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Are You Still With Her? Basking in Reflected Glory and Cutting Off Reflected Failure Frameworks and the Clinton Campaign Twitter Hashtags

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ARE YOU STILL WITH HER? BASKING IN REFLECTED GLORY AND CUTTING OFF REFLECTED FAILURE FRAMEWORKS AND THE CLINTON CAMPAIGN TWITTER HASHTAGS

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the Graduate School of
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Master of Arts
Communication, Technology, and Society

by
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

This thesis intended to analyze the nature of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election conversation on Twitter through the lens of Hillary Clinton supporters. The 2016 election was an unprecedented election in many ways. For social media, Twitter was used as a source of news, information, and as a communication tool for candidates and voters. This thesis examines the election conversation from November 7, 8, and 9 using Clinton campaign hashtags #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer. These hashtags provide insight into how Twitter users voted and why they chose to vote for Clinton. This thesis uses the basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF) frameworks as a lens through which a thematic analysis is conducted to further understand the ways individuals associated or disassociated with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as major party presidential candidates. The findings showed evidence of the BIRG and CORF framework as well as a potential adaptation to the framework. The results showed a wide range of emotional responses and a deeper understanding of the 2016 Presidential Election through Twitter conversations.
DEDICATION

For my little sister Zoey, who said, “Yea, my dad wanted Bernie to win but I didn’t because he’s a boy.” Thanks for being so politically aware at age six. You are the smartest girl I know. To Piper and Lennon. Stay feisty and kind.

To my parents. Thank you for your immense support.

Love, B.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big thank you to Joseph P. Mazer for your guidance and mentorship throughout my time at Clemson. Thank you to Erin Ash and Andrew Pyle for your service on my committee and to my Clemson MACTS family. Go Tigers!
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“It’s been ugly. It’s been divisive. It’s been coarse. It’s been dispiriting and was more a battle of personalities than it was ideas, in my view,” said Joe Biden, former Vice President of the United States at the inaugural Sidley Austin Forum in Washington D.C. in 2016 (McCaskill, 2016). Biden’s description of the 2016 election is not unique. The 2016 election painted a polarizing world of frustration, anger, disagreement, and hatred. While the road to November 8, 2016 was a rocky one with constant bumps in the road for each candidate, Donald J. Trump became president with an electoral college win of 304 votes to Hillary Rodham Clinton’s 227 votes, despite her popular vote win. According to Pew Research Center (2016), the satisfaction rates for each party candidate was at its lowest point during the 2016 election in two decades. The same report showed that four-in-ten (41%) of voters thought that neither Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton would make a good president with more than half of Trump supporters viewing their vote as a vote against Clinton while 50% of Clinton supporters viewed their vote as a vote against Trump while 48% saw their vote as a vote for Clinton (Pew Research Center, 2016). Some voters looked to Donald Trump as an agent for change and a radical option for the conservative party seeking to shaking things up. The hashtag #DrainTheSwamp became a popular Trump hashtag used on Twitter that focused on Trump’s claim to sweep out corruption from the U.S. capital. However, the Pew report also found that voters thought that Trump would change Washington, but make it worse rather than better, while most
voters thought that Clinton would not change Washington much at all (Pew Research Center, 2016).

Social media also played a large role in covering social feeds with political news and information, some of which was not always factual. Todd Grossman, CEO of Talkwalker, a social media analytics company told NPR, "Social media may have played a role in creating a kind of scandal-driven, as opposed to issue-driven, campaign where topics such as Trump's attitude towards women, Trump's tax returns and Clinton's emails have tended to dominate discussion as opposed to actual policy issues” (NPR, 2016). Grossman’s suggestion that the election focused more on scandals rather than issues mirrored that of Biden’s in 2016. Issues took a back seat to Clinton’s email scandal, question of her trustworthiness, and ability to lead while the media and voter’s questioned Trump’s extreme rhetoric, sexual assault allegations, and temperament for the Oval Office.

From scandals, to fake news, and contentious debates, the 2016 election was a unique mixture of reality television and traditional American politics that pits two candidates against each other. This election played out largely on social media and hashtag threads on Twitter. Each candidate used social platforms to “troll” opposing candidates and connect with other voters. According to NPR (2016), Trump’s Twitter and social media posts may have the “most combative online presence” of any presidential candidate in history. However, social media does not begin or end with Trump. Both Trump and Clinton dissenters and supporters also used social media to communicate their approval and disapproval. Consistent hashtags were used on Twitter to thread common
content together such as #ImWithHer, frequently used to indicate support of Hillary Clinton as a slogan for encouragement.

In order to examine the use of Twitter during the 2016 election, this thesis examines the relationship between the hashtag #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer to compare conversations and determine reasons supporters provided online for remaining a follower of Hillary Clinton and disassociating with Donald Trump. This thesis used the theoretical framework of traditional *basking in reflected glory* (BIRG) and *cutting off reflected failure* (CORF) and applied it to social media content and reactions online.

Traditional BIRG and CORF tells us that people tend to associate with a successful figure and disassociate with unsuccessful figures. The hashtag #ImStillWithHer proposed an interesting relationship to the CORF process which might have been minimized due to the extreme emotions that surrounded the political campaigns of 2016. While there is some scholarship on political applications of the BIRG and CORF framework, the majority of the research covers BIRG and CORF behaviors with sports team affiliations. Research finds that BIRG can be signified by wearing apparel of a major sports team after a win (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989), while CORF behaviors are signified by a verbal or nonverbal disassociation such as losing affiliation or removing a yard sign after the loss of a political candidate (Boen et al., 2002). First a review of literature is conducted on Hillary Clinton’s history of public service, her role in the 2016 election, a review of the BIRG and CORF framework, and a collection of relevant research on the use of social media during the 2016 election.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hillary Rodham was born on October 26, 1947 into a middle-class, Midwestern family. Her mother, Dorothy Howell Rodham was a homemaker and a mother of Hillary and her two younger brothers. Her father, Hugh E. Rodham was a small business owner. Hugh met Dorothy in Chicago, Illinois where they gave birth to one of history’s most influential female figures. Hillary grew up in a politically divided household. Her father, a proud Republican, and her mother, a human rights-minded Democrat, Hillary grew up with both perspectives to reflect on her own beliefs which formed with time (Clinton, 2004). In her senior year of high school, Hillary was the only female candidate who ran for student government President and lost, “which did not surprise me but still hurt especially because one of my opponents told me I was ‘really stupid if I thought a girl could be elected president,’ she wrote in her book, Living History (Clinton, 2004, p. 24). An experience all too familiar for the future she would face.

Hillary attended Wellesley College, a college for women where she found her feminist voice and began to thrive as a leader during her reign as college government President. By her junior year, Hillary shifted her political beliefs from her father’s conservativism to supporting anti-war campaigns and civil rights (Clinton, 2004). An all-female college, Wellesley granted its students the freedom from stressing about boys and worrying about looks to focusing on academics, student leadership in clubs, and student government (Clinton, 2004). Hillary was the first student to ever speak at her class commencement in 1969. The speech was a historic call to younger generations in which
she said, “And the challenge now is to practice politics as the art of making what appears to be impossible, possible” (p. 41).

Hillary later attended Yale Law School in the fall of her graduating year from Wellesley. In the midst of a political and social uprising from the civil rights movement and the women’s movement, Hillary was deeply affected by the polarizing state of America. Her driving force became her passion for empowering women and girls.

She met her future husband, Bill Clinton at the Yale library and later married in Fayetteville, Arkansas. After law school, she grew into her life of public service through her experiences as a lawyer in Arkansas where she taught criminal law, procedure, advocacy and ran a legal aid clinic (hillaryclinton.com, 2016). Bill Clinton became governor of Arkansas where Hillary served as first lady and later gave birth to a daughter, Chelsea. At age nine, Hillary Rodham had decided that she would keep her name when she married but after Arkansas voters struggled to accept her feminist beliefs, she changed her name to Hillary Clinton in order to help his career as governor in 1980 (Kristof, 2017).

Bill Clinton served as the 42nd President of the United States from 1992 to 2001 making Hillary Clinton the country’s First Lady. Hillary’s idea of the first lady was representative of a new era of professional, intelligent women who would not sit on the sidelines cheering for her husband (Burnell, 2001). The news media framed Hillary Clinton as a campaign surrogate for her husband and validated her as politically outspoken and a forthright feminist who disrupted the traditional expectations of womanhood (Parry-Giles, 2014). Burnell (2001) compares Hillary’s first ladyship to that
of Rosalyn Carter and Eleanor Roosevelt. In her book, she quotes Historian Doris Kearns who said, “The advice Eleanor would give you is: Don’t worry about your public opinion polls. Know that you’re doing a good job when your friends respect you and your enemies are angry” (Burnell, 2001, p. 18).

Clinton was a pioneer for women’s rights and government leadership. Historically, first ladies all the way to Martha Washington have faced gendered expectations for their personal and political actions. Some first ladies have fallen into the guidelines of those expectations while others have helped expand the political reach and model of the first lady’s expected behavior (Parry-Giles, 2014). Clinton was often admired and despised by many due to her feminist approach to political life. Sexism played a major role in Clinton’s media portrayals throughout her life in the public eye. She has long been a polarizing figure who was often viewed as “intimidating” because she chose a masculine leadership style that was often the target for sexist acts (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009).

The evidence of her polarizing effect can be seen in a study that surveyed participants on successful women on if they deserved their success. The study found that while Hillary Clinton was ranked in the top three most successful women in both categories, she was ranked second behind Oprah Winfrey on deserving her success, but was also ranked third behind Paris Hilton and Britney Spears, participants claiming that they did not believe she deserved her success (Taylor, Lord, McIntyre, & Paulson, 2011). In the study, participants who assessed her on her ability rated her success internal and
stable, while those who thought her success was attributed to luck of marrying a powerful man rated her success as external and unstable (Taylor et al., 2011).

Hillary ran for president in 2008 against Barack Obama. Clinton narrowly lost the major party candidacy to Obama who later won the presidential election. Obama later bridged the gap between his former rival, and asked Hillary Clinton to join his administration as Secretary of State which she details her experience in her book *Hard Choices*. Hillary became the 67th U.S. Secretary of State in 2009 serving until 2013.

**2016 U.S. Presidential Election**

In 2016 Clinton ran again and was elected the major party candidate. The 2016 election was a tightly ran race against Donald Trump, a high-powered figure of masculinity and financial success. Despite the monumental accomplishment of being the first female presidential nominee for a major party, her efforts were met with contest and outrage. Her campaign was based on the slogan “Better Together,” attempting to unite an extremely polarized political and social climate in America. However historical, her campaign did not withstand the aggression from media, voters, and Trump’s campaign. Hillary Clinton won the popular vote with 68,844,954 (48.2%) to Trump’s 62,979,879 (46.1%) and she also surpassed President Barack Obama’s total votes in 2012 by 389,944 votes (Krieg, 2016). Despite the popular vote win, Hillary lost the electoral vote making Donald Trump the 45th president of the United States. After the election, retiring Sen. Barbara Boxer from California introduced a bill to abolish the electoral college (Krieg, 2016).
Hillary’s staff conducted political autopsies on what went wrong during the campaign and suggested that it was a combination of the release of her campaign emails and the announcement by F.B.I director James Comey to reopen the investigation of her use of a private email server during her time as Secretary of State (Kristof, 2017). She also frequently cited misogyny and sexism as a reason for her election loss. “Certainly misogyny played a role” she said, “That just has to be admitted” (Kristof, 2017). Clinton was the first female to run as a major party candidate and stands behind Barrack Obama in his 2008 victory with the most popular votes than any presidential candidate in history (BBC, 2016). Speculation also surfaced around Russian meddling. The Washington Post reported that the Democratic National Committee’s computer network database revealed emails, transcripts, and detailed research regarding Donald Trump (Nakashima, 2016). Nakashima (2016) stated that two hacker groups were identified, both of which were working for the Russian government. A series of speculations and cyberattacks and spying were also linked to Russian interference, including the possibility of voter suppression. Discussions of possible interference spilled over to social media.

During the campaign, slogans and Twitter hashtags were used as a way for voters to indicate support and show their affiliation to a particular candidate or party. Hillary Clinton voters used hashtags such as #ImWithHer, #StrongerTogether, and #NeverTrump. When the race came to a close, Hillary supporters took to Twitter to show their continuous support and devastation by using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. Clinton’s book, What Happened, was released in September 2017 and described the factors that played a role in her campaign loss. In an interview with NPR, Clinton said, “I take
ultimate responsibility for the loss” (NPR, 2017). However, Clinton also suggested that
Donald Trump’s message tapped into racial, ethnic, and sexist appeals. Along with his
radical message, Clinton also stated that the Russian interference, WikiLeaks, voter
suppression, and sexism also worked against her during the campaign (NPR, 2017).

**Basking in Reflected Glory and Cutting off Reflected Failure in the Clinton
Campaign**

The BIRG (basking in reflected glory) and CORF (cutting off reflected failure)
behavioral framework originated from a study on university students and sport victories
and losses (Cialdini, Borden, Throne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976). The beginnings
of BIRG and CORF research began in the realm of sports and fandom by studying the
behaviors of fans after a victory compared to fan behavior after a loss. The study found
that BIRG behaviors occurred when students displayed a greater tendency to wear school
apparel after a winning football game rather than after a loss. Cialdini et al. (1976) also
considers the “us” vs. “them” mentality. Cialdini et al. found that the students were more
likely to use “we” to associate themselves with a positive source rather than a negative
source. This was most clearly demonstrated when the public image was at risk. The study
showed that through a person’s connection with a sports team, their personal images are
on the line when their team takes the field and their team’s conquests and defeats are felt
as personal triumphs and failures (Cialdini et al., 1976). Contrary to BIRG behaviors,
CORF behaviors suggest that a person is less likely to publically affiliate with their team
after a loss. Synder, Lassegard, and Ford (1986) supported CORF as a distancing
behavior that suggests individuals decrease association with a failure or unsuccessful
group to shield their ego and public image. These researchers conducted a study in which
subjects were asked to complete a task as a group. After the group was given positive,
negative, or no feedback regarding the task, those who received negative feedback were
less likely to participate in the presentation or wear team identifying badges.

While BIRG and CORF was born from studies on sports fans, similar findings
have been seen through studies of political parties on the dynamics between Democrats
and Republicans. Miller and Conover (2015) found that partisan behavior is similar to the
behaviors of sports team fans that are focused more on winning and defeating their rivals
than they are on policy and important issues. This similarity makes examining politics
from a BIRG and CORF perspective an interesting parallel to existing research on sports
teams and fan behavior. During the 2016 election, the partisan lines were more polarized
than ever. Social media became a hub for sharing political affiliations and ideologies.
Twitter, specifically, provides a hashtag feature that connects common threads with the
same keywords together, creating a feed of information surrounding each party candidate
and their respective hashtags. The present study examines the conversation within the
hashtags of the Hillary Clinton campaign to identify potential for BIRG or CORF
behaviors. The hashtag #ImWithHer was used predominately before the results of the
campaign were announced to show a voter’s association with Hillary Clinton. After she
lost the presidential race to Donald Trump, the hashtag #ImStillWithHer began trending
on Twitter. This hashtag indicated that there was remaining association despite her loss.
First, this review of literature (1) defines and discusses BIRG, (2) defines and discusses
CORF, and (3) finally, literature is reviewed on the role of social media during the 2016 election.

**Basking in reflected glory.** According to Cialdini (1976), people tend to publicize a connection with another who has been successful or appears to feel that they can share the glory of the successful person. Fans of winning teams boast about the affiliation with the team through apparel and artifacts that represent the team and claim part of a team’s glory by using “we” rather than “they” (Cialdini, 1976). As mentioned previously, Cialdini (1976) found that students were more likely to associate themselves publicly with their university’s football team after the team had been more successful. This phenomenon of public artifacts and apparel to associate is also relevant in politics and party affiliations. Major supporters of presidential candidates tend to sport bumper stickers, apparel, and yard signs to show support for a candidate. Visual and nonverbal cues are often indicators of BIRG behaviors after an associated success. Verbal BIRG behavior occurs only when a dialogue is held with another person that indicates a clear associated glory with a successful identity of another.

As with many campaigns and election seasons, indications of affiliations with party candidates through artifacts or verbal association can be observed. The signature artifact indicating support for Donald Trump during the campaign season was a red hat with white letter that adorned his slogan, “Make America Great Again.” Hillary supporters also had artifacts such as buttons and bumper stickers available on the candidate campaign websites.
American politics is often publicized as a rat race or a sporting event making the elections an entertaining and energetic time for the media. The polarization of American politics today often resembles sports team affiliations that include a culture of contention and rivalry. This similarity makes BIRG and CORF an interesting theoretical behavioral framework from which to study political contest. Researchers at the University of Kansas conducted a study in which found that most Democrat and Republican voters acted like fans in sport rivalries. They found that both parties cared more about winning the election than they did about major issues and ideologies. Loyalty to one’s party affiliation was the cause of partisan rivalry rather than basic dissimilarity over the issues (Miller & Conover, 2015). These researchers found through nationally representative survey data that those who possessed a more hostile sentiment were more likely to be strong partisans and most likely to participate in elections. This indicates that American voters can treat the political process more like a football game than a vital process for enacting change and improvement. The study also found that nearly two-fifths of the nation stated that they did not care about voter suppression, cheating or stealing, lying, and violence and threats in order to boost their party’s chances of winning (Strachan, 2015). As mentioned above, Americans are viewing politics as an “us-versus-them” mentality rather than focusing on their true beliefs and political principles. The 2016 election was a perfect example of polarizing party lines in American politics. According to Pew Research Center (2016), in January 2016, 44% of U.S. adults reported learning about the 2016 election in the past week from social media, beating out print news. As of July 2016, 24% claimed to turn to the social media platforms of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton for information rather
than their respective campaign websites or emails combined. The conversation on Twitter around the hashtags for each candidate can be examined as artifacts of polarized and “sports like” commentary. Online groups and hashtag feeds on Twitter serve as artifacts to the kind of hostile and uncivil communication that occurred within and between party supporters. Because of this sports-like association, the hashtags for party affiliations sometimes contained a negative sentiment or attack on the party opponent such as #LockHerUp referring to Clinton’s email scandal and #LoveTrumpsHate that referred to Donald Trump’s divisive campaign rhetoric.

Trump and Clinton used social media differently to communicate with their publics. Pew Research Center (2016) states that Clinton mostly passed messages that have been crafted by her campaign team, while Trump reached out to news media and the public. With increased use of social media, a platform is available at our fingertips to share our personal, political, and educational affiliations to our own social network. Users have the ability to broadcast their beliefs and ideologies to the world through their devices and be constantly connected to the news media. During the 2016 election, the hashtags for each party candidate, major event, or specific issue created a thread of conversation around the topic on Twitter, became a way of publically announcing one’s affiliation to a candidate or refuting the positions of the rival candidate. Twitter hashtags served as a way of communicating within a common word or phrase about a person or event in a single thread. The main hashtags were inspired by campaign slogans such as, #ImWithHer or #StrongerTogether for Hillary Clinton and #MakeAmericaGreatAgain for Donald Trump. Pew Research Center (2016) found that Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton,
and Bernie Sanders, Clinton’s democratic rival, all posted content at similar rates, but Trump received more response from posts through comments, shares, reactions, and retweets. Trump also maintained a higher number of followers on both Facebook and Twitter than Clinton and Sanders. Pew Research Center (2016) also found that on Twitter, Trump retweets the general public by 78% of his posts while Clinton retweets her campaign account by 80%. These factors may have influenced the level of engagement that Trump received on Twitter. The campaign associated hashtags became ways for the public to communicate with other supporters, attack opposing voters, and communicate with candidates. Trump’s engagement with the public through Twitter was unprecedented and maintained a high level of communication with his constituents (Pew Research Center, 2016).

BIRG behaviors also occur in terms of classic and private behaviors, according to one Internet study (Boen, Banbeselaere, & Feys, 2002). The study found that people were more likely to visit websites of their favorite soccer teams after a victory than after a loss (Boen et al., 2002). These researchers supported that group members not only seek public encounters, but also engage in private BIRG behaviors. This study indicates that BIRG behaviors occur both publically and privately to maintain a positive self-concept (Boen et al., 2002). This means that individuals not only seek public attention and desire to be seen as victorious by their peers, but also have a desire to boost their mood and improve their own view of themselves by personally and privately associating with the success of others.
In a study of yard sign and political artifacts being displayed in front yards before and after the general elections in Flanders (Belgium), these findings suggest that BIRG and CORF effects also apply to political settings. The results indicated homes supporting the winning parties displayed their posters or yard signs for a longer period after the election than houses supporting the defeating parties did (Boen et al., 2002). Existing research on CORFing would suggest that the yard signs would be taken down. However, these results of the CORF process are contradictory to traditional CORF research because traditional CORF suggests that voters would cut off the reflected failure of their losing candidate by disassociating rather than continuing to show support through public displays.

A replication study of Cialdini et al. (1976) on BIRG and CORF behaviors with sport association is applied to the display of yard signs in a local election and suggested that the tendency to show off positive associations and conceal negative associations are potentially dependent on level of expectations and level of salience (Sigelman, 1986). Sigelman’s study was conducted on a local election for Commonwealth Attorney and County Attorney in Lexington, KY. Five streets in each district were surveyed for yard signs and the houses were rechecked on the day after the election to determine if the sign remained or was taken down. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in the yard signs displayed to be considered a successful BIRG study, however, supporters of the losing candidates were more likely to leave their yard signs after the election than winners were. This may support the hypothesis that higher identification minimizes the BIRG effect. In the case of Hillary Clinton, continued support remained
after her loss as well. This thesis determines the extent to which voters remained in association with Hillary Clinton by choosing to voice their support. It also examines the nature of the social media conversation surrounding the Clinton campaign hashtags before and after her loss.

**Cutting off reflected failure.** On the contrary to BIRG effects, in the face of failure, people tend to increase distancing behavior to make it appear less likely that one is associated with the failure of another. This is often used as an image-protection tactic to disassociate with those who have failed to avoid being evaluated by the failure of others (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). The concept of distancing after an associated failure is called *cutting off reflected failure* (CORF). Snyder et al. (1986) found that people who were evaluated negatively based on the failure of their associated group were prone to severing the associations with the group through self-report and behavioral distancing in order to avoid further damage to self-image. They also found that people in this negative association group experienced a greater level of anxiety than members of the positive evaluation group that suggests people do, in fact, identify with groups in an important way.

In the same Internet study by Boen, Vanbeselaere, and Feys (2002), results revealed that CORF behaviors also occur in private. The research used team website visits in relation to the soccer team’s games and found that after a loss, soccer fans were less likely to visit the team’s website and avoid private contact, suggesting that private CORF also occurs (Boen et al. 2002). The study also found that after a win, fans were more likely to go to the team’s website than after a loss. Similarly, in a study of Nigerian
football supporters, results indicated that participants showed better mental health scores after a victory and displayed poorer mental health scores following a team loss (Ugwu & Ugwu, 2013). This indicates that the outcome of a match has a significant impact on the wellbeing of fans. Another study on the BIRG and CORF behaviors by NFL fans found that female fans displayed higher levels of BIRG behavior than male fans did (Spinda, 2011). This is interesting considering the male dominated arena of sports and the stereotypes of male fans as aggressive and boastful. Similarly, Donald Trump’s signature traits of confidence, bravado, and perception of trustworthiness and control, despite misleading or false information, are all hallmarks of traditional masculinity (Hamblin, 2016). According to *The New York Times* (2016), Trump was a symbol and product of masculine culture, in turn, giving people a reason to accept and trust him. This type of masculinity and evoking aggression is comparable to sports fandom. This may be explained by the level of involvement that a fan or voter has with a team or candidate. Highly identified individuals are more likely to remain associated with the failure of others than a person who is low in identification. High associated individuals who align themselves with success of others personally associate themselves with their success.

Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, and Hodges (1995) examined BIRG and CORF effects during the 1992 presidential election and found that those who indicated high levels of involvement in the election were more likely to resist the CORF process and maintain associations by continuing to publicly identify with the candidate even though their party’s candidate lost. Individuals who were highly involved were more likely to wear the badges of their candidate despite the loss compared to those voting for a winning party.
(Wann et al. 1995). Lachlan and Levy (2016) began this investigation in the realm of social media by analyzing Twitter data and found evidence of BIRG and CORF behaviors in Twitter content of the 2014 Scottish Independence Vote. The study showed the losing party created and posted less content regarding their party affiliation. They noted that the content on the losing side disappeared almost instantly and the winning, pro-union tweets took time to BIRG within the hours after the vote indicating that they exhibited a high association with the winning side and publicly displayed their association.

Wann et al. (1995) found that association increases with a losing candidate with high-involvement. In this study, the CORF process in the form of physical artifacts and signage may be more trivial and inconsistent with previous research due to the nature of public display of signs. The risk of public image and vandalizing of signs should be considered in the CORF process and taken into consideration with the use of public artifacts to support a candidate. In both political and sport research on BIRG and CORF, self-esteem seems to serve as a moderating variable that influences the level of BIRG and CORF behaviors that individuals display. Miller (2009) states that our group memberships can serve as a significant part of our identity and influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that take on an emphasis for group service. Miller (2009) studied the sustainability of yard signs in Minneapolis, MN and Knoxville, TN and supported the hypothesis that yard signs supporting Obama would be displayed longer than McCain signs. Miller’s study was the first successful field study on BIRG in a U.S. presidential election. This study also found that individuals with higher self-esteem exhibited less CORF behaviors than individuals with lower self-esteem. This suggests that those with
lower self-esteem are more likely to CORF in the face of failure while those with higher self-esteem are more likely to show higher BIRG behaviors than those who do not have high self-esteem.

The influence of social media in elections is not a new concept. While the 2016 election may be the first of its kind, the influence of Internet outlets has been discussed in the literature. During the 2006 election, YouTube and MySpace posed a new set of challenges to campaign staff that reduces the level of image control (Gueorguieva, 2008). During the 2006 election, party candidates used these platforms to discuss their issue stances, fund-raising efforts, a push for voter registration, and recruit volunteers. However, just as we notice in today’s political world, YouTube and MySpace give control to a segment of the voting population that can damage the candidate’s image and messages with user-driven content (Gueorguieva, 2008). Gueorguieva highlighted and predicted the importance of strategic social networking and stated that strategists in 2008 foresaw that large campaigns would face hundreds of rogue postings each month which required strategy for responding quickly. Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump’s campaign often took to Twitter to communicate with supporters and even each other. This Twitter banter made Twitter an epicenter for live and in-real-time, political communication. Twitter allowed pollsters and the general public to see into the minds of voters to predict outcomes and understand voter preferences and ideas. This thesis uses the concepts of BIRGing and CORFing to discover what Hillary Clinton’s supporters were communicating about before the election results and how the conversation changed once her loss was realized.
The BIRG and CORF behaviors in the realm of politics are related to high involvement in politics and association with a candidate. What we know from BIRG and CORF research tends to revolve around the world of sports and team associations. Applying these behaviors to politics and online communication will advance the framework into new contexts and specifically expand knowledge on the 2016 election, the online influence and significance of Twitter in elections, and the reasons that Hillary Clinton supporters remained in association despite a major loss.

Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, and Welpe (2010) conducted a content analysis of 100,000 tweets before the German federal election in 2009. They identified three major findings about Twitter and political elections. First, the findings suggested that more than one-third of the tweets were a part of a conversation to discuss opinions with other users. This implied that Twitter became a platform used for political deliberation. Secondly, the researchers stated that the number of Tweets closely reflects the election results to traditional polls making it a valid form of political opinion polling. Third, the sentiment of the tweets corresponded to media coverage of the campaign, candidate profiles, and political programs (Tumasjan et al., 2010).

Social Media Communication and the 2016 Election

Social media has increasingly become a platform for communicating ideas about political beliefs and sharing news information. According to Pew Research Center (2016), about 6-in-10 Americans get their news from social media. Twitter’s microblogging format requiring posts to be 140-characters or fewer and includes the use of trending hashtags allows users to connect through common topics online. One study
found that users tend to expose themselves to information online that reinforces their beliefs rather than taking the time to expose themselves to counter-arguments (Garret, 2009). This customization allows for a personal, unique bias and echo chamber being created in a person’s news feed. Twitter has increasingly become a focal point for election research around how people communicate their positions online. Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sander and Welpe (2010) found that the number of Facebook supporters can be associated with electoral success. Tumasjan et al. (2010) found that the number of Twitter messages reflected the election results closely to traditional election posts. Pew Research Center (2016) also found a 7% increase in the use of social media, specifically Twitter, for news use from 2013 to 2016, with nearly six-in-ten Twitter users (59%) getting their news from Twitter. With Twitter users increasing their use of the site for political conversation, it is an important place to turn for research on the impact of Twitter messages on election results and political affiliations.

boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networking sites as web-based services that (1) create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded structure, (2) provide a list of users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and navigate connections and those made by others within the site. “What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks” (boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211).

For social media, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define it as, “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p. 61). Effing,
Van Hillegersberg, and Huibers (2011) suggest that social media is in a renovation stage causing users to be more active participants. In a study on the 2010 and 2011 elections in the Netherlands, results showed that little could be concluded from social media use during local, state, and council elections; however, during national elections the politicians with higher levels of social media engagement received more votes (Effing, Van Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011).

While social media may frequently be used for sharing news information or spreading personal political ideologies, one study employed survey data to determine if social media impacted an individual’s engagement in the political process. The study found that social media had a significant and positive impact on activities of civic engagement and political action, increased levels of social capital to facilitate relationships to gain social acceptance and can potentially improve the democratic and civic engagement processes (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012). Social media can be used positively to engage and encourage political participation. While social media encourages engagement, it also incites intense polarizations of information. In a Harvard study (Faris, Roberts, Etling, Bourassa, Zuckerman, & Benkler, 2017), researchers analyzed hyperlinking patterns of social media sharing over the course of the presidential election to examine the “media ecosystem.” The study found that Breitbart, a place for “news, commentary and destruction of the political/media establishment,” was the most frequently retweeted media source of supporters of Donald Trump. Pro-Clinton social media users most frequently shared media from The Washington Post on Twitter. In an article in the Columbia Journalism Review, these researchers suggested that the
“asymmetric polarization is more likely politics and culture than technology” and social media sharing impacted the broader media agenda, specifically that of the right-leaning perspective (Benkler, Faris, Roberts, & Zuckerman, 2017). This study showed that Clinton and Trump followers were engaging with polarized and drastically different information.

Researchers disagree about whether the Internet polarizes or unites the political process. One study suggested that social media allow users to connect with news media on an interpersonal level that provides access to information they might not have otherwise gained from traditional news sources (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). While there are competing views of social media and its connection and access to political information, it does allow for a bird’s eye view of what voters engaging with social platforms are thinking and feeling, as well as what news content they are absorbing. Social media provides researchers with a user-generated survey of real-time thoughts, content, emotions, and conversations surrounding political events and elections. This thesis examines social media and political engagement through a behavioral lens to understand how users interact with political candidates before and after a major event.

This thesis examines political Twitter messages through research on comparative hashtags and examining the online display of basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF). As previously reviewed, Cialdini (1976) states that basking in reflected glory (BIRG) signifies that people have a tendency to publically affiliate themselves with someone who has obtained success to associate themselves as successful and claim another’s glory, while cutting off reflected failure (CORF) suggests
that a person is likely to disassociate with a person or group of people who are not successful to distance themselves from the failure of others.

One major campaign hashtag used during her election by supporters was #ImWithHer. After the election loss, users changed the slogan to #ImStillWithHer to indicate disapproval of her loss and remain publically associated with Hillary Clinton. The tweets before and after the election results are compared using her campaign hashtags and the adaptation that users created after the loss was announced. Social media has become increasingly important to study due to the frequency of use and increased political content that is shared. The thesis expands the literature on BIRG and CORF behaviors in relation to politics and social media. The research furthers our understandings of the 2016 Election and considers why Clinton supporters remained in support of her after Donald Trump won the presidency.

Themes indicate reasons social media users have for deciding to vote for or against Clinton during the elections and reasons for continued association after her loss. Themes reveal major categories that emerged within the content of Twitter responses that use the Clinton campaign hashtags. These themes provide a context for the hashtags to determine the nature of the conversation around Clinton and the election anticipation and loss.

RQ1: What are the themes prior to the 2016 U.S. presidential election results on social media about Clinton using the hashtag #ImWithHer?

RQ2: What are the themes after the 2016 U.S. presidential election results on social media about Clinton using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer?
Sentiment is useful in determining the nature of the conversation. Sentiment considers the positive or negative language used in association with each hashtag. Measuring the sentiment of the Twitter posts provides insight into how the hashtags are being used and the opinions of users who post with the hashtags.

RQ3: What are the sentiments of social media mentions prior to the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag #ImWithHer?

RQ4: What are the sentiments of social media mentions after the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer?

This thesis uses themes to determine the manner of the conversation before and after the election results. These themes provide insight into what social media users were sharing and thinking about during the 2016 election in relation to the Clinton Campaign. Sentiment indicates the emotion attached to these posts which will support the themes by indicating if there was a positive or negative feeling attached to the anticipation of the results and the reveal of Clinton’s loss. These themes and sentiments provide insight into if and why social media users decided to continue or discontinue their support with Clinton. This thesis expands on the BIRG and CORF literature in a political context while adding to the literature on social media research. The results of this thesis develop new understandings of the 2016 election and why Clinton supporters did or did not continue to show their support for her after Donald Trump won the presidency.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Procedure

To answer the research questions and better understand the social chatter around Hillary Clinton’s campaign and online support during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, Twitter data was collected using Salesforce Marketing Cloud’s Radian6 software. This software allows for gathering publicly accessible data from online content based on search terms. Search terms were created in the topic profiles using two of Hillary’s campaign hashtags. The hashtags evaluated in this study will compare the conversation before and after the election results. The posts with the hashtag #ImWithHer were pulled before the election results were released and will be compared to the hashtag #ImStillWithHer post-results. The posts were pulled solely from Twitter due to the nature of the hashtag usability and microblogging format. The BIRG and CORF framework is used as a theoretical basis for analyzing Twitter content of Hillary Clinton supporters who used Twitter to share thoughts and opinions in conjunction with the campaign hashtags. The data was analyzed thematically and included a sentiment analysis.

Sample

To answer the research questions, Radian6 extracted data in the form of word clouds, charts, graphs, trends, frequency charts, and sentiment of social media content. The hashtag #ImWithHer was measured the day before and day of the election on November 7 and 8, 2016 and the hashtag #ImWithHer was analyzed on and after the election on November 8 and 9, 2016. Radian6 used a widget that produces a “River of
News” that pulls a collection of tweets that contain the hashtag parameters set in the configuration profile.

Radian6 captured a total of 1,367,427 from the hashtags #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer from November 7 to November 9, 2016. The first 1,000 tweets from each day was analyzed, creating a total used sample of 3,000 tweets from November 7 to 9. November 7 contained data with only the hashtag #ImWithHer while November 8 contained a sample of 500 posts with the hashtag #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer in order to capture both content on this day and to maintain a consistent sample of 1,000 tweets per day. The data extracted from November 9 contained only the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. After deleting the retweets, the total usable sample tweets remained. An initial measure of content volume was utilized to compare the number of tweets before and after the election and the number of tweets containing each campaign hashtag.

To answer research question one and two, a thematic analysis was used to categorize and analyze the River of News. In a similar study using Radian6, Mazer, Thompson, Cherry, Russell, Payne, Kirby, and Pfohl (2015) used a method that called for first reading through the content and analyzing the data, line-by-line. Braun and Clarke (2006) propose a six-step coding process. The process is conducted by first (1) becoming familiar with the data through an active reading process, (2) developing initial codes, (3) finding themes from initial collection of codes, (4) reviewing these codes and themes to ensure the add up, (5) define and name the themes, and finally (6) reporting results (Braun & Clark, 2006).
The method employed for this thesis to answer research question three and four specifically compared the sentiment of Twitter content between the two hashtags #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer. A sentiment analysis examines and estimates the reaction of a message by determining if the message is positive or negative. O’Connor, Balasubramanyan, Routledge, and Smith (2010) found that a simple sentiment detection of Twitter data replicated consumer confidence and approval polls of former President Obama’s performance rating. While numbers of mentions and measuring volume can be useful, Ceron, Cruini, Iacus, and Porro (2010) suggested that sentiment analysis allows a greater insight into Twitter users’ attitudes and opinions. Ceron et al. (2010) conducted a Twitter sentiment analysis of the Italian and French political leaders and elections. In comparing the results to traditional polling, Ceron et al. (2010) found that the sentiment analysis compared closely with actual voting behaviors and can potentially be used to accurately forecast election results.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

To answer all four research questions, themes were created with the BIRG and CORF framework as a guide to understanding the election content on Twitter with the Clinton campaign hashtags. BIRG and CORF behaviors were clearly identified in the Twitter content as well as two new frameworks for the potential adaption of BIRG and CORF to more accurately reflect the results. November 7, 8, and 9 are described below with the respective themes followed by a sentiment analysis for each day. Discussions and implications follow the results section to make sense of the large themes and information within this section.

November 7, 2016: #ImWithHer

Research question one asked what themes emerged prior to the 2016 U.S. presidential election results on social media about Clinton using the hashtag #ImWithHer. In response to this question, the emergent themes showed that the majority of the content within the Twitter posts featuring the hashtag #ImWithHer on November 7, 2016 contained an indication of association with Hillary Clinton as their selected candidate for president. This was to be expected based on the nature of the hashtag as an indication of association. However, other major themes also emerged. These posts frequently contained an element of emotion such as excitement or anxiety for the upcoming election. The major themes that occurred the day before the election with the use of the hashtag

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#ImWithHer included (1) plea or encouragement to vote, (2) reasons for voting, (3) authority reference (4) association with Hillary Clinton, (5) premature basking in reflected glory (BIRG), and (6) disassociation with candidate Donald Trump. Finally, the hashtag #ImWithHer content sentiment has been analyzed and will be explained.

**Plea or Encouragement to Vote**

Posts that included a plea to vote \((n=399)\) were used as an encouragement to fellow Americans to cast their last-minute votes. Encouraging others to vote was frequently used to promote voting or to share that they have voted or plan to vote. This theme functioned as a rallying cry around Hillary Clinton and also a digital version of the traditional “I voted” sticker. Examples include: “I’m with her DO NOT STAY HOME. If you have not voted you must get out there and vote. I voted early (so easy). You have to vote” and “Tomorrow is THE DAY America! Get out and vote… I’m with her, Hillary Clinton.” These posts encouraged others to vote and exercise their rights as citizens to vote for Hillary. This seemed to also function as an association with Hillary Clinton because individuals asked others to vote for Hillary. Another interesting idea that emerged was the “all or nothing” thinking. This can be seen in cooperation with the disassociation with Trump, as well. An “us vs. them” paradigm suggested that there was a right and wrong answer to the election and if it is not Hillary Clinton, it is the wrong choice. For example, this right and wrong thinking was found in posts such as, “Tomorrow we are either going to have the first female president or we are all going to die. I’m with her. Election 2016.”

**Reasons for Voting**
Reasons for voting (n = 226) posts found that users were also engaging with the trending hashtag #ImVotingBecause. This hashtag was a common trend on the eve of the 2016 presidential election for Twitter users to share why they were voting for a particular candidate. With the use of the hashtag #ImWithHer, many of these posts contained content surrounding the historical nature of the possibility for a woman president, citing Clinton’s qualifications, particular issues such as LGBTQ, climate change, and protecting marginalized individuals. Examples include, “Vote for women & LGBT rights. Equal pay, raising min wage, healthcare & alternative energy. Do the right thing. I’m Voting Because I’m with her” and “Tomorrow I vote for a candidate that will advocate for my siblings. Hint: it's not the man who mocks disabled communities. I’m with her.” These reasons for voting tell us a lot about what issues are important to the individuals and what issues that Trump failed to reach Clinton supporters on. These reasons for voting provided insight into what issues people were most focused on this election and what issues were most important to them. Many of the issues also come about from major events in the Trump campaign such as the allegations of sexual assault against Donald Trump. One voter said, “I’m voting because as a sexual assault survivor, I don't want a misogynistic, sex-offending, piece of shit as my president I’m with her.”

Authority Reference

Authority references were also a common theme (n = 159) in which individuals posted about a person of status or celebrity who chose to vote for or against a certain candidate as a reference for their own voting decisions. These mentions were often used to explain reasons for voting or show an association or disassociation with particular
famous individuals or groups. The NFL, Lady Gaga, and Ann Coulter include a few common authority references. These references were used both positively and negatively. As a negative example, Ann Coulter, conservative commentator, major supporter of Trump during the 2016 election, and writer, stirred a buzzing conversation on Twitter the day before the election. Coulter was trending on election night according to *USA Today* when she tweeted, “If only people with at least 4 grandparents born in America were voting, Trump would win in a 50-state landslide” (Solis, 2016). This tweet caused Coulter to trend on Twitter. Among those replies, included the #ImWithHer voters who justified their family history ($n = 54$) in their posts claiming association with Clinton. Posts from Clinton supporters using the hashtag #ImWithHer were charged with irritation in posts that justified their vote for Clinton by explaining their family history. These justifications include posts such as “Ok, Ann, first off, everyone has exactly 4 grandparents. 2nd, my black ass has four GENERATIONS of grandparents born in the US & I’m With Her” and “Fam's been here since 1600's and I'm legit a mix of everything...voting for Hillary. I’m with her.” Others include, “Ann Coulter, how racist are you? Really? All 4 of my grandparents were born here I’m with her. Love Trumps Hate.”

As a positive example, people referenced celebrities as reason for voting for Clinton. For example, “I’m Voting Because really... Beyoncé told me to. I’m With Her,” and “I’m voting because Eva Longoria says to....” Twitter users also referenced celebrities and authority figures to reject voting for Trump. These examples included “Will Trump's former neighborhood vote for him? 'Unequivocally, absolutely not' I’m
with her” and “Brady & Belichick NOT trending. Sure Donald, u have their endorsements. Nice try-competing w Clinton celebrities I’m with her. Vote blue.” These celebrity references were used as an authority to persuade or reject a particular candidate.

**Association with Hillary Clinton**

Nearly all posts contained a clear *association with Clinton* (*n* = 930) as a candidate. This theme is clear and frequent within the data due to the nature of the hashtag itself. The hashtag indicated that those using were likely to publically announce their affiliation with Hillary Clinton for president. This association also manifested itself by identifying artifacts in which Twitter users planned to use to display their Clinton pride on Election Day. These posts also indicated a clear BIRG phenomenon that showed individuals are more likely to wear items and publically affiliate themselves with a candidate they feel strongly about. This can include the written association or evidence of artifacts that present clear association. For example, “Received my Hillary Clinton bumper sticker and a beautiful Hillary print from a supporter on Etsy with proceeds going to PPact. I’m with her” and “Got me a white pantsuit just in time. (Also made a "Votes for Women" sash.) I’m with her Pantsuit nation.” More examples show how artifacts are used to identify and associate individuals with their candidate as a sign of support, “Changed my profile header for the first time in years to say I’m with her” and “Bless OPI Products for making a great "Happy Election Day" nail polish for tomorrow. Hillary Clinton, I’m with her.”

**Premature Basking in Reflected Glory**
This occurred often and frequently, as expected from traditional BIRG and CORF behaviors. However, interestingly, premature basking in reflected glory \((n = 207)\) did take place. This was the clear anticipation and assumption that Hillary Clinton would win the election. These predictions and anticipations often appear as preparation for the election. These posts contain content similar to “me watching the election results tomorrow night when Hillary is declared the winner. I’m with her. USA. VOTE” and “Looking forward to a great victory tomorrow for Hillary Clinton! I’m with her.” These posts implied a confidence in Clinton that assumed a win before the election began. This type of confidence is an anticipated BIRG phenomenon showing that supporters were confident in their candidate and wanted to reveal their association with Clinton as a candidate for president.

Posts that did not contain an association with Clinton were posts that used the hashtag #ImWithHer but whose content did not provide support for Clinton as a candidate. Posts that did not support Clinton \((n = 51)\) are supporters of Trump who used the hashtag to communicate with the #ImWithHer hashtag feed. These posts were frequently used to disassociate with Clinton \((n = 52)\) such as “Tomorrow we discover just how many misguided delusional willfully-ignorant Clinton supporters there are in this country. I’m with her.” These posts were intended to distance from Clinton while the hashtag #ImWithHer was used to support Clinton. These posts were intended for Clinton supporters to see and to announce opposition to her as a candidate for president. Posts that disassociated from Clinton contained messages intended to push back at Clinton supporters and used the #ImWithHer campaign hashtag in a negative way rather than for
association as it was typically used. While the majority of posts showed a clear association with Clinton, this did provide evidence of a few Trump supporters who were also engaged in the #ImWithHer campaign hashtag conversation.

**Disassociation with Donald Trump**

Finally, disassociation with Donald Trump ($n = 313$) as a candidate for president was also a frequent theme in which posts contained content meant to disconnect themselves from him in order to maintain the image and association with Hillary Clinton rather than Donald Trump. Another subtheme of the disassociation was found to be name calling or labeling. Name calling and labeling included profanity, derogatory comments, harsh language, and the “us vs. them” mentality. The “us vs. them” content ($n = 83$) included a collection of tweets commenting on the election as a game or as winning and losing teams. This is similar to an “all or nothing” and “winners and losers” paradigm in voters. This is consistent with traditional BIRG and CORF literature and the increasing polarization of politics. The “if you’re not with us, you’re against us” mentality was shown through these tweets. For example, “Tomorrow is the point in the movie where the good guys go into war and win. I’m with her” and “Notice the two groups of people and how the Trump supporters sound like absolute idiots compared to the Hillary supporters, I’m with her.” These tweets both showed the Hillary versus Trump paradigm as a game of war rather than a political election. The conversation showed that the polarization of political parties is blatant, and the comparisons are stark.

Another component of the dissociation with Trump included name calling or labeling. These posts used harsh language or verbal aggression to distance themselves
further from Trump as a candidate. Frequently negative words and profanity were used to
describe Trump as a disassociation tactic by Hillary supporters. For example, “Ok.
Goodnight America. Vote wisely. Be on the right side of history. Don't vote for the bigot.
Vote for the only option. I’m with her” and “Remember the kids who bragged when they
won but cried & called you a cheater when they lost? One of them is running for
President. I’m with her.” These examples present a clear labeling or name calling that is
used to distance the user from Trump and associate with Clinton.

Evidence in the data showed that these findings are not mutually exclusive and
are found within the same post. These themes do not stand alone. The most frequent
combination occurred in tweets that contained an association with Clinton and a
disassociation with Trump. These two used together indicated that people used Twitter to
share voting preferences and to associate with one candidate and to distance themselves
from the other.

Sentiment Analysis

To answer the third research question regarding the sentiment of social media
posts before the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag
#ImWithHer, a sentiment analysis through Radian6 software, showed that content with
the hashtag #ImWithHer on November 7, 2016 was predominately positive. The positive
analysis shows that 71% of the content was positive while only 28.9% was negative. This
could indicate that due the themes found above the conversation remained hopeful and
positive that Clinton and her supporters would reach an election success. The anticipation
of a win likely caused the content to be more positive as well as the encouragement to
vote, reasons for voting, and premature BIRG that occurred within this hashtag on this day.

**November 8, 2016: #ImWithHer**

Research question one asked what themes emerge prior to the election about Clinton with the hashtag #ImWithHer. To continue answering research question one, half of the data collected on Election Day was content containing the hashtag #ImWithHer to fully understand the election conversation before the results were finalized. On Election Day, in the midst of votes being counted, #ImWithHer supporters continued to post on Twitter using this hashtag to communicate about their political involvement and alliances. Similar to the #ImWithHer themes and trends on November 7, November 8 included and expanded upon the themes from the previous day. On November 8, #ImWithHer themes included (1) continued association with Clinton, (2) disassociation with Trump’s success, (3) emotional response, (4) anticipated future action or failure, (5) cutting of reflected failure (CORF) of Clinton’s perceived loss by those against Clinton. In addition to the thematic analysis, sentiment was also analyzed on this day and showed that the conversation continued to be more positive than negative.

**Continued Association with Hillary Clinton**

#ImWithHer Twitter users used this hashtag to show continued support and alliance to Hillary Clinton and her campaign for the 2016 presidential race. This is to be expected from the nature of the hashtag itself, but it is also shown within the content of the posts. Association continued with Clinton alongside elements of (a) hope and (b) disassociation with Trump for president. Nearly all \( n = 481 \) posts in this dataset
contained an association with Clinton compared to that of Trump (20). Posts on
November 8 were less confident in her success than on November 7. However, the
confidence and assurance turned to hope and reassurance. For example, “I still believe
I’m with her” and “Tonight my daughter told me she wants to be the president. Thank
you, Hillary Clinton. I’m with her.”

Elements of hope were common in posts that associate with Clinton (n = 158).
Hope is a major emotional response that combats the negative responses and fearful posts
that are seen in the emotional response theme below. Hope falls under the association
with Clinton theme because it is most commonly used in conjunction with this theme.
Hope is clearly communicated by remaining hopeful, positive, and expecting a
democratic win despite the negative poll numbers. For example, hope manifests through
content similar to that of, “Hope for the best I’m With Her” and “Just gonna go to bed
and hope that when I wake up our next president won't be a racist, sexist, and rude man.
I’m with her.” Others include, “I believe that she will win. Election 2016, I’m with her”
and “NO NO NO NO DONT YOU DARE DO THIS. DONT GIVE UP ON US
HOMEGIRL. WE GOTTA STAND STRONG, WE CANT LET HIM DESTROY US,
I’M WITH HER.”

This continued association further confirms the premature basking in reflected
glory (BIRG) framework. However, more uncertainty is present within these set of posts
as votes are being counted alongside this trending hashtag. This association continued to
show that, like sports, supporters show association for their “team” or “side” to support
their candidate vocally and associate themselves with this candidate as well as distance
themselves from those they perceive as wrong or unsuccessful. A common theme on November 7 was the “us vs. them” paradigm. While this is not as present on November 8 due to the flood of support and emotional reactions, the paradigm shifted to “right and wrong.” Despite Clinton’s perceived loss as votes began to favor Donald Trump, the emotional effect impacted the tweets of Clinton supporters and many of them contained a “right vs. wrong” or a tension between progress and regression by either going forward and going backwards. For example, “And people tell me that sexism is on the decline? This result will set us back decades. Terrified. I’m with her” and “I'm crying. This is so painful. How can so many Americans be wrong?? I’m with her.” November 8 predicted the next major hashtag by showing that despite her close loss supporters are enduring to be with her. Posts that continued to associate with Clinton created a new framework of *basking in reflected failure* (BIRF) in which Clinton supporters continued to encourage Clinton even though her loss was approaching. For example, foreshadowing of the #ImStillWithHer was a common occurrence on Twitter in posts like “No matter what happens, I’m with her. I will always be with her. I can't believe our country is trying to elect this sexist pig. I'm ashamed” and “Win or lose tonight I’m with her.”

**Disassociation with Donald Trump**

Disassociation with Trump’s success became a more evident theme on this day because the votes were being counted and his potential for winning became more real to Clinton supporters. Clinton supporters vocally cut off the reflected glory (CORG) of his success by denouncing his win and distancing themselves from him and those who voted for him. For example, “This election coverage is driving me crazy How can anyone
seriously vote for him? Election Day, Never Trump, I’m with her.” Some posts contained the hashtag #NeverTrump which also indicated a disassociation with Trump and a CORGing behavior that associates Clinton in a higher position than Trump. Cutting off Trump’s glory is found as important evidence of the CORFing framework. While he was succeeding, Clinton followers were disconnecting themselves with his success. Rather than cutting off reflected failure of their own candidate, they began cutting off reflected glory (CORG) of the opposing candidate. Another indication of this lack of CORFing for Clinton supporters was seen in the amount of content that is mentioned above as continued association with Clinton. More often than not these two themes were used together. An example of cutting off reflected glory of Trump’s vote success includes, “It should not be this close. Why is an individual as vile as Trump even an option? Election 2016, I’m with her” and “Donald "Fear and Hate" Trump 244 Hillary "Hope and Love" Clinton 210 America, WTF?! Election night, I’m with her. I’m horrified and disgusted.”

**Emotional Response**

Evidence of emotions ($n = 138$) were clear on November 8. Evidence of emotional responses were found in the language that individuals used to describe their emotional state during this time. The most common emotional appeals were (1) sadness/disappointment, (2) fear, and (3) shock/disbelief.

Sadness and disappointment were evident based on similar language such as descriptions of sadness, loss, disappointment in the country, and crying. These posts included examples such as, “I'm horrified, you guys. I'm so sad. I feel so much dread.
Let's cling to love and support each other. I’m with her” and “My heart is slowly breaking. I can't even follow this anymore. I’m with her.”

Fear is evident by the use of the words similar to fear, frightened, scared, nightmare, terrifying, and anxiousness. These posts depicted a fear for a group of people, one’s self, the country, or the future. Examples included, “This is scary. I’m watching CNN and I'm filled with anxiety and feeling sick to my stomach... I’m with her. Election night” and “As a gay man, as a Jew, as a support of people of all colors and creeds, I am terrified. Election day 2016. I’m with her.”

Shock and disbelief were the most common emotional responses as the votes were being counted on November 8. There was a constant tension between hope and shock. Shock and disbelief were indicated by the language used as well and the overall message of the post. Disbelief posts contained questions and statements of shock, uncertainty, and refusal to believe that the results are accurate and happening. Examples included, “I still don't believe Trump will win. We can't fall back like this! Together we stand, divided we fall. Stronger Together. I’m with her” and “WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY COUNTRY? Rigged? Russia? Or just a boatload of stupid? I’m with her.”

These emotions were not found to stand alone. Some posts contained more than one, if not all of the emotional response themes such as, “I'm legit about to cry. This is terrifying. How the hell did this happen?! In shock. I’m with her. Elections 2016.” These posts contained an emotional response to the polls through sadness, fear, and shock. These elements of emotional responses were common in instances where the outcome was unexpected and upsetting to those who so strongly identified with the opposing side.
Anticipation of Future Action or Failure

Anticipated future action or failure ($n = 109$) included comments that assumed future failure of the incoming administration or individual action to disconnect with the administration or the country as a whole. Anticipated future action meant a threat of moving away from the United States, recounts in the votes, or standing up and speaking out. Anticipated future failure shows that individual supporters of Clinton, feared for the administration’s future impact on the country and policies such as immigration, women’s rights, and more. This was represented emotionally by individuals equating Trump’s success to a type of “doom’s day” or apocalyptic intimidation. Posts that contained an anticipated action included examples such as, “I'm feeling physically ill right now. Election night. I’m with her. Immigrant. Guess I'll just go back to Ireland for another 4 years” and “Just googled how to impeach a president. This shit is too real & too close. America is a joke. I’m with her.” Posts also called for reform and change, “Electoral reform anyone? I’m with her, despite likely winning the popular vote Hillary Clinton will lose. How can tonight reflect the public?” These responses showed that Clinton supporters were looking for options and a way out of the possibility for a Trump presidency through moving away, impeachment, and reformation of the electoral system.

Posts containing content of anticipated failure of the administration included posts such as, “America Is Over Party. you know it’s bad when there’s a whole hashtag about America being over...I’m with her” and “So happy I voted in this election, because it looks like it may have been my last. I’m a woman. Women can’t vote, Trump is sexist. I’m with her.” Others included “Donald Trump is just 38 electoral votes from being able
to nuke Belgium. Trump 2016. I’m with her” and “Do it for the planet, climate wars due
to his policies regarding the environment are a real possibility. I’m with her.” This type
of content showed that Clinton supporters were against the type of reform and change
that they anticipated would take place under the potential Trump administration. Twitter
users were predicting failure and negative outcomes with this type of response.

Cutting of reflected failure (CORF) of Clinton’s Perceived Loss by Those Against
Clinton

Evidence of the cutting off reflected failure (CORF) and basking in reflected glory
(BIRG) phenomena was also present. However, this was only seen in conjunction with
posts that were not for Hillary Clinton and for Donald Trump that showed a clear BIRG
behavior \( (n = 20) \), and of which were minimal. Posts that had elements of CORF \( (n = 26) \)
were nearly all posts that disassociated with Clinton and sought to further distance
themselves from her predicted loss and her supporter’s loss. Posts that were not for
Clinton all indicated support for Donald Trump and posts that contained a CORF
phenomenon used language and content intended to further separate themselves from the
Clinton campaign. Examples of anti-Clinton content included, “If the polls stay the same
real Donald Trump WINS! Election night. VOTE. I’m with her, LOCK HER UP. We
Love West Virginia” and “Hillary supporter: I’m with her unless she loses then I will go
home and cry in my safe space” as well as “To I’m With Her people. That’s what you get
for backing a corrupt, lying, cheating candidate.” These posts also contain clear CORF
behaviors through name-calling, anger, and further fueling the loss. These posts were
designed to use the Clinton campaign hashtag #ImWithHer to communicate across party
lines and display association with Donald Trump and against Hillary Clinton to the hashtag #ImWithHer crowd on Twitter as a way of basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF) of Clinton’s perceived and predicted election loss.

**Sentiment Analysis**

The third research question asked what the sentiment of social media mentions prior the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag #ImWithHer. The sentiment analysis revealed that on November 8, 2016 the conversations on Twitter continued to be more positive than negative with 61% positive and a growing 38.9% negative. This sentiment analysis examined all the content posted on this day with the hashtag #ImWithHer. While hopes were still high and the results had not yet been confirmed, Clinton supporters were continuing to remain positive and BIRG early in the election process. However, this analysis does show that the negative sentiment grew with an increase from 28.9% to 38.9%.

**November 8, 2016: #ImStillWithHer**

The first research question sought to understand themes before the election results while the second research question asked what themes were present after the 2016 U.S. presidential election on social media about Clinton using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. The analysis below provides the themes surrounding the #ImStillWithHer conversation to more fully answer the second research question. The overwhelming majority of these posts that contained the modified campaign hashtag, #ImStillWithHer, were emotionally charged. The main themes that were discovered within this data set were (1) emotional responses, (2) association with Clinton, (3) disassociations with Trump and/or Trump
voters, and (4) premature BIRG and CORF. Sentiment analysis revealed that the content with the hashtag #ImStillWithHer was primarily negative.

**Emotional Responses**

Emotions were high during the 2016 election. According to CNN, the 2016 presidential race was, “always going to be an emotional roller coaster, given the candidates” (Collinson, 2016). CNN’s Stephen Collinson (2016) describes the ways in which both Trump and Clinton were both “most guaranteed to cause the maximum amount of alienation on the other side.” Due to the high emotional stakes, increasing polarization, and partisanship, emotions are beginning to influence our belief systems and feelings of parties and candidates. One study found that online news on the opposing party’s candidate was related to the emotional response of anger and information sharing (Hasell & Weeks, 2016). When looking at the 2012 presidential election, these researchers suggest that partisan news may encourage information sharing on political subjects’ due to the arousal of anger that was provoked in the audience (Hasell & Weeks, 2016). Anger was a significant emotion that was identifiable within the Twitter content on November 8 (n = 389). As the votes were being counted, anger, anxiety, sadness, disappointment, fear, disbelief, and hope were all common emotions within the hashtag #ImStillWithHer Twitter content. These emotional responses are not mutually exclusive and often contained more than one emotion within the posts.

Sadness and disappointment (n = 131) was the most frequent emotional response. Sadness and disappointment were placed in the same category because of the similarity of emotional response such as defeat and dissatisfaction. These similar responses were
most common and both directly and indirectly stated. Direct sadness and disappointment includes the words or variations of words such as, sad, upset, and disappointment. The clear indications of sadness and disappointment included posts similar to “I'm so disappointed! I’m still with her” and “I'm feeling heartbroken and defeated. I know it's early, but this wasn't how tonight was supposed to happen. Election night, I’m still with her.” Indirect sadness and disappointment was often displayed through the visualization of needing something to take away the sadness or mask the disappointment such as alcohol or food that resembled depressive behaviors. For example, “Taking 2 Benadryl, finishing my beer and going to bed. America. You're better than this. I’m still with her” and “About to say goodbye to my streak of not getting drunk. I’m still with her.”

Anger and frustration (n = 77) was expressed directly and indirectly as well. Direct anger is clear when the post contained words such as, angry, furious, irritated, and other synonyms. For example, “I'm furious, really scared and going to bed. I can't watch this anymore. I’m still with her.” Indirect anger and frustration could also be seen in the way the post was written such as sarcasm or capitalization like “To everyone who voted trump: I HOPE YALL REALIZE WHAT YOU JUST DID TO THIS COUNTRY. I’m still with her.”

Disbelief and fear (n = 119) were just as common as hopeful posts and slightly less frequent than sadness and disappointment. Disbelief and fear were placed together as emotional responses because shock, fear, and anxiousness stood hand in hand. These posts looked like, “Someone's gotta be hacking. Someone's gotta be doing something cuz this isn't actually happening. I’m still with her. Election night, nope” and “I'm terrified
right now and I'm a white woman. I cannot imagine how people of color are feeling right now. I’m still with her. Love trumps hate.” Anxiety and uncertainty caused a rise in disbelief as Trump’s votes grew. While Hillary Clinton’s projected win fell from view, the disbelief in those who were confident in a democratic win were in shock and anxiety of what would happen next in America.

Hope \((n = 119)\) and loss of hope \((n = 15)\) were also frequent emotional responses. At this point in the election, the votes were streaming in from radio, television, and digital news sources and uncertainty was high. Some posts were still looking hopeful for Hillary Clinton to win. These hopeful posts were similar to, “Faith! I’m still with her... It's not over till it's over #Elections2016” and “PSA: yes, I am watching the election, no I am not worried, yes I’m still with her, yes I think she'll win, yes I think Donald Trump is awful.” Loss of hope also appeared, but not as frequently as hope, which shows that the strong association with Clinton as a candidate remained hopeful and positive for the most part until the votes were finally counted. Hopeless or loss of hope content emerged similar to, “I have "hope" literally tattooed on my body and I have never felt so despondent in my life. I’m still with her.”

**Association with Hillary Clinton**

All posts \((n = 500)\) contained an association or continued association with Clinton. These are clear simply due to the hashtag #ImStillWithHer being present in all posts. However, there were no posts that were not for Clinton and zero posts that show support for Trump that also used the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. This means that all posts in this set were supporting Clinton as a candidate for president that used this hashtag.
within this set of data. This association was clear from the beginning but important to note as a theme because the content of the posts also functioned as a mechanism for associating with Hillary Clinton while also disassociating with Donald Trump. For example, “We coulda had the first woman president ever this year! One who's fought for equality her whole life. I’m still with her” and “Ya gotta stick with her. She needs everyone right now. If only us in the rest of the world were able to vote today!”

**Disassociations with Trump and/or Trump Voters**

Disassociation with Donald Trump has been a common theme among all datasets from both November 7 and 8. However, on November 8, rather than only disassociating with Trump himself, the Twitter users who supported Clinton with the hashtag #ImStillWithHer also disassociated with Trump’s voters and states who turned red during the counting of the votes ($n = 127$). Posts that contained a clear disconnection from Trump looked similar to posts such as “Way to go America. Let’s vote for the most racist homophobic person we can find. I’m still with her” and “Disgusted and disappointed in our country. I’m still with her.”

Cutting off reflected glory ($n = 118$) of the Trump campaign’s success was also another way in which individuals distanced themselves from Donald Trump within the posts. As traditional CORF behavior tells us, when a team that you are associated with loses, you are less likely to boast and publically associate with your team (Cialdini, 1976).

However, when politics are involved and voters are highly associated and passionate, they may continue to associate as is seen with the hashtag #ImStillWithHer.
The results lead to what might be considered cutting off reflected glory (CORG) behaviors are described as distancing one’s self from the glory of the candidate for which they did not support and continue to not support. CORG behaviors were common and occurred within posts of other themes as well. Examples of CORG behaviors include, “I almost can't stand to be in a country where the election is this close. I’m still with her. Election night” and “The mindset of people. You rather a man with no class, no humane thoughts, no heart, no common sense, no poise… I be damn. I’m still with her.”

**Premature BIRG and CORF**

Traditional basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF) also occurred within the Clinton supporters, however minimally. BIRG behaviors were premature and less frequent than they were on November 7 ($n = 12$). These posts were hopeful and expectant of a win for Hillary Clinton. They often assumed and concluded that she would become president before the results were officially in. This was a premature function of the BIRG behavior. For example, “Hillary still go ne be in the White House so congrats to her for working her butt off! Girl Power!!! I’m still with her” and “Go Hillary! Love TRUMPS Hate! Wonderful rally. We elect our first female president today. Best of luck America. Hillary 2016. I’m STILL with her.” CORF behaviors also occurred ($n = 20$); however, not necessarily from Clinton and her approaching loss but from the election as a whole. This CORF phenomenon was minimal but important. These distancing tweets contained evidence of disassociation with the election process and the coverage of the polls by deciding to shut it off and head to bed to avoid connecting with the news coverage any longer. For example, “I can't stand to watch
this anymore. No matter the outcome I’m still with her.” Others include, “Sigh...I might have to go to bed and discover the insanity that is our reality tomorrow. I’m still with her. Election night” and “Going to bed to escape this horrific nightmare of an election I’m still with her.”

**Sentiment Analysis**

The fourth research question asked what the sentiment of social media mentions after the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. To answer this research question, the use of a sentiment analysis on November 8, 2016 was conducted through Radian6 with the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. This sentiment analysis showed that the content was primarily negative with 78.6% while only 21.4% of the content is positive. This is a major shift from the prior two sentiment analyses that showed a majority of content was labeled as positive. One explanation for that in reference to the thematic analysis may consider that reality of the Trump administration was setting in. Emotions were displayed as intense and the majority of them were negative emotions that provide insight into the shifting sentiment.

**November 9, 2016: #ImStillWithHer**

In order to fully answer the second research question that required looking for themes after the U.S. presidential election on social media about Clinton using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer, the analysis continued a day after the election to fully grasp the social media chatter after the election. On November 9, 2016, the hashtag #ImStillWithHer was trending on Twitter along with others like #NotMyPresident and #TrumpProtest. These hashtags created a thread of stories that explained and depicted the
emotions of social media users after the results of the 2016 election were concluded. The results yielded an electoral college win for Donald Trump with 306 electoral votes and 232 electoral votes for Hillary Clinton (CNN, 2016). However, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote with 65,853,516 to Donald Trump’s 62,984,825 votes. While the electoral votes are what mattered in the end, Clinton supporters still engaged in BIRG and CORF behaviors, with strong associations. The major themes that emerged from the #ImStillWithHer hashtag on November 9, 2016 included (1) basking in reflected failure (BIRF) behaviors from Clinton supporters, (2) emotional responses, (3) cutting off reflected glory of Trump’s election win and encouraging Clinton supporters to (4) speak out and take action. The third research question asked, what are the sentiments of social media mentions after to the 2016 U.S. presidential election results about Clinton using the hashtag #ImWithHer? To answer this research question, a sentiment analysis of the Twitter content containing the hashtag #ImStillWithHer on November 9, 2016. The sentiment analysis for this day follows the thematic analysis and shows that the content remains mostly positive.

**Basking in Reflected Failure Behaviors from Clinton Supporters**

Despite Hillary Clinton’s popular vote win, the electoral votes did not provide her with the same glory. While Hillary supporters continued to associate with her and show their support using the hashtag #ImStillWithHer ($n = 946$) in nearly all posts within this dataset. Basking in reflected failure (BIRF) is identified by posts that use this space to say thank you, take pride in her success and work as a candidate, or to boast about her popular vote win ($n = 122$). Posts that contained a BIRF behavior for Hillary Clinton look
similar to “We can't forget! HILLARY WON THE POPULAR VOTE! Hillary Clinton, I’m still with her” and “I’m still with her bc I know Hillary Clinton is who we need in office rn.” Other examples include, “even though Hillary didn't win, I'm still so grateful for what these two did for the Hillary 2016 campaign! I’m still with her” and “NEVER FORGET. By own logic Clinton won. Not my president. Hillary for president. I’m still with her.”

Posts where BIRF was present was also most commonly associated with a display of pride (n = 89), which will be further explained in the emotional response section. These posts that contained a written display of pride for Hillary Clinton tell us that BIRF behaviors are commonly connected with a continued, strong association and boastful response for having been associated with her during the campaign (n = 121). For example, “Immensely proud of this woman! I’m still with her” and “Hillary Clinton is classy, dignified and I have more love and respect for her. She is a role model to many of us. I’m still with her.”

While the majority of posts were in support of and in association with Hillary Clinton, a handful of posts were against the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton herself (n = 47). These posts used the hashtag #ImStillWithHer to send messages to the group of Hillary supporters using this hashtag. They were often negative in nature and resembled posts such as “You lost liberals. Get over it. I’m still with her for prison. Keep crying. MAGA3X. Liberal Lunacy. Liberal Tears.” Another example included, “I’m still with her, Trump protest, You guys realize he won already, right? Get over it, and get a job”
and “Trump protest, not my president, and I’m still with her, Eat your hearts out! We’re dragging you into a better future whether you like it or not!”

**Emotional Responses**

Similarly, but not as prevalent as the day before, emotional responses were also present on November 9. These emotions were less clear and less frequent but included emotions such as, pride ($n = 121$), sadness ($n = 120$), anger/irritation ($n = 87$), hope ($n = 64$), and shock/fear ($n = 57$).

Pride, as mentioned above in the BIRF theme, was the most common emotional response found on November 9, 2016. Pride was commonly used to boast and a continuation of strongly aligning with Hillary Clinton, regardless of her loss. These posts rarely mention her loss. Rather, they continued to congratulate her on her hard work and success and thanked her for her work throughout her career. These posts looked to Clinton as a role model and displayed a strong bond and pride for having voted for her in the 2016 election. For example, “Hillary Clinton, you are an inspiration to me Thank You for fighting for all my rights. Child, woman, immigrant, I’m still with her. Aun con Ella” and “SO PROUD ... Hillary IS my president in my HEART!! I’m still with her.”

Sadness was another emotional response, nearly equal to pride. Sadness continued from November 8 to the 9 by providing evidence for grief and mourning of Hillary Clinton’s election loss. Sadness posts looked similar to that of November 8 in posts such as “The tears will not dry up for a long time. I’m still with her” and “I’ve cried more in the last 24 hours than in the month prior. Make America cry again, so ashamed. I’m still with her. The hope is gone.”
Anger/irritation was also an emotional response. Anger (80) and irritation (7) was identified by direct and indirect evidence. Anger was marked by language and direct use of synonymous words to anger and irritation was marked by sarcasm and frustration. These posts were often posts that individuals used to vent their frustrations and anger on social media about the election results. Examples include, “Tr*mp won't make America great again and NEVER WILL. I’m still with her” and “One day later, and I'm not mad, just disappointed. Lol just playing I'm still super mad. I’m still with her. Not my president.” Others include, “I AM NOT LESS OF A PERSON FOR BEING A WOMAN OR BISEXUAL. Not my president. I’m with her. I’m still with her” and “yea trump can sexually harass women and Hillary Clinton is the criminal. Please note my sarcasm. I’m still with her.”

Hope (n = 64) was an interesting emotional response that was used to say things like “It's been a long day- and will be a long four years, but NEVER stop fighting and NEVER lose hope! I’m still with her” and “For the sake of our country, I hope and pray that Mr. Trump will be a good president. I’m with her but stick with him. I’m still with her.” These posts ranged from hope that Clinton could still win, encouragement, and a sense that everything would be okay.

Shock/fear (n = 57), was less common on November 9, as it was on the previous day. Uncertainty on November 8 may have caused more of an increase in fear and disbelief in Twitter users than on November 9. November 9 was the day that the election results were finalized and clearly showed a victory for Donald Trump. Posts that contained fear were less fearful of a Trump win, as they were with the uncertainty of the
future and particular issues. For example, “Still in shock... but we must persevere. Stay high... don't go low, we need to stay strong geoff9cow, FLOTUS, Barack Obama. I’m still with her” and “I hope these Trump protest’s strike the same amount of fear in Trump as his presidency strikes in the American people. I’m still with her.” Another example includes, “I haven't felt this much despair since 9/11. I'm scared for my friends and family! I’m still with her.” These posts depict a fear that flooded Twitter users and Clinton supporters on social media. While the disbelief and shock had decreased from November 8 as the reality of President Trump set in, the fear and uncertainty were still present.

**Cutting off Reflected Glory of Trump’s Election Win**

November 9, 2016 was the day that the election results were finalized. Many Clinton voters on Twitter were less than thrilled with the final results. Cutting off reflected failure (CORF) framework indicates that people tend to disassociate with a person they once associated with due to failure. However, in the world of polarization and politics, cutting off reflected glory is a more relevant term. These Twitter posts show that some Clinton supporters continued to show their support for Clinton despite her loss, while disassociating even more with Donald Trump even though he was declared successful. CORG behaviors happened in a few ways on this day on Twitter, (a) #NotMyPresident began trending \((n = 247)\), (b) disassociation with Trump \((n = 164)\) and Trump voters \((n = 86)\), (c) mentions of protests or #TrumpProtest was mentioned \((n = 137)\), and (d) not accepting the results or Trump as election winner \((n = 86)\).
The hashtag #NotMyPresident \((n = 247)\) was common in the dataset to disconnect with Donald Trump as the new President of the United States. For example, “I’m not American but he’s not my president. I’m still with her. Fuck Trump” and “Trump is not my president and will never be. Trump protest. I’m still with her.”

Another way individuals disassociated themselves with Donald Trump \((n = 164)\) rather than using the hashtag includes remarks about his character and fitness for office. For example, “Never will a child rapist be my POTUS! Nor a man who sexually assaults women at will. Who degrades 95% of the citizens. I’m still with her” and “I hate how little he's had to work to get to the White House. Making a mockery of the most prestigious office on Earth. I’m still with her.” These posts were intended to refuse to accept the position of president for Donald Trump, as well as push themselves farther away from Trump himself.

Similarly, individuals disassociated from Trump voters \((n = 86)\) to separate themselves from those who did not vote for the candidate of their choice. For example, “Donald is what happens when we cut funding for education... I’m still with her. Not my president” and “To Republican voters out there: your President-elect Trump is welcome to grab by the pussy... American Election, disgrace. I’m still with her.”

Protest of the Trump presidency began on November 9, 2016. Mentions and conversations about these protests occurred across the nation and were present on social media. The hashtag #TrumpProtest was commonly used to converse online about the protests occurring in real time. Another way that protesting manifested online was the #TwitterBlackOut. Twitter blackout was the name for an online protest against Trump
that encouraged users to change their profile photos to black. For example, “I hope that the Trump protest won’t stop when he becomes president. We must continue to fight for humanity. I’m still with her” and “I am proud of these protesters. I am proud of our youth who is fighting for what they believe in. I’m still with her.”

Cutting off reflected glory also manifested itself in Twitter users refusing to accept the final election results ($n = 86$). These posts contained comments about the electoral college voting system, the potential for voter fraud, hopes of impeachment, and lack of Americans voting. For example, “real Donald Trump, you said the election was rigged. This is the first time I'm agreeing with you. I’m still with her, not my president” and “When does the impeachment trial begin? Not my president. I’m still with her.”

**Speak Out and Take Action**

Many of these Twitter posts encouraged the Trump protests and the importance of staying strong, taking action, and speaking up. Many spoke of using their voices, not staying silent, or “fighting” back. These posts encouraged and demonstrated the beginnings of the mobilization of people against the Trump administration. Examples included, “It's time to fight back & stand up for what we believe in. I’m still with her” and “I hear the call to action loud and clear and oh, boy DO I EVER ACCEPT. I’m still with her. Change is gonna come.” Other examples included “Because I will choose to speak my voice! I will be heard! I’m still with her” and “Keep fighting. keep hoping. this is our country and our future and we have every right to protect it. Stronger together. I’m still with her.”
Along with speaking up and taking action, unity was also a theme among these posts for people to be reminded that they are “#StrongerTogether” and not alone in the fight. Encouragement and togetherness brought together a sense of unity within these posts to encourage each other to do something about the results of the election. Instead of “I” and “me,” posters began using “we” and “us” as a way to bring together like-minded people distraught by the election results. These posts connected groups of marginalized people and encouraged people to gather together to make a change. For example, “Tonight, I stand with woman, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, Muslims, Disabled people. Twitter blackout. I’m still with her” and “We will not let hate lead us. We are stronger together. I’m still with her.”

**Sentiment Analysis**

The fourth research question sought to determine the sentiment of the social media mentions after the U.S. presidential election results about Clinton with the use of the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. As seen in previous days, the sentiment of the hashtag #ImStillWithHer on November 9, 2016 still remained mostly positive. This could be due to the positive BIRF posts that continue to thank and encourage Hillary Clinton as well as others to fight, protest, and support each other. The increase in pride and positive messages of hope and encouragement may contribute to the more positive messages. Radian6 determined that 65.9% of the content was positive while 34.1% was negative. This more positive sentiment may indicate that despite the loss of Hillary Clinton, the association with her and her supporters online was strong enough to overcome and decrease negative emotions and negative content about the opposing party.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

This goal of this thesis was to further understand the election conversation from the perspective of Hillary Clinton supporters. Through understanding the election conversation, the purpose of this thesis was to collect the major themes that were found within the data. This thesis sought to analyze the Election Day conversation through the lens of basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF). The goal of this thesis was to discover the major themes that occurred within the day before, the day of, and the day after Election Day on social media with Clinton campaign hashtags, #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer. November 7, 2016 examined the hashtag #ImWithHer, while November 8, 2016 explored both #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer hashtags. Only hashtag #ImWithHer posts were analyzed on November 9, 2016. The data suggested that traditional BIRG and CORF frameworks were present in the social media conversations, as well as an adapted framework that characterizes the unique conversations that occurred during the 2016 presidential election. Finally, a sentiment analysis was conducted for each day to determine how the sentiment changed across the hashtags on each day. This chapter will review the results, discuss implications of the
findings, highlight limitations associated with the study, and outline suggestions for future research.

On November 7, 2016, the findings showed that the hashtag #ImWithHer was used to (1) plea and encourage voting, (2) share reasons for voting, (3) claim association with Hillary Clinton, (4) engage in premature BIRG behavior, and (5) disassociate with Donald Trump. Encouraging others to vote was a common theme on this day while people still had time to cast their votes. This encouragement to vote was used to pull people to the polls. Twitter is often used as a platform for sharing information about one’s self. On this day, individuals used Twitter and the hashtag #ImWithHer to share their reasons for voting for Hillary Clinton. Some of these posts assumed that Clinton would win, which led to a premature BIRG phenomenon where individuals were basking in the glory of her win before a win was realized. Much like rival teams, those who associated with Clinton often disassociated with Donald Trump by further distancing themselves from him and his political platform.

Election Day was examined through posts containing the hashtags #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer. On November 8, 2016 the hashtag #ImWithHer continued to be used to (1) associate with Hillary Clinton, (2) disassociate with Trump and his approaching success, (3) indicate an emotional response, (4) anticipate a future action or failure, and (5) CORF by those against Clinton. As used the preceding day, association with Clinton came from the clear use of the hashtag #ImWithHer as a tool to show support and honor their candidate. Distancing from Donald Trump also continued to occur on this day. November 8 provided a more raw and emotional response from
individuals as they watched the election unfold. This emotional response was met with various types of emotion such as fear, sadness/disappointment, and shock/disbelief. Individuals used this space to share their feelings about the election as it occurred in real time. Fear was often associated with a nervous or anxious feeling about the future of the country and certain issues that Twitter users were most concerned about. Sadness and disappointment was found to be connected to the loss of their candidate of choice, Hillary Clinton as well as disappointment in the American people for voting for Trump. Feelings of shock and disbelief was connected to user’s inability or refusal to understand how the election did not turn out in their favor. These emotions presented a window into the hearts of Twitter users. Individuals used this online space to communicate how the election results were making them feel as an individual and as an American citizen.

Anticipated future action or failure was also a common theme on November 8 in which individuals anticipated or feared a future failure by the Trump administration. Individuals also used this as a space for sharing their intent to act by speaking out or moving out of the United States. CORF occurred on this day as well, however not by Clinton supporters as traditional CORFing suggests. Individuals who posted against the Clinton Campaign cut off reflected failure and used the hashtag #ImWithHer as a communication tool with the Clinton supporters online.

The hashtag #ImStillWithHer on November 8, 2016 presented similar themes. The themes within the use of hashtag #ImStillWithHer included (1) emotional responses, (2) associations with Clinton, (3) disassociations with Trump and/or Trump voters, (4) premature BIRG and CORF behaviors. This day and hashtag followed similar patterns as
November 7 and the hashtag #ImWithHer. A few differences existed in the disassociation with Trump and/or Trump voters. This was the first time that distancing from those who voted for Trump occurred. Premature BIRG continued to occur in the assumption that Hillary would win and CORF behaviors also occurred by those who do not support Clinton but also by Clinton supporters who intended to distance themselves from the election as a whole rather than the anticipation of a Clinton loss. These distance posts were used as a disconnection from the entire election process by turning off the television or going to bed. Individuals who presented this type of response used it as a way to avoid the adverse information. These individuals decided to power off the news and refused to connect with negative information coming in.

On November 9, 2016, the results showed new and familiar sets of themes. The themes for the hashtag #ImStillWithHer on the day after the election included (1) BIRF from Clinton supporters, (2) emotional responses, (3) CORG of Trump’s election win, and (4) encouragement and intent to speak out and take action. The results follow a similar pattern as the days prior; however, BIRF of Clinton’s loss included messages of pride and admiration for her hard work and success even though she did not win the presidency. Emotional responses continued, this time with less fear and shock and an increase in pride and sadness. CORG behaviors were also more elaborate and common during this day through the use of trending hashtags such as, #TrumpProtest and #NotMyPresident. The encouragement and intention to speak out and take action was also more prevalent on November 9 than on November 8. This theme included a call to
action to speak out and do something to stop Trump or support the American people through this time.

**BIRG and CORF Adjusted: BIRF and CORG**

Traditional BIRG and CORF research focused mainly on the world of sports and fan behavior. As discussed in Chapter Two, Cialdini (1976) provides studies on the BIRG and CORF framework that tells us that BIRG is more likely to occur with the success of a team or person to which an individual or group of people associates with. On the other hand, CORF behaviors are supported by distancing from failures of an unsuccessful group or individual to protect the ego and public image (Snyder, Lassегard, & Ford, 1986). Based on the results of this thesis, these traditional frameworks may be better suited for sport contexts with a required adaptation for political contexts. In the results, two new frameworks appeared that might be better suited to describe the behavior of political association online. *Basking in reflected failure* (BIRF) occurred when Hillary supporters continued to associate with Clinton and her campaign for president even after she lost the race. These posts basked in her failure by sharing their affiliation, pride, and thanks to Clinton online. Their continued association and connection showed that political affiliations can be extremely strong and correlate with a refusal to CORF. These individuals remained closely associated with Hillary Clinton and even went so far as to engage in *cutting off reflected glory* (CORG) behaviors which occurred when Hillary supporters were attempting to distance themselves from Trump’s presidential success. The refusal to accept his win is not a BIRF phenomenon but a CORG phenomenon in which individuals distanced themselves from his success as president. CORG behaviors
include a refusal to accept the glory of a person’s success due to an individual’s strong desire to distance himself or herself from the person they oppose. This framework is used to understand the conversations about the refusal to accept Donald Trump’s success in the presidential election. CORG was used as a way to continue disassociating from the candidate these users did not want to win. These two modified frameworks are derived from the BIRG and CORF framework to apply more directly to political affiliations and online conversations that have been analyzed in this thesis. MacKuen, Wolak, Keele, and Marcus (2010) concluded that two modes of citizenship exist: deliberative and partisan. Deliberative citizenship means the individual is reflective in consideration of the available choices. In contrast, partisan citizenship is a steadfast adherence to convictions. From these results, the majority of these posts would likely be considered steadfast, partisan citizens who continue to adhere to their choice for president even when that choice does not succeed (MacKuen et al., 2010). These partisan citizens engaged in BIRF and CORG behaviors in order to display their political choices with the public and stand by their political decisions.

**Heightened Emotions**

A major finding in the results highlighted the presence of significant emotion in the Twitter data. With the exception of November 7, November 8 and 9 contained emotional responses that included anger, anxiety, sadness, disappointment, fear, disbelief, hope, and pride. One study found that emotions shape the way individuals gather political information through aversion and anxiety to produce response patterns (MacKuen et al., 2010). When aversion is activated, individuals shut down their information search and
practice selective attention to information. On the other hand, these authors stated that when anxiety is produced, people are more likely to be open to new ideas and information (MacKuen et al., 2010). This may explain the use of the hashtags and the increased and open conversation about emotion. Due to the hashtag being more pro-Clinton, individuals may have used this hashtag as a way to avoid information around Trump and Trump supporters and selectively attend to information around the #ImWithHer conversation. MacKuen (2010) and other researchers argued that these partisan citizens, mentioned above, are more likely to engage with anger and emotions. The results of another study indicated that anxiety in politics may depress the desire to share information for some while encourage others to share information in hopes of reducing uncertainty (Hasell & Weeks, 2016). This study suggested that anger is a factor in why individuals chose to share information on social media. These researchers argued that understanding political information sharing and engagement online is important for political expression and is an increasingly important place for consumers to gather news information about politics. Anger as a collective emotion can cause mistrust and a collapse of the legitimization of the opponent, sometimes leading to fighting and violence as a coping mechanism under threatening conditions (Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007). This can be seen with the combination of disassociation with Trump, the simultaneous refusal to accept him as president, and the conversation about protests and resistance. This finding may suggest that the results of this study continue to open doors for understanding how individuals share and communicate online about political information.
Another interesting finding that MacKuen (2010) provided is that emotions motivate strategic action. This finding is consistent with the November 9 findings in this thesis that showed individuals called others to action through encouragement and mentions of protests and uniting together against the incoming administration. These researchers suggested that the distinctions between anxiety and aversion of information during the political process impacts citizen information processing and behavior. “Those activated citizens resist a social deliberate that calls for honoring other perspectives and a cooperative search for solutions. Angry participants notoriously produce poor deliberation; worried participants might do better” (MacKeun, 2010, p. 453). In sum, the difference in emotion impacts the way individuals behave and act politically. Emotions fuel individual political decisions and the type of citizenship individuals chose to engage with. This may explain the increased push for protesting and resistance on November 9, 2016 within the content of social media as a mechanism for emotional fuel for political participation.

Fenton (2008) argued that online activism runs the risk of raising hopes with the possibility of letting them down and in turn, individuals should encourage hope in multiple acts of resistance because hope is critical to social progress. In sum, Fenton argues that hope is a vital piece of the political resistance process. In turn, the data that contained elements of hope makes considerable sense in an effort to enact change and encourage others to join in. In the results, hope was used as a way to encourage others to be strong. Hope was found within the data on November 8 and 9. These posts were most frequent on November 9, the day after the election. Hope was used as a coping
mechanism for the fear and anxiety of America’s future with Trump. Despite Hillary Clinton’s loss, her supporters remained hopeful that she would make a comeback in the polls, remained hopeful despite Trump’s success, and encouraged to others to use hope as a way to persevere through the anticipation of hard times. The emotion of hope was intended to give themselves and others sense of peace and the strength to withstand hard times as a society. Hope led these users to the beginning of a movement toward social change. Without hope, these individuals intended to keep the conversation positive which is seen in the sentiment analysis throughout these days. Hope was also connected to the encouragement to fight back against the Trump administration through social action.

Twitter users also hoped that Trump’s presidency would be successful for the good of the people even though he was not their candidate of choice. On November 9, encouragement to speak out and take action emerged as a theme. Within this theme, hope was also a common word used to send encouragement to others and to unite as a community, help the nation, and speak out for what they believe in.

This large online conversation presented a collective bank of emotions and conversations. According to Bar-Tal, Halperin, and de Rivera (2007), collective emotions are vital to shaping and changing individual and societal responses to conflicting events and contribute to the emotional climate and collective orientation toward the event. As shown in the data, individuals experienced emotions related to collective societal experiences. This ultimately shapes the way society frames the event. In the case of the 2016 election, the collective experience was largely negative with emotions such as fear and anger. However, these emotional responses also contained elements essential to
change such as hope and pride. Hope refers to positive goals of equality, security, prosperity, and peace (Bar-Tal et al., 2007). In the data, the content that contained elements of hope frequently contained messages of unity and togetherness. These authors suggest that hope is a way of viewing the world and a source for mobilization and taking action. This research affirms the results found particularly on November 9, 2016 where individuals had emotions of hope and pride for Hillary Clinton while also sending messages of action against Trump and sticking together as Clinton’s other campaign slogan and trending hashtag said, #StrongerTogether. Hope, in this case, was a prevalent finding due to the collective fear that Clinton supporters were facing. Hope was used to combat these fears and anxieties and led people into a larger conversation about what to do next. The emersion of hope within this context was significant since hope indicated that these circumstances were not permanent and could be changed through action and participation. Hope was a promise to other Twitter users that the election loss was not the end and, by standing together, anyone can make a difference.

**Sentiment Discussion**

The emotions discussed above likely played a large role in the sentiment of the Twitter content. The sentiment analysis of each day showed that the conversation remained mostly positive. On November 7 and 8 using the hashtag #ImWithHer, the social media content was more positive than negative. The hashtag #ImWithHer may have been more positive than negative due to the engagement and high affiliation that these users placed on their relationship with Hillary Clinton. These users chose to indicate support with Clinton online and use this hashtag to share across the web where
their political allegiances lie. This content was primarily positive, likely due to the positive nature of associations. These individuals prided themselves on who they were voting for by encouraging others to vote, sharing their reasons for voting, indicating a connection with Clinton, and early basking in reflected glory.

The positive content trend stopped with November 8, 2016. The content on this day with the hashtag #ImStillWithHer was more negative than positive. This hashtag generated more negative posts than that with the hashtag #ImWithHer. This could be due to the change in emotions and conversation on November 8 with a more negatively charged response to the election results. It might also be possible that the #ImStillWithHer posts arrived later in the day when the election results were creeping in. The realization of Hillary’s loss may have created a more negative sentiment than that of the hashtag #ImWithHer. One major difference on this day was the disassociation with not only Donald Trump himself, but with the Trump voters as well. This day and hashtag may have been more negative due to the increased negative emotions. The most frequent emotion was sadness and disappointment, followed by disbelief and fear, and anger and frustration. While hope was a common positive emotion, these hopeful posts were not enough to balance the negative content.

**Implications**

The results of this thesis showed that researchers might consider adapting the BIRG and CORF framework to political contexts more frequently and within the modern political climate. According to *USA Today*, a survey by the American Psychological Association found that 72% of Democrats say the outcome of the 2016 election was a
significant source of stress. *USA Today* also reports that, according to the online Harris Poll survey, 57% of Americans said that the political climate is a significant or somewhat significant source of stress (Shamus, 2017). Many reports suggest that the 2016 election was uncharted territory. *NPR* provides a list of 65 ways in which the 2016 election can be considered unprecedented, a few of which include Trump’s list of lawsuits, Clinton’s use of a private email server, Clinton as the first female presidential candidate, and Trump’s background in business (Kurtzleben, 2016). With extreme polarization and the strong associations that voters develop with presidential candidates, these frameworks need to be considered in a different way in order to reflect the political world for future research in political communication. This thesis begins to chip away at that shifting framework but is by no means sufficient for developing a well-researched and practiced theoretical framework. Scholars should continue to examine political communication through BIRG and CORF behaviors to further understand its adaptation to politics and the potential parallels with sports communication.

Additionally, this thematic analysis shows that emotions were clearly and strongly attached to conversations around political elections and candidates. These associations were strong, and the disassociations may have been even stronger. This thesis shed light on how individuals communicate online, specifically Twitter, about their political affiliations and opinions. This thesis also presented an interesting examination of Twitter usage among voters and politically active individuals in online spaces that shared personal political data about themselves with the broader public. These hashtags also provided an in-depth view into the Clinton campaign supporters and their connections
with her and the political process. The hashtags provided deep meaning into why individual Twitter users vote, who they vote for, why they vote for them, and how they feel about that candidate or the opposing candidate.

**Limitations**

The limitations of this thesis include the inability to accurately interpret Twitter content due to the nature of sarcasm and the 140-character limit. This limit has been increased to 280 as of 2017. Since this change was not in effect during the 2016 Presidential Election, the limits on characters provided less content per tweet. The limits on characters, potential lack of full understanding, and the emotional response within the content may have inhibited the results in a true understanding of the nature of the posts and its intentions. Some posts may have been interpreted one way but intended to mean something else. However, the thematic analysis conducted in this thesis sought to provide general themes across the days and hashtags that were studied and benefits this thesis by providing a broad view of the conversations occurring online over the course of the days leading up to and after the election.

Additionally, the sentiment analysis may have provided skewed results based on Radian6 software’s inability to detect sarcasm and the overall complexities of human language. While the software cannot detect when someone is being sarcastic, it can pick up on words like “hope” or “proud,” which can impact the way the software identifies the sentiment. A sentiment analysis with Twitter is particularly difficult due to the nature of the platform as a quick, witty, and short hand responses. The content may not have been as accurately coded as a human eye might have been able to label a post as positive or
negative. Another difficulty with sentiment is the vast range of emotions that this content contained and the overwhelming mix of emotion within a single tweet. These posts may have included more than one sentiment that would cause it to be both negative and positive. Radian6 is unable to analyze the mixed human emotions that are present within the content studied here. A set of human coders may have been more productive in gaining a more accurate account of positive and negative sentiment and is something to consider for future research with social media data.

Another limitation includes the presence of hyperlinks. These hyperlinks within the data may have provided more insight into the meaning and essence of the posts if the hyperlinks were also analyzed. This thesis looked solely at the original content of the post that was written by the user. Including the content of the hyperlink and analyzing the content may have added to a more in-depth understanding of the Twitter content.

**Future Research**

As noted above, the hyperlinks attached to each post may have presented a more in-depth view of the true meaning of the posts. Future research might consider analyzing both Twitter data and hyperlinks in order to achieve a full understanding and more comprehensive analysis of Twitter content. Analyzing the content of the hyperlinks may require a more visual and advanced version of Social Studio (Radian6’s partner software package) to track the images and links. Future research might also consider exploring the Trump campaign hashtags through the BIRG and CORF framework to provide a broader picture of the election conversation on Twitter. Examining the Trump campaign hashtags
may provide similar or counter information that may be helpful in fully understanding the Election Day conversation on Twitter from both sides.

Additionally, future research on the BIRG and CORF framework should consider the alternative frameworks of BIRF and CORG to examine the applicability of these frameworks in other contexts but also as a political application to communication. BIRF and CORG present a unique communication framework that flips BIRG and CORF and highlights a need to reconsider the traditional BIRG and CORF concepts and applications. In contexts where affiliation is strong, BIRG and CORF may not be suitable for explaining the communication phenomena. Applying these new adapted frameworks may present broader research opportunities for politics and the BIRG and CORF traditional frameworks.

**Conclusion**

This thesis sought to examine and compare the nature of the election conversation on Twitter through the lens of Clinton’s campaign hashtags #ImWithHer and #ImStillWithHer. The goal of this study was to apply the BIRG and CORF framework to a political context in order to consider how individuals associated and disassociated with the 2016 presidential candidates online. This thesis found (1) BIRG and CORF behaviors were present within the data, (2) a potential to adapt political research to a new BIRF and CORG framework, (3) presence of significant and meaningful emotions, (4) the surprisingly positive sentiments of the conversation.

This thesis added to a gap in the literature on the BIRG and CORF framework applied to a political context. The results show that the BIRG and CORF framework was
present in the data. This context provided a deeper understanding of the way individuals associate and disassociate with candidates they are for or against. Individuals on Twitter used these hashtags to make clear associations with Hillary Clinton and disassociations with Donald Trump. With a few exceptions, Clinton supporters used the campaign hashtags to communicate about their political affiliations and display strong emotions as the election results were finalized.

From these results, two new frameworks emerged from the traditional BIRG and CORF. Individuals remained hopeful and proud of Clinton even though she lost the election. This continued association led to basking in her failure. Basking in reflected failure (BIRF) is an emergent framework that can be applied and explained more easily to the continued association with a candidate even if that candidate does not succeed. Cutting off reflected glory (CORG) emerged as a way for Clinton supporters to continue disconnecting themselves from Donald Trump and refuse his success. These two adapted frameworks may provide a more consistent application to a political context whereas BIRG and CORF may apply best to sport contexts.

While these frameworks were identified within the data, so was the presence of intense emotional responses. Emotions of fear, anxiety, anger, hope, pride, and more were found within the results. The emotional responses of these Twitter conversation showed that these hashtags provided a space for sharing personal feelings and political affiliations with others. The hashtags were used as an emotional outlet and a place for encouragement and communication. Hope was also found to create a space for positivity and was associated with the encouragement to take action and speak out. These emotions
provide a deeper understanding of how the election results made Clinton supporters feel during the days surrounding the election.

The range of emotions contributed to a rich set of data for sentiment analysis. The sentiment of most days remained more positive than negative with the exception of November 8 and the hashtag #ImStillWithHer. This overwhelmingly positive sentiment is an interesting finding, as positivity remained high even in the face of adversity for Clinton supporters. The hashtag #ImStillWithHer also contained more content featuring expressed sadness and disappointment. The majority of emotional responses on this day were more negative than positive leading to greater negative sentiment.

These findings provide evidence for BIRG and CORF, the potential for an adaptation to the framework, insight into the emotions of Clinton supporters, and the mainly positive content. This thesis sought to understand the themes and sentiments of the data containing the Clinton campaign hashtags. These results indicate that the study of political elections may need an adapted framework that deviates slightly from traditional BIRG and CORF. The 2016 election featured strong associations, disassociations, and emotions. From this thesis emerged a greater understanding of the 2016 election and the online conversation during this time. The way individuals communicate their political affiliations is changing and it is important for research to highlight the nature of those conversations to provide a greater understanding of how individuals BIRG and CORF, or in this case, BIRF and CORG.
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