Trump's Twitter Frenzies:
Does Trump's Tweeting Behaviour Explain His Dominance in Gaining Media Attention During US Elections 2016?

By

Md. Ishtiaque Hossain

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
for the requirements of
Masters of Communication and Media Studies
Monash University
Sunway Campus

2017

Preface

Thesis Title

Trump's Twitter Frenzies: Does Trump's Tweeting Behaviour Explain His Dominance in Gaining Media Attention During US Elections 2016?

Abstract

During the US Elections 2016, Trump was a prolific Twitter user. This study attempts to find whether Trump's Twitter behaviour can explain his success in getting media attention. A sample of tweets between the day Trump became official Republican nominee and the day he was elected president has been considered for this study. During that timeline, a certain pattern has been observed. During important media events such as presidential debates, scandals, or when facing harsh criticism from the media or political opponents, his tweeting frequency increases several times the average; the highest being 88 times in one day. These periods of high frequency tweets have been labelled as "frenzies" and this study analysed these frenzies in a systematic way, and compared them with non-frenzy tweets. When Trump is in "frenzy" mode, his tweets become more aggressive, contain increased fearmongering and negativity. Through his Twitter frenzies, Trump escalates conflicts and provides the corporate media with content that can be tabloidized and processed as spectacles. This study implies that by constructing a conflictual and dramatic narrative on social media that follow the logic of media spectacles, it is possible for a celebrity politician with a strong brand value to gain significant media coverage and take centre stage in political debate, without having to engage in detailed policy related discussions.

Unit Code: AMG5743

Student Name: Md. Ishtiaque Hossain
Student ID: 27679802

Unit Supervisor: Dr. Julian Hopkins

Julian Hopkins has conducted and published doctoral research on the monetisation of social media, and has taught units on social media as well as methods of research. He has also supervised Masters and Honours dissertations.

Citation Style: Harvard

Word Count: 19, 417

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

As soon as reality star and real estate mogul Donald J. Trump announced his candidacy for USA presidency on June 15, 2016; he became the centre of media's political coverage. Throughout his election campaign, he has been the candidate with the most TV and web coverage compared to any candidate from either camp (The GDELT Project, 2017a, 2017b). According to Google Trends (2017), the ratio of global web search interest in Donald Trump compared to Hillary Clinton was 100:31 between Nov 6 and Nov 12, 2016.

According to a Bloomberg report, campaign spending is not the key reason behind Donald Trump's victory. The Trump campaign spent 531 million USD, where Hillary's campaign spent 961.1 million (Allison et al., 2016). However, in terms of free media, Trump campaign earned 1,898 million USD, dominating the airwaves and far above the second highest free media earning candidate Hillary Clinton, who earned 746 million USD in free media (Confessore and Yourish, 2016).

When faced with criticism, Trump responds aggressively and escalates conflict. After being criticised by Khizr Khan, father of slain US war hero, at the Democratic National Convention 2016; Trump responded by suggesting Khizr Khan's wife Ghazala Khan was forbidden to speak at the convention as a Muslim, and questioned if Khizr Khan's words were politically motivated and whether those words had been penned by scriptwriters (Coleburn, 2016). Trump was criticised by prominent politicians from both republican and democratic camps for the remarks. According to poll by FOX news, a right wing leaning media outlet, that 69% respondents familiar with Trump's comment found them to be out of bounds (Smith, 2016). Trump took to Twitter to defend himself after the backlash,

> "I was viciously attacked by Mr. Khan at the Democratic Convention. Am I not allowed to respond? Hillary voted for the Iraq war, not me!" (31st July 2016)

Followed by two more consecutive tweets the next day,

> "Mr. Khan, who does not know me, viciously attacked me from the stage of the DNC and is now all over T.V. doing the same - Nice!" (1st August 2016)

> “This story is not about Mr. Khan, who is all over the place doing interviews, but rather RADICAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM and the U.S. Get smart!” (1st August 2016)

Trump came under criticism again the next month, on August 9, 2016, for his comments regarding Hillary Clinton and the Second Amendment where he said,

> Hillary wants to abolish -- essentially abolish the Second Amendment. By the way, if she gets to pick, if she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, folks. Although the Second Amendment people, maybe there is, I don't know.

The comment was interpreted by the media as suggesting violence against Clinton and was condemned by Democrats, gun-control lobbyists and former head of the CIA retired General Michael Hayden. CNN ran a story hinting Secret Service was looking into the matter (Diamond and Collinson, 2016).

Trump again took to Twitter to defend himself, tweeting the following quote on 10th August,

> “Reuters just announced that Secret Service never spoke to me or my campaign. Made up story by @CNN is a hoax. Totally dishonest.”

When Trump’s 2005 *Access Hollywood* tapes were leaked online, where he boasted about sexually assaulting women; he came under intense criticism from prominent members of the Republican party, the First Lady of the USA, celebrities, and women’s rights activists (Fahrenthold, 2016). Trump released a video statement where he dismissed his comments as “locker room talk” and once again, took to Twitter and posted the following tweet on October 10th, 2016,

> “The media and establishment want me out of the race so badly - I WILL NEVER DROP OUT OF THE RACE, WILL NEVER LET MY SUPPORTERS DOWN! #MAGA”

After Hillary referred to Trump supporters as a ‘basket of deplorables’ in September 2016 (Merica and Tatum, 2016), Trump retweeted a 2012 tweet from Barack Obama which was aimed at Mitt Romney. The tweet by Obama said, “RT if you agree: We need a President who is fighting for all Americans, not one who writes off nearly half the country.”

During the entirety of his campaign, Trump was a prolific Twitter user, tweeting every day, with the average being approximately 9 times per day. It has proven an integral part of his campaign, a medium that he has used to take down his critics from both Republican and Democratic camps and brutalize his political opponents and media outlets by branding them with colourful nicknames like “Lyin’ Ted”, “Crooked Hillary”, “Goofy Elizabeth Warren” and “The Failing NYTimes”.

The aim of this study is to determine if Trump’s tweeting behaviour can explain his dominance in the media. The study uses an inductive approach to qualitative and quantitative content analysis of Trump’s tweets, and theories of media spectacles, networked publics, parasocial intimacy, reality TV and branding. The conclusions indicate that Trump gains media coverage through Twitter by increasing the negativity, aggression and fearmongering in his rhetoric in response to media spectacles.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This study involves trying to explain Trump's dominance in the media by looking into his Twitter behaviour. Aside from literature about Trump and Twitter, other relevant literature about media spectacles, networked publics, public sphere, hashtags, and literature about what kind of content makes for engaging news have been taken into account.

2.1 Public Sphere and Politics

The term public sphere refers to a social space where the members of the publics are free to express their opinions without restriction and a space where a public opinion may be shaped regarding issues of common public interest (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974). The ideal behaviour in public spheres as described by Habermas (1998, p.364), is:

> Openness to the public, inclusiveness, equal rights to participation, immunization against external or inherent compulsion, as well as the participant's orientation toward reaching an understanding … a proposition is 'true' if it withstands all attempts to refute it under the demanding conditions of rational discourse.

Habermas (1989) also suggests that the integration of advertising and popular entertainment in the form of public relations will acquire what he calls a 'political character'. He argues that private enterprises create a belief in the consumer that while making consumption choices and purchases decisions they are acting in their capacity as citizens. Therefore, the state must also speak to citizens as if they were consumers. According to Habermas (1989) the public sphere disintegrated due to manipulation of public opinion for either profit, or political power and became a platform for flaunting prestige publicly rather than formation of critical opinions. Habermas terms this change "refeudalization of public sphere" (p.195).

2.2 American Media and American Politics: Perceptions of Political Reality

America has a long history of producing satires that depict political figures and presidents in an unflattering light. Political cartoons have depicted major incidents such as the Stamp act of Mid 1700s to present day issues like global warming and climate change in a satirical light (Hess and Northrop, 1996). As described by Shales and

Miller (2002), the longest running political comedy show *Saturday Night Live* has been doing parodies and satires of presidents, presidential candidates, presidential debates since 1975. According to Graber (2002), in the presidential election of 2000; late night comedians made exactly 771 jokes directed at George W. Bush and 494 jokes directed at Al Gore. As described by Peyser (2004), this trend in American television experienced a huge shift when *The Daily Show* emerged. Whereas *Saturday Night Live* was focused on making fun of politicians, *The Daily Show* focused more on news media, reporters, journalists, news anchors, political analysts and pundits, depicting these people as self-important buffoons. The show and its host Jon Stewart enjoyed high ratings and were lauded by the critics. However, as Theaker (2001) pointed out, the anti-media tone adopted by *The Daily Show* is hardly an anomaly. Criticism of the the media seems to be seen favourably by the American public. Which is why during the 2012 presidential elections, Republican candidates Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum could stay in the race for months, without any substantial support in terms of funding or institutional Republican support. However, they did criticise the news media on a regular basis to stay relevant (Peters, 2012; Jacobs, 2012). The practice of criticising the media to gain public favour is not new. According to Goldstein (2007), Vice President Spiro Agnew of the Nixon administration attacked the nation's media by referring to them as "...little group of privileged men who do not represent the views of America". According to Crawford (2006, pp.19-25) "Today's media is as bullied as ever. Public distrust of the news media is now one of the most hazardous political challenges now facing Americans."

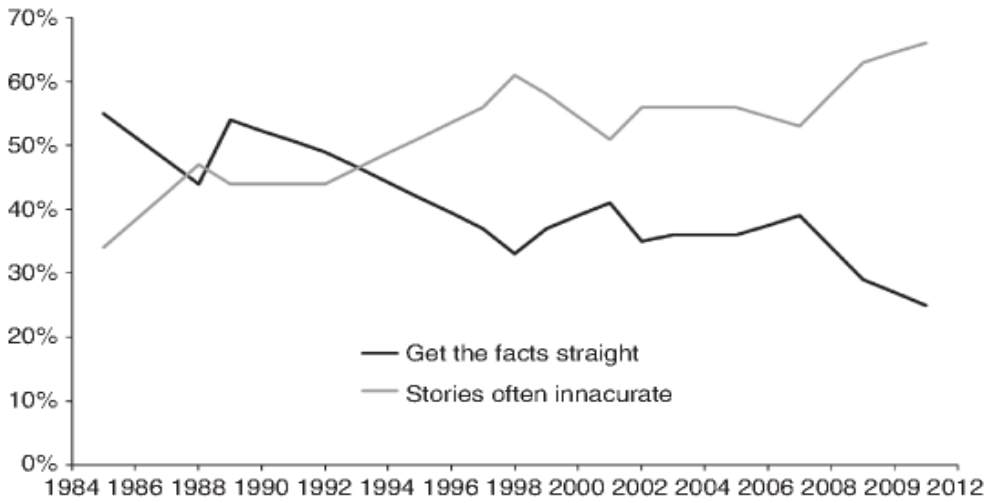


Table 1: Trust in accuracy of news organizations in Pew Surveys by Pew Centre for the People and the Press (2012) cited in 'New Directions in Media and Politics' by Ridout (2013).

As explained by Downs (1957), voters do not have enough motivation to gather information just to improve their voting choices. When it comes to politics, information that is dramatic or emotive will gain more response from the audience compared to information that is complex and supported by sophisticated data (Scheufele and Turney, 2006; Somin, 2013) According to Popkin (1991), voters care more about how presidential a candidate looks as opposed to their political track record. This line of thought is also supported by Graber and Dunaway (2015), who argue that since the majority is exposed to far more non-political media as opposed to political news coverage, their political image is formed through information gathered via make-believe media, entertainment television and movies. As a result, dramatic statements and showmanship often have advantage over logical arguments and factual numbers in terms of grabbing audience attending.

2.3 Who is Donald Trump?

Donald J. Trump was born on June 14, 1946 in Queens, New York to Frederick C. and Mary MacLeod Trump (Kelly, 2015). He is an American real estate mogul, the first billionaire president of the USA (Forbes, 2017), and also a famed television star (Handel, 2015) thanks to his reality TV show *The Apprentice*, *Celebrity Apprentice*, cameos and appearances in various Hollywood movies, TV shows, and even two different fast food commercials (Jang and Stone, 2016). He has owned beauty pageants such as *Miss Universe*, *Miss USA* and *Miss Teen USA* (Koblin, 2015). In 2007, he earned a star on the *Hollywood Walk of Fame* for his contribution to the show *The Apprentice* (Dent, 2015). His involvement with professional wrestling for over a quarter century earned him a place in *WWE Hall of Fame* in 2013 (Brooks, 2016). It is interesting to note that Trump almost always plays himself in his cameos (except in the 1994 movie Little Rascals where he played Waldo's dad), and without exception portrays the image of a rich successful businessman. This may have reinforced his image of a knowledgeable successful businessman despite declaring bankruptcy six times (Hood, 2015) (Qiu, 2016).

Before the 2016 US presidential elections, Trump considered running for president in 1988, 2004 and 2012 (Smith, 2015). His repeated hints that he might run for president and eventually not entering the races caused speculation in the media about whether he was using the US presidential elections as a promotional tool for his reality TV show, *The Apprentice* (CNN Politics, 2011). While being vocal about the possibility of running for president in 2011, Trump repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of Obama's presidency claiming that President Obama was not born in the United States, eventually forcing

President Obama to release his long form birth certificate (Keneally, 2015). However, it didn't end there. Trump kept pressing the birther issue, claimed to have sent private investigators to Hawaii to follow through on Obama's birth certificate, asked for additional documents like his college records (Kelly, 2015). In 2012, Trump again brought up the birther issue on his Twitter account, claiming that an 'extremely credible' source had called him to confirm that Obama's birth certificate was fraudulent (Barbaro, 2016). In 2013, interview with ABC News, Trump declared that he believed he hadn't gone overboard with the birther issue and that stated that pushing this issue 'made him very popular' (Keneally, 2015). In 2014, on 6th September, he took to Twitter again, asking hackers to unearth Obama's' college records and to confirm the President's place of birth (Barbaro, 2016). On 19th September, 2016, in the middle of his election campaign, he finally declared that "President Barack Obama was born in the United States, period", and did not offer any further explanation on changing his stance on an issue he has been pushing for five years (Holland and Stephenson, 2016).

Trump officially declared his run for presidency on June 16, 2015, at Trump Tower in New York City. His core campaign promises included curbing illegal immigration, bringing jobs back to the USA, reforming trade in a way that puts "America First", eliminating "radical Islamic terrorism", and curbing US debt. His campaign slogan was "Make America Great Again" or #MAGA in hashtag form (Time.com, 2015). Trump's 2016 bid for US presidency was planned well ahead. Trump registered his campaign slogan "Make America Great Again" in 2012 (Long, 2015). Throughout his campaign, Trump was criticized for unpresidential behaviour and temperament, to which Trump's consistent response was that he despised political correctness, and referred to president Obama and Hillary Clinton as "politically correct fools" for not using the term "radical Islamic terrorism" (Blake, 2016), shortly after calling for a ban on Muslims from entering the USA (Pilkington, 2015). His disregard for 'political correctness' was reflected in his unconventional attacks on political opponents, a few examples of which include mimicry of an aged Bernie Sanders, repeatedly referring to Hillary Clinton as "Crooked Hillary" on Twitter, attacking Ted Cruz's wife on her looks or suggesting Ted Cruz's father may be involved in John F. Kennedy assassination (Spinelli, 2016) by posting a picture of Ted Cruz's father with Lee Harvey Oswald; and his mimicry of disabled journalist Serge Kovaleski (Devlin, 2017). Trump is as he describes himself on Twitter, a "ratings machine" (Joyella, 2017). After consistently claiming for months that the US presidential elections of 2016 was going to be rigged in favour of Hillary Clinton (Samuelsohn, 2016), Trump officially won the election on 9th November 2016; securing 306 votes in the electoral college against Hillary's 232 votes (CNN Politics, 2016).

2.4 The effects of Pre-existing Beliefs and Negativity Bias on News Consumption

As described by Hart et al (2009), selective exposure theory refers to an individual's tendency to favour news and information that reconfirms his/her prior beliefs. An experiment conducted by Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng (2011) showed that, people who picked news that coincided with their pre-existing beliefs were quicker to pick sides as either Republican or Democrat compared to people who picked news articles that opposed their pre-existing political beliefs.

According to Baumeister et al (2001), negative information is more prominent in the human mind than the positive information. While processing negative information, human brain activity is much higher as opposed to processing positive information. Studies by by Hilbig (2009) and Robinson-Riegler & Winton (1996) show that people are not merely attracted to negative news and information, but they also recall much more details about negative news and information as opposed to positive news and information. Bad news and news that spread fear get more audience, and therefore celebrated by commercial media (Altheide, 1997).

So if these studies on human preference for negative content are considered alongside Stroud's (2011) study on the effects of selective exposure on political participation, the frequency of negative news consumption from partisan sources may have a strong impact on the audience's level of participation in political activities such as engagement with news content on social media, going to campaign rallies, voting and even donating money for the campaign of their preferred political candidate.

2.5 Media Spectacle and Politics

According to Guy Debord (1977), the society of the spectacle came to existence in 1920s, and implied that social life was becoming a representation of itself, losing authenticity. Debord (1977) also implied that commodities will dominate the producers and consumers instead of the other way around. He referred to mass media as a prominent superficial manifestation of the spectacle, and argued that in a consumer society, life is more about having than it is about living and drew a comparison between religions and mass media marketing, stating that propagation of images and media that are primarily about creating enthusiasm for a product, results in fervent exaltation similar to religious enthusiasm. According to Kellner (2004), media spectacle is increasingly shaping political and social life.

Political and social conflicts are now sensationalized as spectacles and digital media culture keeps producing additional material for fantasy and imagination, and by doing so constructing identities, shaping thought and behaviour. Kellner (2004) states that celebrities are created and controlled by media spectacles and to become a celebrity one must be recognized as a "star player" in any field of media spectacle, that includes business and politics, as well as sports and entertainment. It is interesting to note that Donald Trump has traversed all four of the fields of media spectacle mentioned by Kellner. According to Giroux (2016), democracy becomes ineffective when people fail to translate their individual fears and concerns into social issues and he suggests that the 9/11 spectacle of terrorism has caused individual fears to overtake the space of shared responsibility, and that terrorism and violence have become key themes of political spectacles. Kellner (1992) also states that politics is controlled by the logic of media spectacles. According to Kellner (1992) the Gulf War of 1991 was the first spectacle of the global village. Then the Clinton presidency featured spectacles of sex-scandal and impeachment, followed by the spectacle of Bush vs Al Gore US presidential election that was contested in court and perceived by many to be an unfair and stolen election (Kellner, 2001). Followed by the spectacle of 9/11 terror attacks during the Bush administration, which responded with "The War on Terror" in Afghanistan and Iraq (Kellner, 2003). Kellner (2003, p2) calls Pentagon and Bush administration's response to 9/11 attacks as "poorly conceived, badly executed and likely to sow seeds of future blowback and reprisal." Kellner (2003) accused the Bush administration of repeating a lie often enough until the public believes it and pointed out that mainstream media rarely engage in investigative journalism, choosing to follow the sensation of the moment like tabloids that are dominated by codes of spectacle and the quasi-religious fervour of the Bush supporters.

As described by Horkheimer and Adorno [1948], American culture is devolving into tools of manipulation rather than tools of nourishment, and critical thought is slowly being replaced by faith in religious and political extremists. Trump acknowledges this in his own way, reaffirming the adoration of his supporters by saying, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters," (The Guardian, 2016). Kellner's (2003) criticism of Bushspeak, which is playing to anti-intellectual sensitivities, deceitful tactics and lies. Trump can be accused of the same things, however while Bush administration was backed by media, Trump received massive negative media coverage. Yet Trump continues to enjoy the same 'religious adoration' of voters.

Debord (1977) warned in *Society of the Spectacle* that the image, facade, packaging or the representation of something becomes more real than what is being represented. Debord

(1977) compared spectacled with a perpetual opium war where social subjects are constantly distracted. In his new book *American Nightmare, Donald Trump, Media Spectacle and Authoritarian Populism* Kellner (2016) states that without Twitter, and celebrity culture that has transformed into politics, there would never be a Donald Trump. Kellner (2016) also mentions that Trump's celebrity status and his image of a successful adept businessman created by *The Apprentice* creates a belief among his audience that he possesses the necessary skills and qualification required to be president. Trump's dominance in the media and having all his speeches aired live for free, all boils down to the economic factor of ratings and profit (Kellner, 2016).

It can be questioned whether spectacle demands another spectacle response in political arena, and whether or not media culture only promotes spectacle, but also demands it and whether the pressure to create a spectacle in response is greater than creating complex well-thought out policies and solutions that are effective in the long term. Kellner (2010) states that due to intense competition from cable network and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter have forced corporate media to process news and events as spectacles in order to maximize audience size and attention for as long as possible until the next spectacle presents itself.

2.6 Branding and Personality

Trump worked for his father before taking control of the company *Elizabeth, Trump and Son* and renaming it *Trump Organization* in 1971 (Blair, 2001). While his father's business was making functional houses for rent, Trump's business went beyond and built glamorous structures like the *Trump Taj Mahal, Trump Tower, Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino, Trump International Hotel* and *Trump's Castle*. In the real estate crash of the 1990s, Trump's real estate business was at the brink of extinction with a deficit of approximately $900 million (Forbes, 2017). But he came back from that deficit, by shifting his business focus to branding and licensing. By 1997, he was worth close to $500 million (Biography.com Editors, 2017). In 2011, Forbes financial experts declared his brand value to be around 200 million USD. Trump rejected the valuation claiming his brand was worth somewhere between 3 to 6 billion USD (Blankfeld, 2011).

According to Arvidsson (2006a), brands have become a part of social fabric through which social worlds and meanings are constructed. Brands are institutions through which social identity is constructed, and taste in brands are seen as social tools that reflect identities and

aspirations (Power and Hauge, 2008; Quart, 2003). Trump's persona from *The Apprentice* clearly distinguishes between lazy, weak, losers and tough, successful, hard-working winners (Fuchs, 2017). There is a possibility that Trump supporters might want to construct their social identity of being hard-working winners. There is no doubt that Trump is the biggest celebrity endorsement for the Trump brand. As described by Ambroise et. al (2014), brand managers use celebrity endorsers or social media influencers to accentuate and highlight a brand's core values to trigger an emotional response from the consumers and also humanize the brand. Consumers tend to view well-known brands as a part of themselves (Aaker, 1997). Which gives Trump a huge advantage in terms of gaining approval ratings and free press, because when a Trump supporter is reading about Trump, whether it be good news or bad news, they are essentially reading about something which they see as a part of their lives.

As described by Arvidsson (2006b), a brand such as Trump, is an entity in itself which is above and beyond the products sold under it, it is a tool with which a social world is formed and social interactions take place. Modern brand management is more concerned with encouraging the consumer to invite brands into their lives rather than selling products. There is growing consensus amongst academics studying political branding that parties and candidates can be successfully conceptualized as brands (Needham and Smith, 2015). As described by Needham and Smith (2015), interactive social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook contribute to elections becoming more candidate-centric rather than nation-centric due to the non-hierarchical two-way communication channel between candidates and their voters. Needham (2006) points out that brands eliminate the need for researching detailed policies of the candidate. Which enables Trump to ride on the success of his brand, eliminates the need to create detailed policies, and simply engage the audience with short 140 character messages on Twitter. When Trump claims he will destroy ISIS on Twitter, that is enough to engage and intrigue his Twitter audience, because the message comes from the Trump brand, the core promise of which is wealth, success and winning. Reagan appealed to the masses and garnered support with symbolism and emotiveness rather than specific positions and policies (Butler and Collins, 1999). Same can be said about Trump, as his tweets are highly emotive and less policy oriented.

2.7 Reality TV

Reality TV is a phenomenon that is more talked about than it is watched, something that audiences love to hate; dominating social networking sites and tabloid headlines on a global

scale (Hill, 2014). A low budget reality show can have more Twitter followers than viewers (Hill, 2014). Watching reality TV gives the audience a sense of superiority over contestants, and the perception of 'real' enhances the experience, letting the audience fantasize about their own reach for fame and celebrity status (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). As described by Hochschild (2013), reality TV satisfies the demand in the market of emotions, and is a commercialization of intimate life. Reality TV is genre bending in a sense that it is all about the current moment, and exists across many different platforms other than TV, and can be considered more of an effect than a genre. This effect as Reiss & Wiltz (2004) described, is the desire to live vicariously through others. Performers in a reality TV setting create an extreme version of their mediated self, a meta-me, which is something humans do in their day to day social lives, but reality TV scenario takes it to the extreme (Hill, 2014).

The spectacle of *The Apprentice* is not just limited to the realm of reality television, but actually crossed over into the real world in numerous forms. University of Washington introduced a course based on *The Apprentice* titled "Management Lessons from *The Apprentice* (Gynes, 2004). A study done by Miles (2012) reveals that majority of 173 management students from 20 different classes agreed with Trump's firing decisions. USA Weekly devoted a weekly segment to the series in its money section, and websites like MSN Careers, CareerBuilder.com and Entrepreneur.com used the show as a basis for their career advice section (Kinnick and Parton, 2005). As demonstrated by Kinnick and Parton (2005) the primary reason for women being fired in *The Apprentice* is for being too emotional, thus reinforcing traditional gender roles. Men were more likely to be fired for lack of leadership skills, with only one exception where the male contestant was fired for being too emotional. While this could mean that women are simply better leaders on the show, expectancy violations theory (Burgoon & Miller, 1985) suggests it could be because Trump simply did not expect leadership skills from women. A sentiment echoed in Trump's campaign trail where he repeatedly referred to Hillary Clinton as emotionally unstable and insane (Ross, 2016). As described by Parker and Haberman (2016) Trump turned his selection of running mate into a reality TV show, by maximizing the suspense and drama and testing out potential running mates in the court of public opinion. He also took to Twitter to post hints about the 'contenders' and his next potential running mate. The whole process of selecting a running mate had a reality TV feel to it. In the US elections, the norm is to keep the list of people being considered a secret, Trump's method was to go as public and vocal as possible. Trump heightened the anticipation by tweeting about potential running mates.

The Apprentice was also a platform for promoting products from the Trump brand and featured Trump Success, a fragrance, Trump Ice, a new brand of water, along with Trump

Menswear. Trump used the popularity of the show to sell all sorts of Trump branded merchandise including ties, eye glasses, home furnishings, mattresses and wallets (Kranish and Fisher, 2016). As described by (Fuchs, 2017), Trump's entire campaign was about promoting Trump's reality TV persona, a billionaire, a celebrity, a political leader who will run America as successfully as he runs his businesses, someone who will fire inefficient corrupt politicians and replace them with the 'best people'.

2.8 The Dynamics of Celebrity Politics

One of the objectives of this study is to determine how Twitter relates to Trump's challenges as a celebrity politician and whether it amplifies or is neutral to the advantages of being a celebrity politician. As described by Marshall (1997) a celebrity is someone, who through the mass media, enjoys greater public attention, and has more options in terms of activities, agency and presence on the public stage compared to the rest of the population. A celebrity politician has a background in show business, entertainment or sports; goes beyond raising awareness for a single issue by actively seeking office and uses his celebrity associations to communicate his message (Marsh, Hart and Tindall, 2010; Street, 2004). This is consistent with Trump repeatedly drawing attention to his success as a businessman, and how it qualifies him to run the country better than any other political opponent (Gestel, 2017; Eichenwald, 2016).

Before Donald Trump, Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jesse Ventura were the most prominent examples of celebrity turned politicians in the US. As described by Crouch (2004) and Zolo (1992), the emergence of celebrity politician is the result of an increasingly growing post-democratic order where politics has been transformed into spectacle, where the spectacular takes precedence over policy, and it is a show to be performed for an audience of spectators instead of an audience of citizens. Street (2012) suggests that in 2008, Obama once again validated the usefulness of celebrity in running a successful campaign, turning his campaign slogan 'Yes, We Can' into a pop cultural component through social media, by producing spectacles such as making speeches on tunes created by hip hop artist will.i.am of *Black Eyed Peas* fame, dancing on popular TV show hosted by comedian Ellen DeGeneres, extensive use of Facebook and Twitter and endorsements from A-list Hollywood celebrities on a scale never before seen in a US Election campaign. Social media played a key role in increasing the celebrity status of President Obama, and the convergence of celebrity and politics reached critical mass in 2009 during the Obama campaign in history of US presidential campaigns (Everett, 2009; Ruddock, 2013)

Celebrity politicians have several key advantages over non-celebrity politicians, (Marsh, Hart and Tindall, 2010), the celebrity politician gets more press as they garner more interest in the media than other public figures, they can also self-consciously claim to be political outsiders, who are not tainted by confusing political rhetoric and obligations to be 'politically correct'. Which is consistent with Trump's repeated emphasis on deserting 'political correctness' (Swaim, 2016). Trump's repeated attempts at distancing himself from traditional politicians by claiming he is 'not a politician'; a claim that gains him favour with his supporters and is his 'greatest asset' and 'primary appeal' according to director of Monmouth University Polling Institute (MSNBC, 2015) and Gallup polls (Newport and Saad, 2016). Other key advantage of a celebrity politician as described by Marsh, Hart and Tindall (2010) is to be exciting and unpredictable, which is consistent with Kellner's description of spectacle (Kellner 2004, 2010)**.**

However, there are some challenges to being a celebrity politician, as described by Hart and Tindall (2009). The celebrity politician risks diluting his brand by conforming to party politics, and create an impression amongst the voters that he or she is unable to offer something new and exciting. A risk Trump has effectively neutralized by repeatedly bashing the Republican party, by accusing his own party of trying to sabotage his campaign, even four weeks prior to the election (Collinson, Scott and Bradner, 2016) and earlier in the campaign when he threatened a third party run in March 2016, accusing the Republican establishment of treating him unfairly (McCaskill, 2016). The second challenge about being a celebrity politician is that chances of success are higher only if the overall level of trust and approval in the party is low, which was the case when Trump decided to run from the Republican party (Pew Research Center, 2017). And finally, Hart and Tindall (2009) suggest that a celebrity politician's past persona and behaviour may be framed in a political context, causing the celebrity to lose credibility. Trump has been repeatedly accused of sexual misdemeanours that occurred in the past (Blau, 2016), against which he defended himself aggressively on Twitter.

2.9 The Effects of Parasocial Intimacy

As suggested by Horton and Richard (1956), the audience can form parasocial intimacies with television personas, like actors, announcers, news anchors, game show hosts, and judges of reality shows who project soothing consistency in an ever-changing world, their on-screen personalities tailored by the marketing team or producers who wish to be popular in the market, or grab maximum audience attention. This perceived relationship between the

audience and the persona can have varying intensities, but in case of reality TV parasocial intimacy can have higher degree of empathy (Ebersole & Woods, 2007) since in reality TV situations, the audience perceives or imagines that he or she knows the host or the persona intimately (Tian and Yoo, 2015) and the producers of the show expect the audience not only to spectate but also empathize and take some form of action to make a show of support.

According to Stern, Russel and Russel (2007), parasocial intimacy can develop up to the point where the audience may begin to perceive the mediated persona as a real friend wanting them to succeed or stay successful. And frequent exposures over an extended period of time further strengthens this relationship based on parasocial intimacy and feelings developed through parasocial intimacy linger on after switching off the television and affect behaviour throughout different situations outside the make-believe world of television (Eyal and Cohen, 2006).

As described by Rojek (2015), the audience or the consumer of celebrity personalities take gratification in the fact that they know someone famous 'emotionally', and by making their emotions visible, the persona takes the audience into his or her inner circle, and the consumer or devotee of this persona takes gratification in the fact that they share common emotional goals. Following a celebrity on Twitter creates a feeling of 'social presence' in the life of the consumer, as if the celebrity was actually present in their social life like a friend (Kim and Song, 2016; Thompson, 2008). Feeling of social presence is strengthened by retweeting a tweet (Kim and Song, 2016), therefore number retweets may be used as a measure for testing level of parasocial intimacy.

2.10 Filter-Bubbles and Polarization in Politics

The term 'filter-bubble' was first used by Eli Pariser (Pariser, 2011). As described by Bozdag (2013), web algorithms curate information for the user based on user's past online content consumption behaviour and other relevant data such as location and metadata about their online content consumption patterns, thus isolating the internet user from content that contradicts his or her pre-existing perceptions, viewpoints and ideologies. A Trump supporter will get more content that shows Trump in a favourable light, and shows Hillary in a negative light because that's the kind of content that is most likely to engage the consumer. So a Trump supporter may not even get any positive news regarding Hillary because that might irk him and make him click the "unfollow" and "unsubscribe" button or worse, not get any reaction at all, thus reducing advertising revenue for social media and search engine sites

that usually charge advertising dollars on a CPC (Cost-per-click) and CPM (Cost per thousand impressions) basis (Mangani, 2004). This phenomenon of being isolated in one's own ideological and cultural beliefs is referred to as the 'filter bubble'.

As demonstrated by Dandekar, Goel and Lee (2013), increased interaction between individuals with similar mindsets and ideologies result in greater polarisation. As described by Bozdag et al (2014) whether the filters are created by the user or imposed on the user, the end result is a weakening of the democratic process. Because group decision-making between like-minded individuals can create polarization since "Individuals may lead each other in the direction of error and falsehood, simply because of the limited argument pool and the operation of social influences" (Bozdag et al, 2014, p.406). As described by Hill (2009) politicians are supporting increasingly extreme policies to please their increasingly polarised voters.

2.11 Networked Publics

The term networked publics is described by Ito (2008, p2) as, "a linked set of social, cultural, and technological developments that have accompanied the growing engagement with digitally networked media." As described by Boyd (2011) networked publics are publics that have been reshaped and restructured by networking and internet technologies. The term publics may have multiple meanings across different fields of studies. As described by Livingstone (2005), publics are a group of people who can have a common shared identity, a common understanding regarding the world, consensus regarding issues of collective interest, who are bound by shared text. One could argue that people who are constantly bickering on social networking sites regarding political or any other issues, but they are still arguing on a common platform, regarding same issues in the same context, which makes the platform a public sphere. The definition of public sphere can easily be related to social networking sites where users are free to express their opinion publicly without restriction and shape public opinion. As described by Habermas, Lennox and Lennox (1974), public opinion is informal in nature and an informal process of criticizing and controlling the organized state, which also influences the formal process, that is casting votes as citizens. The networked publics are highly informal, whether they be tweets or Facebook posts. Even though there are similarities between the traditional publics and networked publics the nature of interactions and process of forming public opinions have been restructured and reshaped due to technological affordances. As described by Boyd (2011), expressions and opinions of the networked publics published online are stored and archived for an indefinite period, are

searchable, easily redistributed by shares and retweets, and can have potential for unpredictable visibility or going 'viral'. As described by Ito (2008), the communication between networked publics is also much more complex than their traditional counterpart described in Habermas's public sphere. In networked publics, top-down, bottom-up, side-by-side communication takes place.

As described by Boyd (2007), profiles in social networking sites are more than just mere pages and media. They are a digital version of the self, and combined with instant messaging these pages become places, where people can form intimate communities and public spheres. Parasocial intimacy enhances this feeling of closeness. As stated by Varnelis and Friedberg (2008), social networks on mobile platforms are an intimate mobile space that they refer to as a tele-cocoon where the youth transform physical public places like subways and bus-stops or cafes into their own private places where they interact with friends. Trump's tweets can be compared to a personal message from a personal friend in an intimate setting.

Twitter can also enable people who are not conventional politicians to cut through various publics and take centre stage in a political debate (Larsson and Moe, 2012; Ausserhofer and Maireder, 2013). The way network publics are structured also dilutes the power of mass media, mass media reporting on a certain event has little or no effect on how fast information is dispersed and spreads through the networked public sphere of Twitter (Maireder and Schlögl, 2014). Celebrities have an advantage in networked publics when it comes to getting their voice heard, because they have more connections from incoming nodes in the networked publics, especially Twitter (Meraz and Papacharissi, 2013). In networked publics, and in Twitter the power law curve is dominant (Singh and Jain, 2010), where 10-20 percent users receive most of the attention, and wield most influence, even more than Twitter accounts of mainstream media outlets. Influential figures in networked public spheres such as Twitter have enough influence to put mainstream media on the sidelines, because their followers spread those opinions through shares and retweets in a contagious manner (Meraz and Papacharissi, 2013). Trump's celebrity, combined with millions of followers on Twitter, gives him significant influence in the networked public sphere and his followers cementing an ideological cocoon with every retweet (Conover et al., 2011).

2.12 Background on Twitter

Twitter went online in 2006 as a microblogging and social networking platform. Even though not originally intended to be a tool for political campaigning, and despite the inconvenience of disseminating information in short bursts of 140 characters, its political relevance was undeniable by the 2008 US Elections (Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers, 2010). As described by Tumasjan et al (2010), the role of Twitter as a legitimate political campaigning tool was solidified as a result of 2008 US Elections campaign and according to William and Gulati (2010), Obama's early adoption and extensive usage of Twitter aided his victory in the 2008 US Presidential Elections. However, Conway et al. (2013) argue that popularity on Twitter is dependant more on external forces beyond the social networking site, and extensive usage doesn't necessarily equal to more followers. As described by Gainous and Wagner (2013), even though the actual number of followers is an important measure of reach and impressions, it can go above and beyond if a follower with more reach than the actual tweeter retweets a particular tweet.

2.13 The Impact of Twitter

According to Nagarajan, Purohit and Sheth (2010) Twitter has the power to inflict a tangible effect on societies and economies. As described by Davis, Holtz-Bacha and Just (2017), the key reason for politicians using Twitter is to bypass traditional gatekeepers of information, often referred to as 'mainstream media' and connect directly with their voters. Also, most Twitter users get their information on Twitter from Twitter accounts of individuals, and only 15% of the information received by Twitter users come from mass media Twitter accounts (Wu et al., 2011, pp. 5-6).

As described by Black (2010), the 'electronic' generation perceive Twitter to be as intimate as a personal visit or telephone call. The potential reach of Twitter goes beyond a closed group of contacts like the Facebook friend list. As demonstrated by Kwak et al. (2010) Twitter is an effective medium for disseminating information rather than a platform for making personal social connections. Suh et al. (2010) describes Twitter as a key medium of information diffusion for Iranian protesters during the Iranian presidential election protests of 2009, however Morozov (2009) claims protesters' reliance on Twitter was largely romanticized.

Kwak et al. (2010) also demonstrates that half the retweets happen within an hour, 75% within a day and 10% retweets can happen after a month of the original tweet. As described by Java et al (2007), Twitter's 140-character limit reduces thought and time investment in

having to disseminate information which enables fast spread of information. Another interesting fact about Twitter was conclusively proven by Cha et al. (2010), where they studied Twitter data from 54 million users and demonstrated that having a large number of followers on Twitter doesn't essentially mean having more influence, rather the number of followers who retweet and mention the original tweeter is more impactful, as in higher user engagement on Twitter translates to greater influence rather than actual number of followers on the microblogging platform. As Tumasjan et al (2010) state in their study that Twitter is not only used to disseminate political opinions of political leaders, but it is also a platform for debating and discussing political opinion with other Twitter users and the mere number of mentions on Twitter can be used to predict outcomes of elections, as in a candidate with higher number of mentions during the election season has a greater chance of victory.

As described by Conway et al. (2013), even though candidates for US Presidency regularly mention each other on Twitter, the primary objective of these mentions is to criticise candidates from the opposing camps, not to facilitate a back-and-forth exchange of dialogue or debate. As demonstrated by Williams and Gulati (2011), campaigns that favour Twitter over traditional media and traditional forms of campaigning because they tend to see less advantage in using traditional media and because of budget constraints and ease of use. Republican office-seekers perceive the mainstream media channels to be biased against them, have trouble generating media coverage while Democrats are in power, and believe the gatekeepers of traditional media channels are either obstructing or diluting their campaign message (Gainous and Wagner, 2013).

The actual audience of Twitter may be another key reason for Twitter becoming an important campaigning tool for American politicians. Twitter can help politicians reach an influential audience in their 30s, get reactions from "elite users" like celebrities and politicians, and get more news coverage in mainstream media (Donia, 2010; Parmelee and Bichard, 2011; Wu et al, 2011). Park (2013) suggests that there exists a positive correlation between opinion leadership and frequency of Twitter usage.

2.14 What are Politicians Tweeting about?

According to Parmelee and Bichard (2011), political leaders primarily tweet about policy and to provide personal information about themselves. An analysis of 6,000 tweets made by Congresspeople done by Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers (2010) reveal that tweets made by that group are predominantly dispersing personal information, news articles about

themselves and links to their personal websites and blog posts. A case study of Republican representative Laura Brod's tweeting habit reveals that out of 307 tweets made between March 21-July 13, 2009; the highest percentage of tweets were about policy issues (46.3%) and the second highest (17.3%) about her personal life and musings (Ostermeier, 2009). As demonstrated by Parmelee and Bichard (2011), American politicians use Twitter as a tool for agenda setting, announcing political events, gaining momentum for political campaigns, asking for donations and political parties go as far as to invite questions from the public, one example is "Twitter Town Hall" in 2011, where members of Congress invited questions from the public that were accompanied by hashtag #AskDems.

2.15 The Significance of "Retweeting"

Although Twitter has had a built-in reply feature since 2007, the built-in retweet feature was not introduced until 2009 (Meeder et al. 2010). As described by Suh et al. (2010), retweeting is the most effective mechanism for disseminating information and content on Twitter. Suh et al. (2010) also demonstrate the factors that are related to a tweet's "retweetablity", which are URL and hashtags. Retweetability is also affected by number of followers, according to the aforementioned research, but is unaffected by the past number of retweets. As Boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010) compared retweeting to a political act for politicians wishing to get their voices across, and stated it is common for political actors to ask for retweets. Boyd, Golder and Lotan (2010) also stated another category of retweets they referred to as "Ego Retweets" which they described as the act of retweeting tweets which refer to the retweeter. If Tom Brady tweets "Donald Trump is a strong leader" and Trump retweets it, it can be classified as an "Ego Retweet". Marketers use "Ego Retweets" to publicly broadcast intriguing content and favourable views from consumers about their brand. According to Macskassy and Michelson (2011), the primary motivation behind retweets is to share new information. An interesting fact about retweets according to Nagarajan, Purohit and Sheth (2010), is that individuals have an increased likelihood of being retweeted as opposed to marketers or news organisations. In the political realm, the most popular tweets are said the have these four traits: call for action, group identity making, crowdsourcing, and information sharing. (Nagarajan, Purohit and Sheth, 2010).

2.16 The Significance of Hashtags

In the early phase of Twitter launch in 2006, the hashtag (#) function was non-existent. The hashtag acts as a hyperlink that brings all relevant content under one roof, like Trump's

#DrainTheSwamp or #MAGA. Even though hashtags are a common function across various social media platforms, they are particularly popular and useful on Twitter where the 140-character limit makes it difficult to provide context and promotes inappropriate levity along with rapid dissemination of information. Hashtags provide the means of inserting multiple levels of meaning into a tweet (Highfield, 2016). Hashtags serve as more than just a hyperlink, it also helps the audience gauge the context of the tweet in a manner that is economic and efficient (Scott, 2015). The audience can infer the intended meaning of the tweet and make relevant assumptions with less cognitive effort.

The hashtag function was originally proposed by technologist Chris Messina in 2007 (Burns and Burgess, 2011) as means of creating improved context and content filtering mechanism through “channel tags”, so people could follow conversations and content on topics they were interested in. No specialized programming knowledge is required to create a hashtag, all a Twitter user has to do is type a series of alphanumeric characters following the # symbol and their tweet becomes a part of centralized information under a hashtag, becoming part of a polyphonic backchannel for public reactions to media events.

According to Burns and Burgess (2011), hashtags have the power to create ad hoc publics. Once a hashtag is used frequently enough, it shows up as a trending topic on Twitter (Page, 2012), and can spread across different communities other than the follower community of the hashtag’s creator. These publics form around topical freshly relevant issues almost instantaneously. According to Bastos, Raimundo and Travitzki (2013), political hashtags have a longer lifespan than other kinds of hashtags, and repeated exposures to of a controversial topic have a relatively large effect on adoption.

Another interesting trait of Twitter hashtags is that it goes beyond follower-followee relationship, one doesn’t even need a Twitter account to follow a stream of hashtags, and contemporary TV shows often live stream tweets under a particular hashtag, essentially giving hashtagged topics the power to penetrate through filter-bubbles and across different communities (Bruns and Burgess, 2015). Page (2012) describes hashtags as a potent tool of increasing reach and visibility of a tweet and its author, and means of being affiliated or identifying as a member of a community without following other members of that community or engaging with them. This type of bonding around a growing topic of interest is referred to as ‘ambient affiliation, and enables Twitter users to ‘hyper-charge’ their tweets with symbolic meanings shared by members of community created as a result of ‘ambient affiliation’ (Zappavigna, 2011).

2.17 Theoretical Framework

As Kellner (2010) suggests, American corporate media treats news, events, information as spectacles, in order to survive in the increasingly competitive digital media landscape, battling for audience attention. Infotainment and sensationalism are increasingly replacing investigative journalism (Kellner, 2010). The media currently prolongs a spectacle for as long as possible until the next spectacle emerges (Kellner, 2010). As Kellner mentioned the main fields of media spectacle are business, politics, sports and entertainment (2004). Trump has traversed all four fields. Spectacles are increasingly dominating the field of politics, and sensationalism in politics in forms of conflict, contestation and scandals are processed as spectacles by the media (Kellner, 2004, 2010, 2016). Terror and violence are also key themes of political spectacles (Giroux, 2016, Kellner, 2010). As politics is controlled by logic of spectacles (Kellner, 1992), celebrity politicians get more press compared to traditional politicians (Marsh, Hart and Tindall, 2010). Politicians who employ showmanship and dramatic statements have an upper hand in gaining media coverage compared to politicians who attempt to engage in complex policy discussions supported by sophisticated data (Popkin, 1992).

In the digital landscape, filter-bubbles are contributing to increasing polarization in politics (Bozdag et al, 2014) which facilitates increasingly extreme views and hateful rhetoric among likeminded individuals. As Debord (1977) suggests, spectacles are celebration of highest values in society. Therefore, a politician expressing opinions that are xenophobic or politically incorrect maybe facilitating creation of spectacles for the media. Also, negative news and information make for more engaging news content, and gets more audience as opposed to positive news (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Altheide, 1997; Baumeister et al, 2001; Hilbig, 2009).

Being a Reality TV star can heighten a politician's ability to churn out spectacles, as the Reality TV genre is a spectacle in itself (King, 2005). Reality TV encompasses the key traits of spectacles: being glitzy, vulgar, and commercial; ideal for tabloidization and thriving on sensationalism, more talked about than watched (Hill, 2014); traits that are also important aspects of political contestation (Kellner, 2010). According to logic of spectacles, packaging becomes more real than the real itself (Debord, 1977). Thus, creating a perception that a Reality TV persona’s packaging of success and intelligence is also true in real life. As Fuchs (2017) suggests, Trump’s campaign persona reflected his Reality TV persona.

Audiences of television shows can form parasocial relations with television personas (Horton and Richard, 1956) and in case of Reality TV these parasocial relations can have deeper level of empathy because of the perceived 'realness' (Ebersole & Woods, 2007). Due to parasocial intimacy, audience can perceive a TV star as a personal friend (Stern, Russel and Russel, 2007). Following a celebrity on Twitter creates a deeper level of parasocial intimacy than viewing them on television (Thompson, 2008), and retweeting tweets from celebrities strengthens this bond of parasocial relations (Kim and Song, 2016). Branding also plays a role to create a sense of intimacy, as brands have become a part of social fabric through which social worlds and meanings are constructed (Arvidsson, 2006a) and because consumers view well-known brands as a part of themselves (Aaker, 1997).

As described by Habermas, Lennox and Lennox (1974), a public sphere is a social space where the members of the publics are free to express their opinions without restriction and a space where a public opinion may be shaped regarding issues of common public interest. Due to manipulation of public opinion for profit and political power, the public sphere transformed from a place where critical opinions can be formed regarding issues of common good to a space where wealth and prestige can be flaunted publicly (Habermas, 1989). Twitter is an example of public sphere where networked publics come together to express and share their opinions. In Twitter, 10-20% of the users receive most of the attention (Singh and Jain, 2010). Through Twitter, a non-traditional celebrity political could cut through various networked publics and take centre stage in political debate (Larsson and Moe, 2010, Ausserhofer and Maireder, 2013). Celebrities and people with large enough following on Twitter can bypass the gatekeeping of traditional media and get their message across without having to go through the framing of mainstream media (Meraz and Papacharissi, 2013). With the affordances provided by Twitter, it is possible for Donald J. Trump, a celebrity with significant following on Twitter, to leverage the power of parasocial intimacy by mirroring his Reality TV persona, core values of the Trump brand and churn out spectacles in the form of tweets. By making inflammatory remarks on Twitter, Trump gains attention in the form of media scorn, a technique which is best described as "online trolling" (Philips, 2015) and escalate conflicts which the media processes as spectacles for ratings and profit (Kellner, 2016). It is also possible that media gives Trump more coverage because news about Trump gets a larger audience, due to effects of branding, celebrity and parasocial intimacy, therefore generating more ratings and profit for the corporate media. Twitter gives Trump the ability to create spectacles for the media, at a moment's notice, from a mobile platform, with no additional cost.

Chapter Three: Method Design and Methodology

The proposed study used an inductive approach and employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis of content. The research question is “Does Trump’s tweeting behaviour explain his dominance in gaining media attention during US Election 2016?”. “Trump’s tweeting behaviour” also includes tweets made by his campaign staff using his Twitter handle @realDonaldTrump. Tweets made by @realDonaldTrump were the primary source of data for this research. Inductive approach was used to facilitate the search for unexpected patterns in tweeting behaviour. Quantitative content analysis was used to get a precise measurement of tweeting behaviour in different contexts, to understand whether variance in different content categories change based on context and if these changes have any relevance to the research question. A theoretical framework was formed based on the recurring themes and conspicuous patterns that emerged from the quantitative analysis. Qualitative approach was used to investigate some of the subjective components of this study like parasocial intimacy, effects of the Trump brand and Trump’s Reality TV persona in strengthening parasocial intimacy.

First, all of Trump’s tweets between his nomination as a presidential candidate and inauguration day were downloaded using a web app TWLETS from twlets.com and organized into an excel sheet. The sheet contained date and time, the actual tweets, and number of likes and retweets for each tweet. Then upon analysing and re-analysing the tweets multiple times, common themes and patterns that keep reappearing were identified. Those common themes were used for coding the tweets into similar categories. Also, inductive approach used to analyse data first and then look for relevant theoretical framework and form a hypothesis. Emergent coding was used to code the tweets into different categories. The context in which the tweets were posted were also taken into account (example: during debates or after a Clinton speech).

After coding the data, the study looked into relevant literature and assessed the research question once more. After assessing the question in light of the quantitative analysis of coded data, and relevant literature review, two more questions were formed that were related to the original research question: “Are Trump’s tweets spectacles?” and “Does Trump’s reality TV persona reflect his campaign persona?” A theoretical framework was developed at this stage. Quantitative data was used to interrogate the theoretical framework.

The data gathering and coding was done in a manner similar to grounded theory approach.

As described by Bernard and Ryan (2010), there are three major stages of grounded theory approach; the first stage is the collection and coding of information, looking for patterns in chunks of text that keep reappearing. The second stage is memoing, where one writes down observations and insights while gathering data in the field, or in this case tweets from Trump's Twitter account. Memoing also starts from the very beginning, with the first concept that has been identified. And finally, integration of coded data and memo scripts and the refining of theory.

3.1 Sampling

The initial sample size for this study were all the tweets made between Trump's nomination as the Republican candidate and inauguration as president, which amounted to 1779 tweets. But considering the research question, the sample size was reduced from inauguration day to election day. The new date range for the sample was between 19th July 2016, the day Trump became the official Republican nominee; and 8th November 2016, the day before the election. There were 1405 tweets in the new sample.

3.2 Constructing Data Sets

The sample size of 1405 tweets was still too large for in-depth analysis, so it was decided to construct different data sets using different criterias. After inductive analysis of the tweets a salient pattern emerged: increased frequency of tweeting corresponding to important media events such as debates, scandals and speeches/rallies of political opponents. These increased frequencies within 24 hours were labelled "frenzies" and grouped together to construct one of the three datasets. Other two datasets are "Top 100 liked Tweets between nomination and election" and "Every 9th Tweet between nomination and election".

Trump's average tweet count per day is 8.54 times. Any time Trump tweets more than 18 times within a span of 24 hours has been dubbed as a frenzy. The media often calls these frenzies "Tweet Storms" or "Trump's Twitter Meltdowns". There are four debate frenzies and five non-debate frenzies. Debate frenzies happen during presidential and vice-presidential debates and non-debate frenzies happened in response to Khizr Khan's speech, Clinton's nomination acceptance speech, in response to women coming forward with accusations of sexual harassment, post DNC frenzy during a Clinton rally, and in response to Clinton's accusations of pushing Birther campaign and racism. There are 397 tweets total in all the 9 frenzies combined. All of them have been analysed for content, links, images, videos, news

articles, hashtags.

The second dataset of every 9th Tweet contained 155 tweets. And the third data set was Trump's top 100 most liked Tweets. All three data sets were taken from the same timeline between July 19th, 2016; the day Trump became Republican Nominee and 8th November 2016; the day before the election. These three datasets: frenzies, every 9th tweet and 100 most liked tweets were coded using emergent coding. The frenzy dataset was treated as the most important data set of this study, and consisted of two sub categories: frenzies that happened during debates, when tweets were posted by Trump campaign staff, and non-debate frenzies; frenzies where Trump allegedly tweeted himself. One anomaly is the vice-presidential debates, where Trump was live-tweeting his opinions on the event. Using popularity (most liked) a method for constructing one data set, and random sampling (every 9th tweet) a method for another, and using "frenzies" as a criteria to construct the third dataset, the study observes the tweets from three different perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of Trump's tweeting behaviour.

3.3 Content Analysis

After re-reading the tweets within the selected timeline some common patterns emerged. These recurring patterns are:

CH - Tweets criticising Hillary Clinton were coded as CH
CM - Tweets criticising the media were coded as CM
CO - Tweets criticising political opponents other than Hillary were coded as CO
CI - Tweets sharing campaign information were coded as CI
FM - Tweets containing threats of ISIS, terrorism, xenophobia, threats of increasing crime, violence and failing economy were coded as FM
Policy - Tweets mentioning policy, like jobs and strengthening military are coded as Policy
C2A - Tweets calling for a specific action like asking for votes or asking to join a rally are coded as C2A.

These are non-exclusive categories as some tweets can belong to more than one category. After coding all the 397 tweets from frenzy dataset, 100 tweets from "Top 100 liked tweets" dataset and 155 tweets from "Every 9th tweet" dataset, relevant theories and literature were reviewed. A theoretical model was developed. The theory of "spectacle" as descibed by Kellner (2001, 2003, 2004, 2010, 2015, 2016) and Guy Deobord (1977) was used to

operationalise the phenomenon of “spectacle” in Trump’s tweets.

3.4 Operationalisation

As described by Kellner, spectacles are events in the media that deviate from the norm, from the habitual and from what is expected, and correspond to some form of competition (Kellner, 2010). In this case, the US 2016 Election can be seen as the competition or contest and the contestants are Trump and Hillary. Kellner (2010) also pointed out a specific characteristic of media spectacles, which is to be dramatic and sensational. Spectacles can also be described as exaggerations which serve to heighten the impact of an event (Lewis 2014).

Reality TV is undoubtedly a form of spectacle, referred to as *Spectacle of the Real* by King (2005). Kellner (2016) and Fuchs (2017) point out that Trump’s campaign persona reflects his persona from *The Apprentice*. Kellner (2016, p8) provides a list of quotes that capture Trump’s reality TV persona which he brings to the campaign:

> • When somebody challenges you unfairly, fight back—be brutal, be tough—don’t take it. It is always important to WIN!
> • I think everyone’s a threat to me.
> • Everyone that’s hit me so far has gone down. They’ve gone down big league.
> • I want my generals kicking ass.
> • I would bomb the shit out of them.
> • You bomb the hell out of the oil. Don’t worry about the cities. The cities are terrible.

3.5 Operationalising ‘Spectacle Tweets’

It is hard to define the abstract concept of spectacle in strict objective terms, however for the purposes of this study, two conditions need to be fulfilled in order for a tweet to be categorized as “spectacle”.

First, as suggested by Debord (1967), spectacles are not separate from society but a part of society, a reflection of societal values and a convergence point for societal attention. So as a measure for attention, for a tweet to be categorized as “spectacle” it must have a minimum

retweet count of above 9,934 or like count of above 27,352 i.e. higher than the median count of likes and retweets in our sample size. Having either above median like or retweet indicates the tweet is getting more attention compared to other tweets in the sample.

Second, Trump's tweets are categorized as spectacles when he uses the following themes, which are common characteristics for spectacle according to Kellner (2001, 2003, 2004, 2010, 2015, 2016), Debord (1977), Giroux (2016) and King (2005):

1. When he uses hyperboles, exaggerations and dramatisation. Example: "No one knows ISIS better than me" or "No one has worse judgement than Hillary - corruption and devastation follows her wherever she goes."

2. When he mirrors his persona from *The Apprentice*, and emphasizes on "winners and losers" or "hiring the best people"

3. Use of archetypes, caricatures and labelling: Example: "Crooked Hillary, Goofy Elizabeth Warren, Low-energy Jeb, Lyin Ted"

4. When he uses the 'key themes' of political spectacle, "terrorism, fear mongering and violence" as described by Giroux (2016). Example: "Hillary has called for 550% more Syrian immigrants, but won't even mention "radical Islamic terrorists." or "Drugs are pouring into this country, we have no border, we have no country"

5. When Trump makes sensational claims with no verifiable sources, or that are poorly sourced. Example: "Hillary accepted money from an organization linked with ISIS" or "Obama founded ISIS"

6. Sensational racist, xenophobic, statements such as "Ban all Muslims" and "Mexicans are sending drugs, criminals, rapists."

3.6 Ethical Consideration

All the data used in this study are Tweets publicly posted by Trump, a public figure, therefore no ethical clearance was required to use them. Tweets from non-public figures used in this study were anonymised to protect their identities.

Chapter Four: Analysing the Frenzies

This chapter will compare debate frenzies with non-debate frenzies, then frenzies with regular tweets from the dataset of every 9th tweet between Trump's nomination and election win.

The total number of frenzies can be divided into two broad categories: debate frenzies, the tweets made during the debate; and non-debate frenzies, when Trump allegedly tweets himself. These two categories of tweets were separated into two different bundles, tweets from three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate bundled as debate frenzies and rest of the other frenzies as non-debate frenzies, then analysed for content. The charts in Table 2 and Table 3 show content distribution across non-debate and debate frenzies respectively. This separate analysis of debate tweets and non-debate tweets during the frenzies helps identify similarities and differences. There is no evidence that all the tweets made during the non-debate frenzies are solely by Trump, however during the presidential debate he is not tweeting at all, handing over his Twitter account to his campaign staff.

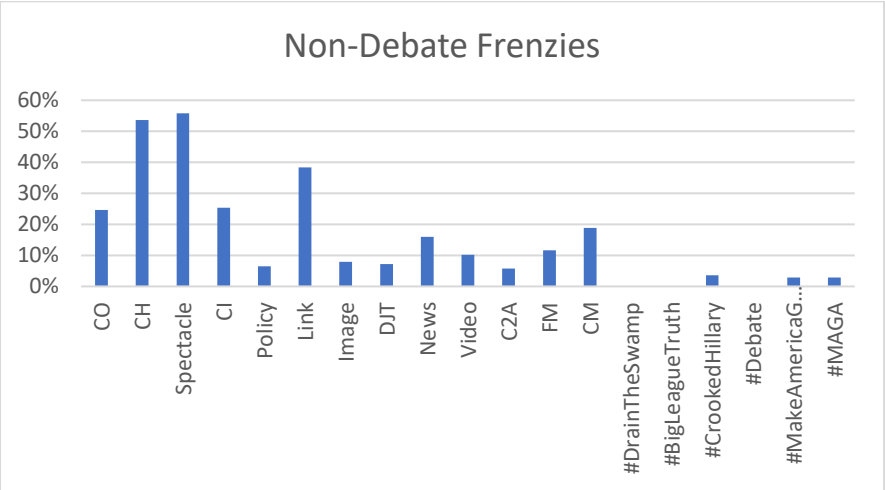


Table 2: Content distribution across non-debate frenzies

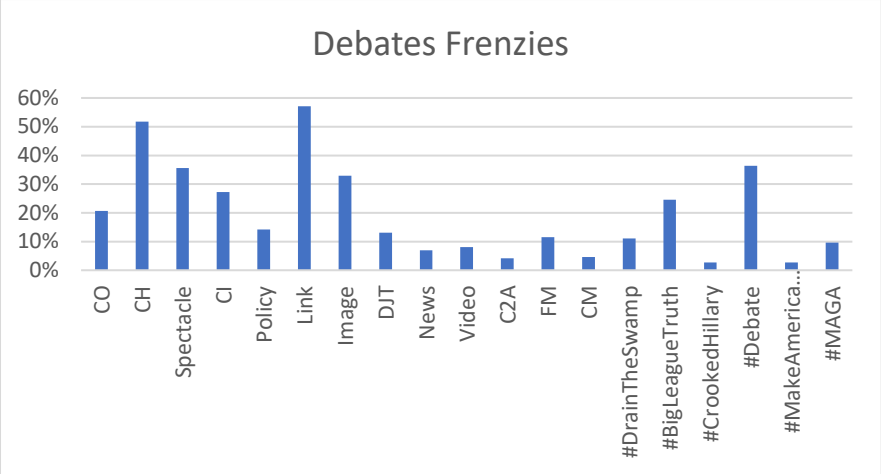


Table 3: Content distribution across debate frenzies

4.1 Similarities between Debate and Non-debate Frenzies

Both debate frenzies and non-debate frenzies share some similarities in terms of content and tone. Hillary is criticized 52% of the time (CH) in debates and 54% of the time during non-debate frenzies, fearmongering is at 11% (FM) during debates and 12% during non-debates, and political opponents are criticized (CO) 21% of the time during debates and 25% of the time during non-debate frenzies. Heavy criticism of political opponents is aligned with previous research that candidates seeking office only mention each other to criticise each other, not to facilitate dialogue (Conway et al., 2013). The consistent percentages of CH, CO and FM make for engaging news content (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Altheide, 1997; Baumeister et al, 2001; Hilbig, 2009) and follow the logic of media spectacles (Giroux, 2016; Kellner, 2004, 2010, 2016).

Campaign information (CI) sharing is 27% during debates and 25% during the non-debates. Call to action (C2A) is also within close range, 6% for non-debate and 4% for debates. [1] These similarities could indicate that the Trump campaign is following Trump's tweeting pattern during the debates. The tone and wording of debate tweets do not have any major shift from informal to formal, possibly trying to benefit from Trump's pre-existing persona, brand and leverage the effects of parasocial intimacy. Many of the debate tweets are Trump's quotes, remarks made during the debate, and include name calling, such as "Crooked Hillary" or "Wild Bill". This suggests that the Trump campaign staff are mimicking Trump's tweeting style during the debates. Another common trait in debate tweets is to repeat tweets posted by Trump during non-debate frenzies and tweets from outside the frenzies, with additional links, images, video and hashtags, indicating the presence of more

[1] Percentages may add up to more than a 100 because some tweets perform more than a singular function, as in criticise Hillary (CH) and criticise the media (CM) at the same time.

professional campaign hands at work. The most liked and retweeted tweets are more inflammatory in nature and don't contain links or any additional content, making it more likely that these are tweeted by Trump himself. Analysis of Trump's most engaging tweets from both inside and outside the frenzies, between the day he became the Republican nominee and the day he won the election, reveals only 20% of the highest like receiving tweets contain links. These tweets also have overall high engagement, as likes have a positive correlation with retweets.

4.2 Differences between Debate and Non-debate Frenzies

A significant difference can be seen in the "spectacle" category, which is based on above median like and retweets. Non-debate frenzies have a higher "spectacle" content 56%, as opposed to debate frenzies that have a spectacle content of 36%. Indicating when Trump is tweeting by himself he gets more engagement as opposed to when tweets are made by members of the Trump campaign while he is debating. There are significant differences in terms of percentages while sharing policy related tweets, 14% in debate frenzies and 7% in non-debates. Which is not surprising since in debates policy related questions have to be addressed by politicians. Criticising the media (CM) is also has a higher level of variance, 19% during non-debates and only 5% during debates. Which consistent with the assumption that Trump is tweeting himself during the non-debate frenzies as criticising the media and not discussing policy echoes the rhetoric of his speeches given during campaign rallies. This is consistent with Popkin's (1991) findings that showmanship evokes a stronger response than complex policy discussions. Also, consistent with Ridout's (2015) findings about American audience's ever-growing distrust of mainstream media. By criticising the media Trump is making the American audience comfortable with the views they already have (Goldstein, 2007), minimizing the cognitive effort of forming new opinions and being entertaining at the same time, and creating news that is more likely to get engagement (Downs, 1957; Hart et al, 2009; Hilbig, 2009). Increased CM also has a positive correlation with increased user engagement on Twitter. By increasing his criticism of the media during frenzies, Trump is discrediting mainstream media for being biased against him, and at the same time gaining attention through media scorn. The low percentage of media criticism in debate frenzies could be interpreted as an attempt to gain more favourable reviews of his debate performance, as tweets during the debate are made by the staff of Trump campaign and are more strategic and less volatile in nature.

More links are shared in debates as opposed to non-debate frenzies, 57% of the debate tweets and 38% of the non-debate tweets contained links of either news, images, retweets from third parties and videos. The links containing press releases, donation links and rally

schedules directly from the official Donald Trump campaign website have been coded separately as “DJT”. During debates 13% of links are from Donald Trump’s official campaign website, as opposed to only 7% during non-debate frenzies. Debate frenzy tweets have only 6% news compared to 16% news sharing during non-debate frenzies. An indicator that there is an increase in tabloidized news sharing during non-debate frenzies.

Figure 1: Fake news tweeting increases during non-debate frenzies

Increased use of hashtags during debates could result in formation of ambient communities (Zappavigna, 2011) and ad-hoc publics (Burns and Burgess, 2011) around those hashtags, giving further reach and longer lifespan to Trump campaign’s commentary on the debates (Page, 2012; Bastos, Raimundo and Travitzki, 2013; Bruns and Burgess, 2015).

4.3 Content Analysis of Image, Video, and News Articles in Debate and Non-Debate Frenzies

Video, images and news articles shared during the frenzies follow the logic of spectacles, being dramatic, vulgar, glitzy, sensational; the type of content which can be processed as tabloidized infotainment, and used as modes of conflict resolution (Kellner, 2004, 2010, 2016).

Images

33% of the tweets from debate frenzies contained links of images, as opposed to 8% of tweets that contained images in the non-debate frenzies.

In debate frenzies 54% of the images shared were about criticising Hillary (CH). Other themes of the images include: 29% campaign information (CI), 25% about policy, 14% about criticising an opponent other than Hillary Clinton (CO), 12% about fearmongering (FM) and 7% about call to action (C2A). Images seem to be the preferred form of information distribution during debates. 34% of images shared during debates have above median like or retweets. Images that have a call to action (C2A) theme have the highest number of retweets in debate frenzies. Images that criticize Hillary Clinton have the second highest number of retweets in debate frenzies. However, the highest number of likes belong to images that criticize Hillary, the second highest number of likes are awarded to images carrying campaign information (CI). Trump supporters "like" anti-Hillary images as opposed to any other category of images.

Figure 2: The image which got highest number of engagement during debate frenzies

In non-debate frenzies image sharing 54% of the images are about campaign information (CI), 18% about criticising Hillary (CH), 18% about call to action (C2A), and 9% about policy, 9% criticising media, 9% news content. Criticising opponents and fear mongering seem to be absent from images shared during non-debate frenzies. 36% of the images shared during non-debate frenzies have above median like or retweets. Images that criticize Hillary Clinton have the highest number of retweets in non-debate frenzies.

Figure 3: The image that got highest number of engagement during non-debate frenzies

Videos

8% of the tweets posted during debates and 10% of the tweets during non-debate frenzies contained videos.

During the debates 13 out of 21 or almost 62% of the videos posted on Twitter were about criticising Hillary (CH). 14% of the videos posted were about criticising a political opponent (CO) other than Hillary, 28% about sharing campaign related information (CI), about 5% about sharing policy related information, 5% about call to action (C2A), 9% about criticising the media, and 14% about fearmongering (FM). The videos which criticise Hillary (CH) receive the highest and videos that are categorized as fearmongering (FM) receive the second number of engagement on Twitter during debate frenzies.

Figure 4: Video with most engagement during debates, where Trump threatened Hillary Clinton with prison

The video in Figure 4 became an internet sensation in forms of memes and gifs, and fits into Tim Highfield's (2016) description of irreverent politics where netizens engage with serious political issues in a humorous manner or as inflammatory online trolls who make provocative statement to gain media attention (Philips, 2015).

Figure 5: Video with most engagement during non-debate frenzies

The video featured in Figure 5 uses cartoon drawings and carnival music in the background and offers a step by step guide on how to get rich quick using Hillary Clinton's techniques of corruption. Claims made in the video are not supported by any sources.

During the non-debate frenzies 9 out of 14 videos or 64% of the videos shared criticized Hillary (CH). 21% of them are about criticising a political opponent (CO), 28% about sharing campaign information (CI), 7% about fearmongering (FM) and 7% about criticising the media (CM). Policy and call to action (C2A) are completely absent from non-debate frenzy videos. The highest engagement comes from criticising Hillary (CH) or criticising the media (CM) during non-debate frenzies.

News Articles

In debates 53% of all the news articles criticise Hillary (CH), 6% criticise opponents other than Hillary (CO), 30% are about sharing campaign information (CI), 13% about policy, 6% about fearmongering (FM). Call to action (C2A) and criticising the media (CM) seem to be absent. The highest engagement comes from news link announcing Trump's debate win over Hillary, and criticising Hillary. This is consistent with the Trump brand, Trump's reality TV persona, from *The Apprentice* who places excessive importance on winning (Kellner, 2016; Fuchs, 2017).

Figure 6: News article that receive highest engagement during debates

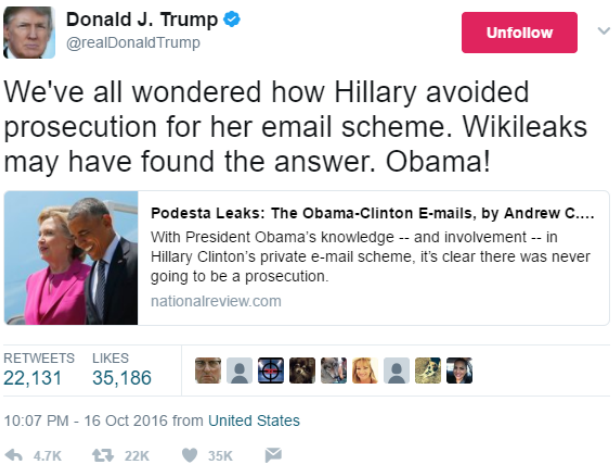


Figure 7: News article with highest engagement during non-debate frenzies

In the non-debate frenzies out of 22 news articles shared, 63% is about criticising Hillary (CH), 36% about criticising a political opponent other than Hillary (CO), 14% about sharing campaign information (CI), 9% about policy, 9% about FM, 18% about criticising the media (CM). Highest engagement is obtained by news articles about CO and CM then FM. Majority of news articles are dramatic exaggerations from partisan sources or non-mainstream media who enjoy less accountability and can afford to make spectacular claims. High engagement obtained by news articles that are negative is consistent with previous findings of negative news being more attractive to the audience compared to positive news (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Altheide, 1997).

The main purpose of news article sharing seems to be attacking Hillary and other political opponents with sensational headlines, reinforcing lies or half-truths taken out of context

under the official looking façade of journalism, giving these claims an appearance of legitimacy. This is an immoral but effective strategy, since most humans want to reduce their cognitive investment when it comes to forming opinions and mindsets (Scheufele and Turney, 2006) and therefore may accept these poorly sourced news articles as real news.

Links to Donald Trump official website (DJT)

Links that lead directly to Donald Trump's official website have been coded as DJT links. In debates, DJT links are more varied. Out of 34 DJT links posted during debates, 67% are about criticising Hillary Clinton (CH). 18% about criticising an opponent (CO. 26% about sharing campaign information (CI). 5% about policy. 9% about fearmongering (FM) and 9% about call to action (C2A).

In non-debate frenzies, 100% of DJT links are about sharing campaign information. The formulaic pattern of this category of tweets suggest these are tweeted by the Trump campaign staff rather than Trump himself.

4.4 Comparing Frenzy Tweets with Random Sampling of Every 9th Tweet

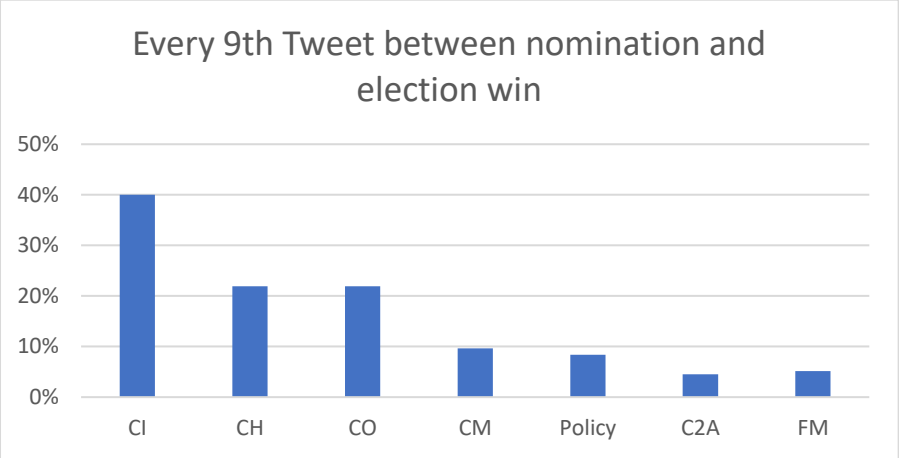


Table 4: Content distribution across every 9th tweet between Trump's nomination and election win

In both debate and non-debate frenzy tweets, criticising Hillary Clinton (CH) has taken priority over any other category, but a sampling of every 9th tweet between Trump's nomination and election win (Table 4) shows that the highest number of tweets are about sharing campaign information (CI), almost twice as much (CI) tweets have been shared in this sample compared to the frenzy content depicted in Table 2 and Table 3. Fearmongering is also at 5%, half the amount during frenzies. Criticising the media happens 10% of the time, about half the amount seen in non-debate frenzies but twice as much compared to debate-frenzies. The fact that Trump's Twitter is less critical of the media during debates

than usual strengthens the argument that he is hoping for favourable poll numbers, or that his staff aren't either allowed or do not wish to criticise the media as much as Trump.

As seen in Table 4, during non-frenzy or regular tweeting, the percentage of tweets criticising opponents is 22%, within the range of 21% and 25% of the time political opponents are criticised (CO) during non-debate and debate frenzies. Call to action (C2A) tweets happen 5% of the time, within the 4-6% range of the frenzies. Policy discussion is 8%, also within the frenzy range of 7-14%. Call to action and policy discussions are consistently low across all datasets, which contradicts previous findings about tweeting pattern of politicians (Parmelee and Bichard, 2011; Ostermeier, 2009).

The major difference between frenzy tweets and regular tweets is the difference in content distribution in FM and CH categories. Frenzy tweets in general are more critical of Hillary Clinton and have more fearmongering. Non-debate frenzy tweets have twice as much media criticism as opposed to regular tweets. The primary purpose of frenzy tweets seems to be attacking Hillary Clinton, and the primary purpose of regular tweets is to share campaign information. Frenzies are simply more aggressive, attacking and sensational, all traits that make for attractive news content (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Altheide, 1997, Kellner, 2010, 2016). As Donia (2010) suggests, being authentic and humorous on Twitter gets a political candidate more media coverage. Whether Trump's tweets are humorous or horrifying depends on who is reading them, but there is no question that the increased aggression during frenzies is true to Trump's persona. As described by Trump himself in his book *The Art of the Deal*:

> *Much as it pays to emphasize the positive, there are times when the only choice is confrontation. In most cases I'm very easy to get along with. I'm very good to people who are good to me. But when people treat me badly or unfairly or try to take advantage of me, my general attitude, all my life, has been to fight back very hard. The risk is that you'll make a bad situation worse, and I certainly don't recommend this approach to everyone. (Trump and Schwartz, 1987, p.38)*

Chapter Five: Master of the Spectacle?

A Google news search between 19th July to November 9th, 2016 shows 1.9 million results for the words “Trump tweets” and only 75,000 results for “Hillary tweets” within the same timeframe. A possible reason for this high coverage of Trump’s tweets could be that they bring in ratings and profit, and the current mainstream corporate media is profit-oriented (Kellner, 2016). As Kellner (2004, 2010, 2016) pointed out, mainstream media has shifted from investigative journalism to entertaining tabloidized news coverage. And Trump’s consistent use of dramatization, sensationalism, aggression and fearmongering is ideal for the current trend of infotainment and tabloidization of the press.

There is a distinct pattern to Trump’s frenzies, they all correspond to a media spectacle. Aside from the debates, each frenzy is a response to a specific media spectacle. The three frenzies to receive highest engagement on Twitter share certain common traits: high percentage of FM and CM.

5.1 Frenzy in response to the Khizr Khan’s Criticisms

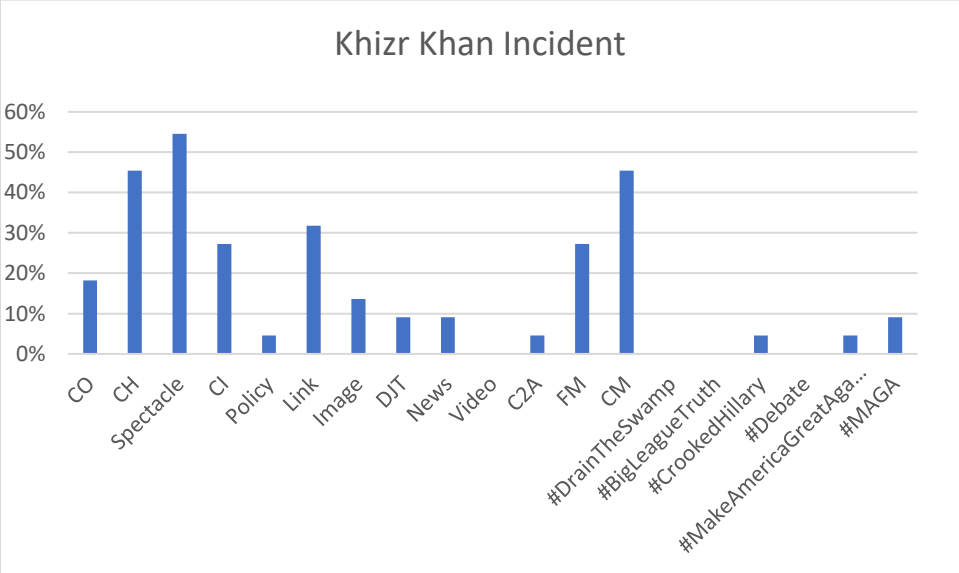


Table 5: Content distribution during the Khizr Khan Frenzy on 1st August, 2016

When Gazala and Khizr Khan, parents of fallen Muslim US soldier Captain Humayun Khan criticised Trump for his proposed ban on Muslims, Trump responded by criticizing their appearance at the Democratic National Convention and suggested that Captain Humayun’s mother may not have been allowed to speak. When he came under fire from both

Republicans and Democrats for his comment (Smith, 2016), instead of softening his tone or apologising, Trump took to Twitter to bash the media for being unfair to him, criticised Khizr Khan for “viciously attacking him” and shifted blame on to Hillary for “voting for the Iraq war”. Fearmongering was also a prominent part of this frenzy as seen on Figure 8. A few tweets from the Khizr Khan frenzy:

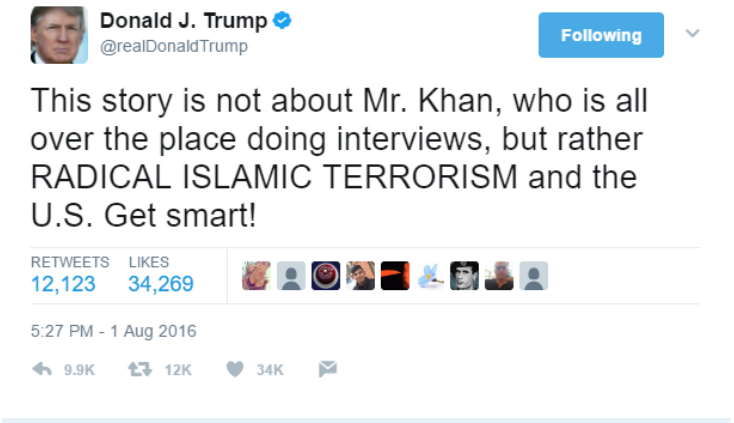


Figure 8: Trump criticises the media for focusing on the “wrong story”

Figure 9: Trump accuses the media of being biased against him

As seen in Table 5 Fearmongering (FM) and criticising the media (CM) are unusually high during this frenzy, at 27% and 45% respectively. Usually during non-debate frenzies FM happens 12% of the time and CM happens 19% of the time. And a random sampling of every 9th tweet between Trump’s nomination and election day shows 5% FM and 10% CM. During the Khizr Khan frenzy FM and CM is more than twice as high compared to frenzy standard and more than four times high compared to regular non-frenzy standards. Criticising Hillary and Criticising opponents is at 45% and 18% respectively, slightly less than the usual 54% CM and 25% CO of non-debate frenzies. The three main themes of this frenzy are CH, CM and FM. As Altheide (1997) suggests, fearmongering is celebrated by

news producers as it makes for ‘entertaining’ news content. The remarkably high ratio of FM in this frenzy could mean an attempt on Trump’s behalf to keep the onus of media attention on himself, and an effective form of providing the press with entertaining news content. Despite rebukes from fellow Republicans he keeps on attacking Khizr Khan with references to Radical Islamic terrorism, another aspect of Trump that makes for exciting news content, him being an unpredictable individual as opposed to adhering to party politics and representing the values of Republican party. The overall spectacle score for this frenzy is 55%, which means more than half the tweets made during the Khizr Khan frenzy received more than median likes and tweets. With his aggressive tweets against a Gold Star family, Trump garnered substantial media coverage on all major American networks, and added media coverage on reactions from Republicans and Democrats on the Khizr Khan issue (Williams, 2016) (Lowry, 2016).

Another two non-debate frenzies with above 50% spectacle score happen after Hillary Clinton’s DNC nomination acceptance speech; and when multiple women come forward with sexual harassment claims against Trump.

5.2 Frenzy after Hillary’s DNC nomination acceptance speech

As suggested by Kellner (2016), the Trump campaign ‘imploded’ after the Democratic National Convention. As a response to Hilary’s acceptance speech, Trump produced another Twitter frenzy.

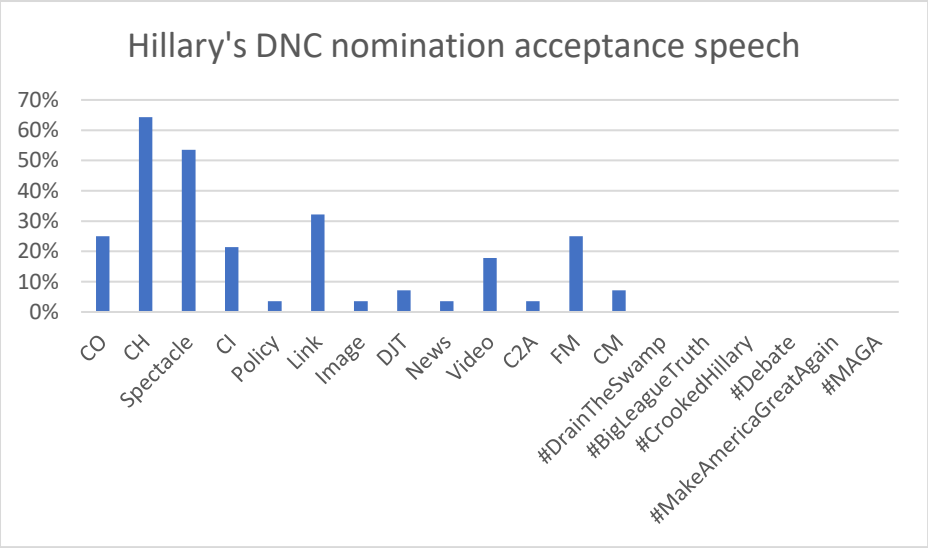


Table 6: Content distribution of the frenzy on 29th July in response to Hillary’s DNC nomination acceptance speech

As seen in Table 6, this frenzy has over 60% spectacle score, as in more than 60% of the tweets made in this frenzy have above median engagement in terms of either likes or retweets. Fearmongering is also twice as high compared to average non-debate frenzy percentage of 12% and four times higher than 5% of regular tweets picked via random sampling of every 9th tweet. Criticising Hillary (CH) is also above 60%. 75% of the fearmongering tweets are also about Criticising Hillary. A few examples of this frenzy:

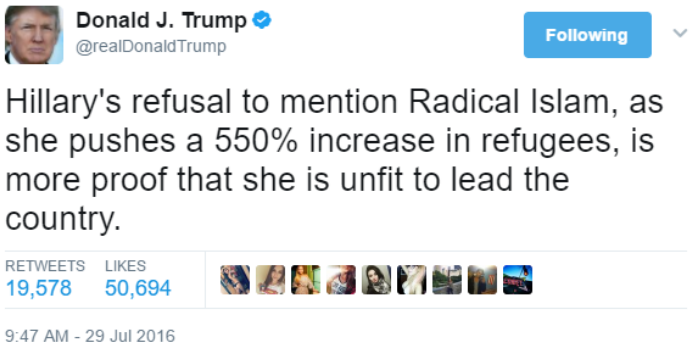


Figure 10: Trump combines CH and FM and generates high engagement

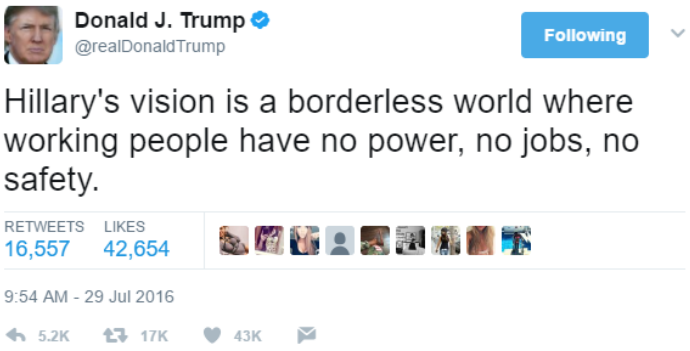


Figure 11: Dramatic exaggeration is the preferred rhetoric for FM and CH

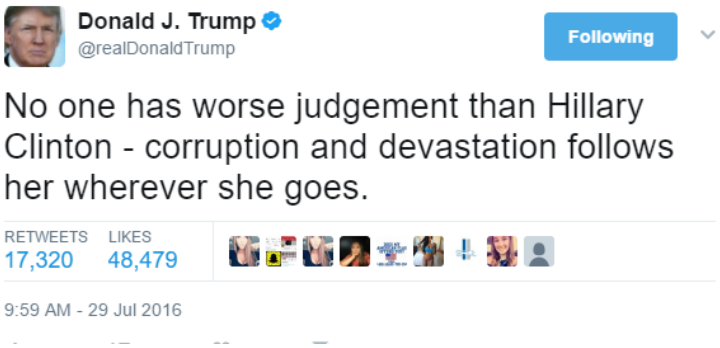


Figure 12: Hyperboles get high engagement

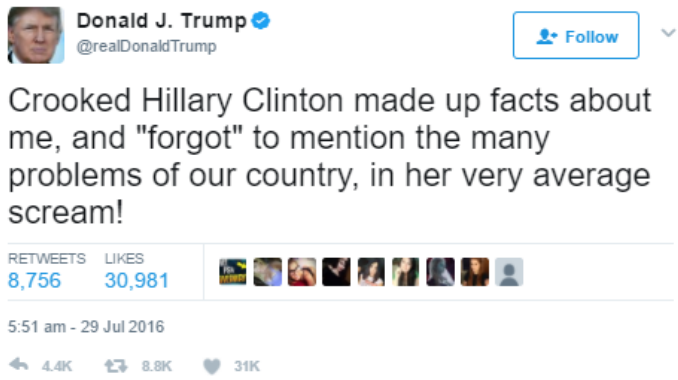


Figure 13: Trump's colourful description of Hillary's nomination acceptance speech yielded 45,000 exact match (verbatim) results on Google Search

5.3 Frenzy in response to charges of sexual harassment

The highest spectacle score of 76% comes from the two-day long frenzy on 16th and 17th October 2016 when several women publicly accused Trump of sexual assault shortly after the release of the Access Hollywood Tape.

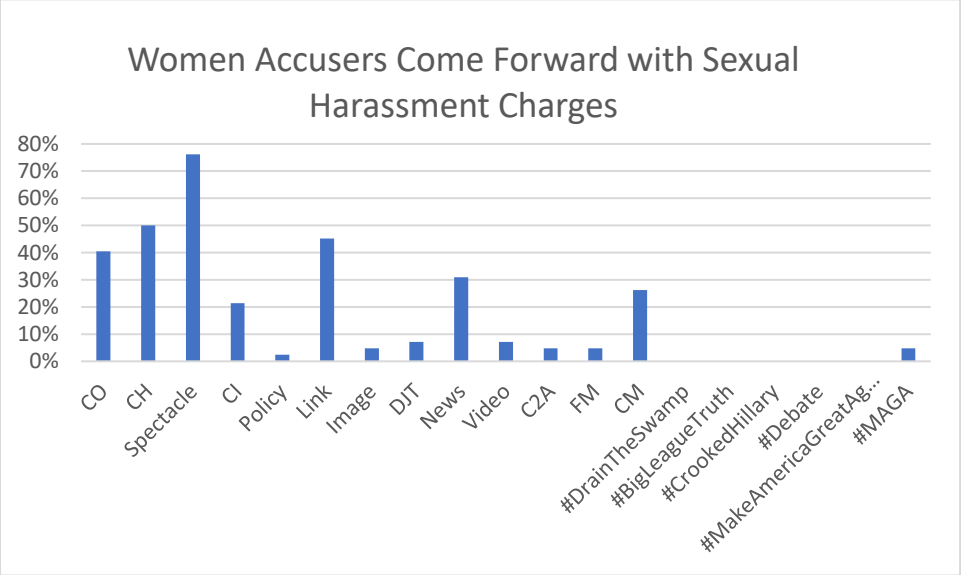


Table 7: Content distribution across two-day long frenzy on 16th and 17th October 2016

In Table 7 fearmongering is below 10%, which is low considering this was part of a frenzy. This is due to a coding error, as threats of media rigging election was not coded as fearmongering (FM) but as (CM). However, it can be argued that suggesting the US elections can be rigged is a form of fearmongering. If references to rigged elections were coded as FM then total percentage of FM would have been 24%, a norm for frenzies with high spectacle score. During this frenzy, there was little talk of terrorism or ISIS, or rising crime and illegal immigrants, topics that are normally coded as FM. However, there was

substantial amount of media criticism, and a Trump repeatedly suggested that the election was being rigged by the media. At least 50% of the tweets criticising the media during this frenzy directly accused the media of rigging the election in favour of Hillary. The highest engagement during this frenzy was received by the video seen in Figure 5, a step by step animated guide that tells the viewer how to get rich quick using Hillary Clinton's tactics. Other sensational tweets include accusations of Joe Biden groping and kissing women, accompanied by a video link that shows nothing of that sort, merely a collage of videos that show Joe Biden hugging and shaking hands with women at various formal functions. Another sensational claim was made accusing the FBI and Department of Justice colluding with the media to rig the election and protect Hillary at all costs. The claims made in these tweets fail to cite any reliable source, but get high engagement regardless. Supporting Guy Debord's (1977) assertion that the appearance, sensationalism, representation and packaging is more important than authenticity when it comes to spectacles.

Figure 14: Trump accused 'the system' and the media of being rigged against him

Figure 15: Packaging complete false claims as authentic, from an obscure website: 710wor.iheart.com

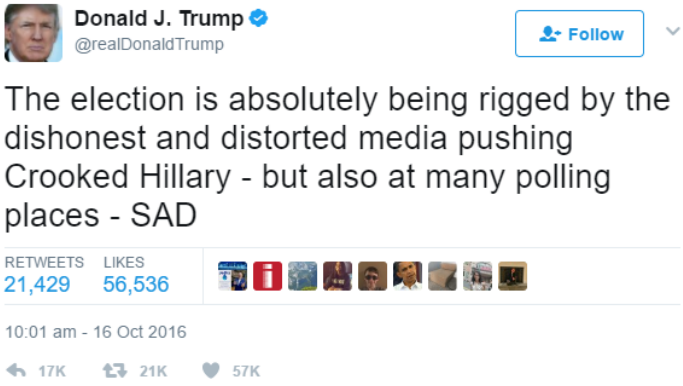


Figure 16: The tweets mentioning a 'rigged election' consistently get high engagement

The rigged election accusations received significant media coverage, and Hillary Clinton's running mate Tim Kaine accused Trump of using scare tactics to undermine the validity of US Elections and "swinging at every phantom of his own imagination because he knows he's losing" (BBC News, 2016).

When cornered by multiple women accusers coming forward with charges of sexual misconduct against him, Trump pushed the "rigged election" narrative. A verbatim search on Google for the words "Trump rigged election" returns 482,000 results. Which is an indication of how substantial the media coverage for this rigged election claim was. When attacked by Khizr Khan, Trump attacked him right back, again gaining himself substantial media coverage. During the Khizr Khan frenzy the dangers of ISIS and radical Islamic terrorism

dominated his Twitter feed, accompanied by a reminder that it was Hillary who voted for the Iraq war and of course complaining against media bias. After Hillary's DNC nomination acceptance speech Trump used the words "very average scream" and referring to her as "Crooked Hillary" 30% of the time she was mentioned. This unusual rhetoric once again gained him substantial media coverage, and his tweet which described Hillary's speech as average scream was quoted verbatim in 45,000 links (found on Google verbatim search). A consistent pattern of fearmongering can be observed in all these frenzy incidents, either fears of rigged election or ISIS. Another pattern is exhaustive counter-attacks against, either media (CM), or Hillary Clinton (CH) or (CO). These counterattacks escalate conflict without exception. These conflicts are processed by media as spectacles as a way of coping with harsh competition in the digital age (Kellner, 2010). The high percentage of scare tactics used in all three events, threats of ISIS and terrorism during Khizr Khan and Hillary's nomination acceptance speech, and threats of media and establishment rigging election in "Women accuser's coming forward" frenzy (coded as CM) with the highest engagement on Twitter is no coincidence, as previous studies show production of fear is widely covered by the news media (Altheide, 1997) because this practice gets more audience (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Baumeister et al, 2001; Hilbig, 2009). As Kellner (2004, 2015) and Giroux (2016) have suggested, terror, fear and scare tactics are key ingredients for political spectacle. Trump's tweets are a convergence of information and entertainment, making them easily palatable for the 'infotainment society' (Kellner, 2015), his claims of rigged election, hyperbolic and often sensational criticism of Hillary Clinton and anyone who opposes him, coupled with consistent fearmongering and describing himself being victimised by the media follow the logic of spectacles. His tweets are often embedded directly in the media news reports, constantly feeding a media machine that thrives on tabloidization of news (Kellner, 2010). Also, across all three high engagement frenzy events, policy sharing is minimal. Policy is at 8% in random sampling of every 9th tweet between Trump's nomination and election win, 5% in Trump's top 100 liked tweets, 7% at non-debate frenzies. Only time policy is above 10% is during debates, and that is when Trump is not tweeting by himself at all, also during debate a politician is forced to discuss policies. This low percentage shares of policy when Trump is tweeting are consistent with Crouch (2004) and Zolo's (1992) suggestion that in the post-democratic order spectacular takes precedence over policy. Call to action is lower than 10% across all datasets, 4% in debate frenzies, 6% in non-debate frenzies, 9% in 100 top liked tweets, and 5% in random sampling of every tenth tweet between nomination and election. The low percentages of policy and call for action and campaign information as opposed to high percentages of criticising Hillary, criticising opponents and criticising the media suggest that Trump's tweets are tools of conflict and aggression rather than tools of policy making and agenda setting. Policy and call

for action are not as dramatic, nor as spectacular. The nature of Trump's tweets, especially his frenzy tweets, and the high amount of negative content, combined with the fact that the tweets are discussed in the media in a tabloidized fashion, strongly suggest that Trump's tweets and his Twitter frenzies (sometimes described by the media as Twitter storm) are spectacles.

5.4 Correlation between Increased Twitter Engagement and News Interest

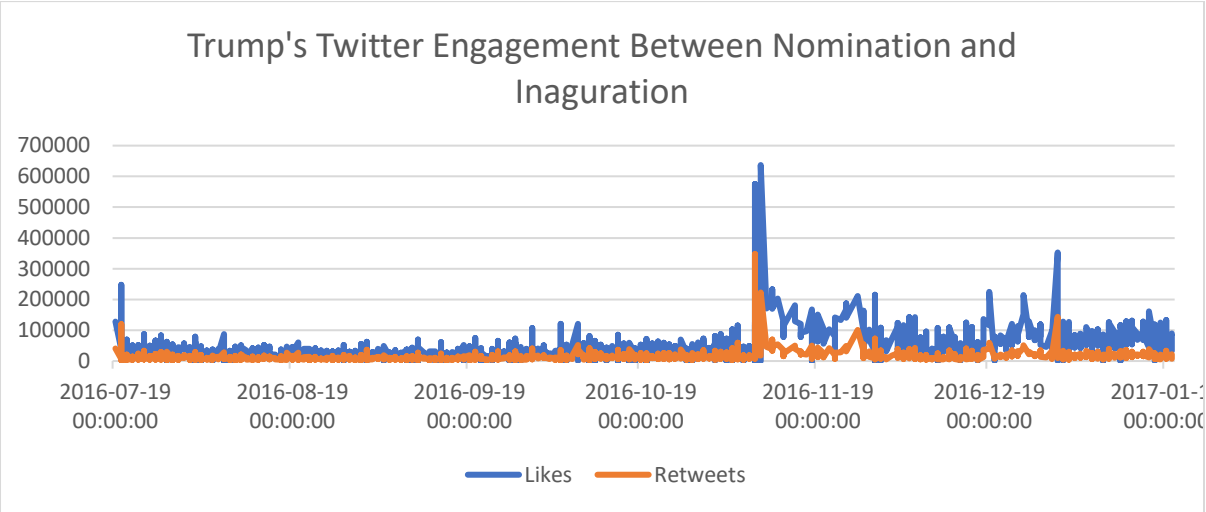


Table 8: Twitter engagement between 19th July 2016 and 20th January 2017

Table 9: News interest in Trump between 19th July 2016 and 20th January 2017 according to Google Trends

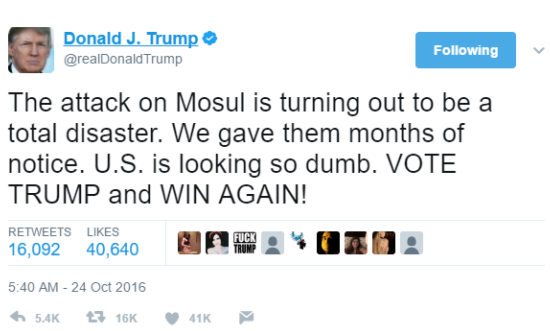
A comparison of Trump's Twitter engagement (Table 8) and News interest in Trump (Table 9) shows that during Trump's nomination as a Republican candidate, presidential debates, election win and inauguration, both news interest in Trump and engagement in Trump's Twitter goes up. However, this correlation doesn't necessarily mean causality, but it does confirm that when news interest in Trump goes up (because of events outside of Twitter), engagement in Trump's Twitter also goes up.

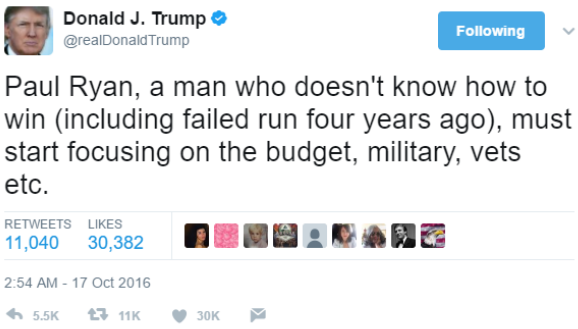
Chapter Six: The Possible Effects of Branding and Parasocial Intimacy

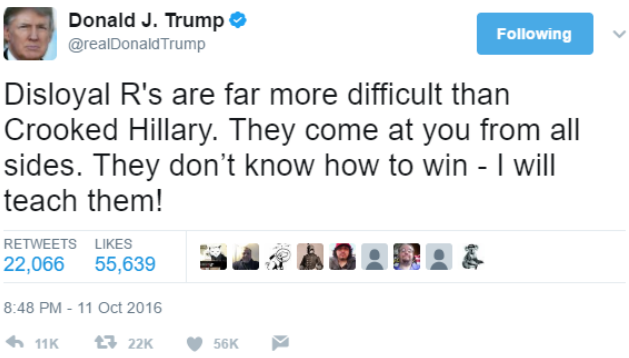
This chapter discusses the possible ways Trump could be capitalizing on the effects of parasocial intimacy and branding.

6.1 Is Trump Mirroring his reality TV persona in the US Elections 2016?

In *The Apprentice*, Trump takes pride in being the master who is looking for his Apprentice, hiring the best people and being 'extremely successful'. Winning is the most important trait in a contestant, despite the means used to achieve an end (Kinnick and Parton 2005). Trump's reality TV persona clearly distinguishes people into two categories, strong successful winners and weak ineffective losers (Fuchs, 2017). Between his nomination as a Republican candidate and election win, Trump tweeted about winning 40 times. The number is not significant in terms of percentages, as the total number of tweets between that period is 1405, but the contents of the tweet reflect the importance he places on winning. And 85% of the time tweets with the word "win" or "winning" will have higher than average retweet count. A few examples:







The occurrence percentage of the word “win” between Trump’s nomination and election win is 0.14%. Which doesn’t seem like a significant number, but after filtering out common generic words (example: there, here, does, have, has, etc.), prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns; the word “win” is the 26th most used word by Trump. The most mentioned person in Trump’s tweets within the selected timeline is Hillary with an occurrence frequency of 0.82% and the second most mentioned person is Trump himself, with his Twitter handle @realdonaldtrump appearing 0.37% and the name “Trump” appearing 0.33% of the time. Which is consistent with the hyperindividualistic values of the Trump brand (Fuchs, 2017), and Trump’s practice of putting his name on every product line and real estate he owns.

According to Fuchs (2017,p.61) Trump’s campaign persona mirrored his reality TV persona: a strong, tough, alpha male who will run the country as he runs his businesses. In the boardroom scenes of *The Apprentice*, the most commonly used words to describe a contestant who is about to be fired are:

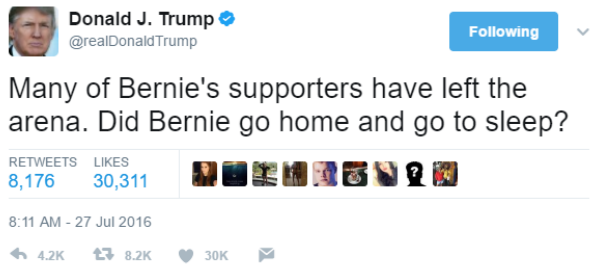
“stupid”, “mess”, “terrible”, “mistakes”, “not good”, “lousy”, “bad”, “flawed”, “losing”, “failing”,

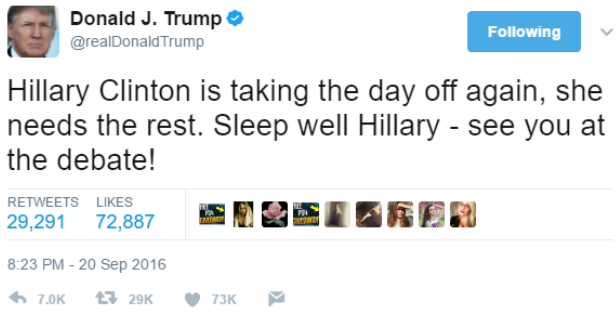
“ineffective”, “loser”, “horrible”, “weakness”, “not strong enough”, “too much emotion”,

“unsuccessful”, “disruptive”.

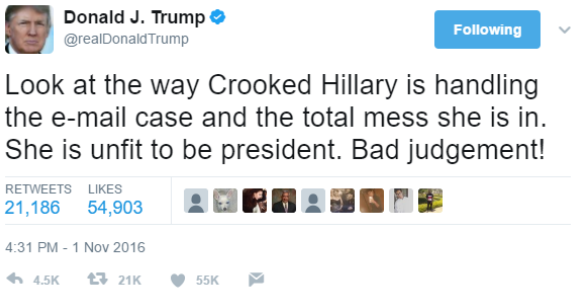
Trump uses Twitter to rebuke his political opponents for being weak, lazy or ineffective using the same rhetoric as in *The Apprentice*. Trump tweets repeatedly between his nomination and election win, about his political opponents being weak, using the words weak or weakness. 5 out of 12 of these tweets are coded as spectacles, possessing above median likes and retweets.

There are also direct accusations of lacking stamina and “sleeping”.

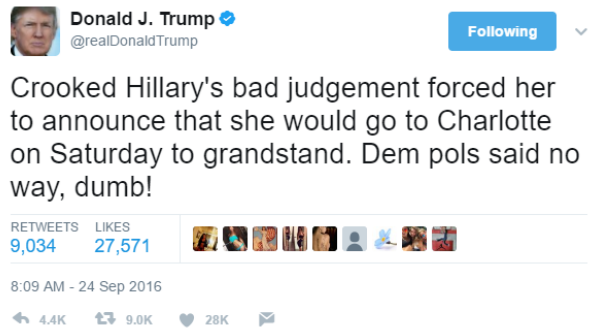




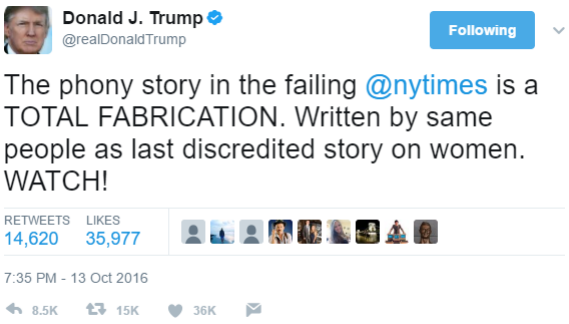
The word “mess” has also been used 8 times within Trump’s nomination and election win, to criticise political opponents, mainly Obama and Hillary. 5 out of those 8 times have been coded as spectacles.



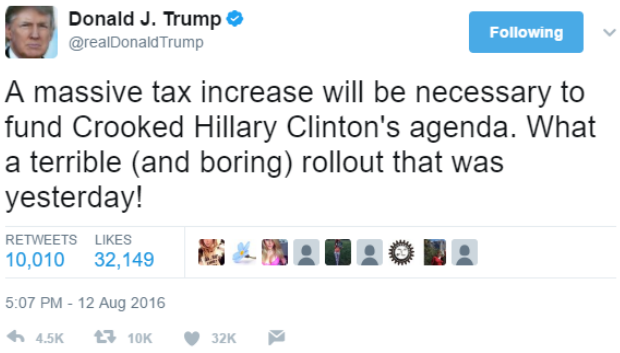
The word “bad” has been used 44 times, and exactly half the times he uses the term to criticise Hillary. 56% of the of tweets using “bad” have above median engagement. 68% of the tweets containing the word “bad” and simultaneously criticising Hillary have above median likes and engagement.



The word “failing” is used 18 times and is reserved almost exclusively for describing The New York Times as “failing @NYTimes”. 61% of those tweets have above median engagement.

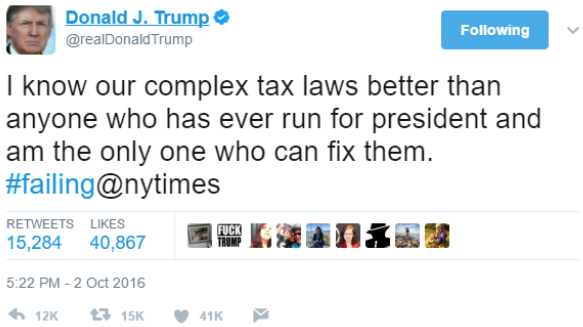


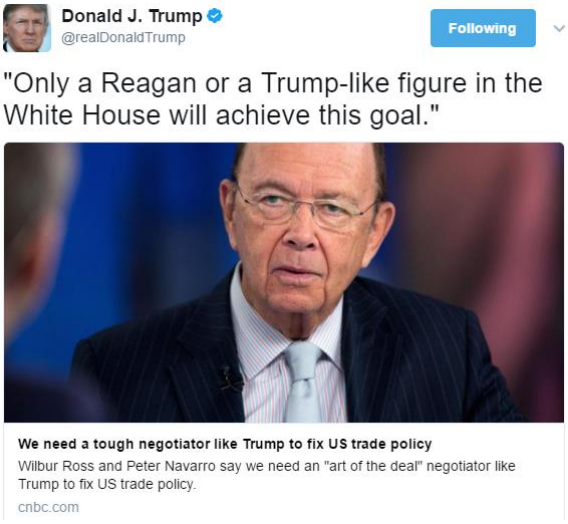
The word “terrible” has been used 9 times, almost always to criticise Hillary and a few instances Obama. All 9 of them have above median engagement.



Although not mentioned by Fuchs (2017), the word “disaster” is also used frequently. It occurs 19 times and mostly to criticise Obamacare and Hillary. 57% of those tweets have above median engagement.

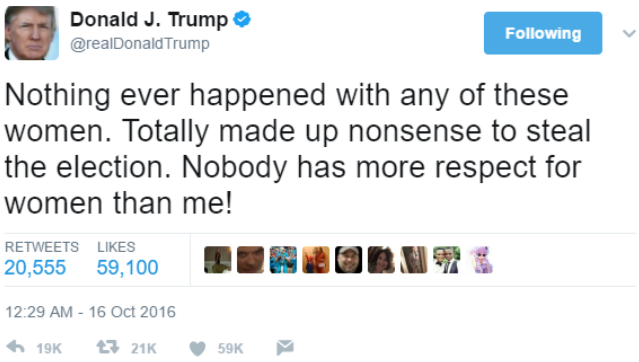
According to Fuchs (2017), Trump’s persona in *The Apprentice* is that of an autocratic leader. Trump describes himself as “*The Master*” in the opening credits of the show and he is the ultimate judge and topmost authority of everything within the show. This aspect is well reflected in several tweets made during the campaign. A few examples include:





And more than a dozen instances of using hyperbole, which is consistent with his Apprentice persona, and described in his book “The Art of The Deal” as his favourite mode of promotion.

> The final key to the way I promote is bravado. I play to people’s fantasies. People may not always think big themselves, but they can still get very excited by those who do. That’s why a little hyperbole never hurts. People want to believe that something is the biggest and the greatest and the most spectacular. I call it truthful hyperbole. It’s an innocent form of exaggeration—and a very effective form of promotion. (Trump and Schwartz, 1987, p.37)



But the use of hyperbole can also be seen to criticise political opponents. The word “the worst” was used 9 times to criticise political opponents and the media. 8 of them have above median engagement.

The ideology of hard labour is consistently promoted in *The Apprentice*, where winners are described as tough, hard-working individuals. The same ideology is reflected in Trump's tweets where he describes his supporters as "hard-working Americans". And repeatedly tries to associate himself with the ideology of hard labour.

Figure 17: A tweet that was posted 15 times between 21st July 2016 and 12th August 2016 as a paid Twitter ad

The tweet seen in Figure 17 was posted 15 times, as a Twitter ad, alternately asking for email addresses from followers or donations. The similarity in wording and rhetoric used by Trump's reality TV persona and his tweets made during the campaign suggest that Trump is not deviating from his persona depicted in *The Apprentice.* The fact that Trump gets

consistently high engagement by reflecting his reality TV persona could be an effect of parasocial intimacy.

6.2 Is there evidence of Parasocial Intimacy in Trump's Twitter Feed?

Trump has come under fire for retweeting average ordinary citizens and teenagers (Wagstaff, 2016). But this tactic reinforces the parasocial bonds with his followers. During the vice-presidential debates, Trump live tweeted his opinions on how the debate was progressing. At least 20% of the tweets made during the VP debate was crowdsourced, as in Trump retweeted non-famous, non-celebrity citizens. One of the retweets is particularly relevant to parasocial intimacy and reality TV. In the following tweet, a Republican member of Arkansas State Senate made a direct reference to the kind of president she wants, the "you're fired" president from *The Apprentice*. "You're fired" became a catchphrase after Trump's repeated usage of the words in the boardroom scenes of *The Apprentice* to terminate contestants.

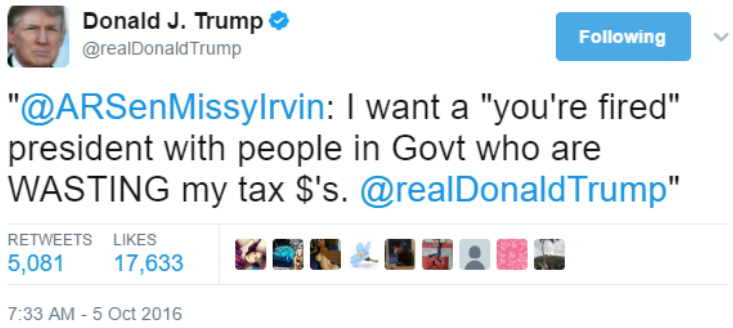


Figure 18: A member of the Arkansas State Senate demanded a "You're Fired" president

Another interesting retweet by Trump was made by a citizen with around 128 followers on Twitter.

Figure 19: A common trait of parasocial intimacy is to share common emotional goals with the celebrity

The following tweet is from a supporter who has only 33 followers on Twitter. But that didn't stop Trump from retweeting him.

Figure 20: Twitter enhances the feeling of social presence of the celebrity in the lives of the audience

Another example where a follower refers to Trump directly in a friendly conversational tone.

Figure 21: Parasocial intimacy makes the audience perceive the celebrity as a close personal friend

6.3 Fake News gets High Engagement

At least 50% of top ten most liked news articles tweeted by Trump are unverifiable fake news. This could be because brands eliminate the need for detailed research (Needham, 2006), or as a result of parasocial intimacy the audience believe Trump's claims are authentic. However, this could also be because people prefer news that confirm their prior beliefs and news that is emotive is more interesting to the audience over news supported by sophisticated data (Downs, 1957; Hart et al, 2009).

6.4 The Anti-Establishment Lone Wolf Fighting for the People

In cases of parasocial intimacy, the audience enjoys the notion of sharing common emotional goals of someone famous and want the object of their parasocial intimacy to succeed (Stern, Russel and Russel, 2007; Rojek, 2015). Evidence of sharing common emotional goals can be found in the high amount of likes in the following tweets, through which Trump constructs a highly emotional narrative of being a lone wolf running against Hillary, the 'biased' media, the 'establishment', and even Republicans.

Trump mentions the Republican party 22 times between his nomination and election win and out of those 22 times he criticises his own party half the time for not giving him enough support. The fact that all of the tweets (except one) criticising Republican party have higher than median likes, and assuming likes are a show of support; this supports Needham and Smith's (2015) suggestion that in current politics individual brands have eclipsed party brands. With his direct criticism of the Republican party and Republican politicians, Trump has averted the risk of diluting his brand by conforming to party politics, which according to Hart and Tindall (2009) is one of the key challenges faced by celebrity politicians. A key

benefit of being a celebrity politician is the ability to be able to claim the status of a political outsider who is not part of a corrupt system (Marsh, Hart and Tindall, 2010). Trump has confirmed this by repeatedly claiming to be anti-establishment on Twitter and asserting that he will fight for the American people. The tweet shown in Figure 22 appeared as a paid ad half a dozen times in one day. As suggested by Gallup polls (Newport and Saad, 2016) and Monmouth University Polling Institute (2015), Trump's 'outsider anti-establishment' status is the trait most favourably seen by his supporters. Trump seems to be using this anti-establishment image to ask for donations on Twitter through paid Twitter ads, capitalizing on the effects of parasocial intimacy.

Figure 22: This tweet was posted half a dozen times as a Twitter ad on 5th August, 2016

Figure 23: Over 100k likes on Trump's statement released in response to Access Hollywood Tapes

Hart and Tindall (2009) also suggest a celebrity politician's past persona might be used against him or her and result in loss of credibility. An apt example is the *Access Hollywood*

tape recorded in 2005, showing Trump bragging about groping women without their consent (Fahrenthold, 2016). However, the statement released in response to this tape on 8th Twitter, as seen in Figure 23, shows overwhelming support from Trump's Twitter followers, 118K likes, more than four times the median number of likes. Which gives us an indication of the strength of parasocial bond between Trump and his Twitter followers.

Conclusion: Exploiting Celebritization of Politics, Tabloidized Journalism, Infotainment Media by Prolonging Spectacles through Conflict Escalation on Twitter

On March 31st, the hashtag #Covfefe became a trending topic on Twitter across the world. The reason? Trump made the tweet seen in Figure 24. While some expressed concern that the president may have fallen asleep mid-tweet, writing covfefe instead of coverage, others jokingly speculated it might be a cryptic code. US Senator Al Franken joked in a CNN interview the next morning, calling #covfefe a Yiddish term for "I am going to bed now" (Heavey and Alexander, 2017). The gaffe dominated the media next day, got mentioned by Hillary Clinton, Jimmy Kimmel, Bill Maher, Trevor Noah, amongst numerous late-night TV show hosts and sparked thousands of memes. BBC accused this tweet of "melting the internet" (BBC News, 2017). Hillary Clinton jokingly told a crowd in California that the tweet was "a secret message to the Russians", and when the White House press secretary Sean Spicer was later asked to clarify the meaning of the tweet, he simply responded "The president and a small group of people know exactly what he meant." Even the official Twitter account of Meriam Webster dictionary was forced to respond, at the request of Twitterverse to clarify the meaning of #Covfefe (Flegenheimer, 2017). This incident is an apt example of Tim Highfield's (2016) assertion that social media has the capability to turn the trivial into sensational.

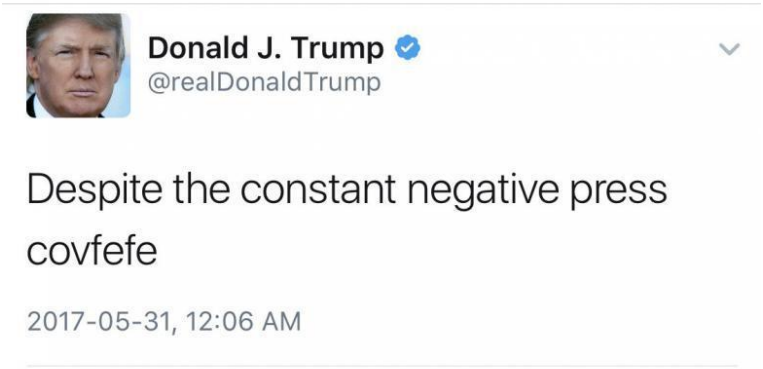


Figure 24: Trump's cryptic tweet about negative press "covfefe"

The purpose of this research was to find out if Trump's Twitter behaviour can explain his dominance in the media, whether Trump's tweets can be conceptualised as spectacles, and if they reflect his reality TV persona.

Are Trump's Tweets Spectacles?

The core element of a spectacle is to be a convergence point of social attention (Debord, 1977) and other traits include being conflictual, dramatic, hyperbolic, tautological, vulgar, glitzy (Debord, 1977; Kellner, 2004, 2010), and especially in the case of political spectacles, fearmongering about terrorism and violence (Kellner, 2015; Giroux, 2016). Trump's tweets fulfil all those requirements, and the spectacle traits occur more frequently during frenzies, as it has been observed from the increased percentages of conflictual content and fearmongering during the frenzies. Frenzies which have high percentage of fearmongering in the tweets also receive high engagement, which is consistent with previous research of political spectacles (Giroux, 2016). This study contradicts previous research about policy being a dominant theme of political tweets. A Google news search between 19th July to November 9th 2016 shows 1.9 million results for the words "Trump tweets" and only 75,000 results for "Hillary tweets" within the same timeframe. The fact that media reports about Trump's tweets twenty times higher than Hillary's tweets, and combined with the fact that Trump's tweets contain all the characteristics that define spectacle, strongly suggest that his tweets are spectacles.

Is the Trump Brand and Trump's Reality TV persona Reflected in Trump's Tweets?

Trump gets more engagement on his tweets when he tweets himself during the non-debate frenzies as opposed to when his campaign staff tweets for him during the debate frenzies. Implying that Twitter users either instinctively recognize the true Trump voice, or simply engage more with tweets posted personally by Trump because they are more negative and dramatic. By not changing his rhetoric to a more formal tone, and using the same wording and language he uses in *The Apprentice*, Trump maintains his Reality TV persona and the core values of his brand.

There is evidence of Trump's Reality TV persona and core values of the Trump brand being reflected in Trump's Tweets. In the reality TV world of *The Apprentice* the world is divided in winners and losers (Fuchs, 2017). Winners are smart, intelligent, successful and hardworking, losers are soft, weak, lazy and failures. Trump repeatedly emphasizes the importance of winning in his tweets, refers to his supporters as "hard working Americans" and asks for campaign donations with a paid Twitter ad that says "I will work hard and never let you down". Trump labels his political opponents as soft, weak, lazy, lacking in stamina and success. The tweets where Trump uses same wording and phrases from *The Apprentice* have higher likelihood of gaining above median engagement on Twitter. 85% of the tweets that talk about winning have higher than median Twitter engagement. This could be a possible indicator of parasocial intimacy at work.

An interesting finding in this study contradicts Suh et al.'s (2010) suggestion that URL and hashtags increase a tweet's "retweetability". 77% of Trump's 100 most retweeted tweets and 80% of Trump's most liked tweets don't have any URLs or hashtags. The same trend can be seen in the comparison of debate and non-debate frenzies, where debate frenzy tweets overall have more hashtags and URLs compared to non-debate frenzy tweets but less engagement. Which could suggest "what is being said" and "who is saying it" contribute more to engagement than hashtags and URLs. This is a possible indication of the strength of the Trump brand, and effects of leveraging the benefits of parasocial intimacy by mirroring his reality TV persona. As people see well-known brands as a part of their social lives (Aaker, 1997; Arvidsson, 2006a, 2006b), by echoing his brand values on Twitter Trump makes himself more relevant to the audience, and thus more newsworthy.

Trump used Twitter to create a Reality TV atmosphere surrounding his pick of a running mate. He tweeted about several possible picks, testing them out in the court of public opinion, maximizing the drama and attention around possible vice-presidential picks (Parker and Haberman, 2016).

Can Twitter Explain Trump's Dominance in the Media in the US Elections 2016?

The corporate media process news as sensational tabloidized stories, constructing spectacles to maximize audience size and attention until the next spectacle emerges. With his conflictual tweets, dramatic statements, consistent attack on political opponents using hyperboles and exaggerations, Trump feeds the media's appetite for spectacles through his tweets.

Trump's Twitter frenzies are an efficient way of escalating conflict, and as the data suggests Trump becomes much more aggressive during the frenzies, and substantially increases his attacks on Hillary Clinton, his political opponents, the media; and increases the amount of fearmongering. All of Trump's Twitter frenzies correspond to important media events such as presidential debates, DNC convention, Hillary Clinton's nomination acceptance speech, Hillary accusing Trump of racism and birtherism, Khizr Khan incident, and multiple women coming forward with charges of sexual assault. All of those events can be categorized as spectacles according to Kellner's (2010) description of what constitutes a media spectacle. With his frenzies, Trump creates narratives of Trump vs Hillary, Trump vs biased Media, Trump vs political opponent; combined with consistent fearmongering of terrorism and xenophobia. Criticising the media is an effective way of staying relevant and gaining public favour (Theaker, 2001; Goldstein, 2007; Crawford, 2006) and also gains Trump high engagement on Twitter. Fearmongering and escalation of conflict with political opponents also make for engaging news content, in the infotainment tabloidized news culture (Kellner,

2003, 2016; Giroux, 2016). By responding to these spectacles with higher than usual amount of aggression and negativity in his tweets, Trump provides the media with the type of content attract audience (Robinson-Riegler & Winton, 1996; Altheide, 1997; Baumeister et al, 2001; Hilbig, 2009). One of the most important objectives of corporate media is to maximize profit and ratings (Kellner, 2010, 2016). Due to filter-bubbles causing increased polarization in opinion formation, the hyperbolic negative rhetoric and high percentage of conflictual content present in Trump's tweets make for news that boosts ratings, making reporting about Trump's tweets a profitable practice for the corporate media. Thus, gaining Trump more news coverage.

Celebrity politicians commonly get more media attention for being unpredictable and exciting (Marsh, Hart and Tindall, 2010). If Twitter didn't exist, Trump would still probably get more coverage in the media compared to Hillary and other traditional politicians simply because he is a celebrity, because his speech and statements are more dramatic and because people wish to know what Trump has to say as a result of parasocial intimacy and the effects of branding. But Twitter and affordances provided by networked publics significantly enhance Trump's ability to gain more coverage as a celebrity. Since half the retweets happen within an hour and 75% of the retweets happen within the first day (Kwak et al, 2010), Trump's message spreads fast. Twitter amplifies Trump's ability to get more press through a shock and awe factor, and gives him the means to be unpredictable and exciting from a mobile platform, efficiently disseminating his message to millions of followers, which include all major news outlets as well as ordinary citizens, within seconds. Twitter provides the means to cut through various publics (Larsson and Moe, 2012; Ausserhofer and Maireder, 2013) and allows Trump to take centre stage in a political debate. Previous research confirms tweets from a celebrity is perceived as a personal message, and creates a social presence in the life of the follower (Black, 2010; Thompson, 2008; Park 2013). Since frenzies are defined as 100% increase in tweeting frequency in 24 hours, and the fact that they correspond with media spectacles; mean that Trump increases his social presence in the lives of his followers during times when he is facing increased criticism from the media. With frenzies, Trump provides a counter-narrative to media's narrative which is shocking and spectacular. Giving the media additional content to process as spectacles, and dominating the news cycles.

Implications

This research shows that half of Trump's most liked and retweeted news articles posted on Twitter are fake. Policy is one of the least frequently discussed topics in Trump's tweets which contradicts previous literature about policy being the most discussed topic on Twitter

by politicians (Parmelee and Bichard, 2011; Ostermeier, 2009). Since people's faith in the mainstream media is deteriorating, and news itself is increasingly shifting from investigative journalism to infotainment, and with Twitter providing the means to bypass gatekeeping of traditional media, any celebrity with a large enough Twitter following, with little knowledge of policy and politics, could become the next president of the USA or at least gain substantial media coverage to be considered a serious candidate, as long as they use Trump's tactics of aggressively attacking political opponents using sensational claims, portray the mainstream media as a tool used by 'the establishment' to oppress 'the people', engage in consistent fearmongering and feed the media with a continuous supply of spectacles. Rapper Kanye West, who is married to reality TV star Kim Kardashian, has already expressed serious intent to run for the US presidency in the year 2020 (Oppenheim, 2016)**.**

Limitations and Further Research

The primary source of data for this research are the tweets made between Trump's nomination and election win. This research reveals Trump tweets more often during media spectacles, and during those frenzies the tone of his tweets become more aggressive, negative, dramatic and sensational. Then makes the logical deduction based on previous research by Kellner and other scholars that sensationalism, exaggeration and drama make for content that media can processes as spectacles, or prolong existing spectacles by reporting on Trump's counter-narratives to the existing media narrative. Thus, gaining Trump additional media coverage. However, there is no data driven link between frenzies and news coverage to prove this point.

The case presented in favour of parasocial intimacy in this study is incomplete, as it makes assumptions based on existing literature and user engagement on Twitter. To gain a better understanding of parasocial intimacy, audience response to Trump's tweets need to be analysed and recorded. Interviews of Trump supporters could prove valuable in analysing the nature of parasocial intimacy that exists between Trump and his supporters.

This study is confined to Twitter. Events outside of Twitter also have a significant impact on Trump's success in getting media attention. To gain a better understanding of Trump's dominance in the media, Trump's offline activities would also need to be considered, like his speeches during the rallies, arguments during the debates, and TV interviews.

Further research can be done by looking at data about which tweets were embedded most amount of times or mentioned most amount of times in news reports, then analysing those

tweets for common characteristics. Also comparing Twitter data from other celebrity politicians could yield interesting results and help identify what kind of tweets gain the most amount of news coverage.

References

Aaker, J.L. (1997) Dimensions of brand personality. Journal of Marketing Research, 34(3). pp.347 – 356.

Allison, B., Rojanasakul, M., Harris, B. and Sam, C. (2016). Tracking the 2016 Presidential Money Race. [online] Bloomberg Politics. Available at: https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2016-presidential-campaign-fundraising/ [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Allor, M., (1988). Relocating the Site of the Audience. Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 5(3). pp.217-33.

Altheide, D.L., (1997). The news media, the problem frame, and the production of fear. The sociological quarterly, 38(4), pp.647-668.

Ambroise, L., Pantin-Sohier, G., Valette-Florence, P. and Albert, N., (2014). From endorsement to celebrity co-branding: Personality transfer. Journal of Brand Management, 21(4). pp.273-285

Ang, I. (1990). Culture & communication. European Journal of Communication, 5(2-3). pp.239-261

Arvidsson, A. (2006a). Brands: meaning and value in media culture. New York : Routledge.

Arvidsson, A. (2006b). Brand value. Journal of Brand Management, 13. Pp.188–192

Barbaro, M. (2016). Donald Trump Clung to 'Birther' Lie for Years, and Still Isn't Apologetic. [online] The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/17/us/politics/donald-trump-obama-birther.html?_r=0 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Bastos, M.T., Raimundo, R.L.G. and Travitzki, R., (2013). Gatekeeping Twitter: message diffusion in political hashtags. Media, Culture & Society, 35(2), pp.260-270.

Baumeister, R.F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C. and Vohs, K.D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. Review of general psychology, 5(4), p.323.

BBC News. (2016). US election 2016: Trump says election 'rigged at polling places' - BBC News. [online] Available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37673797 [Accessed 8 Jun. 2017].

BBC News. (2017). 'Covfefe': Trump invents new word and melts internet - BBC News. [online] Available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40104063 [Accessed 3 Jun. 2017].

Black, S. (2010). The Charisma of Twitter. Graziandio Business Review, 12(4).

Blake, A. (2016). Donald Trump is waging war on political correctness. And he's losing. The Washington Post. [online] Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/07/06/donald-trumps-failing-war-on-political-correctness/?utm_term=.5fdbb551d7c1 [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Blankfeld, K. (2011). Donald Trump On His Brand Value: Forbes' Numbers Are Ridiculous. Forbes. [online] Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/kerenblankfeld/2011/04/28/donald-trump-on-

his-brand-value-forbes-numbers-are-ridiculous/3/#7b624d1b297f [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Blair, G. (2001). The Trumps: Three Generations That Built an Empire.. 1st ed. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Blau, M. (2016). These women have accused Trump of sexual harassment. [online] CNN. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/14/politics/trump-women-accusers/ [Accessed 30 Apr. 2017].

Boyd, D. (2007). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. MacArthur foundation series on digital learning–Youth, identity, and digital media volume. pp.119-142.

Boyd, D. (2011) Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances, Dynamics, and Implications. In: Papacharissi Z (ed.), A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites. New York & London: Routledge. pp. 39–58

Boyd, D., Golder, S. and Lotan, G., (2010). Tweet, tweet, retweet: Conversational aspects of retweeting on Twitter. System Sciences (HICSS). 43rd Hawaii International Conference. IEEE. pp.1-10.

Bozdag, E. (2013). Bias in algorithmic filtering and personalization. Ethics and Information Technology. 15 (3): 209–227.

Bozdag, E., Gao, Q., Houben, G.J. and Warnier, M. (2014). Does offline political segregation affect the filter bubble? An empirical analysis of information diversity for Dutch and Turkish Twitter users. Computers in Human Behavior, 41. pp.405-415.

Brooks, D. (2016). Donald Trump Isn't Real. The New York Times. [online] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/02/opinion/donald-trump-isnt-real.html [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Bruns, A. and Burgess, J.E., (2011). The use of Twitter hashtags in the formation of ad hoc publics. In Proceedings of the 6th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference.

Bruns, A. and Burgess, J. (2015). Twitter hashtags from ad hoc to calculated publics. Hashtag publics: The power and politics of discursive networks. pp.13-28.

Burgoon, M. and Miller, G.R., (1985). An expectancy interpretation of language and persuasion. Recent advances in language, communication, and social psychology, pp.199-229.

Butler, P. and Collins, N. (1999) 'A conceptual framework for political marketing', in Newman, B. (ed.) 'The Handbook of Political Marketing'. London : Sage. pp.55-72

Fuchs, C. (2017). Donald Trump: A Critical Theory-Perspective on Authoritarian Capitalism. tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society, 15(1). pp.1-72.

Butsch, R. (2011). Audiences and Publics, Media and Public Spheres. In: V. Nightingale. ed. The Handbook of Media Audiences. 1st ed. West Sussex (United Kingdom): Wiley-Blackwell. Pp.149-168.

Cha, M., Haddadi, H., Benevenuto, F. & Gummadi, P.K. (2010). Measuring user influence in Twitter: The million follower fallacy. ICWSM. 10(10-17). p.30.

Coleburn, C. (2016). GOP Reacts to Donald Trump's Controversial Remarks on Khan Family. NBC News. [online] Available at: http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/gop-reacts-donald-trump-s-controversial-remarks-khan-family-n620481 [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Collinson, S., Scott, E. and Bradner, E. (2016). Donald Trump: 'Shackles have been taken off me'. [online] CNN. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/11/politics/donald-trump-paul-ryan-tweets/ [Accessed 30 Apr. 2017].

Confessore, N. and Yourish, K. (2016). $2 Billion Worth of Free Media for Donald Trump. [online] The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/upshot/measuring-donald-trumps-mammoth-advantage-in-free-media.html [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Conover, Michael D., Jacob Ratkiewicz, Matthew Francisco, Bruno Gonçalves, Alessandro Flammini, and Filippo Menczer. (2011). Political Polarization on Twitter. Bloomington: Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research School of Informatics and Computing, Indiana University [online]. Available at: http://truthy.indiana.edu/site_media/pdfs/conover_icwsm2011_polarization.pdf (accessed December 28, 2016).

Conway, B.A., Kenski, K. and Wang, D., (2013). Twitter use by presidential primary candidates during the 2012 campaign. American Behavioral Scientist, 57(11), pp.1596-1610.

CNN Politics. (2011). Trump not running for president. [online] Available at: http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/05/16/breaking-trump-not-running-for-president/?hpt=T2 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

CNN Politics. (2016). Presidential Results. [online] Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/election/results/president [Accessed 2 Mar. 2017].

Crawford, C. (2006). Attack the messenger: How politicians turn you against the media. Oxford : Rowman & Littlefield.

Crouch, C. (2004). Post-democracy. Cambridge: Polity.

Debord, G. (1967). The Society of the Spectacle, translated from French by Donald Nicholson-Smith, (1994). New York: Zone Books.

Donia, L. (2010). A Look at Cory Booker, the Social Media Mayor. [online] TechPresident. Available at: http://techpresident.com/blog-entry/look-cory-booker-social-media-mayor [Accessed 4 Jun. 2017].

Downs, A. (1957). An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy. Journal of Political Economy, 65(2), pp.135-150.

Dandekar, P., Goel, A. and Lee, D.T. (2013). Biased assimilation, homophily, and the dynamics of polarization. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 110(15). pp.5791-5796.

Davis, R., Holtz-Bacha, C. and Just, M. (2017). Twitter and elections around the world. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Diamond, J. and Collinson, S. (2016). Donald Trump: 'Second Amendment' gun advocates could deal with Hillary Clinton. CNN. [online] Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/09/politics/donald-trump-hillary-clinton-second-amendment/index.html [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Dent, M. (2015). 15 Facts You Didn't Know About Donald Trump. [online] The Fiscal Times. Available at: http://www.thefiscaltimes.com/2015/07/10/15-Facts-You-Didn-t-Know-About-Donald-Trump [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Devlin, A. (2017). Why did Donald Trump mock disabled reporter Serge Kovaleski and what did Meryl Streep say at the Golden Globes?. The Sun. [online] Available at: https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2567899/why-did-donald-trump-mock-disabled-reporter-serge-kovaleski-and-what-did-meryl-streep-say-at-the-golden-globes/ [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Evans, P. and Wurster, T.S. (2000). Blown to Bits: How the New Economics of Information Transforms Strategy. Boston : Harvard Business School Press.

Ebersole, S., & Woods, R. (2007). Motivations for viewing reality television: A uses and gratifications analysis. Southwestern Mass Communication Journal, 23(1). Pp.23–42.

Eichenwald, K. (2016). Why Donald Trump isn't the successful businessman he claims to be. The Independent. [online] Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-elections/why-donald-trump-isn-t-the-successful-businessman-he-claims-to-be-us-elections-republican-politics-7173666.html [Accessed 28 Apr. 2017].

Everett, A. (2009). The Afrogeek-in-Chief: Obama and our new media ecology. Journal of Visual Culture, 8(2). pp.193-196

Eyal, K., & Cohen, J. (2006). When good friends say goodbye: A parasocial breakup study. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 50. Pp.502–523.

Fahrenthold, D. (2016). Trump recorded having extremely lewd conversation about women in 2005. [online] Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-recorded-having-extremely-lewd-conversation-about-women-in-2005/2016/10/07/3b9ce776-8cb4-11e6-bf8a-3d26847eeed4_story.html?utm_term=.f4a3869567f9 [Accessed 10 Jun. 2017].

Fiske, J. (1987). Television Culture. London: Methuen.

Fiske, J. (1989). Understanding Popular Culture: Reading the Popular. Routledge, London.

Fiske, J. (1992). Audiencing: a cultural studies approach to watching television. Poetics, 21, 345-359.

Flegenheimer, M. (2017). What's a 'Covfefe'? Trump Tweet Unites a Bewildered Nation. [online] The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/31/us/politics/covfefe-trump-Twitter.html [Accessed 3 Jun. 2017].

Forbes. (2017). Forbes The World's Most Powerful People. [online] Available at: https://www.forbes.com/profile/donald-trump/ [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Fraser, N. (1993). Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy, in B Robbins (ed.), The phantom public sphere. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gainous, J. and Wagner, K.M., (2013). Tweeting to power: The social media revolution in American politics. Oxford University Press.

Gestel, A. (2017). The psychological language tricks Donald Trump used to convince American voters. [online] The Independent. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/donald-trump-inauguration-president-psychological-tricks-language-Twitter-tweets-convince-americans-a7536866.html [Accessed 28 Apr. 2017].

Giroux, H.A., (2016). Beyond the spectacle of terrorism: Global uncertainty and the challenge of the new media. London : Routledge

Golbeck, J., Grimes, J.M. and Rogers, A. (2010). Twitter use by the US Congress. Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 61(8), pp.1612-1621.

Google Trends. (2017). Google Trends Search Interest Donald Trump vs Hillary Clinton. [online] Available at: https://www.google.com/trends/explore?q=%2Fm%2F0cqt90,%2Fm%2F0d06m5 [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Graber, D. (2002). Mass Media and American Politics. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Graber, D. A. and Dunaway, J. (2015) Mass Media and American Politics. London : Sage.

Goldstein, T. (2007). Killing the messenger: 100 years of media criticism. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Gower, K. (2007). Public relations and the press: The troubled embrace. Chicago, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Gyenes, K. (2004). Apprentice' sparks classroom discussions. [online] CNN. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/TV/04/15/apprentice.biz.schools/ [Accessed 13 May 2017].

Habermas, J., Lennox, S. and Lennox, F. (1974). The public sphere: An encyclopedia article (1964). New German Critique, (3). pp.49-55.

Habermas, J., (1989). The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, trans. Thomas Burger. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. and Cooke, M. (1998). On the pragmatics of communication. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Halavais, A. (2009). Search Engine Society. Cambridge : Polity.

Hall, S. (1981). Encoding and decoding in television discourse. In: S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, & P. Willis (Eds.), Culture, media language. London:Hutchinson. pp. 128-138

Handel, J. (2015). How Did Donald Trump Get a $110K SAG Pension?. The Hollywood Reporter. [online] Available at: http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/how-did-donald-trump-get-810566 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Hart, P.T. and Tindall, K. (2009) 'Leadership by the Famous: Celebrity as Political Capital', in J. Kane, H. Patapan and P. T. Hart (eds), Dispersed Democratic Leadership: Origins, Dynamics, and Implications. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 255–78

Hart, W., Albarracín, D., Eagly, A.H., Brechan, I., Lindberg, M.J. and Merrill, L., (2009). Feeling validated versus being correct: a meta-analysis of selective exposure to information. Psychological bulletin, 135(4), p.555.

Hauser, G.A. (1999). Vernacular voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres. Columbia, South Carolina : University of South Carolina Press.

Hess, S. and Northrop, S. (1996). Drawn & quartered. Montgomery, Ala.: Elliott & Clark Pub.

Highfield, T., (2016). Social Media and Everyday Politics. Cambridge : Polity.

Hilbig, B.E., (2009). Sad, thus true: Negativity bias in judgments of truth. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45(4), pp.983-986.

Hill, A. (2014). Reality TV. Florence : Taylor and Francis. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [2 April 2017].

Hill, S. (2009). Divided We Stand: The Polarization of American Politics. Natl Civ Rev 94(4):3–14.

Hochschild, Arlie. (2003). The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Holland, S. and Stephenson, E. (2016). Trump finally backs off Obama birth claim, falsely says Clinton started it. Reuters. [online] Available at: http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-idUSKCN11M1F3 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Hood, B. (2015). 4 Times Donald Trump's Companies Declared Bankruptcy. [online] Vanity Fair. Available at: http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2015/06/donald-trump-companies-bankruptcy-atlantic-city [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Horkheimer, M., Adorno, T.W. and Noeri, G., (2002) [1948]. Dialectic of enlightenment. Vancouver : Stanford University Press.

Horton, D. and Richard Wohl, R., (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. Psychiatry, 19(3), pp.215-229.

Ito, M. (2008). Introduction. In K. Vernelis (Ed.) Networked Publics . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (pp. 1-14)

Jacobs, J. (2012). *Santorum in his own words on Huntsman, working women and sexual liberty*. [online] Iowa Caucuses. Available at: http://caucuses.desmoinesregister.com/2011/08/05/santorum-in-his-own-words-on-huntsman-working-women-and-sexual-liberty/?odyssey=obinsite [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

Jang, M. and Stone, N. (2016). Donald Trump: 18 Memorable Cameos, From 'Home Alone 2' to 'Sex and the City'. The Hollywood Reporter. [online] Available at:

http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/donald-trump-18-memorable-cameos-873520/item/ghosts-can-t-do-donald-873562 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Java, A., Song, X., Finin, T. and Tseng, B., (2007). Why we Twitter: understanding microblogging usage and communities. In Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis. ACM. pp. 56-65.

John III, B.S. (2010). Press professionalization and propaganda: The rise of journalistic double-mindedness. Amherst, MA: Cambria Press.

John III, B.S., Lamme, M.O. and L'Etang, J. (2014). Pathways to public relations: histories of practice and profession. London : Routledge.

Joyella, M. (2017). Trump, Calling Himself 'The Ratings Machine,' Trashes Schwarzenegger Over Low 'Apprentice' Ratings. Forbes. [online] Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/markjoyella/2017/01/06/trump-calling-himself-the-ratings-machine-trashes-schwarzenegger-over-low-apprentice-ratings/#4ba383b21cf6 [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Kelly, C. (2015). Everything You Need To Know About Donald Trump. [online] ABC News. Available at: http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/meet-donald-trump-2016-republican-presidential-candidate/story?id=32108595 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Kellner, D. (2001). Grand theft 2000: Media spectacle and a stolen election. New York : Rowman & Littlefield.

Kellner, D. (2004). Media Culture and the Triumph of the Spectacle. [online] Razón y palabra, 39. Available at: http://www.razonypalabra.org.mx/anteriores/n39/dkelner.html [Accessed 21 Apr, 2017]

Kellner, D., (2003) From September 11 to Terror War: The Dangers of the Bush Legacy. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield.

Kellner, D. (2010). Media Spectacle and Media Events: Some critical reflections. Media Events in a Global Age. pp.76-91.

Kellner, D. (2015). Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy: Terrorism, War, and Election Battles. London : Routledge.

Kellner, D. (2016). American Nightmare. 1st ed. Rotterdam - The Netherlands: SensePublishers.

Keneally, M. (2015). Trump's History of Raising Birther Questions About Obama. [online] ABC News. Available at: http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donald-trumps-history-raising-birther-questions-president-obama/story?id=33861832 [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Kim, J. and Song, H. (2016). Celebrity's self-disclosure on Twitter and parasocial relationships: A mediating role of social presence. Computers in Human Behavior, 62. Pp.570-577.

King, G., (2005). The spectacle of the real: from Hollywood to 'reality' TV and beyond. Intellect Books.

Kinnick, K.N. and Parton, S.R. (2005). Workplace Communication What The Apprentice Teaches About Communication Skills. Business Communication Quarterly, 68(4). pp.429-456.

Knittel, C.R. and Stango, V., (2010). Shareholder Value Destruction Following the Tiger Woods Scandal. Graduate School of Management, University of California. [online] Working Paper. Available at: http://faculty.gsm.ucdavis.edu/~vstango/tiger004.pdf.

Knobloch-Westerwick, S. and Meng, J. (2011). Reinforcement of the political self through selective exposure to political messages. Journal of Communication. 61(2). pp.349-368.

Koblin, J. (2015). Trump Sells Miss Universe Organization to WME-IMG Talent Agency. The New York Times. [online] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/15/business/media/trump-sells-miss-universe-organization-to-wme-img-talent-agency.html [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Kwak, H., Lee, C., Park, H. and Moon, S. (2010). What is Twitter, a social network or a news media?. In Proceedings of the 19th international conference on World wide web. ACM. pp. 591-600

Larsson A.O. and Moe H. (2012). Studying political microblogging: Twitter users in the 2010 Swedish election campaign. New Media & Society 14(5). pp. 729–747.

Lazarsfeld, P.F., Berelson, B. and Gaudet, H., (1944). The people's choice: how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign. New York : Columbia University Press.

Lewis, S. (2014). 'What Is Spectacle?', Journal Of Popular Film & Television, 42, (4). pp. 214-221.

Liu, B.F., Horsley, J.S. and Levenshus, B.L. (2010). Government and corporate communication practices: Do the differences matters? Journal of Applied Communication Research, 38(2). pp.189–213.

Long, H. (2015). Donald Trump trademarks 'Make America Great Again'. [online] CNN Money. Available at: http://money.cnn.com/2015/10/08/investing/donald-trump-make-america-great-again-trademark/ [Accessed 5 May 2017].

Louie, T.A. and Obermiller, C. (2002) Consumer response to a firm's endorser: (Dis)association decisions. Journal of Advertising, 31(4). pp.41 –52.

Lowery, S. (1995). Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects. New York : Longman Publishers.

Lowry, B. (2016). Why Khizr Khan's speech became a PR nightmare for the Trump campaign. [online] CNNMoney. Available at: http://money.cnn.com/2016/08/02/media/khizr-khan-donald-trump-media/index.html [Accessed 8 Jun. 2017].

Macskassy, S.A. and Michelson, M. (2011). Why do people retweet? Anti-homophily wins the day! ICWSM. pp. 209-216.

Madianou, M. (2007). Shifting identities: banal nationalism and cultural intimacy in Greek television news and everyday life. In R. Mole, ed. Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics. London : Palgrave. pp. 95–118.

Madianou, M. (2010). Living with news: ethnographies of news consumption. In S. Allan, ed.

The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism. London : Routledge. pp. 428–438.

Mahler, J. and Eder, S. (2016). 'No Vacancies' for Blacks: How Donald Trump Got His Start, and Was First Accused of Bias. [online] The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/us/politics/donald-trump-housing-race.html [Accessed 6 Apr. 2017].

Maireder A. and Ausserhofer J. (2013). Political discourses on Twitter: Networking. In: Weller K, Bruns A, Burgess J, et al. (eds) Twitter and Society. New York: Peter Lang. pp. 305–318

Maireder, A. and Schlögl, S., (2014). 24 hours of an# outcry: The networked publics of a socio-political debate. European Journal of Communication, 29(6). pp.687-702.

Mangani, A., 2004. Online advertising: Pay-per-view versus pay-per-click. Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management, 2(4). pp.295-302.

Marsh, D., Hart, P.T. and Tindall, K.. (2010). Celebrity politics: The politics of the late modernity? Political studies review, 8(3). pp.322-340.

Marshall, P. D. (1997). Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture. London: University of Minnesota Press.

Martin, V. (2008). Attending the news: A Grounded Theory about a Daily Regimen. Journalism, 9, (1). pp. 76–94

McCaskill, N. (2016). Trump again threatens independent bid. [online] POLITICO. Available at: http://www.politico.com/blogs/2016-gop-primary-live-updates-and-results/2016/03/donald-trump-independent-bid-220170 [Accessed 30 Apr. 2017].

Mercer, A., Deane, C. and McGeeney, K. (2016). Why 2016 election polls missed their mark. [online] Pew Research Center. Available at: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/why-2016-election-polls-missed-their-mark/ [Accessed 7 Mar. 2017].

Meraz, S. and Papacharissi, Z., (2013). Networked gatekeeping and networked framing on# Egypt. The international journal of press/politics, 18(2), pp.138-166.

Meeder, B., Tam, J., Kelley, P.G. and Cranor, L.F. (2010). RT@ IWantPrivacy: Widespread violation of privacy settings in the Twitter social network. In Proceedings of the Web. Vol. 2. pp. 1-2.

Merica, D. and Tatum, S. (2016). Clinton expresses regret for saying 'half' of Trump supporters are 'deplorables'. [online] CNN. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2016/09/09/politics/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-basket-of-deplorables/ [Accessed 18 Apr. 2017].

Miles, D.A. (2012). You're Fired: An Empirical Study of the Management and Termination Decisions in Donald Trump's "The Apprentice". Journal of Management Research, 4(4). pp.298-309.

Mosco, V. (1996). The political economy of communication. London: Sage.

Morozov E. (2009) Iran: Downside to the 'Twitter Revolution'. Dissent, 56(4). pp. 10–14.

MSNBC. (2015). Trump's greatest asset? He's not a politician, says polling. [online] Available at: http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/trumps-greatest-asset--hes-not-a-politician-515489859584 [Accessed 28 Apr. 2017].

Nagarajan, M., Purohit, H. and Sheth, A.P., (2010). A Qualitative Examination of Topical Tweet and Retweet Practices. ICWSM, 2(010). pp.295-298.

Nayyar, D. (2010). Public relations and communication. Jaipur, India: ABD Publishers.

Needham, C. (2006). Brands and political loyalty. Journal of Brand Management, 13(3). pp.178-187.

Needham, C., Smith, G. (2015). Introduction: Political Branding. Journal of Political Marketing, (14). pp.1–6.

Newport, F. and Saad, L. (2016). Trump Support Built on Outsider Status, Business Experience. [online] Gallup.com. Available at: http://www.gallup.com/poll/189773/trump-support-built-outsider-status-business-experience.aspx [Accessed 28 Apr. 2017].

Nightingale, V. (2011) In: V. Nightingale. ed. The Handbook of Media Audiences. 1st ed. West Sussex (United Kingdom): Wiley-Blackwell. pp.86-108

Oppenheim, M. (2016). Kanye West explains why he is running for President in 2020. [online] The Independent. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/kanye-west-outlines-why-he-wants-to-run-for-president-in-2020-im-not-saying-i-have-any-political-a7166561.html [Accessed 19 Jun. 2017].

Ostermeier, E. (2009). How Do Politicians Use Twitter? A Case Study of Rep. Laura Brod. [online] Smart Politics. Available at: http://editions.lib.umn.edu/smartpolitics/2009/07/15/how-do-politicians-use-Twitter/ [Accessed 6 Feb. 2017].

Page, R., (2012). The linguistics of self-branding and micro-celebrity in Twitter: The role of hashtags. Discourse & communication, 6(2). pp.181-201.

Pariser, E. (2011). The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding from You. New York: Penguin Press.

Parmelee, J.H. and Bichard, S.L., (2011). Politics and the Twitter revolution: How tweets influence the relationship between political leaders and the public. New York : Lexington Books.

Park, C.S., (2013). Does Twitter motivate involvement in politics? Tweeting, opinion leadership, and political engagement. Computers in Human Behavior, 29(4). pp.1641-1648.

Parker, A. and Haberman, M. (2016). Donald Trump's New Reality Show: The Running Mate. [online] The New York Times. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/07/us/politics/donald-trump-vice-president.html [Accessed 8 Apr. 2017].

Peters, J. (2012). *Gingrich Bets on Attack Mode Against News Media*. [online] The New York Times. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/23/us/politics/gingrich-bets-on-attack-mode-against-news-media.html?mcubz=2 [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

Peterson, H. (2017). Here are all the companies that have cut ties with the Trump family - Business Insider. [online] Business Insider. Available at: http://www.businessinsider.my/companies-cut-ties-with-trump-2017-2/?r=US&IR=T#2GLdWYLKY6jEzxKI.97 [Accessed 13 Apr. 2017].

Pew Research Center. (2012). Cable leads the pack as campaign news source. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Pew Research Center (2017). In Trump Era, What Partisans Want From Their Congressional Leaders. [online] Available at: http://www.people-press.org/2017/02/22/in-trump-era-what-partisans-want-from-their-congressional-leaders/ [Accessed 30 Apr. 2017].

Peyser, M. (2004). Red, White & Funny. [online] Newsweek. Available at: [http://www.newsweek.com/jon-stewart-red-white-funny-132041]

Phillips, W. (2016). This is why we can't have nice things: mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Pilkington, E. (2015). Donald Trump: ban all Muslims entering US. [online] The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/07/donald-trump-ban-all-muslims-entering-us-san-bernardino-shooting [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Popkin, S. (1991). The reasoning voter. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Porter, K. (2017). Tiger Woods talks golf with Donald Trump, 'Make Tiger Great Again' shirts. [online] CBSSports.com. Available at: http://www.cbssports.com/golf/news/tiger-woods-opens-up-about-golf-with-donald-trump-make-tiger-great-again-shirts/ [Accessed 13 Apr. 2017].

Power, D. and Hauge, A. (2008). No man's brand—brands, institutions, and fashion. Growth and Change, 39(1). pp.123-143.

Qiu, L. (2016). Donald Trump's six bankruptcies, detailed. [online] PolitiFact. Available at: http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/jun/21/hillary-clinton/yep-donald-trumps-companies-have-declared-bankrupt/ [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Quart, A. (2003). Branded: The buying and selling of teenagers. Cambridge : Perseus Pub.

Rafferty, A. (2015). Trump Begins Debate By Attacking Rand Paul. [online] NBC News. Available at: http://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/trump-begins-debate-attacking-rand-paul-n428761 [Accessed 15 Jun. 2017].

Reiss, S. and Wiltz, J. (2004). Why people watch reality TV. Media psychology, 6(4). pp.363-378.

Ridout, T.N. (2013). New directions in media and politics. New York : Routledge.

Robinson-Riegler, G.L. and Winton, W.M., (1996). The role of conscious recollection in recognition of affective material: Evidence for positive-negative asymmetry. The Journal of General Psychology, 123(2), pp.93-104.

Rojek, C. (2015). Presumed Intimacy: Parasocial Interaction in Media, Society and Celebrity Culture. Chichester : Polity Press. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. [Accessed 2 April 2017].

Rosen, J. (2006). The people formerly known as the audience. [online] Pressthink. Available at: http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2006/06/27/pplfrmr.html [Accessed 18 Mar. 2017]

Ross, J. (2016). Donald Trump thinks Hillary Clinton, a lady running for president, is crazy. [online] Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/08/08/donald-trump-thinks-hillary-clinton-a-lady-running-for-president-is-crazy/?utm_term=.7b5c555eaf1c [Accessed 6 Apr. 2017]

Ruddock, A. (2001). 'Cultural studies and audience research', in Understanding audiences, SAGE Publications Ltd, , pp. 116-146. , [Accessed 6 March 2017], doi: 10.4135/9780857020178

Ruddock, A. (2008). Media studies 2.0? Binge drinking and why audiences still matter. Sociology Compass, 2, (1). pp.1–15

Ruddock, A. (2013). Youth and media. London: Sage.

Samuelsohn, D. (2016). A guide to Donald Trump's 'rigged' election. Politico. [online] Available at: http://www.politico.com/story/2016/10/donald-trump-rigged-election-guide-230302 [Accessed 2 Mar. 2017].

Seaman, W.R. (1992). Active audience theory: pointless populism. Media, Culture & Society, 14(2), pp.301-311.

Scheufele DA. (2006). Messages and heuristics: How audiences form attitudes about emerging technologies. In: Turney J Engaging science: Thoughts, deeds, analysis and action. London: The Wellcome Trust. pp. 20-25.

Scott, K. (2015). The pragmatics of hashtags: Inference and conversational style on Twitter. Journal of Pragmatics, 81. pp.8-20.

Shales, T. and Miller, J. (2002). Live from New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live. Boston: Little, Brown.

Silverman, S. (2004). The Donald to Get New Wife, Radio Show. [online] PEOPLE.com. Available at: http://people.com/celebrity/the-donald-to-get-new-wife-radio-show/ [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Singh, Vivek K., and Ramesh Jain. (2010). “Structural Analysis of the Emerging Event-Web”. Proceedings of the 2010 World Wide Web Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work. New York: ACM

Smith, A. (2016). POLLS: Donald Trump's feud with the Khan family was very damaging. Business Insider. [online] Available at: http://www.businessinsider.com.au/polls-donald-trump-khan-2016-8?r=US&IR=T [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

Smith, K. (2015). Stop pretending — Donald Trump is not running for president. [online] New York Post. Available at: http://nypost.com/2015/05/30/stop-pretending-donald-trump-is-not-running-for-president/ [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Somin, I. (2013). Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Governments are Better.

Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Spinelli, D. (2016). Trump revives rumor linking Cruz's father to JFK assassination. Politico. [online] Available at: http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/trump-ted-cruz-jfk-assassination-226020 [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Stern, B.B., Russell, C.A. and Russell, D.W. (2005). Vulnerable women on screen and at home: soap opera consumption. Journal of Macromarketing, 25(2). Pp.222-225.

Street, J. (2004). Celebrity politicians: popular culture and political representation. The British journal of politics and international relations, 6(4). pp.435-452.

Street, J. (2012). Do celebrity politics and celebrity politicians matter? The British journal of politics and international relations, 14(3). Pp.346-356.

Strömbäck, J. & Kiousis, S. (2011). Political public relations: Defining and mapping an emergent field. In J. Strömbäck and S. Kiousis (Eds) Political public relations: Principles and applications (pp. 1–32). New York: Routledge

Stroud, N.J. (2011). Niche news: The politics of news choice. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Swaim, B. (2016). Donald Trump tries to kill political correctness — and ends up saving it. [online] Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/donald-trump-has-made-political-correctness-credible-again/2016/11/01/0f397c0c-9fb1-11e6-a44d-cc2898cfab06_story.html?utm_term=.523695207ae6 [Accessed 28 Apr. 2017].

Suh, B., Hong, L., Pirolli, P. and Chi, E.H. (2010). Want to be retweeted? large scale analytics on factors impacting retweet in Twitter network. In Social computing (socialcom). IEEE. pp. 177-184.

Theaker, A. (2001). The public relations handbook. London: Routledge.

The New York Times, (2016). Which Candidates are Winning the Money Race. [online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/us/elections/election-2016-campaign-money-race.html [Accessed 4 Jun. 2016].

The GDELT Project. (2017a). Analysis by the GDELT Project using data from the Internet Archive Television News Archive. [online] Available at: http://television.gdeltproject.org/cgi-bin/iatv_campaign2016/iatv_campaign2016 [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

The GDELT Project (2017b). US Presidential Campaign 2016: Candidate Online News Tracker, Analysis by the GDELT Project. [online] Available at: http://television.gdeltproject.org/cgi-bin/iatv_campaign2016/iatv_campaign2016_web [Accessed 22 Jan. 2017].

The Guardian. (2016). *Donald Trump: 'I could shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose any voters'*. [online] Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/24/donald-trump-says-he-could-shoot-somebody-and-still-not-lose-voters [Accessed 20 Jun. 2017].

Thompson, C. (2008). Brave New World of Digital Intimacy. The New York Times. [online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/07/magazine/07awareness-t.html [Accessed 13 May 2017].

Tian, Y. and Yoo, J.H. (2015). Connecting with the biggest loser: An extended model of parasocial interaction and identification in health-related reality tv shows. Health communication, 30(1). pp.1-7.

Time.com. (2015). Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech. [online] Available at: http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/ [Accessed 1 Mar. 2017].

Traub, J. (2004). Trumpologies. The New York Times. [online] Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/12/magazine/trumpologies.html [Accessed 28 Feb. 2017].

Trump, Donald. (2015). Crippled America: How To Make America Great Again. New York: Threshold Editions.

Tumasjan, A., Sprenger, T.O., Sandner, P.G. and Welpe, I.M. (2010). Predicting elections with Twitter: What 140 characters reveal about political sentiment. ICWSM, 10(1). pp.178-185.

Varnelis, K. and Friedberg, A. (2008). Place: The networking of public space. Networked publics. pp.15-42.

Wagstaff, K. (2016). President-elect Trump retweets teenager in rant against CNN. [online] Mashable. Available at: http://mashable.com/2016/11/29/donald-trump-tweetstorm/#pMXRjKeli8qO [Accessed 9 Jun. 2017].

Williams, Christine B., and Girish J. Gulati. (2010). “Communicating with Constituents in 140 Characters or Less” Working Papers. Paper 42. http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/pn_wp/43

Williams, K. (2016). Trump-Khan feud: A timeline. [online] TheHill. Available at: http://thehill.com/policy/national-security/290049-trump-khan-feud-a-timeline [Accessed 8 Jun. 2017].

Wu, S., Hofman, J.M., Mason, W.A. and Watts, D.J., (2011). Who says what to whom on Twitter. In Proceedings of the 20th international conference on World wide web. ACM. pp. 705-714

Zappavigna, M., 2011. Ambient affiliation: A linguistic perspective on Twitter. New media & society, 13(5). pp.788-806.

Zolo, D. (1992) Democracy and Complexity. Cambridge: Polity.