

## **Message Matters: How Kellyanne Conway Redirected the Focus of Donald Trump's Twitter Account**

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### **Abstract**

This research project studies the effect of campaign manager Kellyanne Conway on the target of Donald Trump's tweets. Prior research states that while voters best respond to positive advertising, the purpose of Twitter during a campaign goes unresolved. A content analysis of the tweets posted in the two weeks immediately preceding and the four weeks immediately following Conway's hire is conducted under a nine category coding scheme; the categories of primary focus are tweets about the campaign, issue positions, and attacks on Hillary Clinton. All hashtags accompanying the tweets are also recorded, specifically focusing on the use of campaign-centered hashtags compared to the hashtag attacking Secretary Clinton. The results show that campaign tweets increased in frequency over time after Conway's hire. Somewhat surprisingly, issue position tweets did not increase after Conway's hire. Additionally, the introduction of a campaign-centered hashtag, #AmericaFirst, following Conway's hire aided in shifting the focus of Mr. Trump's tweets away from Secretary Clinton and towards the Trump campaign. The results conclude that Mr. Trump spent more time tweeting about the campaign once Conway began her role. This research begins to suggest that Twitter does not serve a universal purpose for candidates during an election. Rather, campaign managers matter in that they have the ability to work alongside the candidate to set the overall message of a campaign.

**Keywords:** Twitter, Campaigns, Digital Messaging

### **1. Introduction**

On August 17, 2016, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump made yet another drastic change to his campaign by promoting senior advisor Kellyanne Conway to the role of campaign manager.<sup>1</sup> Filling a position that had been vacant for two months, Mr. Trump saw Ms. Conway as the best option to close the seven-and-a-half point lead Democratic candidate, Secretary Hillary Clinton, held in the national polls.<sup>2</sup> As the founder and past CEO of The Polling Company, Inc./Woman Trend, Conway spent the past two decades conducting demographic and attitudinal surveys for races at all government levels.<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, Conway consulted former Speaker Newt Gingrich during his 2012 presidential run as well as former Indiana Governor, and now Vice President, Mike Pence. Conway's stellar reputation for defying pundits by correctly predicting election results every cycle as well as her prior success with Governor Pence's campaign were reasons this appointment was a strategic improvement of the Trump campaign.<sup>4</sup>

Looking back on her campaign strategy, Ms. Conway discussed how she kept Mr. Trump on message throughout the last months leading up to the election. During a forum at Harvard University on December 1, Conway admitted to telling Mr. Trump, "You're running against one of the most joyless presidential candidates in history. Why don't we find a way to be the happy warrior?"<sup>5</sup> She followed that she implemented this strategy by playing to Mr. Trump's biggest strength: traveling around the country connecting with voters.<sup>6</sup> Just two weeks after Conway's hire, Mr. Trump found himself up four points in the polls, with Clinton only beating him by three-and-a-half percentage points.<sup>7</sup> After

another two weeks, about one month since Conway assumed her role, Mr. Trump was essentially tied in the polls and faced a dead heat against Clinton.<sup>8</sup> Such a drastic shift in the polls over this time period raises the consideration that perhaps this was not simply a coincidence. Moreover, Mr. Trump's rise in the polls over this month was quite constant. This implies that Mr. Trump may have somehow altered the course of his campaign in a tangible way that resonated with voters.

This project studies how Mr. Trump redirected his messaging on Twitter after he hired Kellyanne Conway as his campaign manager. Specifically, how the target of Mr. Trump's tweets changed over the course of Conway's first month serves as the focal point of this paper. First, the paper will present an analysis of the literature necessary to answer this question. I will then state my hypotheses and explain the methods used to test them. Lastly, a presentation of results precedes the conclusions of this project.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Positive And Negative Advertising

Flanigan and Zingale outline a three-step explanation of when issue positions affect the vote choice.<sup>9</sup> Not only must voters be knowledgeable about the issue and must candidates clearly state where they stand on this issue, but voters must also be able to evaluate the relationship between the issue as perceived by themselves and the candidate. In other words, voters must be able to understand the position candidates take in order for it to successfully affect the vote choice. A misperception of a position may cause the voter to incorrectly assume the party of the candidate and vote for someone who holds conflicting beliefs.<sup>10</sup> Positive advertising is one way to increase the effectiveness of this three-step process. For example, one suggestion for a candidate looking to increase loyalty among voters is to advertise strengths rather than attack the opponent.<sup>11</sup> Rick Ridder, a former campaign manager, agrees, stating, "a good message communicates who and what you are fighting for."<sup>12</sup> Positive advertising allows for a more concise message within the campaign because voters hear exactly what a candidate thinks and are not left guessing how the platform is different from that of an opponent's.<sup>13</sup> In sum, the literature seems to suggest that a candidate is best able to distinguish himself in a race when focusing on the positives of his own campaign rather than relying on a method of attack.

On the other hand, some scholars claim that negative attacks, under certain conditions, could be an integral part of a campaign's messaging strategy. Ignoring or responding to attacks, as well as counterattacking, have all proved ineffective, thus increasing the benefits of initiating an attack.<sup>14</sup> However, because the public responds better to positive advertising,<sup>15,16</sup> mostly independent organizations have focused on this negative advertising method, while campaigns have still relied on a more positive message.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, although psychologists believe that a strong positive message is on average more effective, they also say that strong and weak negative messages are viewed equally in the eyes of a voter, which suggests that candidates could rely on negative advertising when they do not have a strong positive message to support their campaign.<sup>18</sup> The literature hints that negative advertising may either be initiated by organizations outside the realm of the campaign or used as a cover up for a candidate with a weak message.

### 2.2. An Overview Of Twitter In Electoral Politics

Twitter debuted in 2006, making 2008 the first presidential election during which the social networking website existed. However, Twitter was not a driving force behind any campaign that year, especially the Obama campaign.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the Obama campaign's victory tweet in 2008 was only retweeted 157 times.<sup>20</sup> Just four years later, during the 2012 election, Twitter stood front and center in both candidates' campaigns. The Obama campaign's victory tweet received 800,000 retweets, over a 5,000 percent increase in retweets from 2008.<sup>21</sup> Both candidates also included links to Twitter on their campaign website,<sup>22</sup> making the social media network an important component of campaign communication.

During the 2012 presidential primary, almost half of the candidates' tweets mentioned another user.<sup>23</sup> Of this collection of tweets, most were directed towards opposing candidates, rather than creating dialogue with voters.<sup>24</sup> However, this comes as no surprise to Kreiss, who argues that campaigns use Twitter to influence the press' broadcasting schedule.<sup>25</sup> It makes sense, then, that a candidate's popularity on Twitter extends far beyond just the quantity of tweets posted daily, but includes factors that draw attention to the tweets, such as focusing on issues and drafting catchy hashtags.<sup>26</sup> The specific targets that make a successful Twitter account, however, remain unclear. Whereas Bethany Conway concluded that tweeting about issues and mentioning opponents remains the primary purpose of Twitter in electoral politics,<sup>27</sup> others disagree. Instead, Adams and McCorkindale suggest that the 2012

presidential candidates used Twitter as a means of increasing attendance at campaign events and did not use Twitter to share their issue positions.<sup>28</sup> Adams and McCorkindale's conclusion appears to dismiss Twitter as a direct means of implementing Flanigan and Zingale's three-step issue position initiative. Among other things, this tension in the literature about the purpose of tweeting during a campaign requires analysis from the 2016 election to further understand what exactly the candidates were promoting on their Twitter account this time around.

In a guidebook for local campaign managers, the authors suggest that campaigns post a combination of seven different types of tweets.<sup>29,30</sup> A majority of the categories intertwine with the plethora of research discussed above. While it is important to tweet about campaign events and polls, it is also important to highlight the candidate's key issue positions and elicit some attacks on the opponent.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, failure to amplify a candidate's own voice impairs the feeling of sincerity behind the Twitter account, so the guidebook also advises campaigns to include nonpolitical tweets that neither attack an opponent nor highlight the campaign, such as showing support for a sports team.<sup>32</sup> Since the guidebook focuses on local campaigns, analyzing the extent to which these techniques and categories exist in a presidential campaign may help further explain how a manager can set the tone of a national race through a candidate's Twitter use. In sum, the purpose of a candidate's Twitter during an election remains unresolved in the literature and studying how President Trump utilized his account both before and after a campaign manager provides insight into drawing more nuanced conclusions regarding this matter.

### 3. Research Question and Hypotheses

How did the target of Donald Trump's tweets change after Kellyanne Conway became campaign manager? I suggest that Mr. Trump began to tweet more about his campaign and less about Hillary Clinton in the four weeks following Conway's hire. Specifically, I propose the following hypotheses:

H<sub>1A</sub>: After Kellyanne Conway's hire, Donald Trump tweeted winning polls more frequently than before Conway's hire

H<sub>1B</sub>: After Kellyanne Conway's hire, Donald Trump's tweets targeted his campaign more frequently than before Conway's hire

H<sub>2</sub>: After Kellyanne Conway's hire, Donald Trump's tweets targeted his issue positions more frequently than before Conway's hire

H<sub>3</sub>: After Kellyanne Conway's hire, Donald Trump's tweets targeted Hillary Clinton less frequently than before Conway's hire

H<sub>4</sub>: After Kellyanne Conway's hire, a more diverse variety of campaign centric hashtags appeared in Donald Trump's tweets than before Conway's hire

### 4. Methods

The sample of Mr. Trump's tweets contained all of the tweets (n=395) over three two-week time periods, totaling six weeks. The first time period dated from July 31, 2016 until August 13, 2016, the last two weeks on the Trump campaign before Conway became manager. Next, all tweets from the two weeks immediately following Conway's hire, which started on August 21, 2016 and continued until September 3, 2016, represented the second time period. Lastly, tweets from the following two weeks, September 4, 2016 through September 17, 2016, were recorded to compare the content across time since Conway's hire. Throughout the paper, the different time periods are referred to as Time Period 1, Time Period 2, and Time Period 3, respectively. All of the tweets are publicly available to view via President Trump's official personal Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump).<sup>33</sup> Each tweet was coded into one of nine mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories:

1. Campaign: A tweet that primarily focused on the happenings of the Trump campaign, such as events, media appearances, polls, and endorsements  
Polls: Special notation given to campaign tweets focused on sharing recent poll results
2. Issue Position: A tweet that primarily focused on Mr. Trump's solution to an issue or a policy proposal
3. Mobilization: A tweet that encouraged one to become involved in the campaign, but did not focus on a specific event, appearance, or poll

4. Current Event: A tweet in response to a holiday, national newsworthy event, or international newsworthy event
5. Clinton Attack: A tweet primarily focused on Hillary Clinton or her campaign
6. Other Candidates or Government Officials: A tweet primarily focused on attacking a candidate or government official other than Hillary Clinton
7. News Attack: A tweet primarily focused on attacking the shortcomings of the media during the campaign
  - a. CNN: A tweet that directly attacked CNN or a CNN employee
  - b. *New York Times*: A tweet that directly attacked The *New York Times* or a *New York Times* employee
  - c. General Media: A tweet that attacked the media as a whole without mentioning a specific source
  - d. Other: A tweet that attacked the media but did not reference any of the above categories
8. Voter Appreciation: A tweet either focused on a follower’s support of the Trump campaign or Mr. Trump expressing his gratitude to followers without focusing on a specific event, appearance, or poll
9. Other: A tweet that did not pertain to any of the categories listed above

The content analysis also included codes for any hashtags accompanying the tweets, into the following categories:

1. #MAGA (including its extended hashtag, #MakeAmericaGreatAgain)
2. #ImWithYou
3. #AmericaFirst
4. #CrookedHillary
5. Other

It often occurred that Mr. Trump incorporated multiple hashtags into one tweet. Thus, a hashtag is either considered campaign centric if it represents a slogan of the Trump campaign (numbers one through three), a Clinton attack (number four), or an “other” if it was not relevant to this research question (number five).

After coding according to the above guidelines, a basic summation test determined the quantity of tweets for each targeting category and hashtag during each time period. A frequency test followed to determine the relative use of each targeting category and hashtag during the same two-week periods.

## 5. Results and Interpretations

### 5.1. Hypothesis 1<sub>A</sub>

Table 1. Number of polling tweets, by time period

Time Period	Number of Polling Tweets
Time Period 1	0
Time Period 2	15
Time Period 3	15

Table 1 illustrates the number of polling tweets posted during all three time periods. Mr. Trump did not mention polls even once in the two weeks preceding Conway’s hire. However, the Twitter account quickly shifted focus once Conway began her role. The account contained 15 polling tweets during Time Period 2, which accounted for 27 percent of Mr. Trump’s campaign tweets. Mr. Trump posted another 15 tweets during Time Period 3, which accounted for 23 percent of campaign tweets. There was a positive correlation between the number of polling tweets and Conway’s hire; the data supports Hypothesis 1<sub>A</sub>, which states that Mr. Trump’s Twitter account included a larger number of polling tweets in the periods after Conway’s hire.

However, the data also encouraged additional consideration of any outside influences on Mr. Trump’s decision not to share poll results in the two weeks before Conway joined the campaign. Time Period 1 followed both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, which resulted in a lot of fluctuation in the polls. By the time the DNC started, it had been four days since Mr. Trump gave his acceptance speech in Cleveland. The polls sent into the field immediately following the RNC were released around the time the DNC began; these numbers showed Mr. Trump

tying or even winning the race during the DNC in late July.<sup>34</sup> However, in early August, the opposite occurred. Secretary Clinton had just given her acceptance speech and new polls entered the field. Clinton reclaimed her victory and held on to it for quite some time.<sup>35</sup> Her new lead in the polls aligned with the start of Time Period 1. Perhaps Mr. Trump was cautious about tweeting polls after the DNC because he did not hold the same lead as he did during the week before. The paper acknowledges this situation as one limitation to the research.

At the same time, having spent two weeks on the campaign trail without ever updating voters on where the race stood may also have been a weakness in Mr. Trump’s messaging strategy. Even after Conway’s hire, during Time Periods 2 and 3, Mr. Trump was trailing Clinton in the national polls. Yet, the campaign still found 30 polls worthy of Mr. Trump posting on the Twitter account that showed him winning among different demographics in various states and regions. It seems implausible to think that all the voters who picked Mr. Trump in the polls then didn’t support him in early August. Instead, it may have been the case that Mr. Trump and his campaign did not spend enough time looking at polls among different groups and only considered the national averages. This may have led the team to conclude that they should use caution by not tweeting any polls during Time Period 1. As a result of this reasoning, further investigating whether Conway, with her expertise in polling and field research, encouraged Mr. Trump to incorporate polls into his Twitter account yields critical future research.

## 5.2. Hypotheses 1<sub>B</sub>, 2, and 3

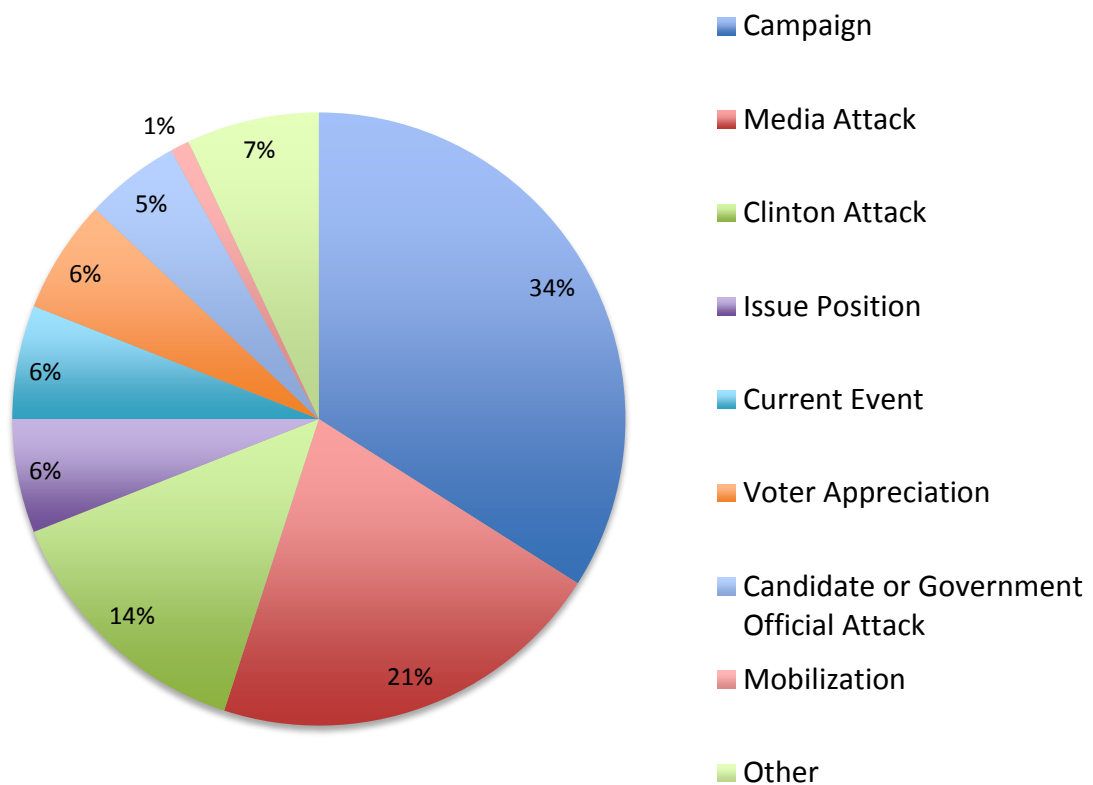


Figure 1. Proportion of tweets, by category (time period 1)

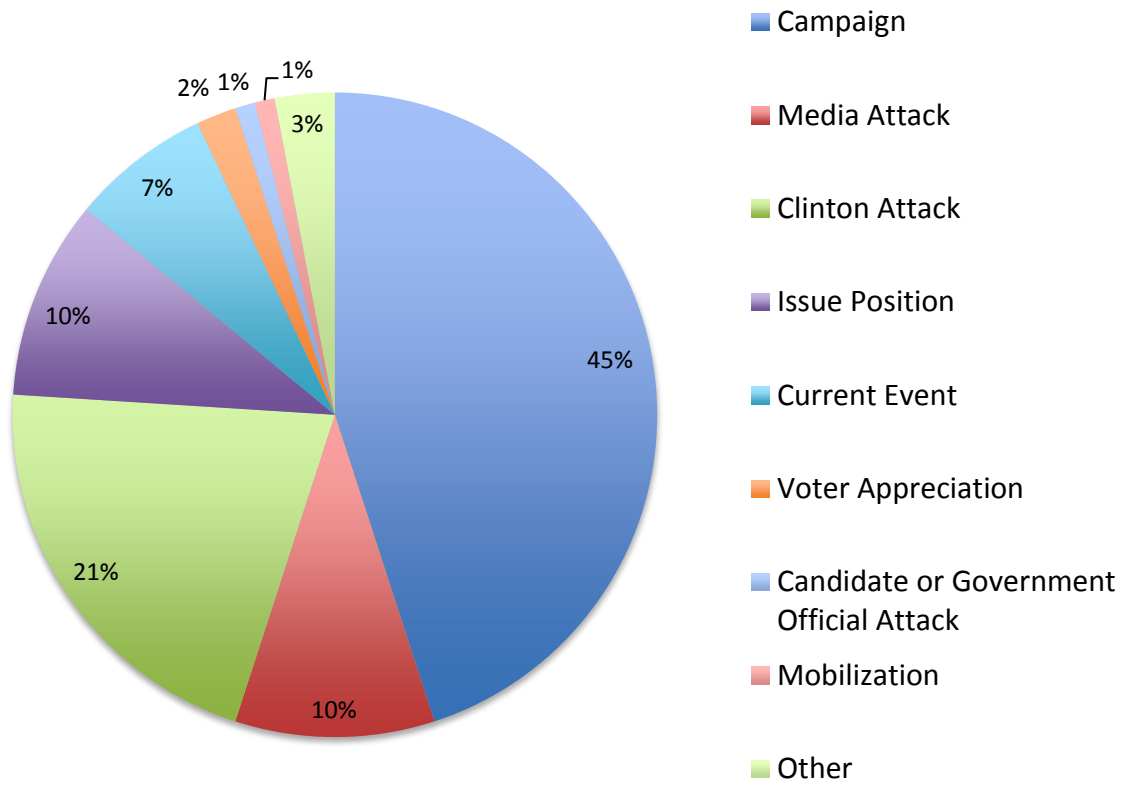


Figure 2. Proportion of tweets, by category (time period 2)

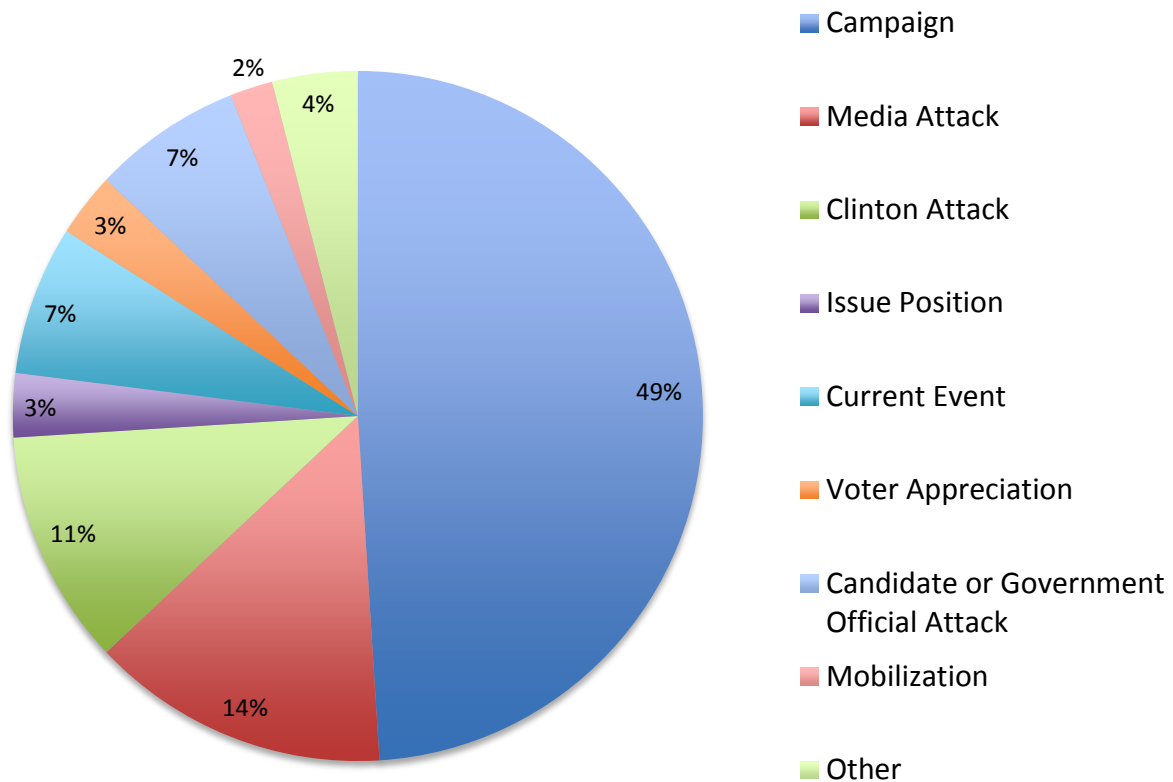


Figure 3. Proportion of tweets, by category (time period 3)

Figure 1 illustrates that campaign tweets represented a plurality of Mr. Trump's tweets in the two weeks prior to Conway's hire. Moreover, campaign tweets held a thirteen-point advantage over the next frequently tweeted target group. Immediately after Conway's hire, the frequency of campaign tweets increased. Mr. Trump tweeted about his campaign eight more times during Time Period 2, compared to Time Period 1. Not only did campaign tweets increase in frequency by eleven points, but they also now held a 24-point lead over the next frequently targeted category (see Figure 2). The trend continued during Time Period 3, as shown in Figure 3. The number of campaign tweets increased by ten tweets compared to Time Period 2 and accounted for approximately half of Mr. Trump's tweets during this time period. The frequency of a campaign tweet held a significant 35-point lead over the next frequently targeted category. As more time passed since Conway's hire, the frequency of campaign tweets increased enough to notice a change in tweeting style. This data supports Hypothesis 1<sub>B</sub>.

One explanation for an increase in campaign tweets was the decision to incorporate polls into the account, thus allowing for a more diverse tweeting category. On top of hosting more rallies and appearing on television more frequently in the last months before the election, Mr. Trump also began sharing more polls (r.e. section 5.1.). The polls broadened the scope of targeting the campaign through Twitter by showing voters where the race stood among different regions, states, or demographics. More information will naturally require more tweets to effectively convey the message, which is why I propose a rise in campaign tweets partially resulted from sharing polls.

When it came to Mr. Trump's tweets on issue positions, I expected the category to increase in frequency as more time went on since Conway's hire. On the other hand, I expected Mr. Trump's attacks on Hillary Clinton to decrease in frequency as more time went on since Conway's hire. Surprisingly, both categories followed a similar pattern rather than acted in opposition to each other. In Time Period 2, Figure 2 shows the increase in frequency of each category, with issue positions almost doubling and Clinton attacks increasing by 50 percent (see Figure 1 for comparison). During Time Period 3, each category then dropped in frequency, as shown in Figure 3. Issue positions reached a new

low, with Mr. Trump only tweeting four times, making up an insignificant three percent of all tweets. Following a similar trend, Figure 3 shows that Mr. Trump's attacks on Hillary Clinton nearly halved the frequency of this category. The data does not fully support Hypothesis 2 because while issue position tweets did increase in frequency immediately following Conway's hire, the category fell to a noticeably lower frequency during Time Period 3. Similarly, the data also does not fully support Hypothesis 3 because attacks on Clinton spike in Time Period 2 before dropping to a new low.

It is plausible that issue positions and Clinton attacks acted in tandem rather than in opposition as a result of the campaign's messaging strategy. During Time Period 2, Mr. Trump appeared to be disqualifying Clinton as a presidential candidate before following up his attacks with an issue position. The policy of primary focus during these two weeks was illegal immigration. Early in the period, Mr. Trump tweeted several attacks on Clinton, questioning her judgment<sup>36</sup>, intelligence<sup>37</sup>, and failed policies<sup>38</sup>, among other traits. Several days later, Mr. Trump followed up with his position on immigration. Rather than going into extensive detail, Mr. Trump tweeted fragments of his position, such as building the wall<sup>39</sup>, making Mexico pay for the wall<sup>40</sup>, and not providing amnesty<sup>41</sup>. The tweets did not convey any formal messages outlining his vision to solve illegal immigration, but rather resorted to the sound bite solutions Mr. Trump had been proposing since the start of his campaign. Considering that Mr. Trump tweeted his already well-known issue positions after attacking Clinton, and did not add additional content or nuance to these positions, I suggest that the tweets were not intended to advance the policies of the Trump campaign to the extent that they were used as a weapon against Clinton to promote change.

In the two weeks following these increases in attacks and issue positions, however, both categories decreased in frequency. The message of the campaign also appeared to significantly shift during Time Period 3 by deviating from the common Clinton attacks and moving towards a new image of the Trump campaign. The paper considers two reasons why new messaging may have caused a decrease in both categories of tweets. First, by the start of Time Period 3, the Trump campaign had introduced an app, entitled America First.<sup>42</sup> Among other things, the app included a link to all of Mr. Trump's official issue positions. Compared to the 140-character limit in a tweet, the app instead linked to multiple pages on Mr. Trump's website. The website outlined Mr. Trump's positions in a series of extended points. Additionally, he followed some of his visions by contrasting with those of Secretary Clinton. When available, the website also included visual aids or a link to a speech about the policy. In sum, the app allowed for a much more extensive explanation of issues that voters could access in one location throughout the duration of the campaign.

Introducing an app was definitely an efficient method of sharing mass information, however it does not fully suffice as justification for almost completely eliminating issue positions on Twitter. Perhaps the Trump campaign also realized that Twitter was not the most effective medium to share issue positions. Rather, giving nationally televised speeches on different policy issues provided for a much more detailed message that also reached a larger and more diverse audience. For example, on September 13, Mr. Trump unveiled his childcare plan, with daughter Ivanka, in a speech. Leading up to the event, Mr. Trump retweeted Ivanka Trump's tweet to his followers, reminding them to watch the event on television.<sup>43</sup> This type of tweet was not sharing an issue position, but rather promoting the campaign by posting about a media appearance. After the event, he tweeted a link to the full transcript of the speech for followers to reference.<sup>44</sup> A similar situation also occurred during the same time period, when Mr. Trump delivered a policy speech to the Economic Club of New York. Following the speech, he tweeted the transcript link for followers to read.<sup>45</sup> I believe posting a transcript helped legitimize the campaign in the sense that Mr. Trump provided enough substantive information about policies that the campaign deemed it important enough for him to share with voters in more words than a tweet allowed. Whereas during Time Period 2, Mr. Trump worked to disqualify Clinton before mentioning multiple fragmented solutions, he turned the tables in Time Period 3 by giving focused, full-length speeches dedicated to a specific topic. These speeches were not necessarily in response to Clinton's qualifications, but rather an opportunity for Mr. Trump to finally express coherent positions in an environment more appropriate than Twitter. These two weeks arguably served as a key turning point in the campaign, where Mr. Trump started focusing on his vision in a detailed, presidential manner that required more space than a tweet to seriously share with voters.



### 5.3. Hypothesis 4

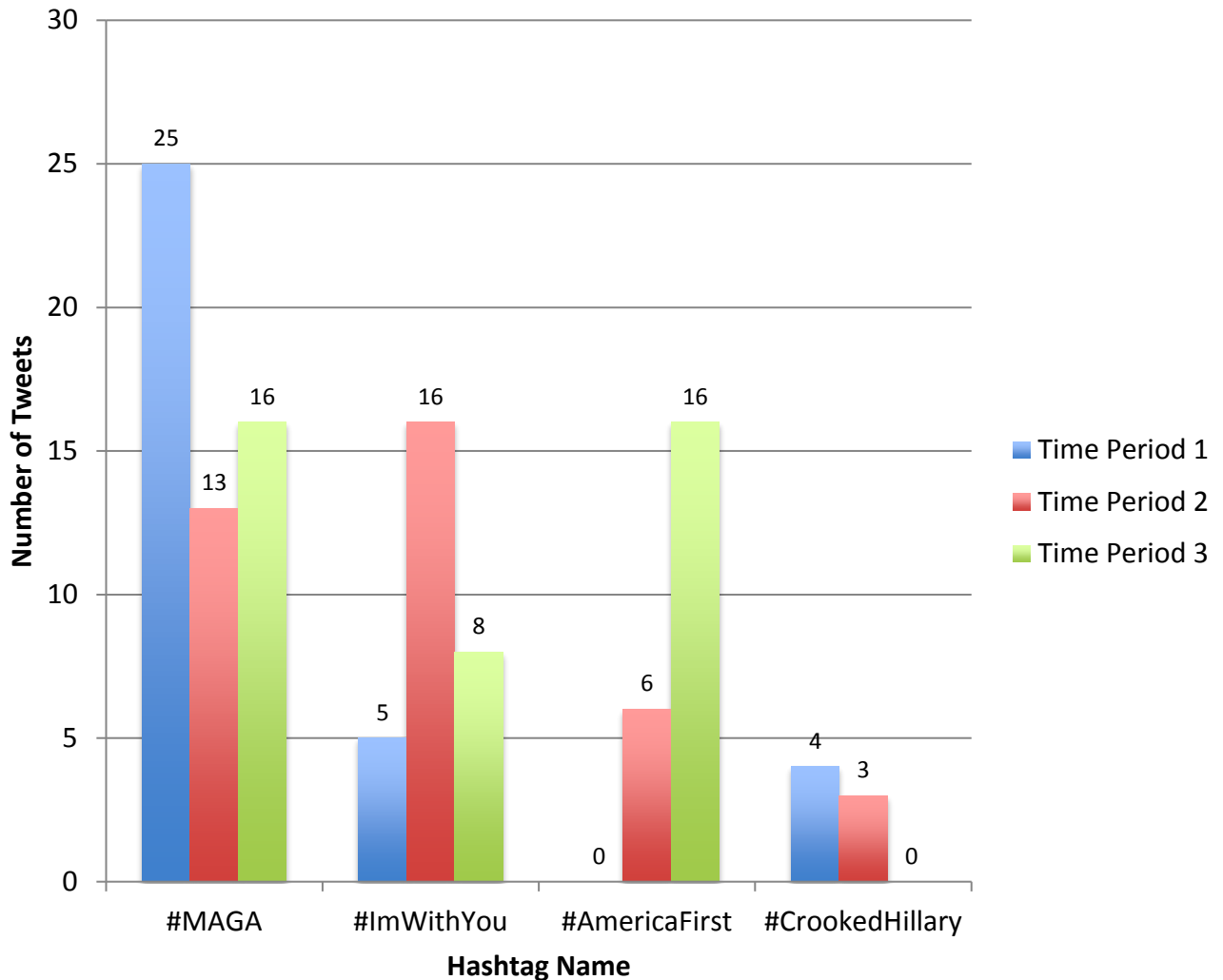


Figure 4. Number of tweets with hashtags, by time period

Figure 4 illustrates the change over time in the use of Mr. Trump’s four most popular hashtags. As previously mentioned, #MAGA, #ImWithYou, and #America First were all campaign centric hashtags that represented a slogan of the campaign. #CrookedHillary was the hashtag representing an attack on Hillary Clinton. In the two weeks prior to Conway’s hire, Mr. Trump’s tweets contained 30 campaign centric hashtags and four hashtags attacking Hillary Clinton. #MAGA was clearly the dominant hashtag during this time period, representing three-quarters of the tweets containing one of these four hashtags. However, the composition and number of hashtags changed quickly once Conway became campaign manager. During Time Period 2, the campaign centric hashtags appeared an additional five times. The use of #CrookedHillary also dropped by 25 percent. As shown in Figure 4, the campaign introduced a new hashtag, #AmericaFirst. Lastly, during Time Period 3, all of Mr. Trump’s most popular hashtags focused on the campaign. #AmericaFirst had already tied with #MAGA as the most used campaign centric hashtag. #CrookedHillary disappeared from the account in early September and all 40 hashtags during this time period promoted the Trump campaign. This data supports Hypothesis 4, which stated that a more diverse variety of campaign centric hashtags appeared after Conway’s hire.

The original purpose of #AmericaFirst was to mirror the name of the campaign’s new app. As time went on, however, the hashtag became much more than just a reference to the app. In fact, any mention of an app ceased after

just one tweet. Instead, #AmericaFirst served as a consistent accompaniment to campaign targeted tweets. During Time Period 3, tweets referencing campaign rallies or winning polls often contained #AmericaFirst. As Mr. Trump targeted his campaign more frequently, it appears as though he needed a uniform way to show his followers the progress the campaign was making. #MAGA would not suffice as showing this progress because the hashtag accompanied tweets across many targets. It was too general and popular of a slogan to tweet only under certain circumstances. #ImWithYou served as a means for Mr. Trump to juxtapose himself with Hillary Clinton. Of course, the hashtag played on the words of Clinton's campaign slogan, "I'm With Her." During its peak in Time Period 2, #ImWithYou often accompanied two types of tweets. First, it appeared alongside the issue position tweets. As mentioned earlier, Mr. Trump shared his positions after he tried to disqualify Clinton. The hashtag served as a way to highlight the immense differences in the candidates' policies and judgment. Additionally, the hashtag also appeared alongside campaign tweets. Mr. Trump often mentioned his massive rally attendance relative to Clinton's, so perhaps the hashtag was intended to not just compare policies, but also compare popularity and momentum among the candidates. It is plausible that the hashtag was used during this time to gain as much ground on Clinton as possible by questioning her perceived self-indulgent campaign slogan in a sarcastic manner. While the hashtag brought awareness to the differences of the campaign, I do not believe that it highlighted the campaign's growth in the most effective way possible.

On the last day of August, Mr. Trump tweeted a video of his immigration speech, during which he dedicated special time to speaking about the necessity of reforms serving America's interest before any other nation. Mr. Trump summed up how he would go about making these reforms by saying, "Under a Trump administration, it's called America First."<sup>46</sup> Soon after, many campaign tweets included the hashtag. I believe #AmericaFirst directed the target of the tweets even further away from Clinton and instead focused on Mr. Trump's vision as president. Compared to #ImWithYou, #AmericaFirst was much more campaign centric because it did not sarcastically play on the words of another campaign but instead evolved directly from a policy speech Mr. Trump gave. From that point on, #AmericaFirst set the overarching tone of the Trump campaign and served as an uplifting reflection of the momentum Mr. Trump had continued to build up.

## 6. Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

This paper explored the changes in Donald Trump's messaging on Twitter after Kellyanne Conway became campaign manager in mid-August. The results suggest that a significant increase in campaign tweets and the diversification of campaign centric hashtags occurred in the weeks following Conway's hire. When reflecting on Conway's decision to portray Mr. Trump as a "happy warrior"<sup>47</sup> by allowing him to spend more time on the campaign trail interacting with voters, it makes sense that the Twitter account may have become more of an outlet for promoting events, media appearances, and polls than it had in the past before Conway's hire.

As a result of this research, one conclusion suggests that campaign managers matter in that they have the ability to set the general tone of a campaign through messaging. Therefore, all political candidates should not use Twitter uniformly during their campaign. Rather than claiming, like the literature suggests, that Twitter should serve as a place to express issue positions or increase attendance at rallies, I propose that effective messaging is candidate specific. In the case of Mr. Trump, the campaign worked most effectively when he focused on his own strengths, such as speaking with voters, rather than attacking an opponent. His Twitter account eventually complemented those strengths once Conway was in a position to strategize messaging techniques. Thus, a campaign manager plays an essential role in determining how a candidate best presents himself during the race. After finding the ideal image, the manager the best person to work directly alongside the candidate and implement a messaging plan complementing the general tone of the race. These conclusions are important for candidates who run for office in the future, as Twitter and other social media platforms will surely rise in popularity. With that rise in popularity also comes more responsibility. Campaign managers have the unique ability to see Twitter from not just a personal perspective, but also as an important, strategic component of a campaign. Their expertise allows the candidate to still have a voice on social networking accounts, but finds a way for the voice to speak with a purpose.

Lastly, I acknowledge that my research design contains some limitations. The time periods in the research surely do not paint a full picture of everything that occurred on the account both before and after Conway's hire. While the time frame selected added new insight into the discussion surrounding electoral tweeting, analyzing tweets from time periods closer to the election, in late September and throughout October, to study if President Trump was able to keep most of his tweets focused on the campaign would contribute to a more holistic study. Also, interpretations of the data are based on patterns, or correlations, observed in the tweets. Like many research projects, I did not consult the exact

source of my research, which is the Trump campaign in my case, and instead made inferences of possible explanations for the data based on my content analysis. While drawing conclusions deemed plausible based on the timing of the tweets, I acknowledge that fully proving interpretations and conclusions lies beyond the scope of this paper.

## 7. Acknowledgements

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