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'I'm the Most Transparent President in the History of this Country': A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Use of Twitter.

Introduction

Transparency has been hailed as the key to better governance (Florini 2007; Hood, Heald 2006; Stiglitz 2001). Access to information about official rules and activities can empower citizens and journalists, constrain politicians, and expose corruption. Yet, for precisely these reasons, transparency is highly political. Most political actors prefer secrecy to openness and oppose constraints on their actions. Despite the relatively clear meaning of the term, there is significant scope for varied concepts of transparency once its basic elements are elaborated and placed within a wider theoretical setting. Of particular interest is the ambiguity surrounding the notion of 'understanding' and how this quality of transparency is itself to be understood. If grasped as a quality pertaining to an object or communication this may lend itself to relatively straightforward empiricist uses of the concept. That is, an object is easily understood on its surface without need for detailed interpretation.

The 2016 presidential election was historic for a number of reasons: Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be nominated for president by a major party; Donald Trump claimed a surprising victory; and Twitter became *the* political social medium. Twitter is a micro-blogging system that eases communication between individuals by allowing them to exchange personal messages, as well as pictures among other types of information (Park 2013). Previous research has indicated the importance of such a microblogging site

as a channel for political discourse online (e.g., see Zappavigna 2012; Wells et al. 2016; Fuchs 2018; Gaughan 2017; Zhang, Wells, Wang, Rohe 2018). The dynamic nature of Twitter and the fact that it is public and free, give the platform a greater popularity (del Olmo, Díaz 2016: 111). According to a Pew Research Center study, Twitter users demonstrate a high interest in politics compared to other social network sites (Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, Matsa 2014). Twitter offers politicians a platform to engage and deliberate with the public, as well as the ability to attack political opponents more effectively (del Olmo, Díaz 2016). The presidential campaign of Donald Trump in 2016 has demonstrated the tremendous potential that Twitter offers for political speech and campaigning. This platform allowed President Trump the ability not only to address the audience in a two way form of communication, but also gave him the opportunity to dodge traditional media by disseminating his views and sometimes important policy statements instantly on Twitter (Gabler 2016; Fuchs 2018). In other words, the way by which important political figures, such as President Trump, utilize Twitter sets the agenda for traditional news media and thus turns such a microblogging system into a competing medium (Gabler 2016).

Donald Trump has claimed to be the most transparent president in the history of the United States¹ and he tries to demonstrate it via his no-filter use of Twitter; addressing decisions and activities on immigration enforcement, environmental protection, climate science, and other hot-button issues. This study will consider a set of tweets as a case study on how Trump's discourse functions in modern society, particularly as a response to a significant event: the California wildfires of November 2018. The case study in question was selected to exemplify discourse produced in response to a non-partisan environmental issue. The rhetorical exigence of this set of wildfires called for a response and Trump did respond to this issue via his preferred discursive method: Twitter. Overall, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- How do President Trump's tweets function as a form of political discourse?
- What are the implications of this style?
- Is Donald Trump's communication actually transparent?

Through the selected case study on the California Wildfires of 2018, the analysis aims at showing that Trump's discursive style on twitter allows for a new form of political discourse to emerge, and with this emergence, broader implications of the discourse evolve, including social implications of the content and of Political Twitter.

Methodology and materials

The analysis of the discourse associated with environmental endangerment represents a goal strictly related to the Critical Discourse Studies agenda.

Ecological destruction can, indeed, be considered as part of the existing oppressive relations between humans and other humans and between humans and nature (see Stibbe 2014). As Fairclough (2004: 104) stated, "[t]he unrestrained emphasis on growth [also] poses major threats to the environment". The capitalist world often downplays the intrinsic ethical value of flora and fauna in the name of the view of nature as a commodity. At the same time, the natural world is also discursively erased from human consciousness, supporting its anthropocentric exploitation and reducing human responsibility in its devastation. Such an 'oblivion' of nature takes place at multiple levels, from sentences and clauses, e.g. through a series of linguistic devices such as metaphors, metonymies, nominalisations, passivisation, ergativity (see e.g. Gerbig 1993; Goatly 2001), to texts and discourses as a whole (Stibbe 2014: 587-588; for a review of the literature on ecolinguistics see e.g. Alexander, Stibbe 2013). Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis aims to provide an explanatory critique that connects language use and social practice (Fairclough 2010). Fairclough's method —Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) — is both text-oriented and allows for sociological analysis. As a summary, Fairclough's approach links linguistic based, detailed textual analysis, the macro-sociological analysis of social

¹ President Trump on May 24, 2019, in reference to Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russian investigation.

practice (based upon Foucauldian traditions) and micro-sociological or interpretive traditions (Jørgenson, Phillips 2009). Fairclough (1992) describes CDA using the “three-dimensional model”. It provides an analytical framework for any type of communicative event and demonstrates how CDA considers textual elements, as well as the discursive and social practices of discourse. Using the organizational strategies by Gumpert (2000), each tweet will be analysed via a descriptive linguistic approach and then preliminary implications and suppositions will be summarized.

The 2018 wildfire season was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire season ever recorded in California, with a total of 8,527 fires burning an area of 1,893,913 acres (766,439 ha), the largest area of burned acreage recorded in a fire season. In November 2018, strong winds aggravated conditions in another round of large, destructive fires that occurred across the state. This new batch of wildfires included the Woolsey Fire and the Camp Fire, which killed at least 85 people with 2 still unaccounted for as of 17 February 2019. It destroyed more than 18,000 structures, becoming both California’s deadliest and most destructive wildfire on record. From November 10 through November 17, President Trump tweeted 50 times about this event. These tweets were one of the largest groupings of tweets responding to an environmental issue from Trump’s primary account. Given the massive news coverage of the fires, Trump’s tweets during this time period allow for a case study of how Trump presents environmental issues in his tweeted political discourse. A full analysis of Trump’s tweets reveals how and where the discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed in the networked public sphere, and the social implications of that discourse. The study is informed by CDA methods, since it relies on the assumption that “any part of any language text, spoken or written, is simultaneously constituting representations, relations, and identities”, as pointed out by Fairclough and Wodak (1997). Consequently, it shares the view according to which discourse does manifest particular worldviews, relations, identities and ideologies, and that, as a set of “context-dependent semiotic practices” (Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 89) that are socially constituted/constitutive, it cannot but be ana-

lysed in its situatedness, considering its multiple layers of contexts.

Analysis and Discussion

In the initial textual analysis, specific grammatical and linguistic features were identified by a close reading of all the tweets together. The first reading was done in chronological order. Further readings and dissection of the text revealed thematic patterns present in the tweets. Fairclough (1989) suggests examination of the large-scale features of the text to be the last step in the linguistic component of critical discourse analysis. In a traditional discourse analysis, the large-scale analysis considers all the aspects of the text as a whole. For this analysis, the tweets will be considered as a whole, even though they were produced separately. In the table below the tweets selected to exemplify the analysis are shown:

Tweet 1 (Trump 2018j)	There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor. Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!
Tweet 2 (Trump 2018g)	More than 4,000 are fighting the Camp and Woolsey Fires in California that have burned over 170,000 acres. Our hearts are with those fighting the fires, the 52,000 who have evacuated, and the families of the 11 who have died. The destruction is catastrophic. God Bless them all.
Tweet 3 (Trump 2018k)	These California fires are expanding very, very quickly (in some cases 80-100 acres a minute). If people don't evacuate quickly, they risk being overtaken by the fire. Please listen to evacuation orders from State and local officials!"
Tweet 4 (Trump 2018n)	With proper Forest Management, we can stop the devastation constantly going on in California. Get Smart!

Tweet 5 (Trump 2018i)	The California Fire Fighters, FEMA and First Responders are amazing and very brave. Thank you and God Bless you all!
Tweet 6 (Trump 2018d)	I just approved an expedited request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of California. Wanted to respond quickly in order to alleviate some of the incredible suffering going on. I am with you all the way. God Bless all of the victims and families affected.
Tweet 7 (Trump 2018m)	We mourn for the lives lost and we pray for the victims of the California Wildfires. I want to thank the Firefighters and First Responders for their incredible courage in the face of grave danger...
Tweet 8 (Trump 2018l)	Was just briefed by @FEMA_Brock and @Secretary-Zinke, who are in California. Thank you to the great Firefighters, First Responders and @FEMA for the incredible job they are doing w/ the California Wildfires. Our Nation appreciates your heroism, courage & genius. God Bless you all!
Tweet 9 (Trump 2018f)	Just spoke to Governor Jerry Brown to let him know that we are with him, and the people of California, all the way!
Tweet 10 (Trump 2018h)	Thank you @JerryBrownGov. Look forward to joining you and @GavinNewsom tomorrow in California. We are with you!
Tweet 11 (Trump 2018c)	Heading to California with @GOPLeader Kevin McCarthy, @RepLaMalfa, and @KenCalvert. Look forward to being with our brave Firefighters, First Responders and @FEMA, along with the many brave People of California. We are with you all the way – God Bless you all!
Tweet 12 (Trump 2018e)	Incredible to be with our GREAT HEROES today in California. We will always be with you!

Table 1
Trump Tweets on California Fires.

Grammatical and linguistic features

Overwording

Over-wording (Fairclough 2001) refers to a high level use of words and lexical items that are synonymous, near-synonymous, or semantically close enough to contribute to the construction of an idea, theme and point of preoccupation. According to Fairclough (1992), overwording is a sign of intense preoccupation, which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle. Trump's use of the word "incredible," has been noted in linguistic analyses before. Factba.se, an AI software based website found that Trump had used the word "incredible," 4,116 times in a sample of 7,910,104 words gathered from previous tweets and speeches as of May 15, 2019 (Fact Squared Inc 2019). In this sample, Trump uses the word "incredible" only four times: "incredible suffering" (Trump 2018d); "incredible courage" (Trump 2018m); "incredible job" (Trump 2018l) and "Incredible to be here" (Trump 2018e). The continued usage signals his own stylistic choice. The phrase "God Bless" is also replicated within this sample, as seen in tweets 2, 5, 6, 8, and 11. There are also repeated instances of the phrase "all the way": "I am with you all the way" (Trump 2018d); "we are with him, and the people of California, all the way!" (Trump 2018f); "We are with you all the way" (Trump 2018e). There are also continuous references to the various groups of first responders that were involved with the fires. The significance of overwording, particularly in Trump's case, is that it demonstrates Trump's affinity for specific phrases, as well as directs emphasis and focuses on certain ideas and groups of people. In particular, Trump continually references fire fighters and first responders. There is also reproduction of specific grammatical errors in the choice to repeat specific vocabulary, which can be interpreted as an indicator of the same author writing each tweet.

Synonymy

The overuse of synonyms has the same implications as overwording. Trump uses various phrases in synonymous forms, which places the

emphasis on the message, and calls attention to specific aspects of the tweets. For instance, the phrase “we are with you” is reworded several times. Tweet 2 includes “Our hearts are with those...” (Trump 2018) and tweet 6 has “I am with you all...” (Trump 2018d). Tweet 10 uses “We are with you” directly (Trump 2018h), as does tweet 11 with “We are with you all the way” (Trump 2018c) and tweet 12 with “We will always be with you” (Trump 2018e).

Trump also uses various phrases for the event that took place itself. While “California Wildfires” was the most common name for the fires, (Trump 2018m, 2018l), the terms “forest fires” (Trump 2018j), “Camp and Woolsey Fires” (Trump 2018g), “California fires” (Trump 2018k), “devastation” (Trump 2018n), and “the fire” (Trump 2018k) were all used in describing the same event. Each of these particular word choices hold a slightly different meaning. However, the use of different names for the same event primarily indicates the lack of consistency of names at this point other than the Camp, Paradise, and Woolsey fires, but also alludes to the misnaming of wildfires as forest fires.

Disjunctive sequencing

There is only one example of disjunctive sequencing in this sample of tweets, but the example helps inform the Manichean language style of Trump as described by Jamieson and Taussig (2017). The sequencing of information using the alternative/disjunctive conjunction “or” presents the issue in an oversimplified, dualistic manner. In tweet 1, Trump defines the cause of the fire as poor forest management. In addressing this cause, he issues a command: “Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!” (Trump 2018j). The either/or choice is presented, but without allowing for variety in solutions. The disjunctive sequencing of information ‘X or Y’ presents only two options and could even be considered as a threat. However, with the absence of agency, it is unclear who the threat is directed toward.

Undefined agency and voice

The agency pattern of a text can remain at the subconscious level unless made visible by the critical reader. Thus, it is important to show who is depicted as Agent, and therefore empowered and over whom (the Affected). A transitivity feature is also the degree of nominalization. The conversion of processes into nominals has the effect of backgrounding the process itself by omitting information about agents of power. This effect can also be achieved by the use of passive verbs (Halliday 1985). When agency is undefined, it allows for abstract blame to take place, as well as the exclusion of responsibility. Tweets 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11 all demonstrate undefined agency. Tweet 1 excludes agency by not specifying an active subject, which in turn allows for the exclusion of responsibility. Trump tweeted “There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor. Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests” (Trump 2018j).

In tweet 4, Trump assigns blame to “Forest Management,” but the agent is abstract and undefined. He writes “With proper Forest Management, we can stop the devastation constantly going on in California” (Trump 2018n). Further, the audience is left to assume the agency of “we” to either be the collective nation of people, or the federal government.

There is technical exclusion of agency in tweets 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11, where the audience is left to assume the active agent is Trump himself. Each of these tweets is written in a grammatically incorrect style with the exclusion of a pronoun or noun defining the agency. It can be assumed in each case, that the agent is Trump. This exclusion of agency demonstrates two further concepts. One, it reflects a stylistic choice on Trump’s part to write tweets similarly to the traditional SMS update style of tweets, when Twitter first came out. This indicates his familiarity with the original versions of Twitter, which further adds to his credibility as a user of Twitter. Second, it demonstrates his use of the first-person voice, which adds to his claims of self-authorship.

The use of first-person voice is evident in tweets 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. It should be noted that the switch in voice from the first five tweets is significant, especially as it further indicates Trump is speaking for himself and tweeting from the account himself. The use of “I” (as well as the implied “I” in tweets 8, 9, 10, and 11) demonstrate Trump’s personal action in the matter, and his self-authorship. With the use of the first-person voice, Trump speaks, and writes, for himself.

Vocabulary and word choice

The particular word choice used in each tweet also holds significance. For one, the level of Trump’s vocabulary is demonstrated in this sample. While it is possible that Trump holds more advanced vocabulary than demonstrated in this sample, the particular word choice makes his tweets accessible to those of nearly any reading ability. Vocabulary choice can signify intelligence and levels of education, but in this sample Trump’s word choice most often represents his relational modality or authority in the situation. His word choice can also call attention to a particular part of the tweet, or demonstrate his discursive style (consider the examples used in the discussion of synonymy and overwording). Other particular word choices are significant as they shape the direction of how the tweets are interpreted, suggest certain ideas and evoke specific ideologies. For example, the use of “forest” in tweet 1 (Trump 2018j) as a descriptive modifier signifies that for Trump, this issue revolves around forests, and further justifies assigning blame to the abstract concept of “forest management”. However, the Camp, Woolsey and Paradise fires were all classified as wildfires under California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection² (Cal Fire 2019), which carries a different meaning than forest fire. While definitionally similar, they are not synonyms and evoke different symbolic meanings.

Trump’s misuse of specific vocabulary, and using specific words

² Incident information. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Retrieved from: http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/incidents/incidents_statsevents, (accessed January 2020).

to imply a factual statement, as Ott (2017), Jamieson and Taussig’s (2017) exemplify, concerns over the accuracy of statements that are presented as factual and authentic information. In a different way, the change in choice of words can also demonstrate reflection and correction of previous word choice, as well as express a more detailed understanding of the issue. For instance, in tweet 1, “forest fire” (Trump 2018j) is used. This terminology shifts to the “Camp and Woolsey Fires” (Trump 2018g) in tweet 2, and finally to “California Wildfires” (Trump 2018m, 2018l) in tweets 7 and 8.

Trump uses modifiers and adjectives to evaluate events. Trump’s positive and/or negative evaluation of an action, person, or event can be seen in the choice of the descriptive adjectives and modifiers that he uses. In a similar method as emphasising, the evaluation does not have to use adjectives or modifiers, and instead can simply use particular phrases that hold specific denotative and connotative meanings. For example, in tweet 1, words such as “massive, deadly and costly,” “poor,” and “gross mismanagement” (Trump 2018j) allude to an overarching negative theme in this particular tweet. Other negative evaluative phrasing is seen in tweet 2, with “the destruction is catastrophic” (Trump 2018g) and tweet 4 with the use of “devastation constantly going on” (Trump 2018k). The framing of tweet 1 combined with the specific vocabulary and terminology used demonstrates negative evaluation of the situation at hand. The negative phrasing of “no reason,” rather than a positive framing such as ‘the reason for X is Y’ is consistent with the Manichean style of Trump’s language identified by Jamieson and Tausig (2017).

There is a shift in the evaluative language Trump uses in the sample, beginning at tweet 5 (coinciding with the fires reaching catastrophic levels of danger and damage). Trump’s tweets prior to this point contained an overall negative evaluative tone, but “amazing and very brave” (Trump 2018i) have an implicitly positive evaluation. It should be noted that what is being evaluated has significance in terms of the tone of the evaluation. Prior to tweet 5, Trump assigned blame and negative evaluative language to the fires themselves, and “forest management” (Trump 2018j, 2018g). However, as the fires worsen, the language shifts to gratitude and support for those facing the fires.

In tweet 6, Trump uses the phrase “incredible suffering” (Trump 2018d) in nearly an oxymoronic fashion. When terms that are inherently positive and negative are juxtaposed in such a way, the lexical cohesion suffers. However, these examples demonstrate Trump’s proclivity for the term. Trump continues to use the same word to positively evaluate the actions taken by the “Firefighters,” “First Responders,” and “@FEMA” (Trump 2018i, 2018m, 2018l, 2018c). Trump’s use of the adjectives in tweet 7, “incredible courage” and “grave danger” (Trump 2018m) suggest that he grasps magnitude of the action taken by emergency responders. The use of “grave” suggests the mortality associated with this danger, making in an appropriate and robust term in the context. Using “great” (Trump 2018l) and “brave” (Trump 2018c) as preceding adjectives also positively evaluates these agents. Lastly, the words “heroism,” “courage,” and “genius” are used to describe the responders in favourable terms.

Relational modality

Among the most significant textual features that Fairclough (1992) considers to be formal features of text, let us focus on the relational values, i.e. those that reflect how social relationships are enacted within the text. In a transparent sense, relational values focus on relations and social relationships. Throughout this sample of tweets, Trump asserts his relational modality, or his authority as a speaker/writer, in several different ways. One way that uses relational modality is through implicit assumptions of the power that comes with his position. By direct references to other politicians, Trump asserts his authority in his own position as president. He references other politicians in tweets 8, 9, 10 and 11, indicating his ‘real time’ collaboration and communication with other notable political leaders. He refers to FEMA Brock Long, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke, California Governor Jerry Brown, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, and Representatives McCarthy, LaMalfa, and Calvert.

Another way that Trump demonstrates the implicit assumptions of relational modality is through suggestions of his social authority in making decisions and assigning fault or blame (in a role similar to a

judge). In tweet one, there is implicit suggestion of Trump’s social authority in determining the cause of the fires, of assigning blame, and of federal aid distribution. The relational modality is demonstrated in the assertive nature of the first two sentences “There is no reason...except that...” and “Billions of dollars are given...al because of...” (Trump 2018j).

The authority claim here does include expressive modality as well, as it naturally overlaps with relational modality, but the modality in this specific tweet aligns closer with the definition of relational modality. The same sentence structure is used in tweet 3. “If people don’t evacuate...they risk...” (Trump 2018k). This structure further demonstrates Trump’s Manichean style of assertion of facts to further his own authority. In a similar manner to assigning authority and agency to emergency responders, Trump also demonstrates his authority in deciding authority of others with assigning agency to “State and local officials” (Trump 2018k). This is also seen in the declarative use of “heroism” (Trump 2018l) and “HEROES” (Trump 2018e), assigning relational modality to emergency responders.

Trump also presents relational modality through specific word usage. Particular word choice, as discussed earlier, is a crucial component of discourse analysis. For example, the use of the word “briefed” (Trump 2018l) in tweet 8 uses relational modality to describe the presidency. It signifies the power inherent with his position and his access to information. The privilege to attain specific knowledge and details is associated with the position of president. This is further shown in the use of specific numbers and details in tweet 2. Using “4,000” (Trump 2018g) rather than “a lot” represents Trump’s attempt to demonstrate that he has a direct and authentic understanding of the issue. Further, it indicates epistemic and relational modality. The word choice of specific rather than abstract quantifiers reflects a degree of certainty and relational modality that comes with Trump’s position. They demonstrate that he is privy to the exact information that others may not have. The tweet attempts to further enhance Trump’s authority by identifying the fires by name, and adding details about the location and particular facts surrounding the event. Trump’s authority of evaluating the truth in

these statements can be interpreted as expressive modality, but falls more in line with the definition of epistemic modality, that refers to “the kind of connotative meaning relating to the degree of certainty the speaker conveys about the message or the estimation of probability associated with it” (Cruse 2004). Epistemic modality is relative to the speaker or writer’s knowledge of the world, and in this case, Trump’s epistemic modality is also contingent on his relational modality. Trump’s epistemic modality can also be indicated with the exclusion of the adjective “forest” to describe the fires, a demonstration of corrective action.

Ideological Themes

Ideologies, according to Fairclough and Wodak (2010: 105), are “particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power [and] relations of domination and exploitation”. The ideological themes shown in Trump’s discourse come from the patterns established in the tweets. The most prevalent themes that Trump presents in this particular sample of discourse are national unity (not to be confused with nationalism), transparency and authenticity.

National identity

Tweets 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 all emphasize themes of national unity. Through promoting national unity with collective pronouns, and variations of the phrase “we are with you” there are indications of a united, supportive front. To further this idea, the phrases “incredible” and “all the way” play on US American cultural ideology of commitment and going above and beyond expectation in times of crisis. The use of collective pronouns, both inclusive and exclusive, is one way that this national unity is explicitly demonstrated.

The vocabulary and phrasing used in the tweets reveal implicit ideologies. According to Fairclough (1989), these ideologies are experiential values, which reflect content, values, and beliefs that are important to the speaker and the audience. Trump also uses in-

clusive and exclusive pronouns, as well as collective pronouns to demonstrate national unity. For example, Trump’s use of the collective pronoun in tweet 8 “Our Nation” (Trump 2018l) signifies unity, and the capitalization of “Nation” signifies patriotism and national pride. Further, in an inclusive direction, Trump uses the phrases “we/I are with you” and “all the way” (Trump 2018d, 2018f, 2018h, 2018c, 2018e) to reflect the US American value of unity, a theme re-emphasized with the collective and inclusive ‘we/our’ pronoun seen in tweets 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Trump also uses the collective “we” in an exclusive manner. In tweet 10, Trump’s use of “We are with you!” (Trump 2018h) indicates the distance between Brown and Trump, who have previously clashed on Twitter. Rather than directly saying “I am with you” or “We’ll get through this together,” the particular phrasing demonstrates acknowledgement without overt identification. This phrase also indicates support for the “people of California” and with the head of the local government.

The importance of noting the collective pronouns in examining thematic unity, is that one can see who Trump aligns himself with, and against. While he unifies himself with emergency responders and US Americans, he distances himself from the victims of the fire, as well as Gov.

Brown. Trump also uses the collective “we” in relaying actions of support, best demonstrated through his appeal to civic religion.

Transparency and Authenticity

The second ideological theme exhibited in this sample of tweets is an aura of Authenticity. Authenticity is one of the key features of Trump’s discursive presentation of self. There are several different ways that Trump presents this supposedly authentic version of himself, including through various grammatical features, themes of transparency, and indications of self-authorship in his published tweets. One way Trump attempts to portray an ‘authentic’ self on Twitter is through his grammatical choices. The use of consistent and persistent capitalization errors, as well as particular word choice indi-

cates that the same author is involved. As well, allowing these errors to be published insinuates that the tweets are not being edited and have an aura of spontaneity about them. Trump's official presidential account mirrors personal accounts of other users.

Minor errors and overuse of particular phrases add up to demonstrate Trump is writing the tweets himself. The grammatical structures of the tweets are similar to one another, further indicating the authentic nature of the account. For example, the grammatical structures of tweets 1 and 4 are parallel in the use of two assertive statements followed by a command.

The use of first-person voice is another indicator of self-authorship and authenticity. By speaking in "I" statements, Trump is relaying information that he conducted himself, and is keeping his followers informed and update on what he is up to. The nature of Twitter also further themes of authentic, as the user is able to speak for themselves and freely post content without censorship or editing. Trump's account has also been verified, which leads the audience to the assumption that if he is the owner of the account, he is also the author of the tweets. Another way that Trump projects an aura of authenticity is through the transparency of his actions. By using phrases such as "I just approved..." (Trump 2018d) or "was just briefed..." (Trump 2018i), "Just spoke to Governor Jerry Brown" (Trump 2018f), or even "Heading to California..." (Trump 2018h), Trump is keeping his followers updated on his real time actions. With a position that involves secrecy and protection of travel and pending actions, the tweets give an 'insider look' at the presidency and allow Trump to appear transparent to his votes. Other phrasing indicates action towards remedying the immediate situation, such as signing a state of disaster declaration or speaking with local government. He keeps the public informed, as he moves towards further immediate short-term actions.

The opinions inserted into the tweets further transparency as well. Trump is not being censored by others, and demonstrates his unwillingness to comply with the censorship of political correctness through his opinionated and inflammatory tweets. In tweet 4, he demands that forest management needs to improve and "Get Smart!",

implying that the current agencies in charge of forest management are not meeting Trump's quota for intelligence. The phrasing indicates action towards remedying the immediate situation. These indicators of authenticity are crucial to my analysis, because the social implications of this analysis depend on the idea that Trump wrote these tweets himself. While there are slightly different linguistic and rhetorical patterns throughout this sample of tweets, there are consistent indicators that the same author is involved in each tweet, such as the consistent relational modality, sentence structure, word choice, and persistent grammatical errors. Overall, as long as there is a consistent practice in the text production, as well as similarities and consistencies in the discursive practice, whether Trump specifically authors the tweets himself is less important than the consistent presentation that he is the author.

Even with assuming that all the tweets in this sample are as written by Trump, there are a few that stand out. Tweet 2 has the most signs of either being co-written or edited by another author. For one, the capitalization error of "Bless" (Trump 2018g) is the only grammatical error in the tweet, which is a mild error that indicates Trump's style. This tweet also uses the oxford comma, which not seen in any other tweet. The particular details included indicate that someone else was involved with at least dispensing the information in this tweet. Considering tweets 2 and 3 together leads to several potential theories on the authorship of these tweets. For one, the style and information of the tweet indicate outside involvement in the creation of the tweet; potentially an advisor. Second, the mild nature of these tweets stray from Trump's often opinionated discourse. Another theory is that these tweets were prepared ahead of time and either proofread for accuracy before being published or were crafted with the help of an aide. In any case, these tweets were still presented as Trump's own words, and are considered as his own discourse.

Other indicators of self-authorship are the persistent and consistent grammatical errors. The continued capitalization of specific words and phrases, as well as repetitive use of key terms indicates that the same author was responsible for each tweet. The "real time" updates in conversations with other politicians, and responses to Gov.

Brown are also indicators that Trump is at least involved with the tweets. Lastly, the thematic authenticity that is presented throughout the set of tweets is a strong indicator that Trump was involved with the tweets.

Conclusion

The era of internet and social media revolutionised the way politicians run their campaigns and communicate with their supporters. Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign utilized all types of social media enabling him to connect with his supporters in a more personal way. Obama's successful online campaign made other politicians follow his lead. Donald Trump took using social media to another level by personally managing his own Twitter account. Trump's controversial tweets created a public discussion which garnered him coverage on traditional media. His domination on social media definitely played a part in his success and one part of it was his rhetoric, which changed the way we think of political discourse. Thus, one thing that separates Trump from his predecessors is his prolific use of Twitter, where Trump is "uniquely transparent" (Clark, Grieve 2019: 23).

In order to answer the research questions posed in the introduction, this study shows that Twitter is used for production and consumption of political content by politicians, establishing itself as an integral form of political communication. With any mediated form of political communication, the content produced merits attention and academic analysis. Though a specific case study, this study showed that Trump uses Twitter to respond to particular events without using traditional media channels. Trump's tweets function as presidential discourse presented to the public and his followers without the news media or personal delivery. This allows him to issue public statements and opinions, as well as publish content such as PR videos, official statements, and campaign materials. Trump can bypass traditional journalism and press releases, and take his content directly to the people. There are many possible reasons for why Trump does this, such as monetary incentives or adaptation to new media,

but more important than the why, is the implications that develop in presenting this new type of political discourse, and the discursive themes presented.

Through textual analysis, previous studies have argued that some of the most prevalent themes in Trump's discourse include restoration, nativism, national unity, and authenticity (Jamieson, Taussig 2017). At the linguistic level of analysis, this study found similar trends. Trump's most prevalent themes in this selection of discourse included national unity and authenticity, but as Fairclough argues, simply identifying themes does not constitute critique. The first major implication of this study is that the discursive capabilities of Twitter depend on the networked public sphere. This study has shown that tweets do constitute a discourse. Through the capabilities of the networked public sphere, tweets can be distributed to a wider audience than most traditional media, which suggests that there are just as many social implications for political Twitter as traditional mediated political discourse. As Fairclough contends, "there is a difference between the actuality of political practices and its representations in the media" (2010: 159), but the policy decisions themselves are less important than the way that the discourse is distributed and consumed. When Trump authors a tweet that blames "forest management" for wildfires, that discourse is distributed and consumed through the networked public sphere. Trump's exact words on Twitter can be reproduced and further consumed. The networked public sphere allows for this discourse to be distributed and consumed outside of Twitter's boundaries as well. The most troubling implication here is the constant reproduction and distribution of non-comprehensive discourse, particularly when it comes to environmental issues. Trump can tweet "God Bless," and other superficial expressions of support, yet the discourse does not address deeper environmental policy issues, and ignores factors such as droughts, climate change, or electric power station equipment management.

Although this study found that Trump's tweets emphasised national unity, it also demonstrated Trump's discursive tendency to assign blame to others, in either abstract or specific terms. Many environmentalists find Trump's discourse troubling, since by assigning blame

to those who may or may not be responsible, Trump avoids responsibility for the issue. Trump has defined himself as the most transparent president of all times. However, while in certain regards he has been very transparent, specifically in the president's use of Twitter to share information, this study has shown that in his tweets there is not an actual disclosure of data, processes, and his tweet lack of formality. Twitter has changed the way the public discusses these issues. It holds the potential to allow politicians to open transparent channels of communication, and to portray authentic versions of themselves. Following in the footsteps of newspapers, radio and television, Twitter became a new channel for political information. It is not the first new channel of its kind, and it will not be the last. Yet it has shaped national conversations, and thus must be taken seriously. By critically analysing the content of this medium, we can add to our understanding of certain issues. And with understanding comes change.

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