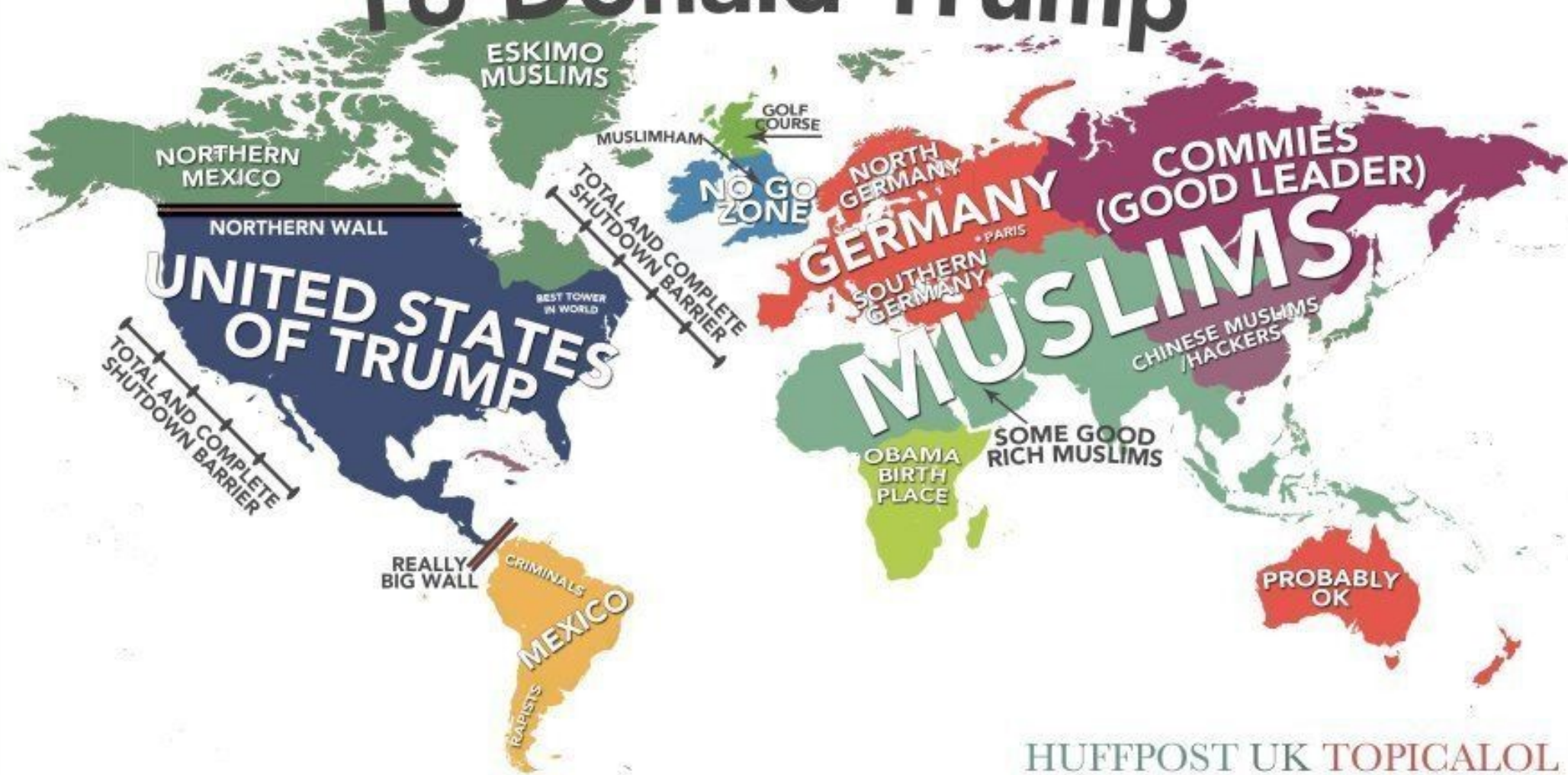


# NEW SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE IN POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Or « Tweet first and think afterwards » ?



# The World According To Donald Trump



HUFFPOST UK TOPICALOL

# COMMON ATTITUDES WITHIN THE AMERICAN COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS - why Americans are receptive to certain forms of populism and propaganda

**FEAR** of losing the «**American Dream**» - Caravan from Latin America



**MORALITY** A vestige of **Puritanism** - Gay marriage and changing gender are wrong !

**HISTORIC BELIEF IN AMERICAN « EXCEPTIONALISM »** -  
« **Make America great again !** »



# « Linguistic Analysis: Without Twitter, Donald Trump Would Not Be in the White House Today »

*UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA DEC. 3, 2019*

Trump tends to “**hyper personalize, character assassinate and use unprofessional language**” on Twitter.

His hashtag, **#CrookedHillaryClinton**, burned itself into the American consciousness, casting doubt on Clinton’s trustworthiness.

**Twitter** was clearly highly influential in the 2016 US election.

**What will happen next November ?**

## SO EXACTLY HOW DOES HE DO IT ?

- **Quick, emotional statements.** Twitter suits Trump's impulsive communication style. The more negative his tweets are, the higher his poll ratings.
- **Speaking directly to the people** through tweets.

**Many Americans like the fact that the President avoids the traditional media to communicate directly with them via Twitter.**

# THE DONALD TRUMP PHENOMENON: *POPULISM AT ITS WORST*

Demagoguery for the “unprotected underdogs” .

## *THE FEAR FACTOR .*



Donald J. Trump@realDonaldTrump

Our country is facing a major threat from Radical Islamic terrorism. We Better get very smart, and very tough, FAST, before it is too late (Dec. 7, 2016)!

*Apparently, he can't spell.>>*



@realDonaldTrump : Caravan, Immigration Laws (Oct.22, 2018)

It looks like Mexico's Police and Military are unable to stop the Caravan heading to the Southern Border of the United States. Criminals and unknown Middle Easterners are mixed in. I have alerted Border Patrol and Military... this is a National Emergency. Must change laws! [0837 EDT]

# SO WHAT IS POPULIST LANGUAGE ?

Populists tend to frame politics as a **battle between the virtuous 'ordinary' masses and a corrupt elite.**

Populist discourse can be politically either **left or right.**

The language of populism generally appeals to the **WORKING CLASSES**, vulnerable to « **scary** » language and the « **fear of falling** », of losing what they have worked for (against a « **welfare state** »).

Terms are simple : « **catchwords** » (ex. : « **national security** » and « **protection** ») but used strongly.

Language is **demagogic** – transmits what the people want to hear.

« **Brexit was about ordinary people rising up to defeat the establishment** »  
– *Nigel Farage*

« **People want to take back control of their countries and they want to take back control of their lives and the lives of their family**” – *D. Trump*

## THE ANATOMY OF POLITICAL TWEETS

**CATCHWORDS** : TRANSMIT PRECISE AND EVEN COMPLEX IDEAS BUT ALSO VAGUE OR POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ONES.

ALSO SENSATIONALIST AND POPULIST «**WORD SALADS**» WHICH MARK MINDS.

**Examples:** « Border security », “invasion”, « deal » (the words “agreement” and “accord” are never used), « fair trade » (with tariffs?), “loser”, “fire and fury”, “tremendous”, “crooked”, “very bad”, “corrupt”, “hoax”, “witch hunt”, “sad”, “ridiculous”..

Can be repeated and repeated to indoctrinate.

> *instant mass communication to produce instant results.*

The public is treated as “consumers” of pre-fabricated language. Many terms and emotional populist statements used appeal particularly to the *lower working classes* who fear for their jobs and homes.



# BUT WAIT - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'WORKING CLASS' AND 'MIDDLE CLASS'?



## Simple Definitions:

The **Working Class** well, works; pays the bills but has little left at the end of the month. Its employment situation is often vulnerable. Mostly “**Blue Collar**”. Tends to vote Republican.



The **Middle Class**, often ex-working class >> “**Fear-of-Falling**” **Syndrome**. Fears losing what it has acquired and fears the arrivals of “newcomers” in their neighborhoods. Has money left, after expenses for « extras » “**White Collars**” : have more stable job status. Now mostly suburban. Divided between Democrats and Republicans.



HOW THE PUBLIC IS MADE TO *RETAIN* OFFICIAL DISCO  
DEPENDS ON THE TONES OF LANGUAGE USED IN  
OFFICIAL MESSAGING : *The science of persuasion*  
*and ... indoctrination*



PATHOS = *emotion* : Use of « **empassioned** » language to convince.  
**Fear of invaders**, of losing the « American Dream », of the unknown.

LOGOS = *rationality* and **persuasive reasoning** - used by Obama to  
promote gun control, for example. But can be misused to propagate  
fear.

ETHOS = *trust* and appeal to the « **honesty** » of “the anti-establish-  
ment” and **in the « truth »**. The crisis of distrust in “political elites”  
gave us Trump's and B. Johnson's elections. Plus the « **fake news** »  
debate.

# **TOOLS : PROPAGANDA vs. INFORMATION**

## **But what IS propaganda ?**

One definition, from the American Security Project :

« Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause. *Propaganda can be and often is completely truthful information, presented selectively to highlight some facts while omitting others* »

The main tools of propaganda >> **CATCHWORDS** : TRANSMIT NOTE-WORTHY IDEAS BUT ALSO VAGUE OR EVEN DANGEROUS ONES One variation > The **CONDENSATION SYMBOL** which oversimplifies complex issues (mentioned above):

Ex.: GLOBALIZATION (Can anyone really define it ??)

# TWITTER THE ULTIMATE COMMUNICATION TOOL IN POLITICS

- Trump's constant use of **Twitter** has created new interest in the platform, with the global economy sometimes influenced by his every tweet.

- The « **contagion** » of use or misuse of the platform for other politicians and world leaders.

- Twitter can be divisive. Not a platform for reasonable discussion.  
**Encourages REACTION over REASON.**

- New issues involve freedom of expression in social media:  
**OFFEND OR INFORM ?**

Infowars, a right-wing conspiracy theory site, has been banned from Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram for spreading false information.

# WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED PRESS CONFERENCE?

“Congress shall pass no law . . . abridging the  
freedom of speech, or **of the press.**”



“The media should keep its mouth shut and just listen for a  
while. The media is **the opposition party.** » - D. Trump

## GETTING WORSE... AND WORSE...

Shortly after assuming office in January 2017, President Trump formally accused the press of being an **“enemy of the American people.”**

20<sup>th</sup> century dictators—such as **Stalin, Hitler, and Mao**—had all denounced the press, as the **“enemy of the people.”**



# SO WHAT IS « FAKE NEWS » ?

(Or should we say « alternative facts »?)

Trump's definition of “fake news”, a term he repeats often, includes any news he does not like.

> **Commander-in-chief** > **Editor-in-chief** ?

And of course, the Russia and Ukraine Investigations are « witch hunts », and fake news.



MP REACTS TO DEMOCRAT'S WIN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Fake news is not subjective interpretation of facts. It is the **deliberate fabrication of falsities** to win over public opinion in a particular aim, usually political, for example, to damage a reputation, or other.

**BUT WHO BELIEVES FAKE NEWS, AND WHO  
GENERATES IT ? Much of it is generated on Twitter.  
« Bullshit receptivity » vs. « media truth discernment »  
(Pennycook and Rand, MIT, June 2018)**

People who **overclaim their knowledge and make exaggerated statements** spread fake news - yet blame news outlets for that. Trump constantly repeats « Folks » to seem intimate with his listeners, then tosses words together incoherently, « **word salads** », speaking to the vulnerable who lack discernment.





# BUT NOW THE QUESTION OF « NEWSWORTHINESS » AND TWITTER 'S RESPONSIBILITY AS A FREE MEDIA OUTLET

*As reported in Techcrunch.com, Sept. 29, 2017*

Critics (of Twitter) argue that continuing to let Trump tweet with impunity has not only resulted in violations of Twitter's own standards but may encourage abuse against individuals or groups currently in Trump's disfavor - a matter of public interest because an increase in hate crimes has been linked with Trump's presidency.

*Twitter refuses to delete Trump's tweets under the right to inform*

**Note :** According to the Constitution, the government cannot censor, but private companies can. And although freedom of the press is guaranteed, press access to official information is not.



# ONE RELIGIOUSLY - ORIENTED TWEET TO APPEAL TO FUNDAMENTALISTS –



**Trump enjoys the support of the Christian Fundamentalists which means that he sometimes « God-tweets ».**  
**But then comes the racism.**

# ONE OF THE WORST TWEETS EVER

**"So interesting to see 'progressive' Democrat congresswomen, who originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the most corrupt anywhere in the world, now loudly telling the people of the United States how our government is to be run.**

**Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime-infested places from which they came. Then come back and show us how it is done." (July 13, 2019)**

**Of the four non-white (or « less white ») congresswomen three of them were born in the US and one was born in Somalia and came to the US as a child.**

# THE CONTAGION OF RACIST TWEETING



**Marina Medvin** @MarinaMedvin · 6 dic

But who wore it better??



💬 13

↻ 24

❤️ 119

Congresswoman [@RashidaTlaib](#) tells cheering crowd that Trump impeachment coming

“We’re going to go in and impeach the motherfucker”

January 4, 2019

**Speaking at a MoveOn event in Washington, DC, just hours after being sworn in, Tlaib — the first Palestinian-American woman in Congress added, « President Donald Trump is a direct and serious threat to our country. »**

**IS VULGARITY BECOMING THE NEW NORM FOR POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON THE WEB ? The « *CONTAGION* » factor.**

# Xenophobic tweets or Subliminal Messages ?

## Make America « White » again ?



**Nancy Pelosi** ✓ @SpeakerPelosi · Jul 14, 2019



When [@realDonaldTrump](#) tells four American Congresswomen to go back to their countries, he reaffirms his plan to “Make America Great Again” has always been about making America white again.

Our diversity is our strength and our unity is our power.

[twitter.com/realDonaldTrump...](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump...)

**Donald J. Trump** ✓ @realDonaldTrump

So interesting to see “Progressive” Democrat Congresswomen, who originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere in the world (if they even have a functioning government at all), now loudly.....



**Nancy Pelosi** ✓

@SpeakerPelosi

I reject [@realDonaldTrump](#)'s xenophobic comments meant to divide our nation. Rather than attack Members of Congress, he should work with us for humane immigration policy that reflects American values. Stop the raids - [#FamiliesBelongTogether!](#)

♥ 58.5K 3:16 PM - Jul 14, 2019



**OF COURSE, ONE « GOOD » TWEET DESERVES ANOTHER**  
**Tweet in response to DT's, from the DumpTrump**  
**#hashtavist group :**



Dumptrump @PUNCHDUMP · 7 mag 2018



**THE ONLY WAY TO TRULY  
"MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN"**



# TRUMP RETWEETS ISLAMOPHOBIC VIDEOS FROM A BRITISH FAR-RIGHT GROUP : The fakest of fake news



**Teresa May and London Mayor Khan ( a Muslim) condemned Trump for the retweets, for which he claimed the need to « keep America safe ».**





**Boris Johnson** @BorisJohnson · Dec 9

Let's get Brexit done.



848 664 3.0K

# Twitter contagion?

**Boris Johnson** @BorisJohnson · Dec 9

When we leave the EU, we will implement an Australian style, points-based .....migration system.



**Unskilled foreign workers will be banned from settling in Britain und...**  
UNSKILLED foreign workers will be banned from settling in Britain under the Tories' planned immigration shake-up. But the exceptionally talented will ...  
[thesun.co.uk](https://www.thesun.co.uk)

1.5K 1.9K 9.5K

## GRETA *TIME* PERSON OF THE YEAR – AND TRUMP DOESNT LIKE IT !

VOX, Dec. 12, 2019 : « Trump — who has very little on his schedule for the rest of the day — has posted a 108 tweets or retweets on Thursday alone, surpassing his single-day posting record of 105. » And this is the worst :



Thunberg responded by updating her Twitter biography to include: **“A teenager working on her anger management problem. Currently chilling and watching a good old-fashioned movie with a friend.”**



Trump War Room (Text TRUMP to 88022)   
@TrumpWarRoom

When it comes to keeping his promises, there's only one Person Of The Year:



# CONCLUSIONS ?



**TWEETING TO « TAKE THE MESSAGE DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE »**

**>> BYPASSING THE PRESS**

**THE DANGERS OF TWEETING POLICY >> CONFUSION : IS IT OFFICIAL ?**

**THE NEW PROPAGANDA AND POPULIST LANGUAGE: POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLITICS ; THE EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKING CLASS.**

**SOCIAL MEDIA ARE FACED WITH ISSUES OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR OFFENSIVE POSTS. THE RIGHT TO INFORM?**

**TWEETING : INSTANT COMMUNICATION OF PRE-FABRICATED SENSATIONALIST LANGUAGE FOR PRE-FABRICATED CONSUMERS ?**

