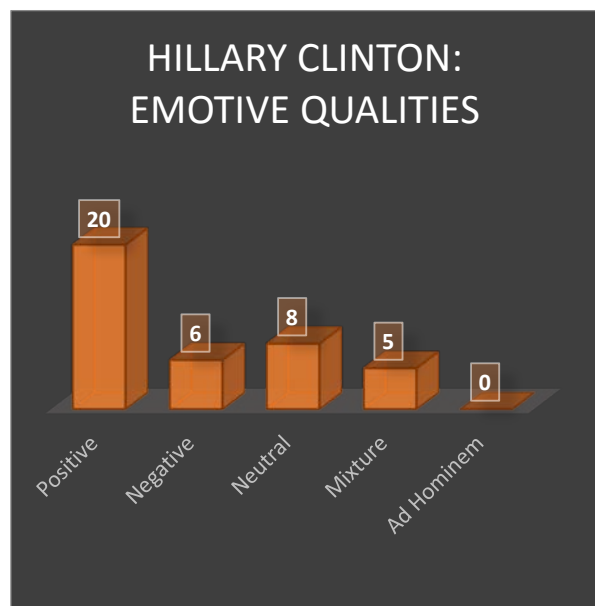
Figure 10: Clinton, Emotive Qualities

Use of fact-emotion. Clinton's tweets are significantly fact oriented. Of the 72 tweets subjected to this dimension of analysis, nearly 50 percent (35 tweets) were coded as containing only factual content. Only 1 tweet was coded as containing solely emotive content. Examples of Clinton's fact-oriented tweets, which lack emotional charge or highly evident emotional language include, include "Access to health care should be a right, not a privilege for those who can afford it" and "Yesterday, Hillary spoke at @NatUrbanLeague on systemic racial inequality in America and how we can help fix it." The one tweet coded for containing only emotional sentiment was the following: "Missing Jon Stewart already." Interestingly, the tweet had

nothing to do with politics, but the departure of a talk show host. However, 36 tweets in this dimension of analysis contained both factual subject matter and emotive characteristics. Tweets that blended logos and pathos included "Fighting to dismantle voting rights, health care, and living wages? That doesn't sound like the right to rise," and "Fixing our immigration system will strengthen families, our economy, and our country." Here, Clinton evokes positive emotive sentiments: fighting for a cause and revealing how an idea will strengthen bonds.

Value statements. Like the other candidates, Clinton's Twitter sample reveals a reluctance to state moral, ethical, or aesthetic positions. None of her tweets were coded for these categories. However, her tweets are infused with innumerable pseudo-concepts and platitudes, which make it challenging to verify their truth, or degree of truth, empirically. Clinton's Twitter sample is revealing for the values that surface and how repeatedly they surface: college costs, immigration, and women's reproductive rights. Examples of tweets that are a mixture of fact and value (pseudo-concept) include "Republicans like Gov. Walker are making it harder to afford college and pay off debt. Hillary says that's wrong" and "We need to rein in how much higher education costs. It's time for a new college compact that makes education available to all."
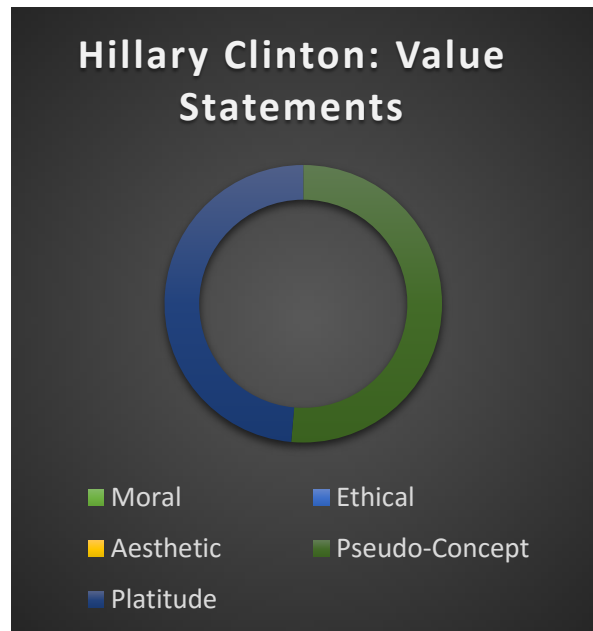
Figure 11: Clinton, Value Statements

Here, Clinton expresses her value orientation toward college costs, while also lacing her statements with facts and references that can be subject to verification. Clinton also utilizes political platitude to convey a point: "Join Hillary's *fight to build an America where we don't leave anyone* out or anyone behind" and "If we *want a competitive future for our kids, they have to be better prepared* when they walk into kindergarten." Here, Clinton conveys two repetitive refrains in American politics using ambiguous language and no substantiation: "build" a better America for all, an oft-repeated mantra, and the assorted mantra language of pre-kindergarten education. While admirable, these statements are sweeping. They also lack substantiation making them difficult to subject to verification because of the tweets utter disregard for specific concrete language.

Time orientation. Most of Clinton's tweets address the present. Of her Twitter sample, a significant percentage of her Twitter rhetoric addressed present concerns — nearly 75 percent (56 tweets). Her Twitter rhetoric is notable for its emphasis on the present compared to the other candidates. This time orientation helps in regards to the statement strength dimension of analysis.

Tweets that were coded as both strong and present focused include the following: "On the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, read #MyFirstVote stories from Americans across the country" and "Good that the appellate court saw the Texas voter ID law for what it is

Figure 12, Clinton: Time Orientation

an assault on the right to vote." These statements contain facts that can be readily observed and subject to truth verification. The statements are also not speculative or predictive.
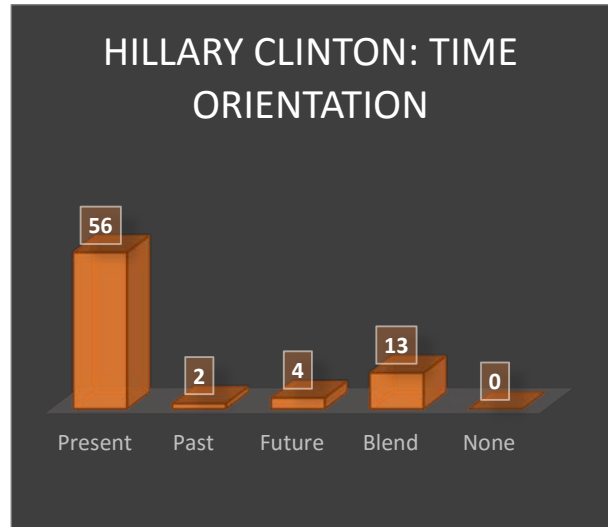
Other categories. Three of Clinton's tweets were coded as senseless because they cannot be subject to verification: ".@JebBush Fixed it for you," and "Their names are emblazoned on our hearts." These tweets likely contain meaning and can be subject to verification if the context of the tweet was taken into consideration. 20 of Clinton's tweets in her sample were also coded as basic propositions. Many of these tweets were campaign plugs: "Our first TV ad of the 2016 campaign: Watch Hillary tell the story of her mom, Dorothy" and "Become a card-carrying member of Team Hillary! Chip in $1 & get your official supporter card." However, Clinton's few senseless and basic propositions are not significant in comparison to the other candidates.

Hillary Clinton: Rhetorical Assessment Summary

Clinton's tweets are overwhelmingly fact driven (logos). Emotive flourishes (pathos) are either not used or emotion is used to increase the persuasive appeal of a fact-oriented statement. This emphasis increases the likelihood her Twitter statements can be validated through empirical means. She makes significant statements about significant matters in a significant number of tweets. Her tweets tend to be substantiated through direct reference to evidence or a concrete situation or topic. However, on occasion, her tweets contain ambiguous language that makes it difficult to prove the merit, or degree of truth, of her claims.

The lack of emotive language may enhance or may diminish the appeal of her message. By avoiding ad hominem rhetoric, she apparently elevates concrete claims over character attacks. That will likely enhance her credibility (ethos). However, it may also diminish her media exposure, as the next chapter of this thesis will show. Clinton's use of positive emotive rhetoric reveals charisma and a "fight for you" mentality. Her avoidance of negative rhetoric shows that

she does not like to sling mud. She wants to address the issues. However, an avoidance of negative rhetoric could also lead to the impression that she is dispassionate and detached.

Like the other candidates, Clinton is susceptible to weaving values (pseudo-concepts) and platitudes into her statements. The bulk of her statements offer that subjective orientation: her values, that of her party, and some that are commonly held. While helpful to understanding her values and beliefs about a given situation, these claims are also difficult to verify. Values have a tendency to not be evidence-based. They also tend to be speculative and contain ambiguous language. Like the other candidates in this study, Clinton makes sweeping, value-infused statements that while lofty and admirable will likely be labeled as "rhetoric" — and not the good kind.

Jeb Bush: Rhetorical Assessment

      Position-based factual tweets. Bush's sample is notable for its dearth of equivocation. His tweets are direct, clear, and nearly free of ambiguity. However, there are some instances where he resorts to ambiguous language to hedge on an issue. Still, compared to the other candidates, his use of abstract, ambiguous language is rare. As an example of his willingness to be direct and take a position on an issue using clear, definitive language, nine of Bush's tweets were coded as binaries. His stance is clear and the language is definitive: "More school choice is needed to help children w/ disabilities. We led the way in Florida. Other states should follow," and "As governor of Florida, I defunded Planned Parenthood. I created a culture of life."

Bush provides concrete evidence and specific language to bolster the substantiation of his claims. This also facilitates empirical verification. Nevertheless, not all of Bush's Twitter rhetoric is free of flourish, loose language, and the intermingling of value, which all challenge the ability to verify his statements. 17 percent of Bush's 71 synthetic tweets (12 tweets) contained ambiguous language or made ambiguous claims (*ambiguous category*). Examples of those ambiguous tweets include "On economic growth, the fact that Paul Krugman disagrees with me warms my heart," "Jeb has the conservative record America needs. Join the winning team today," and "Do we want to insult 53% of Americans? What Donald Trump said was wrong. That's not how we bring people together." These statements lack specific references to facts or other forms of substantiation that would enhance its verification potential. A "conservative record" is a sweeping label with mixed meanings. How he differs from Krugman is not defined. What is being referenced
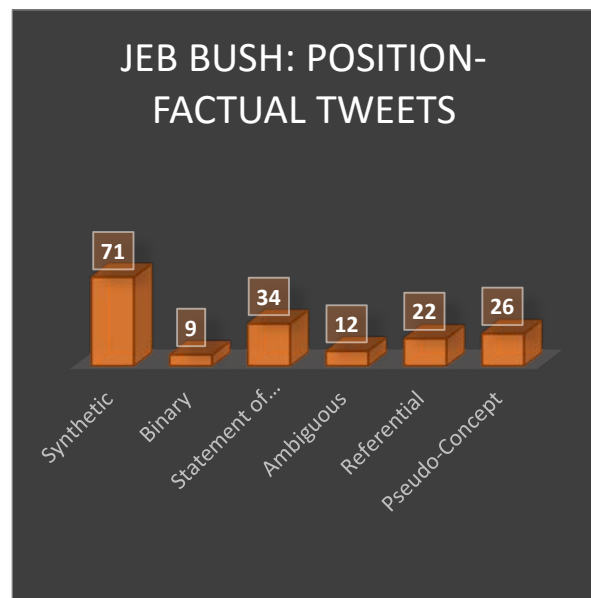

Figure 13: Bush, Position-Based Factual Tweets

regarding Trump is not defined, even though a contextual understanding may shed light on that.

In addition, 37 percent of the 71 synthetic statements evaluated in this dimension of analysis (26 tweets in total) were coded as pseudo-concepts (fact + value). Examples of those tweets include "We need a President who will go everywhere, speak to everyone, unite, not divide. That's just what I did this week," "Jeb has the conservative record America needs. Join the winning team today," and "We must transform immigration from a broken system into one that benefits every American." In these statements, Bush defines three values: how a president should act, that a conservative record is the best approach for America, and that the U.S. immigration system must be fixed.

While these values may be commonly held by others, including Bush, it is difficult to determine whether value claims are entirely true because it is difficult to verify them. Whether a president should go everywhere is speculation. Whether America needs a "conservative record" is speculation. It is also a vague value. What exactly constitutes a "conservative record" today? Whether the immigration system needs to be transformed into "into one that benefits every American" is vague. The ambiguity and speculative nature of the language makes it difficult to verify these statements. There is a complete lack of substantiation and use of specific language grounded in reality or evidence.

Statement strength. Bush's strength in this dimension of analysis is his utter lack of fringe statement usage. Only nine percent (6 tweets) of the 70 tweets in this dimension of analysis were coded as fringe statements. Examples of fringe statements include "Each man has his own destiny... and his own nickname," "As President, Jeb would act immediately to restore America's leadership in the world," and "Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are wrong. We can grow this economy again." The first statement is vague, nearly meaningless. The second and third statements are speculative and vague. The statements would be immensely challenging to subject to verification. However, the bulk of Bush's tweets in this dimension of analysis were coded as strong: 39 strong tweets versus 25 tweets coded as weak.

Emotive qualities. Like Clinton, Bush's Twitter rhetoric lacks emotion. There were only 33 instances of emotive expression, with 19 instances being positive. Also like Clinton, none of Bush's tweets were ad hominem. Most of his Twitter rhetoric was free of language containing a negative charge or negative emotive sentiment. Only four tweets had negative emotive qualities. However, his negative language tended to be stronger than Clinton's negative language, for example, "Obama and State Dept should be ashamed of their purely political manipulation of Cuba's human trafficking issues," and "Strongly support @RepEdRoyce resolution to reject Obama Administration's nuclear agreement with Iran." Bush uses strong words like "ashamed" and "reject" to rouse negative emotional sentiment toward the Obama Administration.

Bush's tweets also tend to convey a mixture of emotions. Examples of tweets containing a mixture of emotional sentiment include "My plan for addressing illegal immigration through border and interior security & cracking down on sanctuary cities" and ".@HillaryClinton what's absolutely, unequivocally wrong is giving taxpayer $ to an org whose practices show no regard for lives of unborn." Bush uses strong negative emotive language, such as "cracking down" and that Clinton is "unequivocally wrong" with giving taxpayer money to organizations that "show no regard to lives of unborn." The statements, however, are not overtly negative, nor are they overtly positive. They contain an emotive neutrality as well that is meant to stir feelings, a tinge of negative sentiment, and a conveyance of facts subject to verification.
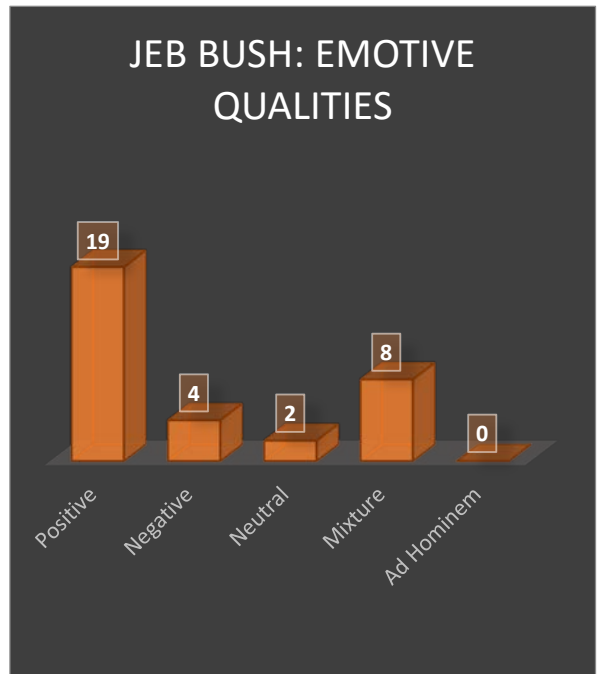
Figure 14: Bush, Emotive Qualities

Use of fact-emotion. Like Clinton, most of Bush's tweets rely on logos to appeal rather than relying on pathos. Of the 71 synthetic tweets evaluated in this analysis, 55 percent (39 tweets) contained facts or a fact-based orientation, while only three relied solely on emotive qualities as an appeal. However, like the other candidates, Bush mixes fact and emotion quite often. 41 percent of the tweets (29 tweets) offered a mixture of fact that can be subject to verification and emotive qualities. Examples of those tweets include "Obama and State Dept should be ashamed of their purely political manipulation of Cuba's human trafficking issues," and "On economic growth, the fact that Paul Krugman disagrees with me warms my heart." Observable situations are referred to (logos), while also lacing the tweet with emotive sentiment: "warms my heart" and "ashamed." However, the bulk of Bush tweets are non-emotive, expressing a claim about a policy, political concern, issue, or merely offering a basic proposition. Examples include "Got some good pre-debate counsel from the @bluestarmothers" and "The Democrats are wrong: We can grow this economy and create jobs."

Value statements. Unlike the other candidates, Bush makes moral statements. 4 of his tweets were coded for containing moral qualities or moral sentiments. Examples of tweets with moral qualities include "Hebrew Scripture & the New Testament still provide the moral vocabulary we all use in America, may it always be so" and ".@HillaryClinton what's absolutely, unequivocally wrong is giving taxpayer $ to an org whose practices show no regard for lives of unborn."

Values are a prominent rhetorical characteristic of Bush's Twitter rhetoric: 30 tweets were coded as pseudo-concepts (fact+value) while 21 tweets were coded as containing platitudes. Examples of tweets coded as pseudo-concepts include "We need to change the incentives for colleges with fresh

Figure 15: Bush, Value Statements

policies that result in more individualization and choices" and "Obama on CNN agrees Iran is ally against Taliban? Wrong … Insight into wishful thinking that led to bad Iran deal." Bush reveals his beliefs pertaining to fixing colleges and his belief that Obama's foreign policy decision with Iran was a bad deal. These statements are potentially verifiable as to the factual material they contain. As with all value statements, that verification will be challenging, if not nearly impossible, however.

Time orientation. A significant number of Bush's tweets address the present or present situations. 64 percent (48 tweets) contain a present orientation. This enhances the potential to verify these statements, causing some of them to be coded as strong. Bush also rarely refers to future events, thus making his Twitter rhetoric less speculative as well as enhancing its verification potential.

Figure 16: Bush, Time Orientation

Other categories. While Bush's Twitter sample does offer new knowledge and numerous claims subject to verification, a significant number of tweets were coded as basic propositions: 40 percent (30 of the 75 subjected to the model) were basic propositions. Those basic propositions generally offered campaign updates and small talk. Examples include "Look forward to seeing this motley crew in Cleveland," and "Just met up with @CFodorKCCI at the @DairyQueen in Iowa Falls. Check out @KCCINews tomorrow to catch our chat." While somewhat illuminating as to the status of the campaign, these updates offer nothing beyond
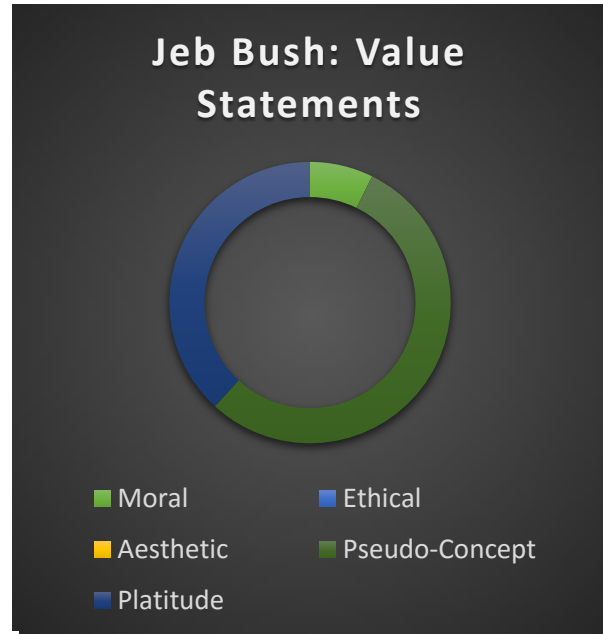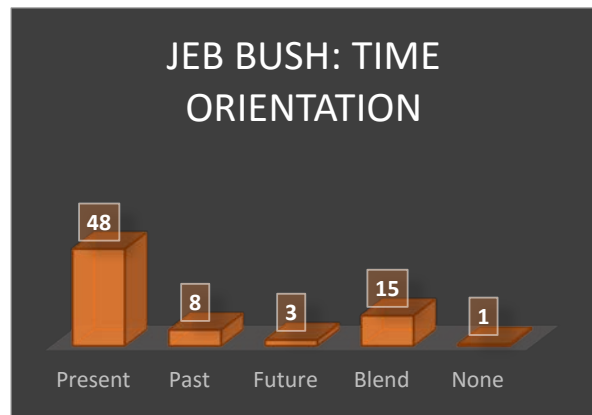
that. But it is a statement made and subject to verification. In all likelihood, these claims are conclusive.

Jeb Bush: Rhetorical Assessment Summary

Bush's Twitter rhetoric is enhanced by its lack of equivocation. Although ambiguity exists, nine of Bush's tweets were coded as binaries: definitive statements of fact on an issue in specific language that is not open to interpretation and that can be readily subjected to verification. Overall, Bush's Twitter rhetoric is fact oriented. On occasion, ambiguous language and references surface. That rhetoric, however, is suffused with values. Fact and value blend forming pseudo-concept, which may contain vague language and reference to beliefs or ideology that is challenging to subject to verification. Bush heralds his "conservative record." But, what specifically does that mean? It is a fact that he is a conservative and it is a value that he also holds. However, that label can be interpreted in a myriad of ways depending on whom you ask. The conservative Republican of the 1980s is the not the conservative Republican of today or tomorrow. It is challenging to verify the merit and degree of truth of the conservative moniker as applied to Bush. The word itself entails a multitude of connotations and denotations, many of which evolve with time, context, and circumstance. Nearly all of Bush's pseudo-claims are considered weak statements for these reasons.

However, the expression of his ethos through pseudo-concepts may appeal to some groups. In addition, unlike all of the other candidates, his willingness to make moral statements may appeal to some while also generating wrath among other groups. Bush may also appeal because his language is not as emotionally driven as the other candidates, particularly Trump. However, like Clinton, that may hurt him because he can also appear to be dispassionate and dispiriting. Ultimately, Bush rhetoric is a hodgepodge of logos, pathos, and ethos. Whether that amalgamation of rhetorical characteristics benefits or hurts him remains to be seen.

A Comparative Analysis of Candidate Twitter Rhetoric

Distinctions and similarities in rhetorical characteristics and tendencies become evident when all of the data is examined and displayed in charts. This portion of the thesis includes that comparative analysis through infographics and brief narrative explanations of the data.

Position-based factual tweets. It is evident that nearly all of the candidates' Twitter rhetoric is synthetic: claims that can be subjected to empirical validation. However, a significant number of those claims are ambiguous, and because of that rhetorical characteristic, challenging to verify. Also, notable is the insignificant number of tweets classified as binaries.

As a whole, the candidates avoid making direct, explicit, substantive statements with concrete language about their policies or positions. In contrast, though a lesser degree of truth, Sanders published a significant number of tweets (34) that make a concrete reference to a policy, idea, or point of contrast (*referential category*). Trump's rhetoric as subjected to this dimension of analysis is revealing: for its lack of revealing much about the candidate's positions, ideas, or policies. In addition, he avoids making value statements (pseudo-concepts), further diminishing any semblance of understanding one can glean from his Twitter rhetoric.

Statement strength. The candidates' statements contain varying degrees of strength. However, Trump stands out as the candidate most susceptible to making fringe statements. Bush's tweets were the strongest in terms of their verification potential or ease to which verification is possible.

Notable though is the number of weak statements made by the candidates and the relative similarity. Though not impossible, weak statements are challenging claims to verify. This is revealing because it shows the sheer number of statements that contain speculation, abstract language, and ambiguity: an overall lack of attachment to proof and substantiation.
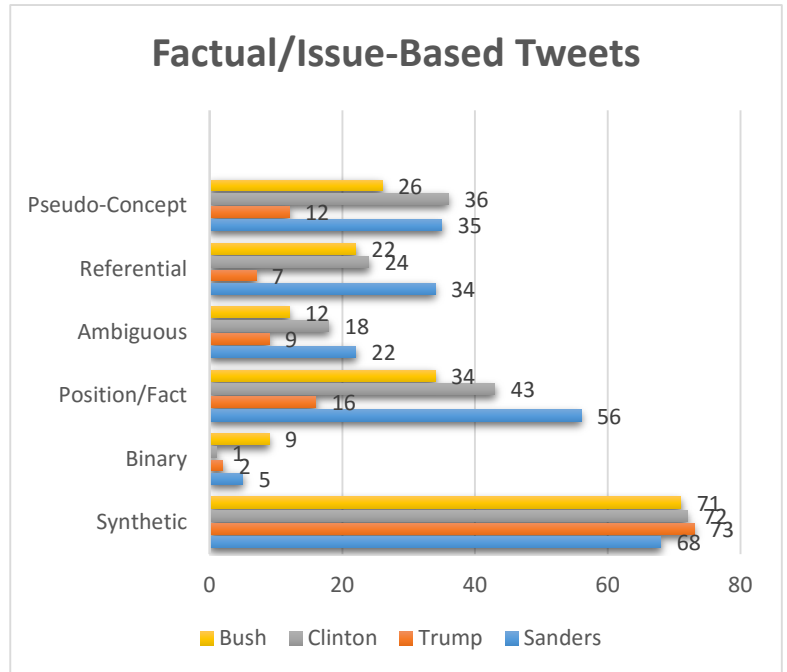
Figure 17: Position-Based Factual Tweets
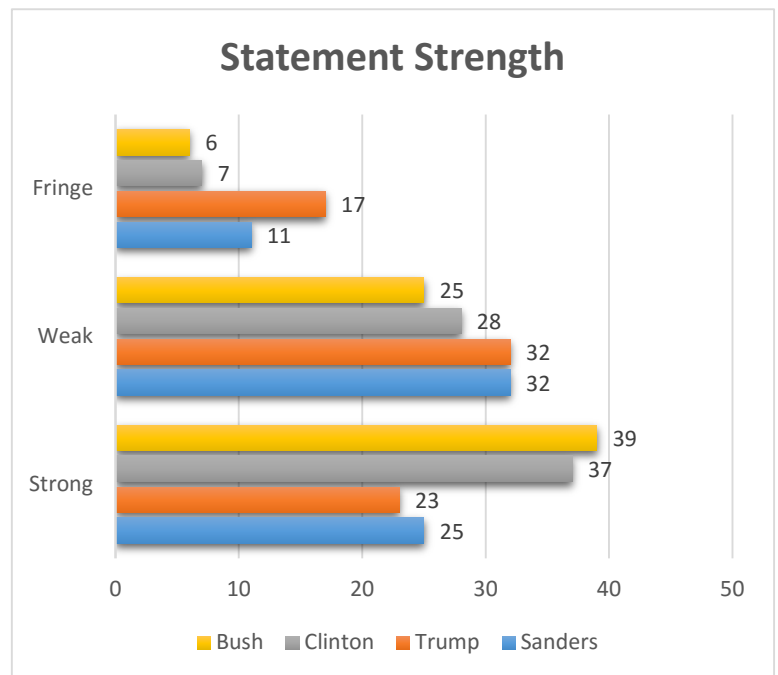
Figure 18: Statement Strength

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Emotive qualities. Wide variation exists among the candidates when it comes to infusing their language with emotive qualities. Trump is the most emotional. He is also highly prone to engaging in ad hominem attacks, while the other candidates' Twitter rhetoric avoids that technique.

Even Sanders' one tweet coded as ad hominem is a borderline case that some would argue does not rise to that standard. Also distinct is Clinton and Bush's lack of emotive rhetoric. Both tend to appeal with logos rather than pathos. Sanders is the most balanced of the four, mixing a range of emotive characteristics into his tweets.

Emotive Characteristics

Category	Bush	Clinton	Trump	Sanders
Ad Hominem	0	0	16	1
Mixture	8	5	10	8
Neutral	2	8	4	9
Negative	4	6	23	20
Positive	19	20	23	10
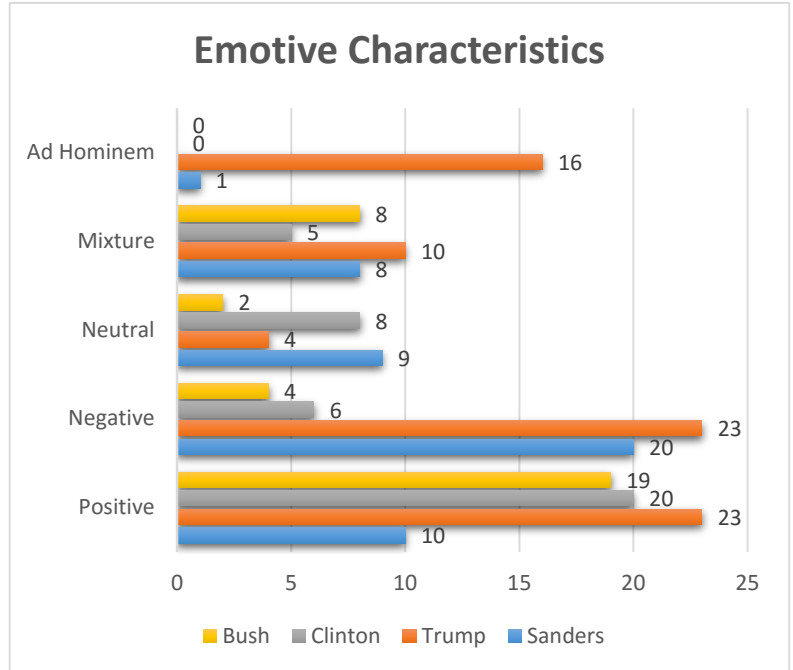
Figure 19: Emotive Characteristics

Use of fact-emotion. Though the candidates widely differ on the quantity of emotive characteristics infused in their tweets, evident similarities exist in their usage of both fact and emotion in single tweets.

However, Bush and Clinton are distinct from Trump and Sanders with their near disregard of emotion to convey message and appeal to audience. On the other hand, Trump is distinct for his extreme reliance on emotion to convey and appeal.

Statement of Fact-Emotion

Category	Bush	Clinton	Trump	Sanders
Both	29	36	36	37
Emotion	3	1	19	9
Fact	39	35	16	25
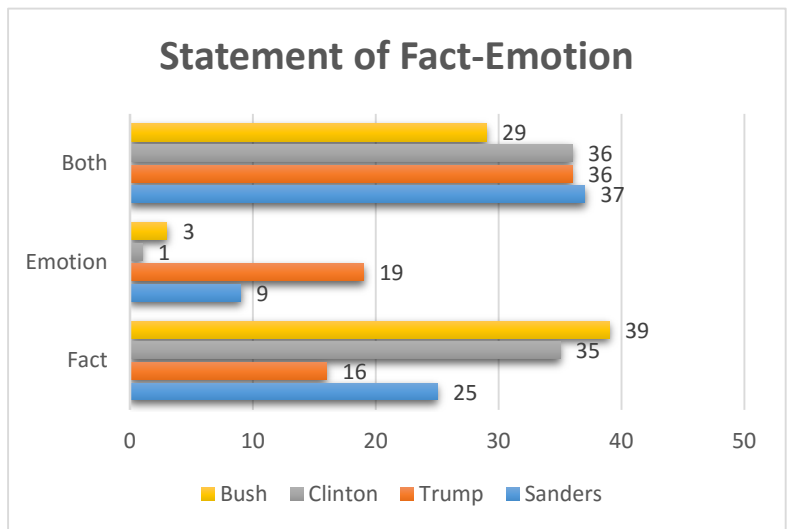
Figure 20: Statement of Fact-Emotion

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Value statements. Sanders, Clinton, and Bush laced a significant number of their tweets with pseudo-concepts and platitudes. While these tweets build ethos and reveal the beliefs and ideologies of the candidates, pseudo-concepts and platitudes are challenging to verify. These statements are sweeping and rousing, if not generic, rather than evidence-based statements that can be readily validated through empirical methods.

Trump is distinct, however, for his lack of values and personal ethos. Some of his platitudes are highly generic as well, like the mantra: Make America Great Again. For this chart and analysis, I excluded the ethical, moral, and aesthetic classifications because of the lack of instances in the entire sample.
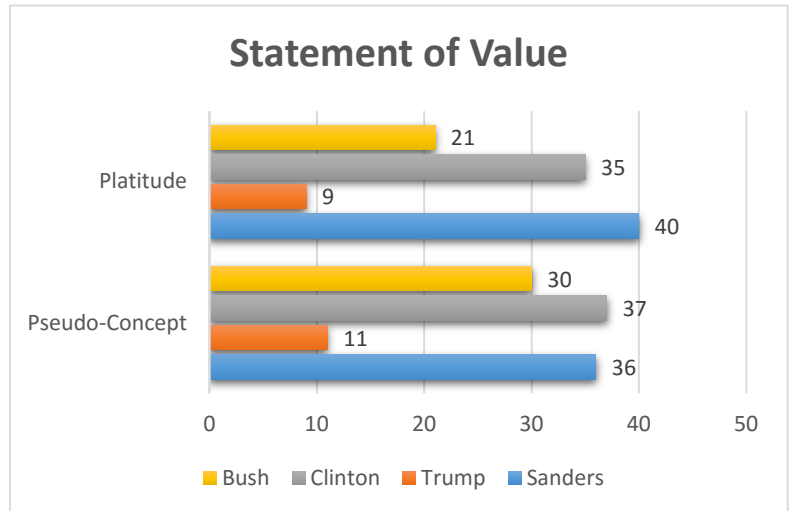
Figure 21: Statement of Value

Time orientation. Most of the candidates' Twitter rhetoric contends with the present. Trump is distinct for his reflections and observations of the past. Sanders has a tendency to be future oriented. That makes his statements speculative and challenging to verify.
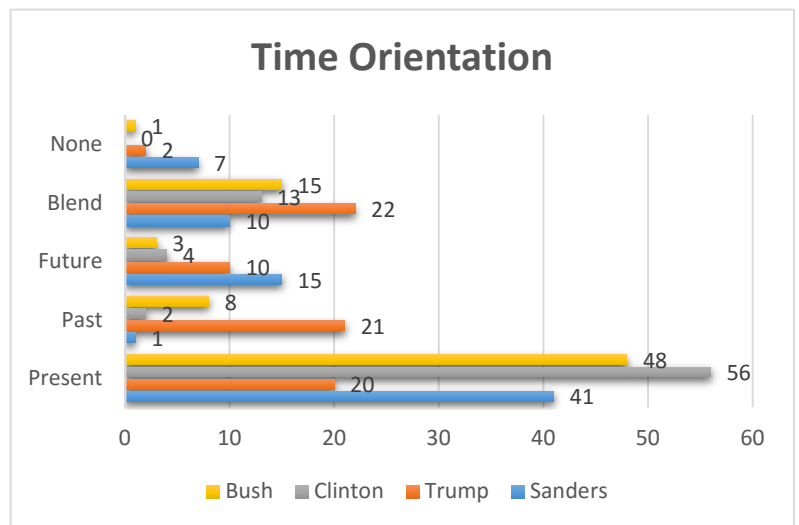
Figure 22: Time Orientation

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Basic propositions and senseless. The candidates' use of basic propositions was varied. Many of those propositions involved campaign updates such as a call for donations or an update on where the candidate had spoken. Overall, this data is insignificant. It reveals nothing and candidates will always post banal updates of this sort on Twitter. It is a predominant use of the platform.

However, the classification needed to be created because of the sheer number of basic propositions in the 300-tweet sample. This data needed to be siloed and assessed. As did senseless statements, which reveal little in content and in terms of data analysis because of the insignificant number of times they occurred.

Figure 23: Basic Propositions

Ayer's system of thought was built from two primary foundations: that which can be verified in sense experience (a synthetic proposition or statement) and that which cannot be verified in sense experience (a senseless statement). To adhere to that logic, I created the category. I also created the category because the candidates tweeted senseless rhetoric on rare occasion. Of the 300 tweets, I coded 15 instances of senseless content. It was spread relatively evenly among the candidates.

Chapter 6: Results and Findings from Model and Media Convergence

Introduction

The findings in this chapter are derived from a randomized selection of each of the candidates' tweets and examining whether those tweets received scant or pervasive media coverage. The distinction between scant and pervasive is as obvious as the words themselves. Scant means the tweet triggered very little media coverage, three or less articles from media outlets. Scant may also mean no coverage. I choose the word scant to signify that the coverage was not evidently pervasive. What I observed through this method was of limited number: so scant as to not mean pervasive. To that point, although I may not have triggered a single search return of a media article based on a tweet on Google Advanced Search, it is plausible that an article triggered by a tweet was published online somewhere. Google may not be picking it up for a number of reasons including Google's detection of my geography and the popularity of the article.

Because of this factor and others, the "scant" category offers that flexibility. It ultimately means that the tweet triggered a few articles, or none. Precise quantification is impossible. In addition, Google appears to be the only technology that can reliably scour a wide extent of the web in search of this data. Conversely, pervasive means the direct opposite of scant: one can easily

and quickly observe a number of articles triggered by a tweet, more than three articles. However, tweets in this category tended to trigger many more articles than just three. What I observed was sufficiently more than a scant number: the observation was quite obvious and evident. The tweet triggered a pervasive number of articles from a number of media outlets.

Similar to the reasoning behind the scant category, if Google returned five articles tied to a particular tweet, it is possible that more articles exist. Umbrella terms, or categories, with flexibility needed to be created and the clear-cut, as well as obvious, distinction between scant and pervasive. In addition, as noted in the scope and methodology section of this thesis, I excluded bloggers and publications that did not appear to be a newsgathering operation, essentially staff hired to report and write about current events. I also narrowed the search to English language sites. Articles that were merely a roundup of candidate tweets were excluded.

Process and findings of first assessment. Tweets subjected to Google search to code for scant and pervasive coverage were randomly selected from each candidate's 75 tweets (see Appendix E for the list of randomly selected tweets). I randomly selected the five tweets using an Excel-based algorithm. Those tweets were examined for the rhetorical characteristics they contained, coding that included all of the categories in the model. Those twenty randomly selected tweets were then subjected to the scant-pervasive triggering test through Google. Of that set, only two tweets triggered pervasive media coverage: one from Trump, "@FrankLuntz I won every poll of the debate tonight by massive margins @DRUDGE_REPORT & @TIME so where did you find that dumb panel" and one from Bush, "In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs." Bush's tweet was used in stories published by The Huffington Post and The Florida Sun-Sentinel, among others. Trump's tweet was used in stories published by The Huffington Post and Mother Jones, among others.

The other 18 tweets subjected to this randomized review and triggering test received scant coverage. Despite containing a wide range of rhetorical characteristics and statement strength that would make it relatively easy to empirically validate the merits of these claims, the tweets received little to no traction in the media. Statements that clearly stated a candidate's position (*statement of position*), made a direct reference to a subject or concern using specific language (*referential*), and contained little to no ambiguous language received scant media attention. It did not matter whether the statement contained a strong declaration of fact or strong statement strength, the former surprising because of its evident "newsworthiness" and the latter because of the ease to which it could be verified by the media.

Binary and ad hominem tweets. The randomized review surfaced two tweets that received pervasive coverage and that contained distinct rhetorical characteristics compared to the other 18 tweets that did not trigger media coverage. Bush's tweet was coded as a binary, which in my model is held as the highest degree of truth because of its direct language and direct statement on an issue or a concern with no equivocation. That rhetorical characteristic would seem to be palatable to media organizations, who are intent on reporting political candidates' positions on issues. In addition, the candidate is making a statement in which they

will likely be held accountable for during the campaign or after they are elected. Bush's tweet was distinct because it was a binary and because it was the only binary subjected to this review.

Trump's tweet also generated pervasive media coverage and was distinct because it was the only ad hominem tweet subjected to this randomized Google review. Since the tweets were distinct because of their binary and ad hominem rhetorical characteristics and because they both generated pervasive coverage, I subjected those rhetorical characteristics to another triggering review. I did this in part to see if additional distinctions in triggering based on rhetorical characteristics could be observed. The findings of this second review were significant.

  Second assessment. Due to the limited number of tweets coded as binaries and ad hominem attacks, I used tweets containing these characteristics from the entire sample. I was not concerned with whether a particular candidate's tweet received scant or pervasive coverage. I was concerned with whether the tweet containing those rhetorical characteristics triggered the media coverage. In addition, I could not divide the tweets equally by candidate because nearly all of the ad hominem tweets were published by Trump. Also, I wanted to test a significant quantity of tweets in each category, binary and ad hominem, to see if a pattern emerged. I subjected all 16 of Trump's ad hominem tweets and the sole Sander's ad hominem tweet to the pervasive-scant test — 17 ad hominem tweets in total. I then selected 17 binary tweets, a sample that comprised tweets from all four candidates: 5 binaries from Sanders; 2, Trump; 1, Clinton; and 9, Bush. In total, 17 binary and 17 ad hominem tweets were tested through Google to see if they triggered pervasive or scant media coverage (see Appendix F for an inventory of tested tweets). The findings are illustrated in the following charts:

Figure 24: Binary/Ad Hominem Results
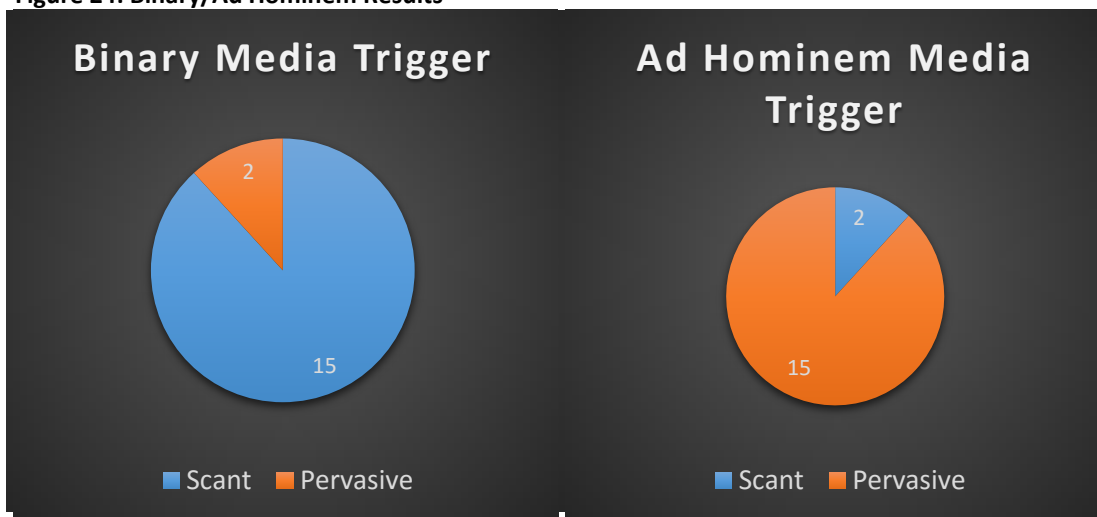
Ad hominem attacks triggered pervasive media coverage in 15 out of 17 tweets evaluated, while binary tweets triggered pervasive media coverage on only two occasions. Despite binary tweets containing direct, ambiguous free declarations on issues, those declarations for the most part stayed within the Twittersphere. Meanwhile, Trump's ad hominem tweets received

extensive media coverage from many media outlets: CNN, Fortune, The Huffington Post, New York Post, CBS News, Bloomberg, USA Today, and The New York Times, among others. Trump's statements in those tweets extended well beyond the Twittersphere. That included "The hatred that clown @krauthammer has for me is unbelievable – causes him to lie when many others say Trump easily won debate!"

Hot-topic issues. The two binary tweets that triggered pervasive media coverage addressed hot-button issues: the Keystone XL pipeline project and Planned Parenthood. Bush triggered pervasive coverage for tweeting about his Planned Parenthood record: "In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs." Trump also triggered pervasive coverage for tweeting his position on the Keystone XL pipeline: "If I am elected President I will immediately approve the Keystone XL pipeline. No impact on environment & lots of jobs for U.S." However because these were hot-button issues, the triggering of pervasive coverage by these binaries is arguably less significant. Declaring stances on these subjects was likely to generate coverage, whether or not the statement made was a binary. However, one Bush tweet, coded as a binary, about Planned Parenthood received scant coverage: "As governor of Florida, I defunded Planned Parenthood. I created a culture of life."

That caveat aside, these tweets are distinct for triggering pervasive coverage. All the other tweets (coded as binaries) received scant coverage. In those tweets, the candidates declared their positions on a variety of issues including diplomatic relations with Iran, school choice, health care, and free speech. Despite the gravity of the issues addressed, the tweets received scant coverage in the media. These tweets are also more likely to be empirically verified, while ad hominem tweets are less likely to be empirically verified. The former are statements of fact composed of clear, concrete language. The latter are emotional statements and subjective interpretations of character, a lesser degree of truth, if not outright falsehood. These findings reveal an apparent callousness, ignorance, or disregard as to whether these claims can be empirically verified or not (fact-checked). Ad hominem claims are widely reported while claims that are direct statements of fact and that are more likely to contain the potential for verification (fact-checking) receive little to no attention.

Media Survey

I distributed an 8 to 10 question survey to media students and media professionals. The survey was distributed online during the research and development phase of this thesis. Responses came from that audience. The survey focused on the following themes: the use of Twitter by media, their impressions of Twitter as a newsgathering tool, and their impressions of Twitter's use in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. 66 respondents answered some questions. 58 respondents finished the survey (see Appendix G for complete survey results and questions).

Survey rationale. The survey was created because of its relevance to the study. I needed to gather data from individuals in the field regarding their thoughts of the use of Twitter in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. In addition, I wanted to understand how they perceived

Twitter as a newsgathering and news reporting tool. Broadly, do they believe it is a useful tool? Specifically, should tweets be subjected to fact-checking?

This thesis was concerned with the identification of rhetorical characteristics of candidates' tweets. It was also concerned with identifying whether particular tweets are more likely, or less likely, to be empirically verified. With those research concerns in mind, I wanted to understand whether media professionals thought tweets should be subjected to empirical verification — basic fact-checking. In the survey, I decided to use the term "fact-check" instead of empirical verification, because the latter term is academic. Overall, the findings are revealing for two reasons: one, 54 percent of respondents "strongly agreed" that "journalists must fact check a presidential candidates' tweets before using them in a story"; two, 53 percent of respondents "agreed" that tweets from presidential candidates should be treated as news sources by journalists.

However while they agree that tweets should be subjected to verification and used in stories, a significant number of the candidates' tweets are incredibly challenging to fact-check. Ad hominem claims are nearly impossible to prove the validity of the statement through empirical means (the typical evidence gathering that a reporter would typically do). Yet those claims receive widespread media coverage despite the near inability to verify these highly subjective and speculative claims. These statements are not meant to cast aspersions on the survey takers. Rather, it is interesting that journalists do recognize the need to fact-check tweets and rightly so. However, while that idealization is admirable and ethical, the act of fact-checking a tweet may be a near impossible endeavor.

Twitter as newsgathering tool. The survey reveals that there is a strong compulsion among respondents to use Twitter as a newsgathering and news-reporting tool. Twitter triggers them to write stories. 28 survey respondents said Twitter "triggered" them to write a story about an organization or individual. 35 respondents also said they "incorporated a Tweet" into one of their news stories or, as an editor, asked their "reporters to cite/use Tweets in their stories."

In addition, 48 percent of respondents acknowledged that "journalists and editors (are) more likely to use a Tweet as a source in their stories" if it contains an emotional reaction. Emotive tweets can be challenging to verify, however. Only 7 percent of respondents felt that a tweet that describes a "fact/situation" is likely to be used in a story. However, 33 percent of respondents felt that a tweet is likely to be used in a story if it conveys both a fact and an emotion. Tweets that blend fact and emotive characteristics are not as challenging to verify since they contain factual material. But, emotive characteristics can increase verification challenges. One survey respondent acknowledged this concern: "Twitter is a good source for tips but not for facts. The site will show what people are talking about and what may be important, but tweets are not always accurate."

Survey and twitter media influence. This survey captured the broad zeitgeist of Twitter use in media and in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. The thesis itself examines the deeper

questions of Twitter use in the media, the underlying implications that reside beneath questions posed by the survey. The survey reveals the fusion of Twitter and media, particularly in the context of the 2016 U.S. presidential race; but the thesis reveals the implications of that fusion. Ultimately, there needs to be a better understanding of what that fusion means in light of the implications that the thesis brings to light. Twitter is overridden with rhetoric that is difficult, if not nearly impossible to fact-check. Media professionals acknowledge the growing use of Twitter in their profession as well as its validity. They also acknowledge the need to fact-check tweets, the survey shows. But, some of the candidates' tweets could likely never be fact-checked, especially the ad hominem tweets that triggered pervasive media coverage.

Chapter 7: Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations

Summary

A tweet is a tiny statement, but that does not mean a tweet cannot persuade. That inherent character limitation also does not mean a tweet is a rhetorically vapid instrument or that it is devoid of the tools of rhetoric that can make it a powerfully, persuasive instrument. Recognizing the power, influence, and pervasiveness of Twitter in political discourse, this thesis exposed the strong and loose rhetoric laden within those short tweets. That was the first research concern: to develop a model that could identify the multitude of rhetorical characteristics in a tweet. A tweet, this thesis has shown, contains a number of characteristics of persuasive rhetoric: emotive language (pathos), value statements (ethos), time orientation, and factual content (logos). But while tweets contain these rhetorical characteristics and others, a more important question is identifying whether those tweets can be substantiated. Do they contain factual merit? Are tweets devoid of truth, merely utterances meant to persuade but not inform? These are important questions to mull over especially since Twitter is leveraged by politicians to sway the minds of voters in their favor.

Twitter in presidential politics. The 2016 U.S. presidential race is an obvious example of the power and influence of Twitter. Politicians are using Twitter as their own news outlet. Their tweets — "news" from the campaign and the candidate — can influence the electorate and potentially trigger the media to write about them. Recognizing that power and influence of presidential tweets, this thesis examined the rhetorical characteristics of their tweets. It also stripped away that rhetoric to expose the "truth potential" of that statement: whether it can be empirically verified or whether that may be a near impossible task. This is an important and relevant undertaking since Twitter rhetoric is pervasive and influential. That pervasiveness and influence is magnified when a single tweet is broadcasted outside the Twittersphere to billions of people worldwide. When U.S. presidential candidates sound off from the Twitter stump and the media disseminate those 140-character sound-offs, it is all too clear that this rhetoric is too powerful and expansive for it not to be taken at face value. It should be subjected to scrutiny.

However, it is challenging to create a "truth test" for these tiny statements. In addition, no model in the literature was found that would identify a multitude of rhetorical characteristics of a tweet and challenge whether that rhetoric can be empirically verified. I solved that first

research dilemma by developing a unique and innovative tweet rhetorical analysis model based off Ayer's statement verification system. That model provided a wealth of primary data about the rhetorical characteristics of 2016 U.S. presidential candidate's tweets. That data showed distinct differences and similarities among the candidates' Twitter rhetoric. It also showed that a tweet should never be taken at face value.

Rationale for verifying twitter claims. Tweets are claims: some of which can be empirically verified and some of which can never be empirically verified. A tweet can contain absolutely concrete language that clearly describes a candidate's position on an issue. However, a tweet can also contain ambiguous language that makes it challenging to validate the truth of the statement. Moreover, a tweet can be entirely devoid of factual content, amounting to nothing more than an emotional diatribe or a senseless statement. An analysis of the candidates' tweets for this thesis revealed the frequency in which the candidates used language that is concrete, as well as language that is laden with ambiguity. Of the 300 tweets analyzed, 284 tweets were coded as synthetic statements.

That means the statements were at least capable of being verified. But the capability to verify does not mean it will be easy to do so. Only 17 tweets (5 percent) from the candidates were coded as binaries: clear unequivocal statements on a position or issue. Verification is easy with binaries. What is stated is stated, free and clear of ambiguity. However, 61 of the 286 synthetic tweets were coded as containing ambiguous language — 21 percent of the study sample. Though these statements are not impossible to verify, they are challenging to do so. The statements are ridden with ambiguity and speculation. The statement may be interpreted in many ways depending on whom is doing the interpreting. The statement may also be devoid of much meaning or truth even though a statement was made. In addition, of the 286 synthetic tweets, 109 tweets (38 percent) were coded as pseudo-concepts: a tweet containing a fact and a value. Though value statements are statements of ethos and are an essential rhetorical tool, they are challenging to verify because they are subjective. They are statements of perspective that not everyone, or anyone other than the speaker, may agree with.

Many of the tweets contain these and other issues that make them challenging, if not nearly impossible, to verify. 117 tweets of the 300-tweet corpus were coded as weak statements, challenging though not impossible to verify. 41 tweets were coded as fringe statements, highly challenging, if not nearly impossible to verify. 124 tweets were coded as strong statements, but the bulk of them were coded as strong statements because they were basic propositions (90 tweets). They offer little in terms of new knowledge.

Twitter speak. The challenges of empirical verification, coupled with the use of ambiguous language, reveal a not-so-evident problem with the character limitation of Twitter. It's easy to say something, but what is said may have little to no relation to reality. Moreover, proving whether the statement is true or not through even a rudimentary empirical assessment may be nearly impossible. In addition, politicians can cherry pick from the rhetorical toolbox to say something that is appealing in part because it contains an amalgamation of logos, pathos, and ethos. But what is said may be ridden with ambiguity, loose logic, or worse, utterly

senseless. An assessment of the presidential candidates' Twitter rhetoric reveals those issues and others. Ultimately, it shows that the truth is slippery, difficult to validate, and rarely concrete on Twitter even though it is possible to make short, concrete statements of fact.

Flimsy presidential twitter rhetoric. All of the candidates' Twitter rhetoric is plagued with verification issues. It would be unwise to take their Twitter rhetoric at face value. It must be subjected to scrutiny. Also, not one candidate is more or less dishonest than the others are. It would be a grave error to make that type of determination from a small body of evidence. However, the data does reveal tendencies of what a candidate is willing to say or not say and how they are willing or not willing to express it. Trump, for example, rarely stated a position on an issue or factual concern. His Twitter sample revealed near complete disregard for logos. On the other hand, his Twitter rhetoric was laced with pathos — and the lowest form of it, the ad hominem attack.

In contrast, Clinton and Bush's Twitter rhetoric lacked the emotive frequency and intensity of Trump's rhetoric. They turn to logos instead of pathos to persuade audience. When they use emotive language, they do so judiciously. This style of rhetoric may have contributed to Bush's decline in the polls and his decision to recast his public image as a firebrand: "There's a new Jeb Bush on the campaign trail: More combative with his rivals, fired up in his speeches, looser and candid with reporters" (Lee, 2015). Whether or not a candidate's style of rhetoric benefits or hurts their campaign is outside the scope of this thesis. Whether the public reacts to that impression positively or negatively is also well outside the scope of this thesis.

Twitter impressions. An examination of the rhetorical characteristics of the candidates' Twitter rhetoric does provide an impression of the candidate: what they state (of factual or emotive basis), how firmly they are willing to state a claim (strong or weak statement), and how they chose to express that statement (through logos, pathos, or ethos). That close examination also reveals their rhetorical propensities and perhaps ultimately the type of person and candidate they are. The rhetoric clearly shows Trump as the firebrand (pathos), Clinton as the non-emotive, position-oriented candidate (logos), Sanders as cheerleader of populist values (ethos), and Bush as an admixture of facts and values (logos/pseudo-concepts).

But the impressions they project through Twitter can be challenging to verify empirically. Moreover, the impressions may be false, though sadly taken at face value by the media and the public. What is seemingly evident and clear in a 140-character statement is not so seemingly evident and clear when subjected to the model's rhetorical assessment. Taken at face value, a mere read of the content of the tweet, it may likely be perceived as true: it was expressed by someone at some point in time. There is little doubting that something was expressed by someone at some time: a claim was made, a claim that may or may not be challenging to subject to verification.

Twitter smokescreen. The model shows that tweets should never be taken at face value, especially from politicians. The content itself is likely a smokescreen, a ruse, a red herring, a faction, propaganda or potentially a substantiated claim that can be easily verified

through rudimentary empirical methods. That surface content must be peeled back to expose the rhetorical characteristics of the statement. It is only through that close analysis that we can begin to arrive at deciding whether a tweet is potentially true or not. This close analysis should occur well before we attempt to determine its truth by assessing the context to which it refers. That may not even be necessary if we pick apart the rhetorical bones of the tweet first, remove the surface flesh, and feast on the truth within.

Scrutinize the twitter smokescreen. If anything, the model shows that Twitter scrutiny is necessary. Otherwise, we will never be informed or be able to distinguish what is truly fact or what is truly fiction. If we just read the surface content of the tweet, just the words and the apparent truths that offers us, we will drown our perceptions and thoughts in a sea of half-baked, concocted claims. These claims will persuade us to believe in lies and factions. These claims will influence us to vote for candidates who do not deserve our vote.

Be fooled or not by twitter. The implications are substantial. If current trends serve as an indication of things to come, Twitter and other social media platforms will likely become the sole "news outlets" for hundreds of millions of Americans. They will be "informed" of the events of the day through social media, not the broadsheet. Nevertheless, while the information may inform, it may not always convey the truth. If the Twitter rhetoric of the presidential candidates is any indication, that "information" contains various degrees of truth — some fact, some fiction, some faction. However, much of it is factually flimsy and ridden with ambiguity. Moreover, these "newsmakers" with their "news outlets" hold an extreme advantage: the limitations of expression on the platform means they can get away with making a broad and vague statement that gets attention and influences voters. However, that statement may also be nearly devoid of factual meaning or the ability to verify its content. The "information," the tweet, the Facebook post must be scrutinized. Otherwise, we will just be consumers of information, and much of it empty rhetoric — oceans away from achieving wisdom or truth.

Media and public implications. Twitter claims also persuade the media to write stories about the claims. The media is a consumer and disseminator of political Twitter rhetoric. Because of the need to understand the flow of Twitter rhetoric from candidate to media to beyond the Twittersphere, the model assessed what type of rhetorical characteristics tend to trigger media coverage of a candidate's tweet. The thesis also sought to answer an additional key question: does the media disseminate political Twitter rhetoric that can likely never be fact-checked? The disturbing answer to that question is yes. It appears that that is the vast majority of the rhetoric they are interested in.

To a highly substantial degree, the model determined that presidential candidate tweets containing ad hominem rhetoric almost always trigger pervasive coverage. Meanwhile, tweets coded as binaries — substantial and substantive statements of fact about an issue or political position — almost never triggered pervasive coverage. The implications of this finding are substantial, and arguably grave, for the media and voters. The media ignores substantial messages of fact that they can fact-check (empirically validate) with relative ease. Meanwhile,

ad hominem tweets from candidates nearly always trigger media coverage. Because of their highly subjective nature, ad hominem tweets are typically falsehoods disguised as truth. But because they are directed at someone, they have the potential to be true: true at least in the mind of the person making the claim, true because a person made a statement. The latter can be verified. However, because of its subjective nature, it is extremely challenging to verify ad hominem claims because it may only be true in the mind of the person making the claim.

An ad hominem attack is not, however, a substantial and substantive statement of fact that can be easily substantiated through empirical means. It is not a statement of fact on a political issue or concern. It is an attack against a character or an institution. Despite these issues and the fact that many ad hominem attacks can likely never be fact-checked, the media widely disseminated ad hominem tweets from the candidates, particularly Trump, while virtually ignoring tweets coded as binaries. This occurred despite the fact that journalists usually follow either a personal or an institutional code of ethics that requires them to fact-check information before publishing it. They are the gatekeepers. But it appears, at least with Twitter, that there is no keeper at the gate. The gate is wide open.

Binary tweets and media coverage. Of the 17 binary tweets subjected to analysis, only two of those tweets received pervasive coverage. The remainder received scant coverage. Meanwhile of the 17 ad hominem tweets subjected to analysis, only two received scant coverage, while the other 15 tweets triggered pervasive coverage. Substantial and substantive statements made by the candidates on Twitter received little to no widespread coverage. That means those statements did not extend beyond the Twittersphere. However, ad hominem claims made by the candidates on Twitter received pervasive coverage in the media. That means those statements extended beyond the Twittersphere. Voters not on Twitter heard those messages. Their opinions of the candidates could have been shaped for and against them because of anger-fueled language. Their opinions were not shaped because of specific ideas on positions, policies, or concerns. They likely never heard those messages.

Flimsy tweets become stories. Sadly, journalists are triggered to write stories from tweets that likely cannot be fact-checked. They cannot be gatekeepers when the tweet doing the triggering cannot be vetted. In this system of Twitter newsgathering, they are abdicating their role as gatekeeper in favor of publishing the salacious. According to this thesis' survey of media professionals and students, 77 percent of 62 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that "tweets from presidential candidates should be treated as news sources by journalists." In addition, 89 percent of 57 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that "journalists must fact check a presidential candidates' tweets before using them in a story." 48 percent of 58 respondents were also triggered to write a news story about an individual or organization because of a tweet.

The survey adds to a growing body of evidence observing Twitter influence on the media. Tweets have the power to instantly alter the news cycle and redirect the media spotlight. To a significant degree, these media professionals and students agreed that they must fact-check the tweets that trigger them to broadcast stories about an individual or organization that

tweeted something interesting. However, in this study, the tweets that were widely disseminated by the media are tweets that would likely never be subjected to fact-checking. It's nearly impossible to fact-check a character attack. It's an emotive statement, usually devoid of facts. However those factually devoid, emotive statements now drive media cycles — or spur the creation of new cycles. The tweets are then projected beyond the Twittersphere, where they may influence public opinion. In this case, the "news outlet" — the presidential candidate — has complete control over their message because no one is guarding the gate in part because they cannot guard the gate. Conversely, they need to ignore rhetoric that cannot be fact-checked.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. Foremost, I coded the tweets. Error is possible for several reasons. Although the model is objective and contains well-defined classifications for coding, I still had to evaluate subjective language and make subjective decisions on occasion. For example, occasions arose when a tweet could have been classified as a weak or a fringe statement, depending on the interpretation of the statement. It may have also contained qualities of both classifications. Occasions also arose when language in one person's eyes would be considered ambiguous but in another person's eyes it may be considered relatively concrete. There were also occasions in which a statement was a borderline platitude or pseudo-concept, or both.

Ultimately, I used my judgment of the language and my knowledge of my system to make the determination. If human and judgment errors occurred, they were purely inadvertent. Errors were not made to skew the data deliberately. However, since the body of tweets under analysis was quite large, any incorrect addition or negation of rhetorical characteristic frequency because of human error in coding should not disturb the overall assessments of the candidates' tweets or those tweets effects on the media. The sheer amount of data derived from the extensive coding of numerous rhetorical characteristics should outweigh any impact human error would have on the findings and analysis of those findings.

   Model category modifications. In hindsight, I would modify the statement strength category by either developing more rigid definitions or adding "an unclassifiable" category for tweets that did not neatly fit into those categories. At times, I had to lean more on my judgment to determine the strength of the statement instead of the tweet fitting neatly into one of the three categories. However, I based my judgment on the standards and the spirit of the category and overall model. Error could have occurred, however. Another coder may have picked a different category. I would also better clarify the distinction between platitude and pseudo-concept. This was a tricky category in part because a platitude may or may not be a platitude depending on whom you ask. I used my best judgment to classify platitudes based on my knowledge and interpretation of them.

Overall, the model worked for its purposes. On a second run, I would create even more strict definitions that completely eradicate the need to lean on subjective judgments of tweets to

make a final determination for coding, especially concerning borderline cases. I would also eliminate any categories that seemed excessive. For example, the aesthetic category was excessive in this context because politicians rarely make those kinds of statements. That entire dimension of analysis could probably be reduced to three classifications: pseudo-concept (platitude incorporated in that definition), moral, and ethical. That reduction will help mitigate subjective judgments and coding errors. For the same reasons, I would also reduce the emotive categories: one person's positive emotive statements are another person's statement of fact that has no emotion. Sentiment coding is challenging in part because of subjectivity and because of the nature of a tweet. There is not much to work with textually, nor can you hear any inflection. I could tweet "I am happy." But, perhaps, it is being stated with flat affect, not joy. Herein lies an interpretation issue and potential coding issues.

Alternately, these issues could be rectified if other people coded the tweets based on the model. In that approach, error can be statistically mitigated by evaluating the coding and selecting the "most selected" answer as the final classification. However, my time and resource constraints forbid this approach. By no means is this model or analysis bulletproof. While it is an objective system of analysis based on rationale and objective categories, it must contend with the subjectivity of language and subjective judgments of subjective language. This language is also stripped of all context: how it was vocalized, history, facts. The analysis stayed within the hovel of the tweet to stay true to the model and to avoid subjective judgments about the truth, or lack of truth, contained in the tweet. However, subjective interpretations even within a highly rigid objective system can still occur in most models of linguistic and rhetorical analysis.

Overcoming subjectivity. Because of its complexity, the analysis of language will always remain a subjective endeavor to some degree no matter which model is used or who may be doing the assessing. Following a barrage of criticism, even Ayer revised his verification theory upon further review. Systems of language analysis are just as fluid as the fluid language it is analyzing. Variance and error are inevitable. However, that does not take away from the findings and the interpretations of the findings. I developed the model to produce extensive data. I chose complexity over simplicity in the model. I produced an array of data points to mitigate the potential effect of subjective judgments on the data. The more data, the less influence of these judgments. The more data, the larger, more colorful, and more textured the picture became, even though there may have been pinholes of error in that large mosaic of rhetorical characteristics.

Media trigger quantification issues. Quantifying media coverage of a tweet proved to be a highly challenging problem. I do not believe precise quantification will ever be possible unless Twitter develops an application that tracks tweet traction in the media. In addition, Google is a flawed gauge, though it is the best and most readily available gauge. By nature of its search algorithm, business model, and still imperfect technology, Google will never return all websites a tweet is published on. While the search engine crawls hundreds of millions of pages, it does not crawl all of them. Some of them may not be search engine optimized, thus affecting

search returns. Search is also affected by location: what I search for in Denver may not turn up for my peer who searches for the same item in New York City.

For these reasons, I was forced to create a classification system that was simple and obvious — discernible phenomenon that a child could see. I see a lot of it (pervasive), or I don't see a lot (scant). Fortunately, borderline cases were rare in this study. A tweet either triggered a lot of coverage or very little. However, it can be fairly argued that this approach is too unconstrained. That may be true. Until I find superior technology to precisely search and precise quantify media coverage of a tweet it will remain unconstrained.

Conclusion

By politicians and friends, we are inundated with Twitter and social media rhetoric. We think it contains meaning and truth when in fact much of it is factually flimsy or challenging to prove as true. However, we often take these short synthetic statements at face value, even though they are likely ambiguous and vague. U.S. presidential candidates use Twitter to successfully persuade millions of voters. They reach the American populace through the platform and trigger the media to write stories about their campaigns. Sadly, the media broadcasts the candidates' most factually flimsy statements beyond the Twittersphere, while ignoring concrete statements of fact. That sad state of affairs will not change unless facts are elevated over the salacious.

An assessment of the 2016 U.S. presidential candidates' Twitter rhetoric shows that it is a vehicle of ambiguity and speculation. That ambiguity and speculation is also widely disseminated by the media. The politicians are the "news outlet." They post news and they create the news, triggering the media to write about them all because of a simple, and sometimes vicious, tweet. They have the power. The media supports and amplifies that power. Meanwhile, the voter is subjected to this unrelenting flood of uncontrolled rhetoric, which may influence who they choose as the next leader of a global superpower. The implications are real and severe.

Recommendations

We, the public and the media, must scrutinize Twitter rhetoric. We must question and try to understand how Twitter rhetoric is shaped on the platform, especially political Twitter rhetoric. We should also try to understand how this rhetoric is shaping the thoughts of the public and the media. This may be an area of future research. These statements, while short, contain a powerful dose of persuasion and ambiguity. Yet, we often let tweets go without much scrutiny because they are supposedly only short statements of expression, nothing more, nothing less. However, those short statements of expression influence the media and voters. They should not go unchecked by the public or the media.

These claims can be subjected to basic vetting, whether through analysis similar to this model or just plain skepticism. The model offers a unique approach to test the truth potential of these

claims, or to at least rethink the claims in terms of their potential for truth — or utter detachment from reality. This is just one approach to peel back the rhetoric and expose the marrow of the statement for what it is: fact, fiction, faction, or outright lie. The media needs only to peel back the surface and look at the marrow of the statement — the basic rhetorical characteristics of the tweet to determine whether it has the potential to contain truth or not. Perhaps that search for truth potential could spur them to question the validity of the statement and question the candidate who made the statement based on that examination. This would restore the media's role of gatekeeper, at least gatekeeper of Twitter rhetoric. It would also help ensure voters are better informed and not inundated with propaganda and useless rhetoric.

One can argue that Twitter is not meant to broadcast truths. It is meant to convey simple expressions — and not treatises on human behavior or the realpolitik. Because of technological limitations, it can never achieve those ends. But Twitter rhetoric can be concrete. It can be specific. It can be free of ambiguity. It can express truths and statements that contain a high-degree of empirical potential. The rhetorical analysis model developed for this thesis shows that Twitter language can express truths and truths that are not factually flimsy. Political candidates can achieve these ends in as little as 140 characters. It just takes precision and careful use of language.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Bernie Sanders Twitter Corpus

1. Free speech does not equal the ability of people to buy elections.
2. It's an outrage that millions of women in this country are forced back to work after giving birth
3. Health care is a right, not a privilege.
4. I am honored to receive the endorsement of @foe_us, one of the great environmental organizations in the world.
5. People are working 40 hours a week and cannot afford to feed their families. That has got to change.
6. We should not be providing corporate welfare to multi-national corporations through the Export-Import Bank.
7. Let's defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement
8. I want to thank everyone who came out to today's town halls. We're going to send a message that enough is enough.
9. Join me tomorrow morning on @ThisWeekABC. Check your local listings for times.
10. Certain types of guns exclusively used to kill people, not for hunting, should not be sold in America.
11. I am going to try my best to try to create a country in which children are not living in poverty.
12. I will introduce legislation which will allow people to run for office without having to beg money from the wealthy.
13. Today, millions of Americans are now working for totally inadequate wages. We must raise the minimum wage to a livable wage.
14. We must move forward in ending our dependence on fossil fuel and move toward energy efficiency and renewable energy.
15. Now is not the time for the same-old, same-old establishment politics and stale inside-the-beltway ideas.
16. Every veteran who defends this nation must get the quality health care and benefits they have earned and receive the respect they deserve.
17. Every man, woman and child in our country should be able to access the health care they need regardless of their income.
18. Where people have no work, where folks have no health insurance, that's where we should be, including Louisiana
19. I find it strange that the kid who smokes marijuana gets arrested but the crooks on Wall Street get off scot free.
20. The American people are sick and tired with establishment politics, with establishment economics and with establishment media
21. Maybe for once Republicans can overcome the needs of their campaign contributors and worry instead about the planet.
22. The American people are demanding action to create jobs for their kids and retirement security for their parents.
23. We must fundamentally rewrite our trade policy so that American products, not American jobs, are our No. 1 export.
24. Watch our new video ad outlining our agenda for America
25. We must stand up to the greed on Wall Street by breaking up too-big-to-fail banks that have done so much damage to the economy.
26. We must create a national health care system that provides quality health care for all in the most cost-effective way possible.
27. We must make college affordable so that every qualified American can get the education they need to reclaim the American dream.
28. While insurance and drug companies make huge profits, Americans spend more and get less than people from any other nation.
29. If an institution is too big to fail, it is too big to exist. Become a citizen co-sponsor of my bill.

30. July 29 proved that we have the people and that we're organized. Here's a short video of history in the making:
31. When you tell a woman that she cannot control her own body, that's extremism.
32. Creating a simple system with one payer covering all Americans would result in an enormous reduction in administrative expenses.
33. This country faces more serious problems today than at any time in modern history, and establishment politics will not resolve
34. We actually need a heck of a lot more than $3 per person for women's health care, @JebBush
35. Instead of trying to take away health care from women, we should be trying to provide family and medical leave to all of our families.
36. The wealthiest 14 people in this country increased their wealth in two years by more than is owned by the bottom 130 million
37. The current campaign system is corrupt and amounts to legalized bribery.
38. Is our democracy being destroyed when one family can spend $900 million to buy elections?
39. Real change takes place when millions of people stand up and say enough is enough, and create a political revolution from the ground up
40. Much of the corporate media is prepared to discuss everything except the most important issues facing our country.
41. The reality is that this country today faces more serious problems than at any time since the Great Depression.
42. We need leadership that is prepared to rally the American people and to take on the wealthy special interests that wield so much power.
43. The only long-term solution to America's health care crisis is a single-payer national health care program.
44. When you look at basic necessities of life there must be a guarantee that people receive what they need in order to live a dignified life.
45. Open to all Americans over 65 years of age, Medicare has been a resounding success since its introduction 48 years ago.
46. Is it morally appropriate that 99% of all new income is going to the top 1%?
47. We must remember that the struggle for our rights is the struggle of a lifetime. Our time to fight is now.
48. We must take bold action to reduce carbon emissions and leave a habitable planet for our grandchildren.
49. The average chief executive in America now makes nearly 300 times more than the average worker.
50. We should be doing everything possible to make it easier for people to participate in the political process.
51. The #VotingRights Act is a critical civil rights law that protects voters, and is as necessary today as it was in the era of Jim Crow.
52. In America, everybody who is eligible to vote is entitled to vote. That is American democracy.
53. Despite the central role they play in our economy, undocumented workers are reviled by many for political gain and shunted into the shadows.
54. The 2016 presidential election will be the first in 50 years where voters won't have the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. #VRA50
55. Today is the 50th anniversary of the #VotingRights Act but conservatives are trying to roll back the clock on one of our fundamental rights.
56. Financial institutions cannot be an island unto themselves, standing as huge profit centers outside of the real economy.
57. Let's see what questions Fox will ask. Will they talk about the disastrous Citizen United decision that allows the rich to buy elections?
58. Will the Republicans tell us why they reject the near-unanimous scientific opinion that climate change is real and caused by human activity?
59. Will the GOPers talk about why the U.S. is the only major nation not to guarantee health care to all as a right? #DebateWithBernie
60. Tonight, follow the debates live with me and use the hashtag #DebateWithBernie to join the conversation.
61. Will Fox ask GOPers why the economy is much improved today over when Bush left office when we were losing 800k jobs/month.

62. .@JebBush has a lot of respect for his brother George W. Really? Let's not forget the virtual collapse of our economy when he left office.
63. Will any Republican talk about the need to raise the current starvation minimum wage of $7.25 an hour?
64. Does any GOPer care about whether or not a woman, rather than the gov't, should make decisions regarding her own body? #DebateWithBernie
65. Tom Hanks. Finally. Somebody who makes some sense. #GOPDebate #DebateWithBernie
66. Oh. It was just a movie trailer. #GOPDebate #DebateWithBernie
67. Still waiting. Will Fox ask if it's appropriate for billionaires to buy elections? #DebateWithBernie #GOPDebate
68. Kasich saved Ohio's economy! Oh. Who was the president who helped lower unemployment and create millions of new jobs? #DebateWithBernie
69. .@MarcoRubio is right. The people are frustrated. The rich get much richer and everyone else is getting poorer. Will the Rs talk about this?
70. .@ScottWalker "listened" to the American people on immigration. Really? Most Americans want a path to citizenship. #DebateWithBernie
71. U.S. is the only major country without guaranteed paid family and medical leave. Will we hear anything about that tonight? #DebateWithBernie
72. Who would've believed it? @RandPaul is right. Yes we can fight terrorism and protect the U.S. Constitution. #DebateWithBernie
73. The clock is ticking. Climate change? Income inequality? Citizens United? Waiting for the questions and the discussion. #DebateWithBernie
74. Some of us didn't believe Bush and Cheney on Iraq. We voted NO. That was the right vote. #DebateWithBernie
75. .@ScottWalker -- do you understand what he just said?

Appendix B: Donald Trump Twitter Corpus

1. Watch my interview with @ericbolling on @FoxNews today at 11:30AM ET
2. I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Brothers. Puppets?
3. I will be interviewed on @foxandfriends tomorrow morning at 7:00. Enjoy!
4. Bush is pretending that the "Trump surge" is great for him and the @nytimesworld is reporting Bush "delight" - con job, a Bush nightmare!
5. Wow, did the @nytimes fall into the Bush trap where his people convinced them how happy he was that I was hurting other candidates and not him
6. Despite the false @nytimes story about Jeb Bush being happy with the Trump surge, he fell more than anybody and is miserable.
7. It came out that Huma Abedin knows all about Hillary's private illegal emails. Huma's PR husband, Anthony Weiner, will tell the world.
8. New Poll Shows Donald Trump Blowing Everyone Else Out of the Water.
9. We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. -- Albert Einstein
10. My #GOPDebate @facebook question for the other candidates-
11. Will be interviewed on @Morning_Joe at 7:3O. Enjoy!
12. Diligence is the mother of good luck.
13. I will be on @oreillyfactor tonight on @FoxNews at 8 PM and 11 PM.
14. Many of Hillary's donors are the same donors as Jeb Bush all rich, will have total control, know them well.
15. Do you notice that Hillary spews out Jeb's name as often as possible in order to give him status? She knows Trump is her worst nightmare.
16. Poll: Trump Leads GOP Field Among Hispanics, Records 34% Favorability
17. Wow! Such a wonderful article from fantastic people--my great honor!

18. I look forward to tonight's "debate" -- but look far more forward to making America great again. It can happen!
19. Just arrived for the #GOPDebate
20. Wow! What a great honor from @DRUDGE_REPORT
21. Thank you @TIME readers- a great honor!
22. .@FrankLuntz is a low class slob who came to my office looking for consulting work and I had zero interest. Now he picks anti-Trump panels!
23. .@FrankLuntz I won every poll of the debate tonight by massive margins @DRUDGE_REPORT & @TIME so where did you find that dumb panel.
24. Wow, @megynkelly really bombed tonight. People are going wild on twitter! Funny to watch.
25. .@FrankLuntz, your so-called "focus groups" are a total joke. Don't come to my office looking for business again. You are a clown!
26. I really enjoyed the debate tonight even though the @FoxNews trio, especially @megynkelly, was not very good or professional!
27. .@FoxNews you should be ashamed of yourself. I got you the highest debate ratings in your history and you say nothing but bad...
28. ....Dopey @krauthammer should be fired. @FoxNews
29. The hatred that clown @krauthammer has for me is unbelievable (it) causes him to lie when many others say Trump easily won debate.
30. So many "politically correct" fools in our country. We have to all get back to work and stop wasting time and energy on nonsense!
31. Re Megyn Kelly quote: "you could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever" (NOSE). Just got on w/thought
32. .@redstate I miss you all, and thanks for all of your support. Political correctness is killing our country. "weakness."
33. Wow, CNN just said that Donald Trump won the DEBATE, connected best with audience. Also, Time, Drudge, Newsmax, N.Y.Times and more!
34. Almost universal support that "Trump won the debate." Only @FoxNews is consistantly fighting the Trump win, and I got them the ratings!
35. Small crowds at @RedState today in Atlanta. People were very angry at EWErickson, a major sleaze and buffoon who has saved me time and money
36. I just realized that if you listen to Carly Fiorina for more than ten minutes straight, you develop a massive headache. She has zero chance!
37. It amazes me that other networks seem to treat me so much better than @FoxNews. I brought them the biggest ratings in history, and I get zip!
38. Wonderful Frank Gifford has just passed away at age 84. He was my friend and a truly great guy! Warmest condolences to family.
39. I will be interviewed on @TODAY Show at 7:00 A.M. and on Morning Joe at 7:20.
40. .@KathieLGifford, Melania and I send our deepest condolences. Frank was a special and amazing person. He will be missed by all!
41. Oh really, check out innocent @megynkelly discussion on @HowardStern show 5 years ago--I am the innocent (pure) one!
42. Roger Ailes just called. He is a great guy and assures me that Trump will be treated fairly on @FoxNews. His word is always good!
43. Enough is Enough- no more Bushes!
44. Frank was a great guy married to an absolutely wonderful woman @KathieLGifford. What a couple!
45. .@OMAROSA You were fantastic on television this weekend. Thank you so much you are a loyal friend!
46. .@BrandenRoderick I was pleased to see the wonderful statements you made about me to the media.I'm not surprised, you're a special person
47. .@KatrinaCampins Thank you so much for the wonderful statements you made about me on TV. Also, keep up the great work!

48. Again, illegal immigrant is charged with the fatal bludgeoning of a wonderful and loved 64 year old woman. Get them out and build a WALL!
49. Truly weird Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky reminds me of a spoiled brat without a properly functioning brain. He was terrible at DEBATE!
50. We must stop the crime and killing machine that is illegal immigration. Rampant problems will only get worse. Take back our country!
51. Why is @RandPaul allowed to take advantage of the people of Kentucky by running for Senator and Pres. Why should Kentucky be back up plan?
52. .@ericbolling you can do much better than you did tonight on @oreillyfactor. Better luck tomorrow!
53. .@SenTedCruz had a very good debate, far better than Rand Paul.
54. Our online store is officially open! Visit http://t.co/3zYiIYWs87 to shop the latest #MakeAmericaGreatAgain merchandise.
55. Will be interviewed by @seanhannity tonight for the full hour. Hope you enjoy it and, more importantly, hope you agree!
56. The #IranDeal is a catastrophe that must be stopped. Will lead to at least partial world destruction (and) make Iran a force like never before.
57. My official #MakeAmericaGreatAgain hat is now available online. To shop please visit http://t.co/3zYiIYWs87 --- it is selling fast!
58. Our online campaign store is officially open! Visit http://t.co/3zYiIYWs87 to shop the latest #MakeAmericaGreatAgain merchandise.
59. Not under my watch-
60. People don't understand that I left The Apprentice to run for President the Apprentice DID NOT leave me. Bob Greenblatt (and) folks @NBC were GREAT!
61. .@AP and @HuffingtonPost should change their fraudulent story to say THAT I DROPPED @NBC (and) The Apprentice to run for President!
62. Making speech tonight in New Hampshire - leaving now. Fantastic people, fantastic crowd!
63. In the plane heading to Iowa State Fair. Will be great fun. Hopefully giving helicopter rides to some of the kids.
64. LIVE on #Periscope: Good morning Iowa! Let's #MakeAmericaGreatAgain #Trump2016
65. .@NicolleDWallace Your father is a brilliant man with wonderful sense -- therefore, you must be good!
66. I really enjoyed being at the Iowa State Fair. The crowds, love and enthusiasm is something I will never forget.
67. The polls have been really amazing--we are all tired of incompetent politicians and bad deals!
68. Why does @FoxNews keep George Will as a talking head? Wrong on so many subjects!
69. Listening to @rushlimbaugh on way back to Jury Duty. Fantastic show, terrific guy!
70. It does matter!
71. I want talented people to come into this country to work hard and to become citizens. Silicon Valley needs engineers, etc.
72. When foreigners attend our great colleges and want to stay in the U.S., they should not be thrown out of our country.
73. .@jasondhorowitz I am very proud of my sister, your story was terrific. Thank you so much.
74. If I am elected President I will immediately approve the Keystone XL pipeline. No impact on environment and lots of jobs for U.S.
75. My H-1B reform plan will transform program so it delivers for country, not lobbyists, and will have bipartisan support:

Appendix C: Hillary Clinton Twitter Corpus

1. A photo we had to share: @Wellesley's Alumnae Ultimate team (named for Hillary!) plays in extra-appropriate uniforms.
2. Yesterday, Hillary spoke at @NatUrbanLeague on systemic racial inequality in America and how we can help fix it:

3. Voting rights, equal pay, immigration reform, LGBT equality, see more of What We're Fighting For on Pinterest:
4. "Lifting the embargo doesn't set back the advance of freedom. It advances freedom." Hillary on Cuba
5. Fighting to dismantle voting rights, health care, and living wages? That doesn't sound like the right to rise.
6. Become a card-carrying member of Team Hillary! Chip in $1 & get your official supporter card:
7. We can't go on like this. We are better than this. Things must change. Hillary at @NatUrbanLeague
8. Three cheers for all the athletes who competed at the @SpecialOlympics this week your spirit and determination inspire us all! #LA2015
9. Are you on Team Hillary? Chip in $1 to support this campaign, and get your official limited-edition supporter card:
10. Our first TV ad of the 2016 campaign: Watch Hillary tell the story of her mom, Dorothy
11. Decades of fighting for everyday Americans in just 1 board. Follow some of Hillary's memorable moments on @Pinterest:
12. Their names are emblazoned on our hearts.
13. Republicans are trying to cut millions off from health care. Hillary has a message for them. #standwithPP
14. .@POTUS is right. we can't wait for another generation to tackle climate change. Our future depends on what we do today & in the next decade.
15. 2.7 million Americans turn to Planned Parenthood every year for health care. Proud to #standwithPP.
16. Hillary stands with Planned Parenthood. Add your name if you do, too: http://t.co/A9YIs0S73W #standwithPP
17. Vean los mejores momentos del discurso de Hillary sobre Cuba que pueden compartir por @WhatsApp (Translated: See the highlights of the speech Hillary on Cuba to be shared by)
18. Hillary's spent her entire life standing up for kids & families. Watch one of our first TV ads of the 2016 campaign
19. "If we want a competitive future for our kids, they have to be better prepared when they walk into kindergarten. Hillary
20. .@JebBush: You are absolutely, unequivocally wrong.
21. To a dear friend, a great boss, and my second favorite president: Happy birthday @POTUS! -H
22. The Voting Rights Act turns 50 this week. When did you cast your first ballot and what did it mean to you? Share your story with #MyFirstVote.
23. "We've had a lot of grandfathers in the White House, but we haven't had a grandmother." Hillary at @scdp:
24. No parent should have to choose between getting a paycheck and caring for their baby. Well done, @Netflix.
25. I'm tired of women being shamed and blamed and dismissed. When you attack women's health, you attack America's health. Hillary yesterday
26. Tomorrow is the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act? what does the right to vote mean to you? Share your story with #VRA50.
27. Good that the appellate court saw the Texas voter ID law for what it is an assault on the right to vote.
28. Hemos tenido muchos abuelos en @lacasablanca, pero nunca hemos tenido una abuela. (Translated: We have had many grandparents in The White House, but we've never had a grandmother" Hillary en @scdp:
29. 50 years after the Voting Rights Act, we can't let anyone undermine America's promise: Everyone's voice and vote count. #VRA50 –H
30. On the 50th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, read #MyFirstVote stories from Americans across the country:
31. On #VRA50, we still have much more work to do to protect the right to vote.
32. Watching the #GOPdebate tonight? Follow @TheBriefing2016 for fact checks and more.
33. Add your name if you agree with Hillary: We should make voting easier, not harder
34. Republicans are systematically...trying to stop millions of American citizens from voting. What part of democracy are they afraid of?"HRC
35. Hillary is proud to #StandWithPP. RT if you are too.
36. Fixing our immigration system will strengthen families, our economy, and our country.

37. Watching the #GOPdebate? Follow @TheBriefing2016 for fact checks and more.
38. Access to health care should be a right, not a privilege for those who can afford it.
39. Share this if you're proud to support a candidate who's fighting for everyday Americans.
40. We should change how we think about business.
41. It's past time for politicians to respect women's right to make their own health decisions.
42. No one should be discriminated against because of who they love.
43. If GOP attacks on @PPFA feel like an assault on women's health, it's because they are.
44. Hillary Clinton sabe que la economía favorece a aquellos con más recursos. La agenda Republicana solo empeoraría el problema. (Translated: Hillary Clinton knows that the economy favors those with more resources. The Republican agenda would only worsen the problem).
45. Watch the #GOPdebate? Bet you feel like donating to a Democrat right about now.
46. Missing Jon Stewart already. #GOPdebate #JonVoyage –H
47. "Everything is going to change now." Read more #MyFirstVote stories on @tumblr add your own:
48. America's strength lies in families & communities. Sign up to support Hillary's plan for a fairness & growth economy:
49. We need to make sure there's accountability on Wall Street so there can be prosperity on Main Street.
50. Hillary's fighting for immigration reform that keeps families together. Read the Facebook Q&A:
51. 4,000,000 followers. Wow! Thanks for joining us #TeamHillary wouldn't be the same without you.
52. Read more #MyFirstVote stories and share your own:
53. How to say "Go Hillary!" in Spanish. Cómo decir (Translated: How to say "Go Hillary!" en español
54. Rolling back rules for Wall Street won't help families get ahead.
55. Hillary's pinning her way across America! Follow her on the campaign trail:
56. Join Hillary's fight to build an America where we don't leave anyone out or anyone behind:
57. A year after Ferguson, there is more we must all do to address systemic racism and ensure every American feels safe in their community. –H
58. Voting is the very essence of the American dream. Read #MyFirstVote stories on @Tumblr:
59. From Beijing to Brooklyn (with plenty of stops in between) follow some of Hillary's memorable moments on @Pinterest:
60. Let's make college affordable, relieve the crushing burden of student debt, and help every family get ahead
61. Watch live: Hillary is laying out her plan to make college affordable & relieve the crushing burden of student debt '
62. Cost won't be a barrier to an education. Debt won't hold you back. Read Hillary's plan:
63. A5 Rising tuition leaves families with a painful choice: pass up on a degree, or do whatever it takes even go way into debt. #MillennialMon
64. Everyone needs to step up to make education more affordable. Hillary's plan: http://t.co/A4pWb3fOf4 #MillennialMon
65. This is about ensuring families can get ahead (sic) having the greatest workforce in the world. Win-win. #MillennialMon
66. What Trump said about Megyn Kelly is outrageous, but what's really outrageous is Republicans' actual positions on issues that affect women.
67. .@JebBush Fixed it for you.
68. Add us on Snapchat! @hillaryclinton
69. Agree that every student should be able to afford public university tuition without taking out a loan? Add your name:
70. Let's relieve the crushing burden of student debt. Learn more about Hillary's plan:
71. Lo que dijo Trump sobre Megyn Kelly es indignante, pero el peor insulto son las políticas de los Republicanos que afectan a la mujer. (Translated: What about Megyn Kelly Trump said is outrageous , but the worst insult is Republican policies affecting women.)
72. We need to rein in how much higher education costs. It's time for a new college compact that makes education available to all. –H
73. Access to higher education should be a right, not a privilege for those who can afford it.

74. I want every young person in America to know that if you work hard, you can get ahead, and I want America to have your back." Hillary in NH
75. Republicans like Gov. Walker are making it harder to afford college and pay off debt. Hillary says that's wrong

Appendix D: Jeb Bush Twitter Corpus

1. Each man has his own destiny... and his own nickname. @SpecialReport & @dougmckelway on mine
2. Enjoyed the opportunity to speak to @NatUrbanLeague in my home state. Here's video in case you missed it:
3. We need a President who will go everywhere, speak to everyone, unite, not divide. That's just what I did this week:
4. Just met up with @CFodorKCCI at the @DairyQueen in Iowa Falls. Check out @KCCINews tomorrow to catch our chat.
5. Great to see Gov @TerryBranstad and so many other old and new friends at Bruce Rastetter's farm tonight in Hubbard.
6. I'm going everywhere and speaking to everyone. That's what a candidate for President should do.
7. .@AEIecon took a look at the jobs performance of all Governors running for President:
8. My statement on Pres Obama's Clean Power Plan:
9. We must transform immigration from a broken system into one that benefits every American.
10. My plan for addressing illegal immigration through border and interior security & cracking down on sanctuary cities:
11. As Gov, I vetoed state funding for Planned Parenthood. Congress should defund PP today. Sign your name if you agree:
12. Obama's Carbon Rule is irresponsible & overreaching. It grabs power from states and hollows out our economy. #StopEPA
13. Used to take the kids to @DairyQueen every Sunday evening. Great spot for interview w/ @CFodorKCCI in Iowa Falls
14. Obama and State Dept should be ashamed of their purely political manipulation of Cuba's human trafficking issues.
15. On economic growth, the fact that Paul Krugman disagrees with me warms my heart. #VotersFirst
16. Look forward to seeing this motley crew in Cleveland. #GOPdebate
17. Ran into members of the KY Farm Bureau last night in Manchester. Eat your hearts out, @SenateMajLdr & @RandPaul
18. Coming soon. Be the first to know:
19. There is no more powerful or liberating influence on this earth than the Christian conscience in action.
20. Hebrew Scripture & the New Testament still provide the moral vocabulary we all use in America, may it always be so
21. In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs:
22. .@HillaryClinton what's absolutely, unequivocally wrong is giving taxpayer $ to an org whose practices show no regard for lives of unborn
23. Strongly support @RepEdRoyce resolution to reject Obama Administration's nuclear agreement with Iran
24. Announcing the launch of the Jeb 2016 Store! T-shirts, hats, stickers, and a few surprises:
25. The 70s were a pretty serious decade. #JebNoFilter
26. .@BarackObama this deal paves the way to Iran getting the bomb & gives $150bn to the mullahs. That's not leadership.
27. Thanks Jimmy! Tees and bumper stickers going quickly
28. Pleased to announce the support of some of Georgia's finest @CaseyCagle, @Samolens, & @ericjtanenblatt
29. Today we announced chairmen in all 17 Nevada counties. Sign up if you'd like to join them:
30. 4 items you should buy from the Jeb 2016 Store. Get 10% off with promo code
31. Good morning from Cleveland. For a preview of tonight, here's what we accomplished in Florida,

32. Got some good pre-debate counsel from the @bluestarmothers. #GOPDebate
33. Back on @KingJames turf. Liked his stroke better at American Airlines Arena.
34. Just over 2 hours til gametime. Who's with me? http://t.co/NFP4LgcbsQ #AllInForJeb #GOPDebate
35. Caught up with @TomLlamasABC outside mass. I'm going to speak from my heart. It'll be fun!
36. As you watch #GOPDebate, follow along here: #AllInForJeb
37. Turning @JebBush over to @Timodc @kristymcampbell @DannyLopezDiaz @SallyBradshaw @ddkochel @aebrandenburger @mattsgorman @embena #GOPDebate
38. Follow #GOPDebate live here: #AllInForJeb
39. "The most conservative governor of a large state since Ronald Reagan #GOPDebate
40. Jeb's proposal to fix our broken immigration system starts with securing our border #GOPDebate
41. "My conservative record helped people rise up" â€" Jeb #GOPDebate
42. Jeb has the conservative record America needs. Join the winning team today: http://t.co/nqhP6denAu #GOPDebate
43. As President, Jeb would act immediately to restore America's leadership in the world. #GOPDebate
44. As governor, Jeb took on the teachers unions and won #GOPDebate #AllInForJeb
45. The Democrats are wrong: We can grow this economy and create jobs. #GOPDebate
46. "Challenging the teacher's unions and beating them is the way to go." Jeb #GOPDebate
47. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are wrong. We can grow this economy again. #GOPDebate
48. "As governor of Florida, I defunded Planned Parenthood. I created a culture of life." Jeb #GOPDebate
49. Jeb Bush: A Pro-Life Champion #GOPDebate
50. Thanks, fun night. You can join the team here:
51. Fired up by hundreds who came out for post-debate rally in Cleveland. What a night.
52. Thanks Bailey! Will keep it up.
53. Thanks for the extra gift and for your support. Bumper sticker shipped. Get yours today at:
54. Humbled by those who had such love for this country, they abandoned all thought of safety & self. Thank you for your courage #PurpleHeartDay
55. Said this last night, totally believe it, we're gonna win when we unite people with a hopeful, optimistic message.
56. Instead of embracing energy revolution, Hillary refuses to support Keystone. Give me a break
57. Picture perfect day in Seabrook, NH. Stopped by @BrownsLobster for some lobster rolls delicious.
58. Bruce Brown and me @BrownsLobster. Lobster shot!
59. The idea that illegal immigrants would be on city council is absurd. We have to respect the rule of law. @TeamCavuto
60. Got in a quick stop earlier at Geno's Chowder Shop in Portsmouth to say hi to Francesca and Evelyn. Great day in NH!
61. Good to be in Atlanta for #RSG15. Will be speaking shortly. Watch here
62. Do we want to insult 53% of Americans? What Donald Trump said was wrong. That's not how we bring people together.
63. Some candidates complained the debate questions were tough. How about dealing with Putin? #RSG15
64. .@EWErickson and me at #RSG15 in Georgia. Great to be with so many fellow conservatives.
65. Looks good!
66. Packed house for opening of our new Iowa HQ. Join the Iowa team here:
67. Thanks to @SenSchumer, @RepEliotEngel and the Democrats joining them in principled opposition to Pres Obama's Iran deal. Hope more will join
68. How do you take your coffee?
69. Obama on CNN agrees Iran is ally against Taliban? Wrong. Insight into wishful thinking that led to bad Iran deal.
70. I'm running with heart and running to win. It's time to unite
71. OPM not only ignored warnings from IG, but now we learn they're actively hindering IG's oversight? Outrageous.
72. More school choice is needed to help children w/ disabilities. We led the way in Florida. Other states should follow.

73. We don't need more top-down Washington solutions that will raise the cost of college even further. @HillaryClinton
74. We need to change the incentives for colleges with fresh policies that result in more individualization and choices
75. New @nbc report confirms personal email more vulnerable to Chinese hacking &; @HillaryClinton should have known that.

Note: Tweets were coded on an Excel spreadsheet. Because of its size, it cannot be referenced in this appendix. However, a downloadable spreadsheet is available online at the following link
https://www.dropbox.com/s/cl9auitkllk7lsc/CandidateTweetAnalysis.xlsx?dl=0

Appendix E: Scant-Pervasive Tweets

Bernie Sanders

											Scant	Pervasive	
People are working 40 hours a week and cannot afford to feed their families. That has got to change.											1		
I want to thank everyone who came out to today's town halls. We're going to send a message that enough is											1		
The 2016 presidential election will be the first in 50 years where voters won't have the full protections of the											1		
Will any Republican talk about the need to raise the current starvation minimum wage of $7.25 an hour?											1		
Still waiting. Will Fox ask if it's appropriate for billionaires to buy elections? #DebateWithBernie #GOPDebate											1		

Donald Trump

											Scant	Pervasive	
Many of Hillary's donors are the same donors as Jeb Bush all rich, will have total control, know them well.											1		
.@FrankLuntz I won every poll of the debate tonight by massive margins @DRUDGE_REPORT & @TIME so whe												1	
.@BrandenRoderick I was pleased to see the wonderful statements you made about me to the media.I'm no											1		
We must stop the crime and killing machine that is illegal immigration. Rampant problems will only get worse											1		
LIVE on #Periscope: Good morning Iowa! Let's #MakeAmericaGreatAgain #Trump2016 https://t.co/zSLKMC											1		

Hillary Clinton

											Scant	Pervasive	
"If we want a competitive future for our kids, they have to be better prepared when they walk into kindergar											1		
I'm tired of women being shamed and blamed and dismissed. When you attack women's health, you attack A											1		
Share this if you're proud to support a candidate who's fighting for everyday Americans. http://t.co/Gkas6qu											1		
We should change how we think about business. http://t.co/61YZQWxaPw											1		
A5 Rising tuition leaves families with a painful choice: pass up on a degree, or do whatever it takes even go w											1		

Jeb Bush

											Scant	Pervasive	
In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs: http											1		
"My conservative record helped people rise up" â€" Jeb #GOPDebate http://t.co/7vXB23oBqh										1			
The Democrats are wrong: We can grow this economy and create jobs. http://t.co/DwGVs5ZJq7 #GOPDebat										1			
Some candidates complained the debate questions were tough. How about dealing with Putin? https://t.co/7										1			
Thanks to @SenSchumer, @RepEliotEngel and the Democrats joining them in principled opposition to Pres O										1			

Appendix F: Ad Hominem-Binary Analysis

Binary		Scant	Pervasive
(BS) 102	Free speech does not equal the ability of people to buy elections.	1	
1006	I will introduce legislation which will allow people to run for office without having to beg money from the we	1	
1025	Health care is a right, not a privilege.	1	
971	The only long-term solution to America's health care crisis is a single-payer national health care program.	1	
961	The Voting Rights Act is a critical civil rights law that protects voters and is as necessary today as it was in the	1	
(DT)631	The #IranDeal is a catastrophe that must be stopped. Will lead to at least partial world destruction & make Ir	1	
569	If I am elected President I will immediately approve the Keystone XL pipeline. No impact on environment & lots of job		1
(HC)633	"Lifting the embargo doesn't set back the advance of freedom. It advances freedom."	1	
(JB)431	There is no more powerful or liberating influence on this earth than the Christian conscience in action.	1	
429	In line with my FL record, we absolutely must defund PP and redirect those funds to other women's health orgs: http		1
428	.@HillaryClinton what's absolutely, unequivocally wrong is giving taxpayer $ to an org whose practices show	1	
427	Strongly support @RepEdRoyce resolution to reject Obama Administration's nuclear agreement with Iran	1	
397	"As governor of Florida, I defunded Planned Parenthood. I created a culture of life."	1	
396	Jeb Bush: A Pro-Life Champion	1	
385	The idea that illegal immigrants would be on city council is absurd. We have to respect the rule of law.	1	
377	Obama on CNN agrees Iran is ally against Taliban? Wrong. Insight into wishful thinking that led to bad Iran d	1	
372	More school choice is needed to help children w/ disabilities. We led the way in Florida. Other states should f	1	
		15	2

Ad Hominem		Pervasive	Scant
(BS) 997	I find it strange that the kid who smokes marijuana gets arrested but the crooks on Wall Street get off scot fr	1	
(DT) 860	I wish good luck to all of the Republican candidates that traveled to California to beg for money etc. from the Koch Bro		1
830	Bush is pretending that the "Trump surge" is great for him and the @nytimesworld is reporting Bush "delight	1	
823	Despite the false @nytimes story about Jeb Bush being happy with the Trump surge, he fell more than anybo	1	
723	.@FrankLuntz I won every poll of the debate tonight by massive margins @DRUDGE_REPORT & @TIME so v	1	
722	Wow, @megynkelly really bombed tonight. People are going wild on twitter! Funny to watch.	1	
721	.@FrankLuntz, your so-called "focus groups" are a total joke. Don't come to my office looking for business a	1	
720	I really enjoyed the debate tonight even though the @FoxNews trio, especially @megynkelly, was not very g	1	
685	.@FoxNews you should be ashamed of yourself. I got you the highest debate ratings in your history & you sa	1	
684	....Dopey @krauthammer should be fired. @FoxNews		1
683	The hatred that clown @krauthammer has for me is unbelievable – causes him to lie when many others say T	1	
678	So many "politically correct" fools in our country. We have to all get back to work and stop wasting time and	1	
677	Re Megyn Kelly quote: "you could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wher	1	
673	Small crowds at @RedState today in Atlanta. People were very angry at EWErickson, a major sleaze and buff	1	
662	I just realized that if you listen to Carly Fiorina for more than ten minutes straight, you develop a massive hea	1	
647	Truly weird Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky reminds me of a spoiled brat without a properly functioning brair	1	
613	.@AP and @HuffingtonPost should change their fraudulent story to say THAT I DROPPED @NBC & The App	1	
		15	2

Appendix G: Survey

Survey Results

1. Please State Your Professional Background.

	Answer	Response	%
1	Journalism Student	10	15%
3	Freelance Journalist	3	5%
5	Employed Journalist	31	47%
6	Unemployed Journalist	1	2%
7	Former Journalist	10	15%
8	Other	6	9%
9	Current/Unemployed Editor	5	8%
	Total	66	100%

2. Tweets from presidential candidates should be treated as news sources by journalists.

	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	15	24%
2	Agree	33	53%
3	Disagree	9	15%
4	Strongly Disagree	1	2%
5	Neither Agree or Disagree	4	6%
	Total	62	100%

3. Have you ever incorporated a Tweet into one of your news stories, or as an editor, did you ask your reporters to cite/use Tweets in their stories?

	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	35	60%
2	No	16	28%
3	I have not been published.	4	7%
4	Twitter did not exist when I was in the industry.	3	5%
	Total	58	100%

4. Do you have a Twitter account?

99

	Answer	Response	%
1	For Personal Use	13	22%
2	For Professional Journalism Use	10	17%
5	For Professional Journalism and Personal Use	31	53%
6	No	4	7%
	Total	58	100%

5. Is it a requirement of your editor(s), or employer, or school newspaper, or client to maintain a Twitter account as part of your news gathering / editorial duties? (Respondents were asked this question only if they answered "yes" or "no" to question four).

	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	21	51%
2	No	20	49%
	Total	41	100%

6. Has a Tweet from an individual or organization ever triggered you to write a news story about them?

	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	28	48%
2	No	23	40%
3	I have not been published.	2	3%
4	I am a student. I have not had the opportunity to write and publish a news story.	5	9%
	Total	58	100%

7. Do you think Twitter is a valid source for news tips? Explain in a brief sentence or two, or more, if you desire. (Respondents were asked this question only if they selected prompt three or four in question six).

Twitter is a good source for tips but not for facts. The site will show what people are talking about and what may be important, but tweets are not always accurate.

I think Twitter is a valid source for news TIPS only. Because so many people have access to post on Twitter and many may be unreliable, confirmation is needed for every Tweet that could be news.

Yes

Yes. While I don't have a personal, nor professional Twitter account, a large majority of the populous does. Using this platform for whatever information an individual put out on it should be considered 'fair game' as a news source.

Yes, since people at the scene of a crime or event may tweet about it before professional police/news sources have reached the scene. An example: tweets about the Boston Marathon bombing made it clear to people nearby what was happening before news sources had begun reporting on the event.

8. Twitter has been overused as a news source by journalists in this U.S. presidential campaign.

	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	7	12%
2	Agree	10	17%
7	Disagree	9	16%
8	Strongly Disagree	4	7%
9	Neither Agree or Disagree	28	48%
	Total	58	100%

9. Journalists must fact check a presidential candidates' Tweets before using them in a story.

	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly Agree	31	54%
2	Agree	20	35%
3	Disagree	2	4%
4	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
5	Neither Agree or Disagree	4	7%
	Total	57	100%

10. Are journalists and editors more likely to use a Tweet as a source in their stories if it describes a fact/situation or if it expresses an emotional reaction to someone/something?

	Answer	Response	%
1	Fact / Situation	4	7%
2	Emotional Reaction	28	48%
5	Both	19	33%
6	Neither	1	2%
7	I am not sure.	6	10%
	Total	58	100%