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@therealDonaldTrump EFFECT: DONALD TRUMP'S SOCIAL INFLUENCE THROUGH THE USE OF TWITTER

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@therealDonaldTrump EFFECT: DONALD TRUMP'S SOCIAL INFLUENCE

THROUGH THE USE OF TWITTER

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Social Sciences and Globalization

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by

Phoenisha Schuhmeier

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Approved by:

James Fenelon, Committee Chair, Sociology

Meredith Conroy, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

There has been a recent rise in the use of social media as a platform for political communication. President Donald Trump who is very influential, due in part to his celebrity status as well as his presidential position, has had the power to influence his millions of followers on twitter. For this research, I used a content analysis and comparative analysis approach on eight tweets made by President Donald Trump which targeted Mexican immigration, Maxine Waters, LeBron James, Don Lemon, the National Football League (NFL) national anthem protesters and Elizabeth Warren and three tweets made by Senator Ted Cruz which targeted Mexican immigration. I found that for Mexican immigration, twitter commenters on Trump's tweets were more prone to agree with him, as opposed to Cruz's tweets, where his commenters disagreed with him.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become progressively interconnected, as people are now able to communicate with others internationally at a fast pace. Twitter which was founded in 2006 by a team of computer programmers, is now seen as one of the most popular social media sites around the world. Twitter has more than 330 million users, which include prominent figures like celebrities, politicians and athletes. Twitter allows its users to connect with other people globally through instant messaging, commenting, liking and retweeting. Within twitter, users are able to retweet, which is reposting of a particular tweet; this increases awareness to a certain event, belief or comment. Users are also able to "like" certain tweets or post; "likes" are used when people show appreciation for a specific tweet.

Currently, the use of social media platforms has helped users stay engaged on social and or political movements, current topics and or current events. Social media sites are easily accessible and can be used on various portable electronic devices allowing for social media users to stay updated on breaking news. Today, many politicians use twitter to spread information to their followers in order to generate an increase in their following and political support. Twitter allows politicians to connect and interact with their supporters directly; politicians have the ability to tweet at any time allowing for their followers to

receive news promptly. This has led to twitter becoming a powerful resource for politicians to use to gain media attention and it has become immensely popular because of the ability to receive news promptly via social media versus waiting for televised news.

Since the 2008 United States presidential election, scholars have continued to assess the rise of social media and twitter as a platform for political communication.[1] During the 2012 election, Barack Obama's campaign successfully used the internet to mobilize his supporters which can be attributed to his success in becoming the first African American President.[2] His campaign was able to influence young adults by using online social networking technology such as Twitter and Facebook; these sites allowed for Obama to connect with his supporters on a direct level.[3] Furthermore, the use of social networking sites also played a pivotal role in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

The use of social media during the 2016 election allowed for many people to become politically aware of both Donald Trump's and Hillary Clinton's campaign.[4] Both Clinton and Trump used their twitter accounts to tweet political news which they felt would benefit their campaign. On election day, Hillary

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[1] Daniel Kreiss, "Seizing the Moment: The Presidential Campaigns' Use of Twitter during the 2012 Electoral Cycle," *New Media & Society* 18, no. 8 (September 2016): 1473–90, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814562445.
[2] Dana R. Fisher, "Youth Political Participation: Bridging Activism and Electoral Politics," *Annual Review of Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2012): 119–37, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145439.
[3] Fisher.
[4] Elia Powers, Susan Moeller, and Yacong Yuan, "Political Engagement During a Presidential Election Year: A Case Study of Media Literacy Students," *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 8, no. 1 (June 20, 2016): 1–14.

Clinton had 10.4 million followers and sent nearly 10,000 tweets, while Donald

Trump had 13.2 million followers and sent over 30,000 tweets.[5] During the 2016

elections, digital platforms and online communities played a role in political

engagement and awareness; many young adults used digital platforms to look for

guidance on political information.[6] The use of twitter during the 2016 election was

at an all-time high; twitter was heavily used within Trump's campaign as a means

to attract voters. This tactic proved to be extremely beneficial to his campaign as

it led to President Trump winning the election.

      Donald Trump joined twitter in 2009 and his twitter following has continued

to increase since his election. Today, Trump has over 50 million followers and

over 37,000 tweets. Throughout Trump's twitter history, he has posted many

false politically fueled tweets about Mexican immigration, political figures, and

celebrities/athletes. Many of these tweets have proven to be incorrect, however,

these tweets continue to receive a vast amount of televised news attention due to

their controversial nature.

      For this research, I am interested in understanding the effect of Trump's

most controversial tweets and how twitter users react to them. Although there

have been studies done on social media and political influence, I would like to

further understand Trump's twitter comments at a deeper level and compare

them with other tweets that are non-related. For this project, I performed a

content analysis of eleven tweets, eight from Trump and three from Cruz. Next, I

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[5] Jody C. Baumgartner and Terri L. Towner, *The Internet and the 2016
Presidential Campaign* (Lexington Books, 2017).
[6] Powers, Moeller, and Yuan.

compared Trump's twitter comments on the selected topics (Mexican

immigration, Maxine Waters, LeBron James and Don Lemon, the NFL protesters

and Elizabeth Warren). After finding that the tweets on Mexican immigration had

more negative comments, than the other topics, I then compared both Trump and

Cruz's tweets on immigration and education by using a measure of respectful

discourse. The reason I am comparing Trump and Cruz is to measure how much

less respectful Trump is compared to a normal Republican politician like Cruz.

Overall, Trump was found to be less respectful than Cruz and this shows that

there is a "Trump effect".

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2018, it was recorded that 68% of American adults occasionally get their news from social media.[7] The use of social media platforms has helped users stay engaged on social and or political movements, current topics and or current events, because it is easily and quickly assessable. Twitter has become one of the main sources of breaking news and politicians are eagerly using twitter to spread information to their followers to increase political support. This can lead to political leaders manipulating their audiences in hopes that it will lead them to vote left or right. Reeves and DeVries (2018) found that those who read right-leaning newspapers were more likely to have negative attitudes towards those who receive welfare because of how the newspaper portrayed welfare recipients.[8] Media platforms can alter what they report to the general public and this can shape one's opinion. Social media has the power to manipulate their audiences by taking advantage of people who may be uneducated or ignorant to politics.

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[7] Katerina Eva Matsa and Elisa Shearer, "News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2018 | Pew Research Center," September 10, 2018, http://www.journalism.org/2018/09/10/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2018/.

[8] Aaron Reeves and Robert de Vries, "Does Media Coverage Influence Public Attitudes towards Welfare Recipients? The Impact of the 2011 English Riots," *The British Journal of Sociology* 67, no. 2 (June 2016): 281–306, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12191.

Since the vast increase of social media popularity, politicians are allowed direct contact with their supporters and users are now interacting with political campaigns, political news and participating in political discussions. Significantly, Trump's use of twitter has sparked a great amount of controversy because of the non-presidential content he posts. Twitter fosters incivility, it allows for people who comment or post on particular tweets to be impolite or insulting to certain groups of people.[9] This is seen within Trump's twitter, his tweets are often impulsive and uncivil reflecting islamophobia, xenophobia, racism and sexist ideologies.[10] Ultimately, Trump's tweets encourage his followers to be hateful and violent. In a study done by Karsten Müller and Carlo Schwarz (2018), they found that social media platforms play a huge role in spreading hateful ideas which motivate real-life action.[11] Müller and Schwartz (2018) found that anti-Muslim crimes have been more common under the Trump administration as compared to George W. Bush administration following 9/11. [12] There was a positive correlation between Islamophobia related tweets made by Trump in a single week, and the amount of hate crimes against Muslims; this correlation suggests that Trump twitter had an influence on those who committed the hate crimes.

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[9] Brian L. Ott, "The Age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of Debasement," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 34, no. 1 (March 2017): 59–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/15295036.2016.1266686.
[10] Ott.
[11] Karsten Müller and Carlo Schwarz, "Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972.
[12] Müller and Schwarz.

Many of Trump's political incorrect tweets target minority groups and many of his followers mimic this behavior online.[13] Trump is continually being celebrated by many white supremacists as he alters racist framing as truth telling. During Trump's presidential campaign, his "Build a Wall" catchphrase has become one of his main objectives as president; he has promised to build a border wall because he believes that it will protect U.S. citizens from undocumented immigrants. Trump has alluded that undocumented Mexican immigrants are deviant, and he uses the media and his twitter account to frame them that way. Furthermore, Trump has created fear and argues that undocumented immigrants are taking Americans jobs leading to a substantial number of American citizens being afraid of a more multiracial future. Many Americans believe that immigration hurts U.S. workers, because immigrants are taking away jobs from native-born Americans. In America, there continues to be a threat of diversifying, even though immigrants are expanding the American economy. Moreover, being a part of a minority group has historically been seen as being a threat to the superior group.

On various occasions, Trump has made many comments both online and offline which he has demonized and scapegoated Mexican immigrants, while still maintaining millions of followers and supporters.[14] This is because extremist

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[13] Jessica Gantt Shafer, "Donald Trump's 'Political Incorrectness': Neoliberalism as Frontstage Racism on Social Media," *Social Media + Society* 3, no. 3 (July 2017): 205630511773322, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117733226.
[14] Lawrence D. Bobo, "Racism in Trump's America: Reflections on Culture, Sociology, and the 2016 US Presidential Election," *The British Journal of*

politicians are more likely to gain excess attention to the public because of the

amount of awareness and media they create.[15] This is likely to be a significant

factor in Trump's increase in support, Trump's politically incorrect tweets receive

televised news attention depending on the severity of them and this leads to

Trump having the power to guide the media on what topics they should cover.

These national and regional broadcastings of Trump's tweets help him gain a

vast amount of attention; when he tweets something that is non-presidential it

normally becomes a headline story across many different media platforms.

Trump has popularized political incorrectness, as his tweets have become

conventional wisdom and truth telling amongst his supporters.

Sociology 68 Suppl 1 (November 2017): S85–104, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12324.

[15] Sounman Hong and Sun Hyoung Kim, "Political Polarization on Twitter: Implications for the Use of Social Media in Digital Governments," *Government Information Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (October 2016): 777–82, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2016.04.007.

CHAPTER THREE

TRUMP'S TWITTER TOPICS

In this section, I am going to discuss a variety of Trump's most controversial tweets on Mexican immigration, Maxine Waters, the National Football League (NFL) national anthem protesters and Elizabeth Warren.

On August 21, 2018, the body of Mollie Tibbets was found after being missing for more than a month. Cristhian Bahena Rivera an undocumented immigrant was charged for Tibbets murder. After the news about Tibbetts death, the Trump administration began to use the case as a way to revise immigration laws. Trump stated in a speech on August 24th in Columbus, Ohio, that "Just this week we learned that Iowa authorities ... charged an illegal alien in the murder of a college student Mollie Tibbetts".[16] Later in his speech, Trump talks about other cases of undocumented immigrants committing crimes, and he has capitalized on these instances to manipulate the public in order to both increase and maintain his supporters.

Moreover, there have been more than 60 mass shootings during Trump's presidency, most which Trump has not tweeted about. The shootings that did receive a recognizable tweet was the Parkland, Florida shooting committed by Nikolas Cruz (February 14th, 2018, 17 killed, 17 injured), the Santa Fe, Texas shooting committed by Dimitrios Pagourtzis (May 18, 2018, 10 killed, 13 injured),

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[16] CNN, *Trump Blames Democratic Policies for Mollie Tibbetts Death* (Columbus, Ohio, 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMa2E76Aznw.

the Sutherland Springs, Texas shooting, committed by Devin Patrick Kelley (November 5, 2017, 27 killed, 20 injured), and the Las Vegas, Nevada Shooting committed by Stephen Paddock (October 1, 2017, 59 killed, 441 injured). In all these tweets, unlike the tweet about Mollie Tibbets listed above, Trump failed to state the race or ethnicities of the shooters, because he has proven to only tweet about the race or ethnicity of an offender when it benefits the Trump administration.

Congresswoman, Maxine Waters, an American politician currently serving as the U.S. Representative for California's 43rd congressional district, is considered by many to be one of the most powerful women in American politics today. She has received a vast amount of online backlash from President Trump because in June of 2018, she called for her supporters to confront the Trump administration because of her disagreements about their policies and laws. Trump has tweeted and or retweeted about Maxine Waters 11 times and most of the tweets and or retweets were negative and disrespectful.

On August 26, 2016 during a NFL pre-season game against the Green Bay Packers, Colin Kaepernick (former San Francisco 49ers quarterback) sat on the bench during the national anthem, to protest against the negative treatment of people of color; the goal of this protest was to combat racism and police brutality against minority groups. After talking to U.S. Army Veteran, Nate Boyer, Kaepernick kneeled during the national anthem instead of sitting, because Boyer suggested that that was respectful. Originally, Kaepernick was alone in his protest, but overtime he received more attention, many of his teammates, as well

as many other athletes from various sports began to join. Kaepernick's protest costed him his job, but it started a movement that is still ongoing today. While Kaepernick has made it clear why he is protesting, President Trump has made various online and offline comments attacking all NFL protesters who take a knee, while consciously disregarding the true reason these athletes are protesting.

In 2017, during an Alabama speech, Trump bashed NFL protesters, (who primarily consisted of African Americans), stating that "Wouldn't you love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say, 'Get that son of a bitch off the field right now. Out! He's fired. He's fired".[17] Trump has encouraged people attending NFL games to leave if a player kneels during the national anthem. While Kaepernick started the protest because of police brutality against minority groups, Trump has not acknowledged this racial inequality, but instead makes the protest about disrespecting the American flag.

In September of 2018, Nike built a campaign ad around Kaepernick. The Nike campaign stated "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything".[18] This sparked controversy, especially from Trump; On September 5, 2018 Trump tweeted, "Just like the NFL, whose ratings have gone WAY DOWN, Nike is getting absolutely killed with anger and boycotts. I wonder if they had any idea that it would be this way? As far as the NFL is concerned, I just find

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[17] CNN, "Trump: I Wish NFL Owners Respected US Flag - YouTube," September 23, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JMnfmxA_Qo.
[18] Kevin Draper and Ken Belson, "Colin Kaepernick's Nike Campaign Keeps N.F.L. Anthem Kneeling in Spotlight - The New York Times," September 3, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/03/sports/kaepernick-nike.html.

it hard to watch, and always will, until they stand for the FLAG!".[19] Trump

continues to attack NFL protesters, but he has yet to post about police brutality

and has not tried to understand the protest and the problem that minorities face

in America. Kaepernick gained notoriety for refusing to stand during the national

anthem and he risked his entire career because of something that he believed in.

Elizabeth Warren, Native American U.S. Senator, is another person who

has been racially attacked by Trump, both online and offline. Trump has

tweeted the words "Elizabeth Warren" 33 times and most of these tweets have

attacked Warren's race. Trump continues to call Warren Pocahontas; he

continues to mock Warren by using racial slurs implying that all Native

American women should be compared to Pocahontas.

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[19] Donald J. Trump, "Just like the NFL, Whose Ratings Have Gone Way Down, Nike Is Getting Absolutely Killed with Anger and Boycotts. I Wonder If They Had Any Idea That It Would Be This Way? As Far as the NFL Is Concerned, I Just Find It Hard to Watch, and Always Will, until They Stand for the Flag!," Tweet, *@realdonaldtrump* (blog), September 5, 2018, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1037334510159966214?lang=en.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS

For this research, I used a qualitative content and comparative analysis approach on eight of Trump's tweets and three of Cruz's tweets. I collected data from Trump's twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) during 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019 by using Trump's twitter archive. I then analyzed the comments of eight of Trump's tweets, three on Mexican immigration, one on Elizabeth Warren, one on LeBron James, two on the NFL Protesters, and one on Maxine Waters. The specific terms I used while accessing Trump's twitter archive were: *Mexican, Mexico, Illegal, Immigration, Immigrants, NFL, Elizabeth Warren, Maxine Waters, LeBron James, and Don Lemon.*

Next, I collected data from Cruz's twitter account (@tedcruz and @sentedcruz) during 2016, 2018, and 2019 by using twitter's advanced search. The specific terms I used while accessing Cruz's advanced search were: *Mexico, Mexican, Illegal, Immigrants, and Immigration*. I analyzed the comments of three of Cruz's tweets on Mexican Immigration. After analyzing the comments of all eleven tweets, I then compared the comments of both Trump and Cruz's tweets on Mexican immigration and education. I used the Difference-in-Differences (DID) method for Trump and Cruz's tweets on education and immigration during 2016-2019. The DID method allows for me to see the "Trump effect" for levels of respectful discourse across different policy topics. First, I examined the difference in levels of respect in Trump and Cruz's tweets on immigration policy.

Next, I examined the difference in levels of respect between Trump and Cruz's tweets on education policy.

While analyzing each tweet, I organized each comment, by those who agreed, disagreed or remained neutral. When reading each comment, twitter users who commented twice were only counted once. Also, comments made by Trump and Cruz were not taken into account. There were some comments that were in other languages so I used twitter's Microsoft translate to interpret these comments. After analyzing each tweet, I used respect to code for both Trump and Cruz's tweets.

Respect: "The DQI (Discourse Quality Index) contains three indicators of respect. First there is respect for the groups that are to be helped through particular policies". [20]

    0) No respect: Only negative statements about the groups. [21]

    1) Neutral: Neither positive or negative statements about the groups. [22]

    2) Explicit respect: This is used "if there is at least one explicitly positive statement about the groups, regardless of the presence of negative statements". [23]

After coding for respect for Trump and Cruz's tweets on immigration and education, the difference between Trump and Cruz on immigration is A, the difference between Trump and Cruz on education is B, and the "Trump effect" of

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[20] Steiner et al, 58.
[21] Steiner et al.
[22] Steiner et al.
[23] Steiner et al, 58.

lower respect is the difference between these differences which is C. *See*

Appendix A.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Trump's Tweets

1. "Again, illegal immigrant is charged with the fatal bludgeoning of a wonderful and loved 64 year old woman. Get them out and build a WALL!"

   - August 10, 2015

   - Retweets: 4,707

   - Likes: 9,206

   - Comments: 1.3k

Findings: More people who commented agreed with this statement.

Respect: 1: There are neither positive or negative statements made about a particular group.

2. "The protesters in New Mexico were thugs who were flying the Mexican flag. The rally inside was big and beautiful, but outside, criminals!"- May 25, 2016

   – Retweets: 11,399

   – Likes: 31,330

   – Comments: 4.7k

Findings: More people who commented agreed with this statement.

Respect: 0: This tweet has no respect for the New Mexico protestors who were protesting against immigration, Trump calls them thugs and criminals.

3. "I look forward to VETOING the just passed Democrat inspired Resolution which would OPEN BORDERS while increasing Crime, Drugs, and Trafficking in our Country. I thank all of the Strong Republicans who voted to support Border Security and our desperately needed WALL!" – March 14, 2019

   - Retweets: 41,752

   - Likes: 174,740

   - Comments: 45k

Findings: More people who commented agreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: There are neither positive or negative statements made about a particular group.

4. "Today Elizabeth Warren, sometimes referred to by me as Pocahontas, joined the race for President. Will she run as our first Native American presidential candidate, or has she decided that after 32 years, this is not playing so well anymore? See you on the campaign TRAIL, Liz!" – February 9, 2019

- Retweets: 39,019

- Likes: 195,035

- Comments 63k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 0: There are neither positive or negative statements made about a particular group.

5. "Lebron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made Lebron look smart, which isn't easy to do. I like Mike!" – August 3, 2018

    - Retweets: 48,197

    - Likes: 178,258

    - Comments: 131k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 0: This tweet has no respect for LeBron or Lemon. Trump calls Lemon "the dumbest man on television", then implies that LeBron is also "dumb".

6. "The NFL players are at it again – taking a knee when they should be standing proudly for the National Anthem. Numerous players, from different teams, wanted to show their "outrage" at something that most of them are unable to define. They make a fortune doing what they love......"

   – August 10, 2018

   - Retweets: 25,106

   - Likes: 110,786

   - Comments: 43k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: This tweet has neither positive or negative statements about a particular group.

7. "Just like the NFL, whose ratings have gone WAY DOWN, Nike is getting

   absolutely killed with anger and boycotts. I wonder if they had any idea

   that it would be this way? As far as the NFL is concerned, I just find it hard

   to watch, and always will, until they stand for the FLAG!" –September 5,

   2018

   - Retweets: 27,220

   - Likes: 120,369

   - Comments: 47k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: This tweet has neither positive or negative statements about a

particular group.

8. "Congresswoman Maxine Waters, an extraordinarily low IQ person, has become, together with Nancy Pelosi, the Face of the Democrat Party. She has just called for harm to supporters, of which there are many, of the Make America Great Again movement. Be careful what you wish for Max!" – March 14, 2019

   - Retweets: 38,712

   - Likes: 138,787

   - Comments: 55k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 0: This tweet has no respect for Maxine Waters. Trump attacks Waters by saying she has a low IQ.

9. "The American people gave us a clear mandate: secure the border and
    build the wall. I have long called for building a wall as a necessary step in
    defending our border and stopping the flow of illegal immigration into our
    country." – December 19, 2018

    - Retweets: 5,803

    - Likes: 17,383

    - Comments: 1.6k

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: There are neither a positive or negative statements made about a
particular group.

10. "I have long called for building a wall as a necessary step in stopping the flow of illegal immigration into our country & defending our border. Indeed, I introduced the #ELCHAPOAct & the WALL Act–2 bills which would offset the cost of completing the wall and securing our border." – February 14, 2019

- Retweets: 319

- Likes: 941

- Comments: 45

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: There are neither a positive or negative statements made about a particular group.

11. "Anyone who really cares about stopping illegal immigration wouldn't hire illegal immigrants and fund the Gang of Eight #GOPDebate" –February 25, 2016

    - Retweets: 1,066

    - Likes: 1,503

    - Comments: 111

Findings: Most people who commented disagreed with this tweet.

Respect: 1: There are neither a positive or negative statements made about a particular group.

First, I found that Trump's tweets about Mexican immigration had more negative comments than his tweets about Maxine Waters, Elizabeth Warren, the NFL protests, LeBron James and Don Lemon. I assume that Trump has influenced his commenters negative views about Mexican immigrants, because Trump's commenters were more prone to agree with his negative statements about Mexican immigrants verses his negative tweets about other people or groups.

After analyzing both Trump and Cruz's tweets, I found that more people agreed with Trump's tweets on Mexican immigration versus Ted Cruz tweets on Mexican immigration. Twitter users who commented on Trump's tweets were more prone to agree with Trump's arguments about "Building a wall" for the safety of America, while Cruz's commenters attacked him for saying "Building a wall". This is because Trump and Cruz have different followings, Trump's followers tend to be more radical, while Cruz's supporters tend to be more conservative in comparison to Trump supporters.

After coding for respect using the DID method to find if there was a "Trump effect", I found that Trump and Cruz have similar low levels of respect when tweeting on immigration. Furthermore, Trump has substantially lower levels of respectful discourse when tweeting on education policy. After I netted out the difference between Trump and Cruz on immigration from the difference on education I identified the "Trump effect" (the additional amount of disrespectful discourse that Trump displays on policies other than immigration). Trump's tweets on immigration were 17% respectful, while Cruz's tweets on immigration

were 20% respectful. When analyzing Trump and Cruz's tweets on education I found that Cruz's tweets on education were 100% respectful, while Trump's tweets on education were 68% respectful. *See Appendix A.* We can assume that when Republicans talk about immigration they are more prone to be disrespectful, while for Trump he is more prone to be disrespectful no matter the topic; we see this with his tweets about the NFL protesters, Elizabeth Warren, LeBron James, Don Lemon, and Maxine Waters.
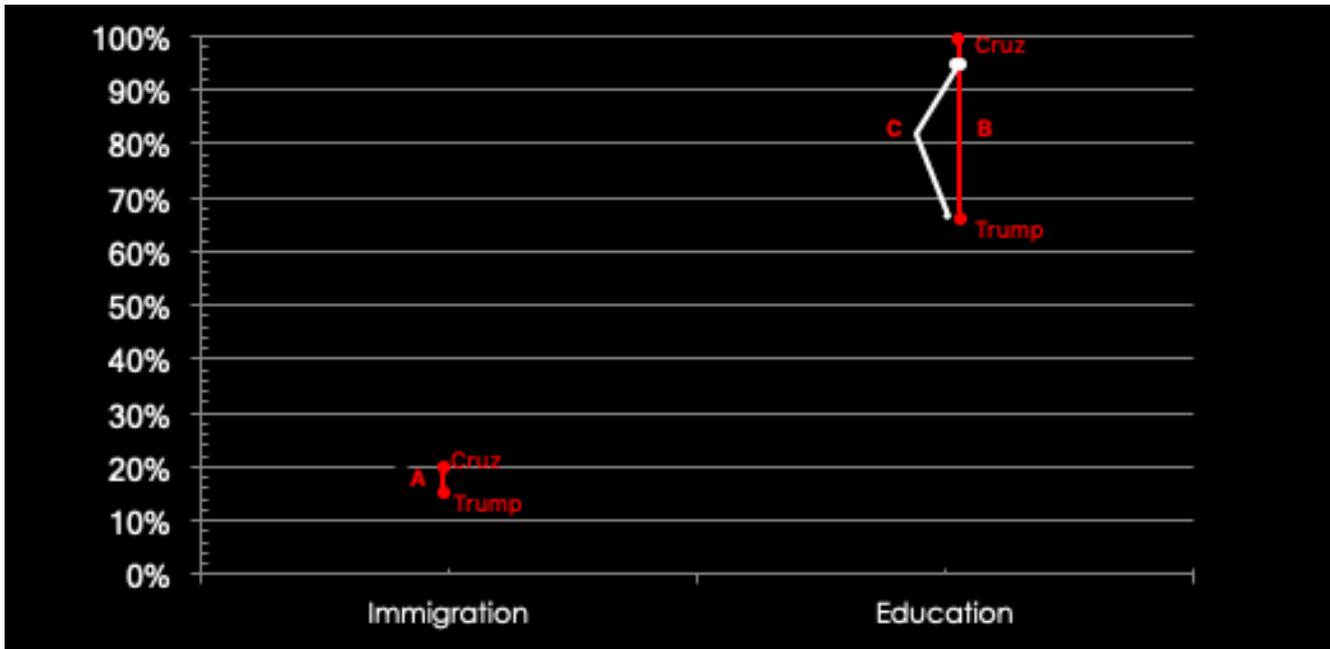
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

Based on the results of my research, twitter users agreed with Trump's tweets on Mexican immigration, but they disagreed with the negative tweets made about other groups or people. This proves that twitter users who commented on Trump's tweets on Mexican immigration were influenced by his statements about undocumented immigrants, but not by his statements about other groups of people. This research is just one example of how Trump's twitter has had an influence on twitter users. Trump has had the power to influence and manipulate his followers into taking his immigration tweets as policy and I think this will lead to discriminatory actions against Mexican immigrants.

In the future, I may expand this study by surveying people who receive their news from twitter to see if they have been influenced by Trump's tweets on Mexican immigration. This will allow me to see if people are also influenced by Trump's twitter offline. Limitations that I faced while doing this research were burner accounts or fake accounts. I noticed that there were some twitter users who commented from burner accounts and this could have affected the validity of this study. Furthermore, after going back and reexamining the tweets analyzed, I found that there was a decrease in comments, likes, and retweets. This could mean that twitter users may have deleted or deactivated their accounts, deleted their comments and or retweets, or un-liked a specific tweet. After completing this study, the information I found allowed me to see just how many people are

influenced and have the same beliefs as Trump. Trump has had an effect on

many individuals and I hope this study can raise awareness and help people

realize that Trump's tweets are influential and can have a negative effect on the

way people view Mexican immigrants.

APPENDIX A

DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES- RESPECT

A=20%-17%= 3%

B=100%-68%=32%

C=32%-3%=29% ("Trump's effect")

Immigration:

Cruz's Tweets: 17% Respectful

Trump's Tweets: 20% Respectful

Education:

Cruz's Tweets: 100% Respectful

Trump's Tweets 68% Respectful

APPENDIX B

TWEETS ANALYZED

Tweets Analyzed

Donald Trump's Tweets:

"Again, illegal immigrant is charged with the fatal bludgeoning of a wonderful and loved 64 year old woman. Get them out and build a WALL!" - August 10, 2015
Retweets: 4,707
Likes: 9,206
Comments: 1.3k

"The protesters in New Mexico were thugs who were flying the Mexican flag. The rally inside was big and beautiful, but outside, criminals!"- May 25, 2016
Retweets: 11,399
Likes: 31,330
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"Today Elizabeth Warren, sometimes referred to by me as Pocahontas, joined the race for President. Will she run as our first Native American presidential candidate, or has she decided that after 32 years, this is not playing so well anymore? See you on the campaign TRAIL, Liz!" – February 9, 2019
Retweets: 39,019
Likes: 195,035
Comments 63k

"Lebron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made Lebron look smart, which isn't easy to do. I like Mike!" – August 3, 2018
Retweets: 48,197
Likes: 178,258
Comments: 131k

"The NFL players are at it again – taking a knee when they should be standing proudly for the National Anthem. Numerous players, from different teams, wanted to show their "outrage" at something that most of them are unable to define. They make a fortune doing what they love......" – August 10, 2018
Retweets: 25,106
Likes: 110,786
Comments: 43k

"Just like the NFL, whose ratings have gone WAY DOWN, Nike is getting absolutely killed with anger and boycotts. I wonder if they had any idea that it would be this way? As far as the NFL is concerned, I just find it hard to watch, and always will, until they stand for the FLAG!" –September 5, 2018

Retweets: 27,220
Likes: 120,369
Comments: 47k

"Congresswoman Maxine Waters, an extraordinarily low IQ person, has become, together with Nancy Pelosi, the Face of the Democrat Party. She has just called for harm to supporters, of which there are many, of the Make America Great Again movement. Be careful what you wish for Max!"
– March 14, 2019
Retweets: 38,712
Likes: 138,787
Comments: 55k

"I look forward to VETOING the just passed Democrat inspired Resolution which would OPEN BORDERS while increasing Crime, Drugs, and Trafficking in our Country. I thank all of the Strong Republicans who voted to support Border Security and our desperately needed WALL!" – March 14, 2019
Retweets: 41,752
Likes: 174,740
Comments: 45k

Ted Cruz's Tweets:
"The American people gave us a clear mandate: secure the border and build the wall. I have long called for building a wall as a necessary step in defending our border and stopping the flow of illegal immigration into our country." – December 19, 2018
Retweets: 5,803
Likes: 17,383
Comments: 1.6k

"I have long called for building a wall as a necessary step in stopping the flow of illegal immigration into our country & defending our border. Indeed, I introduced the #ELCHAPOAct & the WALL Act–2 bills which would offset the cost of completing the wall and securing our border." – February 14, 2019
Retweets: 319
Likes: 941
Comments: 45

"Anyone who really cares about stopping illegal immigration wouldn't hire illegal immigrants and fund the Gang of Eight #GOPDebate" –February 25, 2016
Retweets: 1,066
Likes: 1,503

Comments: 111

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