Politics of engagement: The slacktivism of Canadian political leaders

by

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Adventure is not outside [wo]man; it is within.

~Mary Ann Evans
Abstract

This thesis considered how Canadian political leaders use social media to engage with constituents. It begins with a review of the literature on social media and engagement communications including the role of the Internet as a new public sphere. This is followed by discussion of some of the risks related to online engagement for political leaders. Using an engagement hierarchy that placed dialogic forms of engagement above those that are for disseminating information, this qualitative study involved gathering Twitter data using online software program Netlytic and coding for the intention of the posts. An analysis of this data as well as statistical information and network images provided by Netlytic is presented before recommendations for future areas of study.

Keywords: Canadian politics, Twitter, Social media, Engagement, Slacktivism
Introduction

Social media have passed beyond being considered "new media" and are now ubiquitous in Canada (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011). Politicians regularly incorporate social media into their communications strategies both during and after election campaigns (Bronstein, 2013; Ekman & Widholm, 2014; Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015). Social media refer to online technology that feature content created by users. Individual users can also share and engage with content created by other users. Some of the most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Google+ (Osborne-Gowey, 2014; Small, 2011).

Social media have changed both the way that people consume media—by allowing them to create their own content—and the way that politicians communicate with their constituents (Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015; Osborne-Gowey, 2014; Vesnic-Alujevic, 2013). Engagement may range from “liking” something that is posted, sharing the post, or writing a comment (LaMarre & Suzuki-Lambrecht, 2013). Rather than simply being passive media consumers, individuals have some level of control over their feeds and can be simultaneous creators of news (Oelsner & Heimrich; Srauy, 2015; Vesnic-Alujevic, 2013).

This aspect of social media—and specifically Twitter because of its unbounded nature—offers unprecedented dialogic potential that previous research from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and New Zealand shows is underutilized by politicians in those countries (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Firmstone & Coleman, 2015; Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010; Housholder & LaMarre, 2014; Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015; Ross & Bürger, 2014). Social media are increasing used by Canadian politicians with the 2011 federal election called the first social media election (Gruzd & Roy, 2014). How are Canadian politicians using social media to engage in dialogue with constituents during election times and, even more importantly, while governing? Are they using social media to broadcast their message in a similar way they
would use traditional media rather than to engage in dialogue or obtain feedback from their constituents (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Housholder & LaMarre, 2014; Larsson & Kalsnes, 2014; Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015; Ross & Bürger, 2014; Ross, Fountaine, & Comrie, 2015)?

Social media provide citizens with increased access to political leaders by allowing them to follow their respective social media channels. Using social media, a citizen could ask the Prime Minister a question or request further information about proposed legislation. Additionally, citizens can use social media to connect with other citizens to engage in conversation about shared interests and concerns. Politicians have the opportunity to chime in with their opinion by offering information or soliciting feedback if they are actively listening on social media (Small, 2010; 2011). This type of hypothetical exchange does seem to exemplify the Habermasian public sphere, a "network for communication, information and points of view" (Habermas, 1996, p. 360) where the voices of the general public are heard over the media elite. What remains to be seen is whether Canadian political leaders are engaging in these acts of online listening and contributing to conversations (Crawford, 2009).

Social media does offer the potentiality of a democratic public sphere where citizens can openly engage with Canadian political leaders, however this idealized dialogic public sphere has not been realized due to politicians' reticence to use social media to their full dialogic capacity. Engagement is defined as dialogic with a focus on contributing to discussion rather than simply consuming media (Men & Tsai, 2015; Smith & Gallicano, 2015). I will discuss social media as a new potential public sphere and whether it is living up to the hype of its democratizing potential. I will then outline different theories about slacktivism, a term used to disparage online activists and online engagement, and consider whether Canadian political leaders are themselves slacktivists. For context, I will review Twitter in relation to Canadian politics before presenting
my method for collecting and coding data. Finally, I will discuss my findings about the Twitter usage of Canadian political leaders before offering concluding remarks.

Public sphere

The mass availability of social media in Canada seemed to herald a new public sphere, a place where more actors could publicly discuss and debate issues of importance on a level playing field (Gerhards & Shafer, 2010; Gibson, 2009; Shirky, 2008). The public sphere, as first articulated by Habermas, is "the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society" (Castells, 2008, p. 78). Historically, the public sphere was by necessity a physical location, however widespread availability of social media provided the alternative possibility of having a public sphere without requiring people to physically share space. Additionally, the accessibility of social media posed a perceived opportunity to counteract the declining political participation taking place in North America and Europe and to provide a counterbalance to the immense power of mainstream media (Shirky, 2008). Supporters of the social media as a democratizing force continue to point to successes such as Obama's 2008 presidential campaign as proof that social media are living up to the promise. The ubiquity, dialogic capacity, and user-generated nature of social media enhanced the argument that social media offer an enhanced public sphere (Epstein, Newhart, & Vernon, 2014; Gibson, 2009; Halpern & Gibbs, 2013).

Is the Internet wonderful?

Social media's accessible and dialogic qualities make these tools incredibly powerful and have changed the way in which citizens interact with their environment and with each other, arguably for the better. One of the strongest defenders of the organizing power of online tools is Clay Shirky in his studies on social movements and cognitive surplus (2008; 2010). While he notes that many of the same constraints exist with online and offline communication, he heralds...
the simplicity of organizing previously unconnected but like-minded individuals across geographical areas using social media. According to Shirky (2008), online activism and engagement creates a “take it or leave it” mentality which is effective because it has a low demand on participants. It is easy to join an online group to receive information or to post a video. Scrolling through a social media feed makes it easy to bypass information that is not of interest. It is simple for would-be participants to find individuals and groups with similar interests. Additionally, people who are geographically scattered can come together to work on projects and share information. Based upon Shirky’s (2008; 2010) work, the true advantage of online engagement is that while a political leader may not be able to engage personally with their followers due to time constraints, social media provide the opportunity for those followers to connect. If a constituent is passionate about preventing the proliferation of oil pipelines, social media make it possible for that person to connect with other constituents who are likewise passionate and to potentially organize an offline action. Whether the offline action is organized or not, group sharing can also create a positive net benefit by raising the awareness of individuals within the group (Shirky, 2010).

Additionally, social media have somewhat eliminated the mediated environment that has existed between politicians and constituents. Stromback (2008) argues that the rise of social media offer the potential to transcend mediated politics where communication between the politician and constituent is controlled by traditional media channels. He perceives this as a positive because it decreases the power of media in favour of the citizen. While it is true that any citizen can contact a politician via social media, what is still unclear is whether this has any larger impact on how the politician acts or how they vote. It seems that the politician has more to gain from this unmediated landscape because they solely control their messaging without having to consider editorializing or withstand fact-checking by journalists. Politicians have increased access to their publics while citizens have more opportunity to reach out directly to
politicians. The analysis section of this paper will consider how politicians respond to these advances.

There is some evidence that the quality of politicians’ online engagement may affect their success. Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011) argue that social media blur the line between public and private life, creating an expanded and enhanced public sphere. Their research on Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign points out that his robust social media presence did not just consist of broadcasting messages—instead the tools were used to capture data about participants in order to build a virtual community. The campaign team collected information about people who attended rallies and other campaign events then used that information to further engage those supporters in campaign activities. Obama’s online presence was focused not just on providing information, but on encouraging people who visited his website to donate or to get involved at the local level (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011). Moreover, Obama’s social media engagement strategy was reliant on treating each medium differently. The researchers note that the campaign “used Facebook to organize, Twitter to send news, and YouTube to communicate” (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011, p. 201). They further point out that it was not simply that the Obama campaign used social media—other campaigns used social media prior to 2008 and continue to do so with much less success than Obama—it was the way in which the technology was used to organize and engage supporters.

While this idealized use of social media is possible in theory, the reality shows that the full dialogic potential of social media is currently underutilized by politicians (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015; Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014). Obama’s 2008 campaign was heralded as a watershed moment in online engagement because of the way that his campaign allowed supporters to participate. Each social media platform was tailored to maximize participation: From encouraging homemade videos such as "Obama Girl" to creating an application that would send a message to supporters' phones informing them of upcoming
local events, Obama's campaign spanned the range of different types of engagement (Epstein et al., 2014; Kellner, 2010). However, once elected his engagement strategy dramatically changed: When his administration’s online engagement findings did not echo his priorities, the feedback was dismissed (Epstein et al., 2014). While undoubtedly it is easier to use social media to push out a message than to engage in dialogue, it is both discomfort with the tool and a deep-seated belief in how social media should be used that leads to this behaviour (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015; Ross & Bürger, 2014; Ross et al., 2015). Obviously, increasing dialogue may lead to a perceived negative as the politician may lose control over the dialogue and the content (Oelsner & Heimrich, 2015). Despite this risk, during his 2008 campaign Obama's team successfully empowered supporters to become mini-campaign managers by providing self-organizing tools, a tactic that led to both user-generated content that went viral as well as offline mobilization. Letting go of control over the messaging was extremely effective for allowing supporters to best speak to their own networks and creating the feeling of a personal, grassroots led campaign (Gibson, 2009).

Despite these potential benefits, politicians continue to use social media like traditional media. In their study of Leeds City Council, Firmstone and Coleman (2015) state that discomfort with social media has led to fragmented use both by staff and elected representatives. They note that the individuals they surveyed found it simpler to use social media as a forum to push out communication rather than as an opportunity to engage in dialogue. Similarly, in their consideration of the lead-up to the 2011 New Zealand election, Ross et al. (2015) find that politicians utilized social media to broadcast a message rather than to engage in dialogue. After the election, the elected representatives continued to view social media as a communication channel, indicating that it is not the risk of engaging in dialogue during an election but rather deeper seated perception about how social media can and should be used (Ross & Bürger, 2014).
Despite the enthusiastic testament of Shirky and the encouraging example of Obama's campaign, not all theorists believe that social media has changed the way in which people interact and organize. For example, Couldry (2015) warns against the “mythical discourse” that is emerging regarding the ability of online technologies to facilitate political change. He points out that online technology, including social media, simply take the place of other organizing tools to enable action in the physical world. Moreover, some research has shown that social media have not provided more widespread access, but in many ways simply reinforce the access of those who were already involved in politics with limited ability to correct disparities based on age, gender, race, or income level (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013; Carlisle & Patton, 2013). It is clear that while social media have made organizing easier, this very ease makes some theorists dismissive of the value of online organizing (Gladwell, 2010). In fact, the rise of Internet access has not positively impacted voter turnout but instead has flourished concurrently with a time of decreasing voter turnout. According to Elections Canada, voter turnout peaked in 1958 with 79.4% turnout. In the Internet era, turnout has been 64.7% in 2004, 58.8% in 2008, 61.1% in 2011, and an estimated 68.3% in 2015. This decrease is expanded on by Robert Putnam (2000) who argues that many different forms of civic engagement—including participation in religious, political, and volunteer organizations—are decreasing with a resulting contraction in social capital. This decrease corresponds with increasing mistrust in government (Putnam, 2000).

**Slacktivism**

The decrease in voter turnout feeds into arguments about slacktivism which is often defined as the opposite of “real” activism. A combination of the words “activism” and “slacker”, slacktivism is used as a disparaging term for people who are perceived to only be active online (Butler, 2011). Extensive discussion about whether online activity constitutes a legitimate form of activism has taken place by social media researchers such as Malcolm Gladwell (2010), with
a particular focus on younger generations. Activities such as “liking” a post on social media or signing an online petition are considered to carry low risk. Requiring little input from the participant, they are therefore generally considered to be less valuable (Butler, 2011; Schumann & Klein, 2015). These type of activities have limited influence on others, both within their social media networks and the public at large. At times, online activity can be invisible: If nobody happens to see a tweet about a particular issue then it has no impact whatsoever. This tallies with Olson’s (cited in Butler, 2011) argument that the cost of participation is a motivator of potential activists in that high costs to participation, whether financial or time costs, are seen to result in lower participation. Because social media participation requires low input, more people can be involved but the value of their participation is seen as less than offline participation (Butler, 2011). Those who participate offline by contributing their time or money have more at stake in outcomes. High participation costs can be seen as positive because it separates the 'real' activists from the slackers.

In some cases, the link between online and offline activism may not be apparent and may be perceived as slacktivism. Instead, it may be related to distrust of public institutions and the government. Warren, Sulaiman, and Jaafar (2014) discuss this concept in relation to the impact that online civic engagement initiatives have on public trust in institutions. Their study finds that activists in Malaysia use social media to express concerns online, but do not use social media to coordinate any offline political activities. This creates a perceived gap between online and offline forms of activism. The rate at which these same online activists engage in offline action is unknown, however there are practical reasons for avoiding organizing online. If planning a protest or rally, nothing stops police or those opposing the cause from monitoring the online action and taking steps to prevent the offline action from happening. While it may be true that social media activists in Malaysia are also active offline, it is impossible to gauge the extent of overlap between online and offline activism. While slacktivism indicates a reluctance to invest
more time or energy, there is a difference between that hesitancy and strategic organizing choices that may see activity planning take place offline.

These arguments focus on the idea that social media activism is less valuable than offline activism, an idea that is not universally accepted. For example, Crivellaro et al. (2014) question whether online action is, in fact, less valuable in their case study on Facebook discourse relating to a derelict but historic public pool in a small town. They argue that there is political resistance in everyday acts and engaging in discourse can increase this politicization because discourse naturally becomes political in nature. Citizens in the nearby community engaged in online conversations about childhood memories that took place at the pool and these posts included discourse about civic life and what the government should be providing for the community, thus becoming political (Crivellaro et al., 2014). This example demonstrates the value of online engagement which offers different value from offline engagement.

The discussion about the public pool would meet Schuster's (2013) definition of engagement as raising awareness. Schuster also points out that there are advantages and disadvantages of online activism. Her study of different generations of feminists considers the generational divide inherent in social media activism. Using feminist standpoint theory, she argues that the older generation of feminists are unaware of the activism of younger feminists who choose to use social media as a forum for their activism. This divide feeds into the impression of an apathetic younger generation. When some activists use online forums to communicate and others focus on offline actions, they fail to build an inclusive community that benefits from both forms of activism. The result is that the group of activists who do not use social media and will therefore not see online activity believe that younger generation is not engaged with feminism.

An additional factor is that online participation often echoes offline participation. Epstein et al. (2014) note that “the power relations of the offline world are typically transferred online as
well” (p. 339); online engagement opportunities do not simply provide a blank slate for engagement, but must be considered with other factors. Often the same people who are engaging with politicians online may be engaging offline as well (Epstein et al., 2014). In this way, online participation is not making politicians more accessible, but instead simply provides an alternative forum for interaction. While social media provide a potential way for individuals who are reluctant to participate in offline activities to be involved in the public sphere, there are reasons why they may hesitate to do so. Participants may be “skeptical that the value of their participation is worth the effort they put into it” (Epstein et al., 2014, p. 337), making them less likely to take the time to engage. This is important because despite the relative ease of engaging with leaders online, citizens will only continue to do so if they feel that their efforts are valuable. Online spaces do create potentially democratic public spaces, however it is necessary for leaders to genuinely engage with constituents in order to encourage people to participate in a social media public sphere.

Another way to consider alternative forms of activism is Loader, Vromen, and Xenos’s (2014) analysis on how young citizens engage with non-hierarchical networks that are focused on projects as opposed to traditional political structures such as parties or labour unions. They argue that this is demonstrated by low youth voter turnout during elections as opposed to higher participation in non-political, issue-based rallies. Their analysis questions the general perception that the younger generation is apathetic and instead implies that traditional political communication is not congruent with how young citizens construct their identities. This provides insight into evidence that shows youth have higher rates of social media usage compared to older generations, however they have lower turnout rates during elections (Boulianne, 2015; Loader et al., 2014). In general, studies indicate that social media usage is positively correlated with political or civic engagement in western democracies making Millennial social media usage an anomaly (Boulianne, 2015; Loader et al., 2014). Obama’s 2008 campaign provides an
example of how young people can be successfully integrated into a campaign by using social media effectively (Levenshus, 2010). Rather than focusing on the campaign, Obama's strategy highlighted the individual in what was called a "you-centred" approach (Levenshus, 2010, p. 325). Concentrating on the potential volunteer fed into a non-hierarchical perception of the campaign by providing a variety of ways to contribute. Most of the entry points to the campaign were driven by the personal appeal of the candidate which the campaign team then converted into personalized opportunities to be involved (Levenshus, 2010). These entry points were primarily online whereas the important campaign activities included neighbour-to-neighbour outreach and attending events (Levenshus, 2010). Thus the Obama campaign converted what would generally be considered slacktivism—liking the Obama Facebook page for example—into engagement. Considering slacktivism in the context of engagement is important because it necessitates demarcating different types of online interaction. With this in mind, it is important to define what constitutes online engagement.

Engagement

There are a variety of different ways that social media users can engage online, each with unique characteristics. Many researchers have attempted to define or create a hierarchy of engagement. Pennington, Winfrey, Warner, and Kearney (2015) define engagement merely as interest in politics, participation, and discussion whereas Bruce and Shelly (cited in Men & Tsai, 2014) describe engagement as “the interaction between an organization and those individuals and groups that are impacted by, or influence, the organization” (p. 396). Consumption is generally is considered the least intensive form of engagement and can be described as non-participation with examples being watching videos or reading posts, otherwise defined as online listening or raising awareness (Schuster, 2013). Contribution is more involved and less common; creation is both emotionally involved and the least common form of engagement (Crawford, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2015; Schuster, 2013; Smith & Gallicano, 2015).
Levels of engagement can also reflect more than simply the action taken. Smith and Gallicano (2015) argue that the key difference between consumption and engagement is that true engagement requires emotional involvement. They state that engagement "refers to the absorption and immersive state of social media usage that may not always accompany social media usage" (2015, p. 82). This definition of engagement is starkly different than analyzing the number of likes or shares a post receives and is much more difficult to quantify. Their research focuses primarily on Millennials because of their high rate of activity on social media. Another way to consider engagement is Men and Tsai's (2015) hierarchy of different types of engagement as described in Figure 1. Unlike Smith and Gallicano (2015), Men and Tsai (2015) include acts of consumption, such as watching videos or reading posts but not contributing, as the lowest and most common form of engagement. They consider contributing content, such as engaging in online conversation, as moderate whereas creation—which could include making a video and uploading it—as the highest level. The difference between consuming and creating can also be described as the difference between reactive behaviour (consuming) and proactive behaviour (contributing). Both Smith and Gallicano (2015) and Men and Tsai (2015) value creating content more highly than simply consuming, but whereas Smith and Gallicano (2015) perceive these actions as separate acts, Men and Tsai (2015) consider them as on a continuous scale.
Not all definitions of engagement include a hierarchy. Schuster (2013) provides a wider and more general range of activities which is shown in Figure 2. Her definition of engagement include raising personal awareness online and reading blogs, acts that are generally shunned as less valuable and are considered slacktivism. See Figure 2.
Schuster’s (2013) engagement matrix does not function as a hierarchy because she sees value in all acts of engagement and recognizes that for some people it is not possible to attend off-line events which are generally seen as the highest level of engagement. An example of the value of information sharing is the discourse that emerged around the public pool in England: while the Facebook page dedicated to the pool was created to share stories, it quickly became more political in nature (Crivellaro et al, 2014).

This view that all forms of social media engagement have value is not universally shared by researchers. Smith and Gallicano (2015) question whether viewing, commenting, and sharing content are legitimate forms of engagement. Specifically, they contend that engagement requires interactivity, excluding one-way communication. They also challenge the perception that usage frequency equates with engagement. Shirky (2008) describes engagement as a ladder with sharing as the first step and collective action as the highest level. He does not consider Schuster’s (2013) described acts of awareness-raising as forms of engagement. In a similar vein, Zavattaro and Sementelli (2014) differentiate between interaction and collaboration, stating that while interaction requires two-way communication, it is separate from collaboration which is an act of co-creation. In Small’s research (2011), she considers how the specific platform affects the possibilities for political conversations and participation, using microblogging site Twitter as a case study. While all social media are user-generated and offer opportunities
for engagement, Twitter in particular focuses on conversations. Due to the platform's sense of immediacy, it is ideal for asking questions or engaging in dialogue (Han, Min, & Lee, 2015; Honeycutt & Herring, 2009). Small (2011) found, however, that #cdnpoli was used primarily to share news stories or to link to longer blogs. There was limited dialogue happening on Twitter, perhaps in part due to the 140 character limit which makes detailed arguments difficult (Marwick & boyd, 2010; Park, 2013).

Another way to consider engagement is using the definition of deliberation. Halpern and Gibbs (2013) describe deliberation as behaviours that promote robust community discussion and that enable individuals to carefully consider the different opinions presented. Deliberative engagement requires presentation of reasoned arguments triggered by a social problem that requires a solution. This idealized form of engagement is reliant on participants using reasoned and convincing arguments rather than attempts to bully or coerce and being open to ideas that are different than their own. Further, a level of egalitarianism is necessary to have deliberative dialogue (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013).

For the purposes of this study and following the research of Men and Tsai (2015), Schuster (2013), and Smith and Gallicano (2015), engagement is presented as a hierarchy with activities requiring more emotional, energetic, or time investment by citizens and politicians placed higher. The highest level of engagement is defined as dialogic as shown in Figure 3. Dialogic engagement is defined by initiating and participating in conversation with other Twitter users, what Men and Tsai (2014) refer to as contributing or creating. These two forms of engagement were merged into dialogue because they are both interactive and emotionally-involved participation, proactive, and require the intention to engage in conversation (Smith & Gallicano, 2015). Further, because Twitter is primarily a text-based medium with some opportunity to share video and images, contributing to conversation and creating content are largely the same act. While providing information and listening are valuable activities for political
leaders, current social media technology has the capacity to enable dialogue between citizens across Canada as well as between citizens and those who represent them in Parliament. Traditional media, such as newspapers and television, only granted a one-way transmission; social media allow those receiving a message to provide feedback and to engage in discussion, a feat that seems to realize a true public sphere (Bergie & Hodson, 2015).

While Schuster (2013) considers information sharing to be a form of engagement, broadcasting is one-directional information sharing. It requires an act of creation on the part of the politician, however broadcasting treats citizens like consumers of social media rather than encouraging participation (Men & Tsai, 2014). For this reason, I have placed it at the bottom of the hierarchy. Encouraging offline action is placed in the middle of the spectrum for several reasons: While encouraging active participation offline is valuable, in this study it is not possible to gauge whether the Twitter user actually participated in the activity. Finally, for citizens to participate offline does require more risk and emotional involvement than simply consuming social media information. During election periods, encouraging offline action may have more value because it would involve asking supporters to volunteer, donate money, attend rallies, and vote.
Notwithstanding the potential benefits, engaging on social media does carry a level of risk, including losing control of the messaging and being exposed to trolls. Social media activity is permanent: Once a post is online, it is impossible to make it fully disappear (Miragliotta, 2012). This permanence may lead politicians to opt for more scripted Twitter posts over engaging in a conversation that could go in a direction they do not want. As Feighery (2011) argues, social media facilitate increased opportunities for dialogue yet public trust of news, politicians, and public institutions remains very low. Social media provide the opportunity for what the Nieman Reports call “credibility through conversation” (as cited in Feighery, 2011, p. 159), yet the literature shows that politicians are not using social media for conversation meaning this potential benefit cannot be realized. Trust in social media is markedly lower than
traditional media forms, however this is less true with younger generations (Porter, Anderson, & Nhotsavang, 2015).

In the political party setting, the easy sharing opportunities allowed by social media as well as the ease with which an individual candidate or supporter can make a public misstep has led to increasing centralized control over messaging (Jackson & Lilleker, 2009; Klotz, 2010). One mistake by a candidate can be virally shared, amplifying the impact to people outside of that candidate’s sphere (Haynes, 2016). Political campaigns have seen increasing focus on the leader as the face of the party and spokesperson for the campaign (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). This centralization along with the ability for social media to reach diverse markets relatively cheaply has created a risk-averse political environment with everything from tightly scripted message boxes to strict use of party colours to pre-designed materials (Lee & Shin, 2014). This effect is being seen in the online activities of tweeting politicians. It is more risk-averse to use social media purely for broadcasting rather than for dialogic purposes.

Another risk associated with social media engagement is exposure to trolls. Buckels, Trapnell, and Paulhus (2014) describe trolls as people or, perhaps more accurately, social media personas who intentionally act in a way to cause chaos. They may be insulting or just disrupting, but they are often perceived to serve no purpose except to interrupt and cause mischief (Herring, Job-Sluder, Scheckler, & Barab, 2002). Trolls often hijack the discourse by posting offensive comments, baiting social media users into an argument. They contribute to much of the noise online and can be a deterrent for others to engage in discourse. Burroughs (2013), however, argues that political trolling is an act of engagement. He uses examples of trolling memes directed at American President Obama to demonstrate that those engaging in trolling have a high level of political awareness and that sharing trolling memes is a way to share political beliefs (Burroughs, 2013). According to Herring et al. (2002), trolls aim to draw others into conversation albeit one that is off-topic and frustrating.
Power online

The ability to easily access politicians, whether with a trolling comment or attempt at conversation, feeds into the belief that social media are a levelling mechanism. Online spaces provide a veneer of egalitarianism since anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can create a variety of social media profiles (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). With a basic knowledge of any given platform, a user can begin to create content. A single tweet at a well-known figure could be retweeted enough times to be considered viral. Despite this perception, Hand and Ching (2011) consider the power imbalance that exists on social media. Applying a theoretical framework that considers speaking-from power and speaking-to power to a case study of Phoenix-area municipal governments, they show that social media do provide opportunities to equalize traditional power imbalances between policy-makers and citizens, yet these type of interactions are far from the norm (Hand & Ching, 2011). They point out that there still is difficulty in engaging with a powerful organization or individual in online spaces because off-line power dynamics are transferred online.

Another way to consider online power is through watching or surveillance. With millions watching a political leader’s online activity, any mistake will be immediately noted by citizens or journalists (Mann & Ferenbok, 2013). In this way, social media have created virtual prisons for politicians, with every move being scrutinized and held up for judgement, albeit somewhat by choice. This marks a reversal from governments watching citizens and has the potential to lessen already depleted public trust in politicians when they slip up in the public eye. This is not to say that governments no longer monitor citizens; concern over online security is demonstrated by Malaysian activists’ reluctance to organize events online (Warren et al., 2014). This type of online listening—or watching—does constitute a form of engagement, but one that is difficult to quantify because online listening is often invisible (Crawford, 2009).

Twitter and the Canadian political scene
Twitter offers an interesting forum for the study of engagement because its barriers to participation are extremely low. A large percentage of Canadians have access to the Internet, with 83% reportedly having access in 2012 (Newman, 2016). Of Canadians who use the Internet, an estimated 40% of those users access Twitter (Pellegrini, 2016). Despite this, there is relatively little written about social media political campaigning from a Canadian perspective and Small (2008) points out that Canadian political science researchers have been slow to consider and document e-politics.

Those studying Canadian e-politics have focused on two areas: Various social media including blogs in the context of elections and how individual politicians and parties are using Twitter specifically. The latter includes include Small's (2010; 2011) analyses of Twitter in the context of Canadian politics. She has considered Canadian politicians and political parties participation on Twitter and found them to be slow adopters of the platform (2010). She also studied who uses #cdnpoli and found a wide range of individuals, organizations, and interests to be represented including a high proportion of media outlets (2011). Gruzd and Roy (2014) looked at political polarization on Twitter and found that people tend to engage in conversations with those who share their political views. Gruzd, Wellman, and Takhteyev (2011) studied whether Twitter followers have hallmarks of community whereas Langlois, Elmer, McKelvey, and Devereaux (2009) studied the "Great Canadian Wishlist" created by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a way to have citizens express support for their top priorities for Canada. The campaign by the CBC represented both mediated and unmediated citizenry as the CBC both provided unfettered access to the issues, but through the Facebook page of a traditional media outlet. Elmer et al. (2009) considered Canadian blogs and found most blogs to be highly partisan. They also found that Conservative bloggers were most likely to have ingroup thinking whereas bloggers on the left were more likely to recommend bloggers from other parties.
Examples of studies concerning election-time politics in Canada include Langlois et al. (2009) study of Facebook as a site of alternative political organizing. By looking at Facebook groups that emerged during the 2007 Ontario provincial election, they found that both partisan and issue-based groups emerged on Facebook, providing marginalized voices a platform for expressing their concerns. Dumitrica (2014) studied political authenticity, specifically in reference to the 2010 Calgary municipal election which saw relatively unknown mayoral candidate Naheed Nenshi effectively use social media in his winning campaign. Social media have been a key part of Canadian electoral politics since at least 2011, with the 2011 federal election being called the first social media election (Gruzd & Roy, 2014). Subsequent federal and provincial elections have all had a substantial social media component. Despite this research, there remains a Canadian-focused research gap on how politicians are using social media to engage with constituents on an ongoing basis.

Further, Twitter has grown exponentially since its inception. Small (2010) reported the number of Twitter followers of each Canadian political leader in July of 2009. Seven years later, the numbers are dramatically different. Then Prime Minister Harper had 16,802 followers in 2009 compared to current Prime Minister Trudeau's 1.92 million in 2016 (Small, 2010). There is an even more marked difference between the number of Twitter accounts the Prime Minister followed: Harper followed 13,410 to Trudeau's 949 (Small, 2010). The differential between Trudeau's number of followers compared to followed highlights the one-directional nature of Trudeau's Twitter communication: He has created a limited pool of Twitter users to whom he is listening. While he or his staff could search hashtags such as #cdnpoli to listen to the conversation taking place, the disparity between the number of accounts that follow him compared to the number of accounts he follows provides insight into how he intends to use the platform.
Moreover, Twitter users not only create a parallel narrative to traditional media, but trending topics also become news on mainstream media (Wilson, 2011). News broadcasters often talk about what is trending on Twitter or may accept questions or comments for a guest via Twitter (Wilson, 2011). News programs and broadcasters often have their own accounts that they use to tweet information, creating a convergence of traditional and social media. Despite this convergence, a Twitter user does not require a third party, such as a newspaper or news program, to transit their message. This leads to the impression that Twitter is more spontaneous and authentic than traditional media forms (Lee & Shin, 2014). This unmediated connection belies my personal experience that staff are often handling a politician’s Twitter feed.

Additionally, while researchers have considered social media from a variety of angles, there is a lack of studies about successful engagement on social media. The literature clearly demonstrates that social media technology is being used like traditional media by politicians and the organizations that support them (Firmstone & Coleman, 2015; McNutt, 2014; Ross et al., 2015). Political and civic discourse is emerging outside traditional boundaries into a new public online sphere and as new technologies emerge, the divide between those who are plugged in and those who are not able to keep up will continue to grow.

**Methods**

The engagement matrix that I applied to the collected tweets, shown in Figure 3, is a hierarchy that places higher value on dialogic tweets. For the purposes of this study, I avoided defining engagement as likes and retweets, instead focusing on the intention of the parent posts by politicians and the general discourse by other users with a focus on dialogue. This engagement hierarchy is value-based because, as Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011) point out, Obama’s success was not his use of social media as a communication tool, but his focus on engaging his supporters offline. Similar to Men and Tsai’s (2014) findings, information sharing forms the bulk of the content because it is less intensive and requires only consumption.
On the other end, encouraging and participating in dialogue is less common as it requires more energetic and creative participation (Butler, 2011; Schumann & Klein, 2015). It is important to note that engagement represents a departure from “one-way reception of messages to active user involvement in responding to, creating, and distributing information” (Smith & Gallicano, 2015, p. 83). Twitter by its very construct not only provides ample opportunities for dialogic engagement, but is built in order to facilitate it.

Twitter is a well-used and unique social media platform with its own specific language known to users. Twitter has existed since 2006 and as of June of 2016 Twitter reported 313 million monthly users worldwide with an estimated 11 million Canadian users (Page, 2012; Pellegrini, 2016; Twitter, 2016). Twitter is a social networking site that allows individuals to create their own written and visual content—called tweets—and to share others’ content by "retweeting". Each tweet is limited to 140 characters meaning that it cannot be extensive or detailed (Marwick & boyd, 2010; Park, 2013). This leads many users to link to external content, to use jargon, or to break up their idea into a series of tweets. Users can also respond to tweets or “like” posts (Small, 2010). Each user has a specific handle prefixed by an "@"-sign. A tweet can be directed at a specific user by beginning with the user handle or can tag the user in the tweet.

@nominalie: @EqualVoiceCA @ThomasMulcair Looking forward to Grandmothers of the Vote. A voice arguably much less heard than that of young people. (Bloch, 2016)

@LKMFedLiberals: Awesome fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Thunder Bay thanks to @JustinTrudeau: https://t.co/B749BhzNsp (LKM Federal Liberals, 2016)

Replies always begin with the user handle to whom the response is being directed and indicate a conversation. As more people participate in the conversation, responses will include more user handles.

@miffsriff: @KenChapman46 @931News @RonaAmbrose Whew. What a relief! #ableg (Mole, 2016)
The @ sign can also be used to try to amplify a tweet. By tagging a well known public figure, the tweet has the potential to be seen by more Twitter users, thereby increasing its reach. When a Twitter user retweets another user's tweet, the original user handle is included in the tweet.

@sarmcbride: RT @ElizabethMay: 63% of Canadians voted in 2015 elxn for platforms that called for an end to winner take all voting.@OwenQuann @MaryamMonsef (rhodogal, 2016)

Hashtags are a way to organize conversations. In a hashtagged post, specific words or phrases are prefixed by a hash mark (#) (Page, 2012; Small, 2011; Wilson, 2011). Hashtags can be ongoing, such as #cdnpoli which is regularly used to discuss Canadian politics, or can be ephemeral like #elxn42 which was used during the 2015 Canadian federal election. Hashtags can act as a form of social commentary. When used this way, the goal is not necessarily to use a hashtag that other people are using, but to make the hashtagged comment stand out and provide context to the statement.

@barbara_starr62: @cathmckenna LMAO ur a boob! @JustinTrudeau one of urs! Liberals are not smart ppl LMAO #climatesclowns https://t.co/4clc5eyO4T

Hashtags primarily act as a way to organize discussions and make them searchable (Page, 2012; Small, 2011; Wilson, 2011). Anyone interested in a particular issue can find the conversation by searching the hashtag. Using a hashtag expands the conversation outside of the Twitter user's followers and increases the reach of the tweet because anyone following that hashtag has the opportunity to see the tweet (Small, 2011). A unique aspect of Twitter is that it is asymmetrical meaning that users can choose who to follow without that user reciprocating (Small, 2011). This creates a social network that is less about social relationships with friends and family members and instead more about sharing short, snappy bits of information for general consumption (Gruzd & Roy, 2014). Moreover, Twitter offers a non-bounded community
in that users do not have to be connected in order to have a conversation. Anyone can intentionally look at another user's posts by searching for their Twitter handle or unintentionally see their posts by searching a hashtag, by seeing their tweets that tags a popular Twitter user's handle, or by scrolling through responses to a tweet. In this way, a Twitter user has some control over what they see, but not who sees what they post. Twitter does control each user's timeline by organizing tweets by perceived relevance to the user based on how much they interact with accounts they follow (Twitter, 2016). Additionally, Twitter promotes both tweets and accounts which show up in users' timelines as a way to generate revenue and, according to Twitter, make the timeline more "relevant and interesting" (Twitter, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, social media generate a large amount of data well-suited to discourse analysis and there are a number of studies that have used discourse analysis as a method to study social media. In their discourse analysis on a Facebook page dedicated to a public pool in England, Crivellaro et al. (2014) coded discourse as personal—what they call nostalgic—and potentially political. They posit that discussion naturally becomes politicized on social media, with conversations that began with reflections on experiences at the public pool morphing into discussions about what services should be provided by government. In their study of political parties in Britain, Jackson and Lilleker (2009) consider whether the parties utilize Web 2.0 technologies, such as social media and websites, to their dialogic potentials or simply use these tools to relay information. Their findings echo the studies that show that political parties and politicians are more comfortable broadcasting than engaging in dialogue.

Other studies have coded social media posts for the type of post as well subject matter. In their analysis of New Zealand politicians' use of Web 2.0 technology, Ross et al. (2015) coded Facebook posts both for the type of post—whether photo, weblink, or comment and photo—as well as whether the post was uploaded from a mobile phone. Further, they coded posts based on subject matter and find that politicians tend to write for an imagined local rather
than a national audience (Ross et al., 2015). This question of audience is a key aspect of social media because the Twitter user has complete control over the initial message without having to deal with editorializing or mediation between them and their anticipated public. Ross et al.’s (2015) use of coding for Facebook posts provides a valuable framework for my own research, however I will focus on the whether the posts is dialogic or encourages dialogic engagement rather than the traditional matrix of sharing and liking that is standard on various social media. Ross et al. (2015) also consider the number of posts pushing the viewer to outside content, often a website or YouTube video, however this still falls into the consumption aspect of engagement which I will outline in greater detail below (Men & Tsai, 2014). More importantly for my research, Ross et al. (2015) look at interactivity by examining whether the politician encouraged dialogue by inviting citizens to participate in discussion. The researchers collected and coded the content of response as supportive, hostile, mixed, or neutral (Ross et al., 2015). Their findings indicate that only approximately one third of politicians’ Facebook posts contained a direct invitation for citizens to engage in dialogue (Ross et al., 2015). Following Ross et al. (2015), my research considers the intended form of engagement prompted by the post.

Similarly, it is possible to code content based on what type of engagement the post is attempting to inspire. For example, in Small’s (2011) content analysis of Twitter relating to Canadian federal politics, she coded for the intention of the tweet. Specifically, she differentiated between tweets intended to inform, provide commentary, or engage in conversation. While her study provides only numerical information as to the number of tweets meant to engage, that only 7.4% of overall tweets using #canpoli were intended to engage is illuminating in that it exposes the broadcasting, rather than dialogical nature of political communication via social media. Small’s (2011) work is similar to my research because she codes certain types of conversation as engagement, however her focus is on general discussion, not specifically originating from political party leaders.
This focus on engagement rather than consumption provides the opportunity for more in-depth analysis on social media usage. Based on Men and Tsai’s (2014) hierarchy of engagement shown in Figure 1, it is possible to codify different interactions on Twitter. While Twitter does provide easily quantifiable data such as number of likes and shares, this information acts merely as a way to judge the popularity of a tweet rather than as a tool to assess engagement. The number of likes a particular tweet receives only indicates consumption, the bottom rung of the engagement ladder (Men & Tsai, 2014).

Due to the limited literature relating to analysis on Canadian politicians’ Twitter use, I undertook a discourse analysis of the Twitter activity of the four leaders of Canadian federal political parties. This included Rona Ambrose (@ronaambrose), interim leader of the Conservative Party of Canada; Elizabeth May (@elizabethmay), leader of the Green Party of Canada; Tom Mulcair (@thomasmulcair), leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada; and Justin Trudeau (@justintrudeau), leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and Prime Minister of Canada. I limited data collection to June 20, 2016 which was World Refugee Day. Refugees were a contentious topic during the 2015 federal election with marked differences in proposed policies between the parties. Due to the extreme differences between the parties' approaches to refugees, I anticipated that this would be a contentious topic with plenty of online discussion. Further, World Refugee Day has an associated hashtag: #WorldRefugeeDay. My data included the leader’s tweets, retweets of the leaders, tweets directed at the leader’s account—meaning it was sent as a reply or directly to the account, with the leader’s twitter handle at the beginning of the tweet—or mentioning the leader in the tweet. I collected data using Netlytic, an online program that collects Twitter activity and provides an automated text and network analysis (Gruzd, 2009; Gruzd et al., 2011; Haythornthwaite & Gruzd, 2008). Netlytic provides the text of all tweets within certain search parameters and maps the connections between the individual
nodes. In total, I collected 1817 tweets. The tweets were gathered every fifteen minutes beginning at midnight and running until 11:59 p.m. The search query included the following:

- originating from @ronaambrose or @elizabethmay or @thomasmulcair, or @justintrudeau
- mentioning @ronaambrose or @elizabethmay or @thomasmulcair or @justintrudeau
- to @ronaambrose or @elizabethmay or @thomasmulcair or @justintrudeau

**Coding method**

Using the engagement hierarchy in Figure 3, I manually coded each collected tweet. The tweets were first sorted as originating from the leader, being sent to the leader, or mentioning the leader. I also sorted for retweets so that the number of original tweets could be quantified. While the majority of the tweets were sent by other Twitter users, I coded each leaders' tweets for intention, whether prompting conversation, soliciting feedback, or providing information. Based on the engagement hierarchy, dialogic tweets would encourage discussion from followers. Tweets could also hypothetically encourage offline action such as attending an event, or they could solicit input without the leader indicating they would participate in the discussion. The lowest level of the hierarchy is providing information because it does not encourage followers to engage in conversation about an issue. Table 1 shows the engagement matrix with broadcasting as the lowest level of engagement and dialogic at the highest level.

**Table 1. Engagement matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Type</th>
<th>Broadcasting</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Encouraging off-line action</th>
<th>Dialogic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Providing information</td>
<td>Soliciting feedback without engaging in dialogue</td>
<td>Encouraging off-line action</td>
<td>Initiating dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Great to speak at the #CanUAForum today. May our countries</td>
<td>No examples found</td>
<td>No examples found</td>
<td>Has anyone ever looked at their paycheque and said, &quot;I sure wish they'd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The engagement matrix in Table 1 includes different types of potential posts that political leaders could utilize, including broadcasting, listening, encouraging off-line action, and engaging in dialogue. Broadcasting includes posts that are purely providing information and do not attempt to initiate conversation with followers (Bergie & Hodson, 2015; Firmstone & Coleman, 2015; Hand & Ching, 2011; Ross & Burger, 2014; Smith & Gallicano, 2015). Online listening includes asking questions for the sake of receiving feedback (Crawford, 2009). Posts encouraging off-line action are more engaging because they are asking the follower to become involved in something (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011; Schumann & Klein, 2015). For example, during the 2008 presidential election, the Obama campaign often asked followers to attend rallies, volunteer, or donate money (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011). The most engaging type of post is one encouraging dialogue (Crivellaro et al, 2014; Dumitrica, 2014; Hand & Ching, 2011; Men & Tsai, 2015; Ross & Burger, 2014). This type of post encourages or participates in conversation on Twitter. Participating in political conversation has been shown to positively impact engagement in political and civic activities and is paramount for achieving a Habermasian public sphere making it the most profound type of engagement (Zúñiga, Valenzuela, & Weeks, 2016). The difference between requesting input—or creating opportunities to listen—compared to encouraging dialogue is in the framing. For example, in Table 1, Ambrose's tweet about paycheques was judged to be dialogic because the question is clearly framed in a way that is insincere. She is not legitimately asking whether people want money taken off their paycheque, but is attempting to incite a conversation about CPP and
It should be noted that, due to the 140 character limit, it can be difficult to contextualize individual tweets. A Twitter user may tweet a series of comments, not all of which may tag a leader. However, without the leader tagged in the post it would be difficult if not nearly impossible for the politician to find the remainder of the conversation. For this reason, the tweets would cease to be dialogue with the political leader.

Table 2. Dialogic communication codes for non-leader Twitter users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Type</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Troll</th>
<th>Comment - no response requested</th>
<th>Citizen conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Asking political leader a question</td>
<td>Personal attack or insult</td>
<td>Commenting on leader's tweet, but not requiring a response</td>
<td>Conversation between Twitter users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>@JustinTrudeau What will you do about this? <a href="https://t.co/j3m8EXJWnH">https://t.co/j3m8EXJWnH</a></td>
<td>@ElizabethM May your drunk Elizabeth</td>
<td>@JustinTrudeau condemns killing of Kabul embassy guards in suicide attack <a href="https://t.co/Bl51smpF">https://t.co/Bl51smpF</a> @TJPProvincial <a href="https://t.co/hmXYpjPXL">https://t.co/hmXYpjPXL</a></td>
<td>@joe_warmington @JustinTrudeau @Toronto well said Joe.Trouble is our govt will keep playing the blame game and bury their heads in the sand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different types of tweets that citizens utilize are shown in Table 2. Citizens can use Twitter to ask a politician a question in response to something the politician has tweeted or of their own initiative (Page, 2012). They can send a trolling comment which generally includes an insult (Buckels et al., 2014). Citizens can make a comment that does not require a response (Small, 2011), or they can engage in a conversation with another citizen (Small, 2011).

Twitter users can also retweet, or share, another user's tweet (Small, 2010). Twitter also offers a "quote tweet" option which is a retweet that allows the user to add their own comments in a separate area which appears above the retweeted content (Twitter, 2016). In the data...
collection, any quote tweets showed up only with the added comments and did not include the retweet making it impossible to tell whether the user was using the quote tweet function or simply tweeting. I coded for whether the retweet was of one of the political leaders’ posts. When a Twitter user retweeted another user, I coded whether it was positive, negative, or neutral in nature in order to quantify whether the majority of action on each leaders’ page was supportive. Table 3 also outlines where these forms of engagement are supported in the literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post type</th>
<th>Retweet of leader</th>
<th>Retweet other user-positive</th>
<th>Retweet other user-negative</th>
<th>Retweet other user-neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Twitter user retweeting a leaders’ tweet</td>
<td>retweeting another Twitter user (non-leader) with positive sentiment</td>
<td>retweeting another Twitter user (non-leader) with negative sentiment</td>
<td>Retweet other Twitter user (non-leader) with sentiment unknown or undiscernible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>RT @ThomasMulcair: Great initiative @EqualVoice CA. Ensuring that women are equal participants in politics is so important. <a href="https://t.co/WJ">https://t.co/WJ</a></td>
<td>RT @Jillian_LeBlanc: Thank you @RonaAmbrose for supporting our initiative! #cdnpoli #daughtersofthevote <a href="https://t.co/usMVnwLGy">https://t.co/usMVnwLGy</a></td>
<td>RT @joe_warmington: Thx @JustinTrudeau u 4the $600k 2solve @toronto gunplay. Would have preferred the $4billion he gave Africa and Indonesia!</td>
<td>RT @FairVoteCanada: @ElizabethMay @Commodity52now @korfan12 Do u mean this one? @acoyne has several <a href="https://t.co/lKQgRK92YU">https://t.co/lKQgRK92YU</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from literature</td>
<td>Small, 2011</td>
<td>Ross et al., 2015; Tumasjan et al., 2011</td>
<td>Ross et al., 2015; Tumasjan et al., 2011</td>
<td>Ross et al., 2015; Tumasjan et al., 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RTO+</td>
<td>RTO-</td>
<td>RTN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

In keeping with previous research (Bergie & Hodson, 2015; Small, 2011), Canadian political leaders used Twitter primarily for broadcasting messages and refrained from engaging in dialogue. The Twitter activity by and directed at each political leader varied, however their lack of participation in any dialogue was consistent. May was the most active on Twitter sending
seven tweets and being tagged in 329. Prime Minister Trudeau only sent two tweets, both of which were informational in nature, but he had the most twitter activity associated with his account, being tagged in, retweeted, or tweeting 1064 times. Of all the tweets collected, 31% were retweets of one of the four leaders. An additional 21% of collected tweets were retweets of other users. A detailed breakdown can be seen in Appendix 1. Due to the low number of tweets in this study, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions about any of the political leaders' behaviour on social media. While this sample does provide some insight, a larger study over a substantial time period would be necessary to make conclusive statements.

In order to understand how distributed the Twitter conversation around each leader is, it's possible to visualize the conversations mentioning the leader as a network. The leader is represented as a central node with all other accounts in the network surrounding the leader as outlying nodes (Images 1-4). The network analysis also shows both the bulk of activity associated with the leader's account. The various leaders show a fairly close range of centralization, a figure that indicates how many participants are dominating the conversation (Netlytic, 2016). Ambrose's centralization value is the highest at .42, indicating that there is a smaller number of people controlling the conversation associated with her Twitter account whereas Mulcair's centralization value of .25 showing the conversation is more decentralized. This finding is consistent with other researchers' conclusions that a few strong and highly partisan voices tend to dominate conversations on the right (Elmer, 2009; Shaw & Benkler, 2012).
Image 1. Ambrose Network

Ambrose’s network shows the majority of activity directly associated with her account with some conversations happening through connected nodes.
May’s network shows a dense cluster of nodes with substantial conversation between connected nodes.
Image 3. Mulcair Network

Mulcair’s network shows limited activity
The centrality values shown in Table 4 represent the relationship between different Twitter users. High in-degree centrality shows that the account is often mentioned or tweeted at by other users. Out-degree centrality suggests that the Twitter user interacts with other users in the network, or engages in dialogic activity as per Figure 3. Aside from Mulcair who had limited activity on his Twitter account, the leader with the closest in to out ratio was May with 205:12 whereas Trudeau's ratio was the highest with 849:1 tweets sent compared to received. This shows that Trudeau's Twitter account was influential, being tagged or replied to frequency,
however he did not engage with other users. In fact, Trudeau's one mention of another Twitter user was retweeting Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale.

@JustinTrudeau: RT @RalphGoodale: Last week, I introduced Bill C-23 in Parliament. Here's what it will do #cdnpoli https://t.co/zCcXbgmN4m (Trudeau, 2016)

Ambrose's ratio is 334:4 which falls between May and Trudeau. These ratios show that constituents are using Twitter as an opportunity to speak-to power, however the power imbalance is well demonstrated by their inability to seize the attention of any of the political leaders (Hand & Ching, 2011).

The centrality values are another way of demonstrating that Canadian political leaders are avoiding engaging dialogue on Twitter. A closer in to out ratio, or just a higher out degree would indicate dialogic behaviour on Twitter which is the highest level of engagement laid out in Figure 3. These ratios suggest that each leader is broadcasting messages by sending out tweets that solicit a response from people who follow their account or the hashtag used. Even though the other Twitter users tag the leader's user handle or reply, they receive no response.

Table 4. Leader Centrality Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ambrose</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Mulcair</th>
<th>Trudeau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Degree</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Leader Network Properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ambrose</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Mulcair</th>
<th>Trudeau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>0.063380281690141</td>
<td>0.090354090354090</td>
<td>0.049586776859504</td>
<td>0.038610038610039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralization</td>
<td>0.423481651962665</td>
<td>0.315720857549207</td>
<td>0.251515151515152</td>
<td>0.380390625628970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of tweets associated with each account is starkly different, however it is notable that the reciprocity values on all accounts are extremely low (Netlytic, 2016). According to Netlytic, high reciprocity values would be close to 1.0 (2016). Reciprocity refers to two-way
communication and demonstrates the amount of conversations that are dialogic (Netlytic, 2016). Higher values show that there is conversation happening on Twitter whereas the low reciprocity values associated with these accounts suggest one-sided, or what I have referred to as broadcasting activity (Netlytic, 2016). Reciprocity numbers further help to clarify engagement because it corresponds with dialogic communication on Figure 3 by showing that the political leaders did not respond to the high volume of Twitter activity directed at their accounts. The limitation of reciprocity numbers is that they only highlight the outcome of each leaders' tweets by showing whether other Twitter users responded and if the leader then engaged in conversation, but do not help to understand what type of tweet was sent out by the leader. Broadcasting tweets may solicit engagement by other Twitter users, but are not intended to be conversational.

May's account shows the highest reciprocity, however it is not close to reaching 1.0 which would show all conversations as dialogic. An example of higher reciprocity is Jennifer Hollett, a candidate in the 2015 federal election whose current reciprocity is 0.2 showing a more dialogic style of Twitter usage than the federal leaders. The low reciprocity values associated with each leader's account demonstrate that while there is substantial conversation happening on Twitter about Canadian political leaders, there is limited two-way discussion. Many of the tweets are posting information or opinion without soliciting a response from other Twitter users. While writing original tweets does fit the definition of creation, it only results in consumption from other Twitter users (Crawford, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2015; Schuster, 2013; Smith & Gallicano, 2015).

While their use of Twitter was fairly consistent, the reaction to the political leaders by citizens varied. May received the highest proportion of trolling comments. Compared to Ambrose, May received ten times the number of comments from trolls with a comparable level of Twitter activity. Trolling tweets contained personal attacks, often name calling. In the case of
May, they commonly referred to her being drunk or using Nyquil, a reference to the 2015 Press Gallery Dinner where she appeared intoxicated and made controversial statements, later blaming her actions on taking Nyquil (Andrew-Gee, 2015). Other trolling comments referred to her as a freak or a socialist. While these comments may be considered legitimate political engagement, they do potentially have negative impacts. Political leaders may be discouraged from engaging in conversation in fear that they will elicit more trolls. Politicians may also resort to using social media to broadcast a message to avoid interacting with trolls. The increase in trolls was not affected by the party size or by the politician’s reach on Twitter. Ambrose represents the Conservative Party of Canada which holds 98 seats in the Parliament whereas May represents the Green Party of Canada which holds only one seat—her own. Considering the size of the respective parties, it is disproportionate that a marginal political leader would receive such focused trolling.

Justin Trudeau received the highest number of troll comments at twenty-five. This is unsurprising since he is currently serves as Prime Minister of Canada. Compared to the total number of tweets directed at his account, this was comparatively lower than May. Only two percent of tweets associated with Trudeau's account were trolling comments compared to six percent on May’s account. Trudeau and May are the only permanent party leaders whereas Ambrose and Mulcair are both interim party leaders. This may have an effect as people who troll may not see temporary leaders as targets. Mulcair received no trolling comments and only half of a percent of tweets on Ambrose's accounts were deemed to be trolling.

Political polarization may also play a role in online trolling behaviour. Previous research has shown Conservative Twitter users to be the most polarized partisan group (Grudz & Roy, 2014). Further research could analyze whether accounts that directed trolling comments at May also tweeted positive sentiments about the Conservative leader or party, demonstrating that these trolling accounts had other activity in addition to their trolling behaviour and that they
were, in fact, partisan actors. This would support Grudz and Roy's (2014) findings that online discussion between Conservative Party supporters and individuals who support parties on the left of the political spectrum is often confrontational. It would also explain why May was called a socialist, an insulting term for those on the right. It is important to note that because both May and Ambrose are female political leaders, their gender cannot be considered a factor, however research has shown that men do engage in more anti-social behaviours online (Buckels, et al., 2014). That Trudeau received a substantial number of troll comments supports that the gender of the leader does not contribute to the number of personal rather than political attacks on social media, however whether men more often choose to target women is an area for future study.

Apart from the trolling activity, it was difficult to identify highly partisan behaviour such as Elmer et al. (2009) found on Canadian blogs. A different study would be necessary to identify whether particular Twitter users who tagged or tweeted at political leaders were consistently articulating a specific party message or regularly retweeting other partisans.

Data was collected on World Refugee Day however only Trudeau had substantial activity on his account associated with refugees. Trudeau had 297 tweets mentioning refugees, 198 of which were retweets of his #World Refugee message.

@johangreg: RT @JustinTrudeau: On #WorldRefugeeDay, we recommit to helping the most vulnerable in the spirit of compassion & generosity. #WRD2016 (Johansen, 2016)

An additional 62 tweets were a campaign directed at Trudeau and other international leaders requesting support for education funding for refugee children.

@NancyHosea1: .@JustinTrudeau @UM_DK @fholande @MofaJapan_en This #WorldRefugeeDay show your support for refugee kids-pledge to #EducationCannotWait fund (N. Hosea, personal communication, June 20, 2016)

Ambrose had five tweets about refugees while Mulcair only had one. There were no tweets mentioning refugees associated with May's account. While conversation about refugees and
policy about refugees was limited on Twitter, the large amount of activity associated with Trudeau demonstrates the ability of a political leader to initiate a conversation about a particular topic and to use Twitter to broadcast a message.

Despite the small sample size, these findings suggests that Canadian political leaders only use Twitter as a tool for pushing out communication. Throughout the collection time frame, sixty questions were asked of the respective leaders yet none received an answer. Ambrose and May were both asked seventeen questions each; Trudeau was asked twenty-six questions. It is possible that they chose to answer the questions outside of the collection period, however this is unlikely because Twitter has a sense of immediacy (Han et al., 2015). Streams of conversation move very quickly and most conversations happen within a relatively short timeframe. Additionally, none of the political leaders tweeted answers to questions or engaged in conversations from previous days making it unlikely that they would answer the questions asked of them the next day and outside of the collection period. The collected data demonstrates that citizens are using Twitter as an engagement tool, however politicians are choosing to use Twitter to broadcast messages rather than engage. This echoes the findings of previous research done by Bergie and Hodson (2015), Small (2011), and others that found politicians are not engaging in dialogue on social media. There are limitations to collecting data on a single day as multiple factors such as staffing or travel arrangements could affect the engagement on that particular day. Future studies could consider whether the electoral cycle or parliamentary calendar affect politicians’ Twitter use or whether these findings remain consistent.

Conversation between Twitter users that included one of the four leaders’ Twitter handle in the conversation made up 16% of the Tweets collected. These conversations demonstrate the dialogic capacity of Twitter. Despite the lack of participation in the conversations by the politicians, citizens continued to engage with one another while tagging politicians in the posts. Trudeau was tagged 146 times, May 92 times, and Ambrose 29 times.
These numbers may appear overinflated because once tagged in a post, oftentimes the tag remains throughout the conversation so will continually reappear. Mulcair had notably less Twitter activity and was not tagged in any conversations despite having a comparable number of followers as May. This may be because Mulcair will not be the leader of the NDP going into the next election after failing a leadership vote at the NDP convention. Ambrose, however, is an interim leader of the Conservative Party and also will not be leading the party into the next election. She had considerably more Twitter activity, but was herself more active.

These online conversations provided ample opportunity for any one of the politicians to engage in an online conversation, yet none took the opportunity to do so. While elected representatives are clearly avoiding online dialogue with constituents, Canadians are using Twitter as a forum for discussion about politics. Twitter users asked questions of each other as well as politicians. One Twitter user expressed support for Ambrose's use of the relatively new social medium SnapChat.

@sofiargross : RT @SamuelCoates Refreshing to see CPC leader @RonaAmbrose embracing social media. She's open to anything, inc. SnapChat #cdnpoli (Gross, 2016)

Other Twitter users were just as keen to use social media to express their disappointment about Ambrose's lack of authentic engagement with constituents.

@tremurr: @jboileau1967 @RonaAmbrose She never replies. clearly she has no interest in the voices of real canadians. Only those that line her pockets (TM, 2016)

Twitter provides a perception of accessibility, however those who reached out were disappointed at the lack of response. While accusations of slacktivism are focused on citizens using social media, Ambrose's usage of Twitter could also be considered a form of slacktivism (Glenn, 2015). Rather than clicking like and moving on, Ambrose was soliciting others to do the same without any indication that she would respond to information or ideas they provided.
An interesting aspect for consideration is who the political leaders consider their audience to be: At whom are they tweeting? Whether they have an imagined public to whom they are trying to provide information or whether they are more concerned with managing their brand, it is impossible to tell without questioning the leaders themselves (Marwick & boyd, 2010). Brand management through Twitter does not constitute engagement, but it does have value for the politician in that soft campaigning through personality-driven politics is extremely important for voters to feel that they know the politicians as a person (Lee, 2013; Small, 2010).

In this case study, none of the political leaders sent personal tweets. Prime Minister Trudeau in particular is known for participation in celebrity politics with 1.9 million Twitter followers. Celebrity politics is marked by marketing and entertainment and is particularly directed at younger citizens (Loader, Vromen & Xenos, 2016). He’s also been celebrated via several hashtags such as #trubama about his friendship with American President Obama and #APEChottie when he attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in November of 2015. So while Twitter users have previously engaged in conversation about Trudeau's personal attributes, this was not represented during data collection nor did Trudeau post any personal tweets. While this type of performative branding may be seen in a negative light, the attempt to connect with a younger demographic who is less engaged with traditional politics could also be construed as positive (Wilson, 2011). This delving into the personal sphere is also unique to social media and provides a counterweight to the politician as a public figure (Loader et al., 2016). For Trudeau and other political leaders, this lack of personal content is a missed opportunity to engage with voters on a more authentic level and to be seen as more than simply politicians.

Additionally, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was subject to what Wilson (2011) refers to as brandjacking with an account called @justinshairflip that mentioned him in a tweet about
legalizing marijuana. Brandjacking refers to unauthorized use of a particular brand, either for humorous purposes or as a form of activism (Mancusi-Ungaro, 2014; Wunder, 2009). This unique form of engagement has been documented with respect to politics, social activism, and against major brands (Milam, 2008; Wilson, 2011). While easy to dismiss as simply humorous, in this instance brandjacking constitutes a genuine form of engagement because the brandjacker must be somewhat informed to create an account that parodies what is happening in Canadian politics. Additionally, the one tweet sent by @justinshairflip was about a contemporary and relevant political issue. In this case, the tweet was not successful in gaining traction and was not retweeted by other Twitter users.

Compared with Small's (2010) study of Canadian political leaders and parties' use of Twitter, the data shows Twitter has shifted to become more of a formalized communication tool for politicians. Rather than providing status updates about what they are currently doing or thinking, tweets have become more generic and focused on trumpeting a message box (Small, 2010). This may demonstrate increased staff control over social media. Rather than tweeting impromptu or personal messages, politicians' Twitter accounts have become more scripted and focused on broadcasting generalized messages that are in line with the leader's priorities. A communications staff member would not need to be travelling with the leader to tweet a generic message. Future studies could survey political communications staff to find out their level of control over the social media accounts of politicians, both during and between campaigns.

Despite the lack of personalized, spontaneous or dialogic content from political leaders, other Twitter users did engage with one another in political discourse. An example of this is an exchange between Twitter users @LjungBergkamp and @RuthRogul.

@ LjungBergkamp: @RuthRogul @JustinTrudeau can you expand on what he's done to autistic people? (Vaporwatheist, 2016)
@RuthRogul: @LjungBergkamp @JustinTrudeau Sure. Nothing after 5 years old (Ruthi, 2016)

@RuthRogul: @LjungBergkamp @JustinTrudeau Wynne decided with junk science that no help for parents. Cut funding (Ruthi, 2016)

Twitter user @RuthRogul was prolific, sending fifteen tweets tagging Trudeau. Of these, nine were retweets of other users, but the remaining six were responses to tweets by other users. Most discourse between users were negative comments about the tagged leader. Supporters seemed less likely to engage in dialogue. These types of posts certainly meet the criteria of being emotionally involved, but they bring into question the notion that conversations are happening across the political spectrum instead indicating increasing political polarity in online spaces. According to Shirky (2008), this online dialogue of sharing information and opinions is beneficial even if the politicians themselves do not engage. The public sphere is not reliant on the presence of political leaders, but is merely a space for citizens to discuss issues, share concerns, and potentially organize themselves. In this way, Twitter does live up to expectations of the Habermasian public sphere. User @RuthRogul's Twitter activity clearly represents dialogic engagement because she initiates conversations with other citizens and answers questions by providing information (Men & Tsai, 2014; Small, 2011). It is important to note that there are limitations to this public sphere: Twitter users @RuthRogul and @LjungBergkamp did not use any hashtags associated with autism funding so it would be extremely difficult for anyone interested in this topic to find and contribute to their discussion. Additionally, because Twitter limits conversations to 140 characters, this limits the scope of the conversation. As more users' handles are added to the conversation, this further restricts the content as the user handles are part of the character count.
Retweets require less intentionality and are not an act of creation, however they do contribute to the dialogic ecology on Twitter, creating a substantial amount of noise (Small, 2011). Over half of the tweets collected were retweets, creating a larger audience for a political leader. There was notably less dialogue in response to retweets, even when they were retweeted numerous times. Retweets can be classified as raising awareness, however since retweets are not acts of creation, they cannot be classified as emotionally involved forms of engagement (Crawford, 2009; Men & Tsai, 2015; Schuster, 2013). Further, since retweets do not require or inspire interactivity, they do not meet Smith and Gallicano’s (2015) definition of engagement.

A very real limitation for politicians participating in dialogue online is the sheer number of tweets directed at their accounts. This noise makes it very difficult to identify authentic questions and conversations. For Trudeau to answer any of the twenty-six questions, he or his staff would need to sort through over one thousand tweets to find those who were genuinely attempting to engage with the Prime Minister. However, responding to any of the questions or participating in even one of the conversations would give the impression that he was listening as well as broadcasting and not just using Twitter for self-promotion, thereby embracing the dialogic nature of social media. Naheed Nenshi, the current Mayor of Calgary, is known to personally manage his own Twitter account (Dumitrica, 2014). In doing so, Nenshi is not only accessible, but is seen as highly authentic.

By using Twitter solely to broadcast communications, I argue that it is the politicians who are participating in and encouraging online slacktivism as opposed to dialogic engagement (Butler, 2011; Glenn, 2015; McCafferty, 2011). The politicians did not initiate or participate in any Twitter conversations, instead opting for low-risk, broadcasting tweets (Butler, 2011; Men & Tsai, 2014). While political leaders may not meet the traditional definition of slacktivists—people
who only take action online with low-risk activities—their use of social media expresses the spirit of slacktivism. Specifically, this study shows that they sent out token tweets to the citizens they represent, but shied away from riskier, more time-consuming, and emotionally involved online engagement. The standard perception of slacktivism is that online activity is inherently less valuable, whereas I posit that online activity has a range of values depending on the intensity of the engagement. In this way, the type of slacktivism Canadian political leaders demonstrated on the day of data collection is risk-averse online engagement.

In this study, there are some indications that the political leaders intended to engage in dialogue on Twitter. Ambrose sent one tweet encouraging dialogue, but did not respond to any of the replies. Likewise, May sent two tweets prompting conversation, but did not engage with people who tweeted back to her. While these tweets are acts of creation that resulted in conversation by citizens within the social media public sphere, the leaders made no effort to engage (Men & Tsai, 2015). By not responding to any questions or engaging in dialogue, political leaders are reinforcing the belief that it is not worth the effort of trying to engage with elected leaders and citizens’ opinions are not valued (Epstein et al, 2014).

The lack of social media engagement may negatively affect the outcome of future elections since social media use is connected with political engagement: People who attempt to contact political leaders on Twitter and do not receive a response may allow that lack of engagement to impact their voting choices (Bouliane, 2015; Loader et al, 2014). That this lack of engagement may affect political success provides a potential counterbalance to the power imbalance that exists on social media. Since social media creates an unmediated landscape between politicians and constituents, it is the politicians and not constituents who are the primary beneficiaries. They gain unfettered access to their publics with the ability to control the messaging. Based on the limited data from this study, there is no evidence of citizens gaining
additional power or influence because of social media. Any issues or causes that citizens attempted to bring to the attention of the political leaders were not acknowledged.

Conclusion

Numerous questions remain regarding the intentions of those engaging in political discourse on Twitter. Are users attempting to seek information and engage in dialogue or simply trying to reinforce their existing beliefs, seeking validation from those who share their point-of-view and political leanings? In attempting to raise consciousness, are they open to having their own consciousness raised? Twitter offers an interesting perspective because of its asymmetry: Those who a user chooses to follow do not have to reciprocate creating massive imbalances in the reach of personal Twitter accounts. Likewise, well-used hashtags and the accounts of political leaders can create a rally point for those who are interested in taking the temperature of a discussion and engaging with individuals outside their circles. Following hashtags or leaders’ accounts offers the opportunity to take Twitter users outside of their individualized echo chambers where they are only exposed to information and perspectives that align with their own to the exclusion of opposing viewpoints (Gruzd & Roy, 2014).

Twitter creates a parallel public sphere, but one that is not universally accessible. Various barriers relating to the digital divide preclude involvement by some groups of people. This is not exclusive to online spaces, but exists in real public spaces which bound people by geography and may be inaccessible to individuals with disabilities. Social media offer a potential alternative, but one that is not fully utilized and Canadian politics offers another example of how social media has not lived up to its potential. The technology to engage with constituents online has existed for over a decade, yet the political will to use these tools for dialogue, consultation, and engagement rather than as a loudspeaker to broadcast a one-way message is lacking. By
using social media as one's own personal television, radio, and newspaper, politicians ignore its deeper capacity and deny the potential of the equalizing Habermasian public sphere (Castells, 2008; Habermas 1996).

By avoiding dialogic engagement on social media, Canadian political leaders not only reinforce public mistrust of politicians, but also risk making the situation worse. Citizens in large part recognize the dialogic opportunities of social media and this study found evidence that they are using Twitter to engage in conversation. By essentially ignoring questions and comments in response to a tweet, politicians are signalling that they are not interested in receiving feedback.

The engagement model used for this study provides a frame through which to consider different types of social media activity. Since the model is qualitative, it does not provide information on which posts perform better in terms of soliciting feedback. It may be useful to include post reach, number of retweets, and number of comments to discover whether dialogic posts do result in more dialogue than broadcasting posts.

Future studies could consider the role that communications staff play in shaping the social media strategies of Canadian politicians, including outlining to what degree the politician is actually involved in tweeting. This study took place less than one year after an election which saw a new majority government with a popular leader take power. There is ample opportunity to study social media communication in the lead-up and during an election period as well as at the provincial and municipal levels. Analyzing engagement at different times throughout the electoral cycle would be useful for comparing whether different activities, such as offline participation, are emphasized at different points of the cycle. Also, as studies indicate that men and women behave differently online, a study on both the behaviour and response to leaders with a consideration of gender would provide insight as to whether gender affects social media activity in Canadian politics (Buckels, et al., 2014).
Appendix. Manual coding of 1817 political tweets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ambrose</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Mulcair</th>
<th>Trudeau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of tweets</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique posters</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets of leader</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets of other user</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Tweets (not retweets)</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolling comments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets of leader</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retweets of other user</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolling comments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversations of other users</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader response to conversation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets at leader</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to tweets at</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments not needing responses</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweets about refugees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of leader tweets</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader providing information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader prompting dialogue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader asking for information (listening)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader encouraging offline action</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate number of followers</td>
<td>367,000</td>
<td>227,000</td>
<td>237,000</td>
<td>1.92 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number following</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>6063</td>
<td>1190</td>
<td>949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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rhodogal. [sarmcbride]. (2016, June 20). RT @ElizabethMay: 63% of Canadians voted in 2015 elxn for platforms that called for an end to winner take all voting.@OwenQuann


TM. [tremurrr]. (2016, June 20). @jboileau1967 @RonaAmbrose She never replies. clearly she has no interest in the voices of real canadians. Only those that line her pockets [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/tremurrr/statuses/744971917573099520


Vaporwatheist. [LjungBergkamp]. (2016, June 20). @RuthRogul @JustinTrudeau can you expand on what he's done to autistic people? [Tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/LjungBergkamp/statuses/745026398432133120


