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**The Role of Twitter**   
**in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election**

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## **Dedication**

*To my mother,  
my husband, Abdelkarim,  
and my best friend, Souraya.*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor *Dr. LARBI YUCEF* for his unaccountable guidance and patience in directing me throughout this journey.

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## **Abstract**

Presidential politics have always been using innovative ways in the way elections and campaigns are organized. The 2016 U.S. Presidential Election has witnessed the investment of internet by the candidates (Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton). This dissertation explores the contribution of social media networks to the 2016 U.S. presidential campaigns. It focuses on the role of Twitter platform in the effectively-conducted electoral campaigns. The researcher provides an overview about the system of presidential elections in the U.S. constitution and history. The presidential campaigns, particularly Clinton's and Trump's, are demonstrated with references to major debates, polls and conflicts. Finally, an exploration of Trump and Clinton's digitalized platforms is provided. Twitter is found to have significant role of information dissemination and controlling voters' reactions and enthusiasm. Besides, it seemed to massively contribute to Trump's popularity.

**Keywords:** Twitter, Campaigns, 2016 Presidential Elections, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Social Media.

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## General Introduction

Social media networks have not been used only for personal interactions, they have also enabled users to share news and discuss various events. Globally, political actors and activists have recognized such rich medium of communication. The most significant use of social media in political events has first been noticed in the 2008 U.S. presidential elections. Obama's electoral campaigns have highlighted potential contributions of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

The latter has triggered the following candidates to plan for successful campaigns and political events through more forms of presence on social media. It was not surprising that the recent U.S Presidential Elections would witness investments in social media. The major Republican and Democratic contenders, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, have had millions of followers. Twitter has recently been spotted by several researchers who are interested in the increase of platformed political discourse on social media. Twitter analytics have also been raised as to check figures' popularity or election predictions.

In the light of what has been mentioned, this research aims at exploring the role of social media networks in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election. Particularly, it attempts to show the contribution of Twitter platform to the effective conducting of electoral campaigns by both candidates: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. In order to achieve the study objectives, the researcher raises the following questions:

- How did Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump benefit from social media in their electoral campaigns for the 2016 elections?
- What is the role of Twitter in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections?

It is hypothesized that:

- Clinton and Trump made use of technical strategies that would help them convince much more numbers of volunteers and voters for the 2016 elections.
- In the U.S. Presidential Elections, Twitter played the role of disseminating information, spreading political agenda and checking the public's reactions and enthusiasm.

The study consists of three chapters. The first chapter presents the timeline of major descriptions and developments of the American election system throughout history and with references to the U.S constitution. The second chapter is devoted to the presidential campaigns, how Clinton and Trump proceeded their nomination, managed their debates and scored in the electoral college. The chapter describes the real events in the campaigns void of the interference of social media. The last chapter, however, is devoted to the exploration of Trump and Clinton's digitalized platforms. It also provides an explanation of how Twitter contributed to the successful conduction of electoral campaigns from both candidates' parts.

# CHAPTER ONE: THE SYSTEM OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS

## Introduction

The first chapter of this dissertation attempts to provide a clear picture about the context of the current study. It focuses mainly on the system of elections in the USA. The chapter provides an overview of the system of federal, local and state elections in the US Constitution. Moreover, it accounts for the key events and procedures, as referring to the important changes and shifts related to presidents and presidencies. This chapter broadly describes the process of electing a president through providing an overview of the Electoral College.

## I. Elections in the US Constitution

The American system of government is ideologically based upon classically liberal Republicanism. Historically, this stemmed from the colonial era committees of safety as well as the original committees of safety in England during the English Civil War of the mid-17th century (Hall 29), While the US Constitution<sup>1</sup> sets the parameters for the elections, it regulates most aspects of elections in the U.S (primaries, the voters' eligibility, electoral college's running, etc.) Administering all elections (federal, state, and local) is the mission of all states.

The creation of government was on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1789. Taking the place of the Articles of Confederation<sup>2</sup>, such "republican form" of government was first codified within those articles and subsequently into the US Constitution (Edling 75). Since 1787, twenty-seven changes have been made to the constitution known as "amendments". The first ten of these amendments were after the Civil War, and called the Bill of Rights.<sup>3</sup>

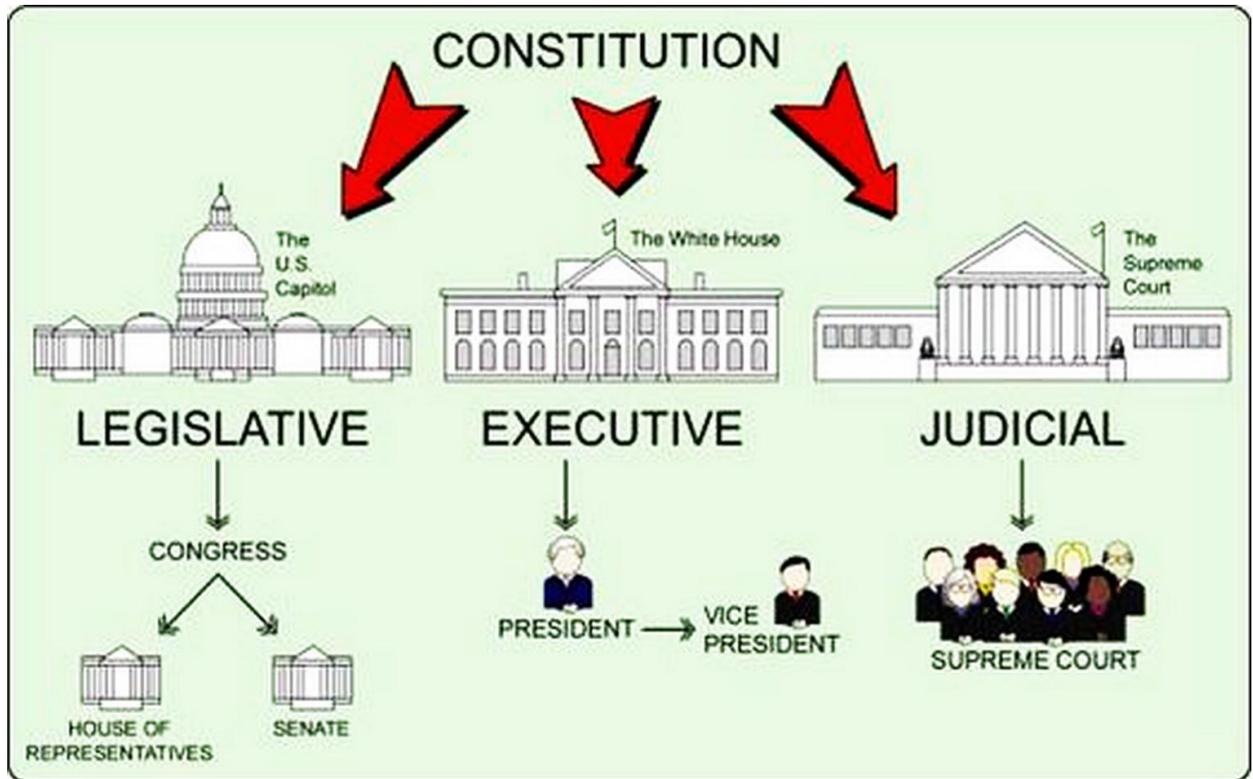
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<sup>1</sup> The highest law of the US signed on September 17<sup>th</sup> 1787 by the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> An agreement among the first (thirteen) states in the US that served as its first constitution

<sup>3</sup> Written in 1789 and in effect in 1791, the ten amendments that limit the power of the federal government and guarantee citizens of the US certain rights.

Thanks to the Philadelphia convention of 1787 and that their socialization of the war debt, the federal Constitution established the framework for the operating structure of the central government, which is composed of three branches, the legislative, the executive and the judicial. (as shown in Figure 1)

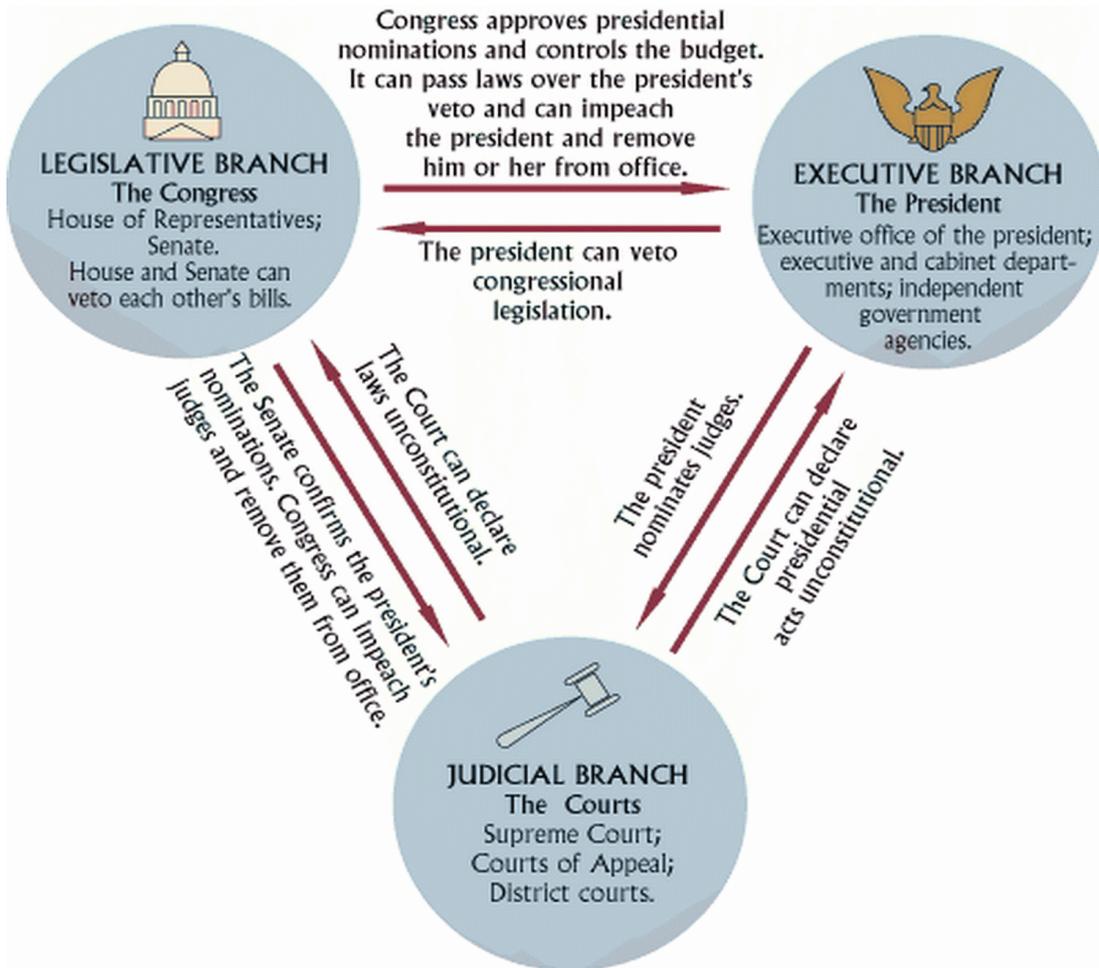


**Figure 1. The Government Structure in the US Constitution<sup>4</sup>**

The legislature writes the laws. The executive enforces the laws and the judiciary interprets the laws. Each of these branches can be recognized as the United States Congress, the United States presidency and the United States Supreme Court, respectively (Sabato & Ernst 12). These three branches of the federal government are constructed as such so as to provide for separation of powers.

Uniquely, the American system of government, decentralized political power, even more so as intended by the framers. This separation of powers also enjoys “checks and balances” which means that if one branch becomes tyrannical, then one or both of the other two can act to hold the misbehaving branch from getting too much out of control. (Edling 70)

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Constitution and The Three Branches of U.S. Government  
<http://rudman.tripod.com/government/branches.htm> Accessed on Feb 24th 2019



**Figure 2. Checks and Balances<sup>5</sup>**

The separation of powers is not just horizontal but also vertical. That is, state governments have their own legislatures and governors, and judiciary county governments have commissioners, Sheriffs and courts municipalities that is city governments commonly have city councils, mayors and judges, yet the reality of the situation is that the three branches of the federal government to Congress, the president and the Supreme Court begrudgingly cooperate with each other. (Hall 113-115)

### **I.1 The Distribution of Powers in the US Constitution**

Article I. says that the US Congress makes the laws. It has two parts, known as "Houses": The House of Representatives and the Senate. All about who can be -and how they are- elected is in Article I (Fallon 5). The people in each state elect the members of the first part of the Congress (The House of Representatives). The number of a state's population

<sup>5</sup> The checks and balances that exist among branches of US Government  
<https://sites.google.com/a/musd.org/testa/government/checks-balances-reading> Accessed on Feb 24th 2019

determines the number of representatives. The latter are elected for two years.

Moreover, Article I. makes rules for Congress to impeach and remove from office the President, Vice President, judges, and other government officers. Regardless to the state's population, two members in the Senate are elected from each state (Senators) for six years. Originally, Senators were selected by state legislatures; however, that had been changed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Amendment. (Fallon 293)

The laws made by Congress are carried out by executive offices. Article II. lists the President, Vice President, as well as executive offices as the power that carries the laws. The elections of the President and Vice President are described in Article II. (how and by who they are elected). Article II. also describes the President as "the Commander-in-Chief" in charge of the military. Two-thirds of the Senate approve the treaties and appointments that the President makes (Fallon xvi).

As for Article III. It is about the judicial branch (the Supreme Court). The Article says that Congress can decide the needed federal courts. Furthermore, Article IV. says that all states must give "full faith and credit" to the laws and treat citizens of other states as fairly as they treat their own citizens. Making new states is described in Article IV. In 1787, the US had only thirteen (13) states, however, in present day, they are fifty (50) states. According to this article, the Congress makes rules for Federal property, each state must have a republican form of government. (Fallon 6)

## **I.2 The Presidential Elections in the US Constitution**

In this respect, it is necessary to describe current provisions in the U.S. Constitution that relate to presidential elections, specifically ones that were either originally written into the Constitution by the founding fathers or added later as amendments. The major provisions are as follows:

- According to Article II. Section I., there are three qualifications to become president. A president must be a natural born US citizen and the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment says that someone born in the US is a citizen. A president must also be at least thirty-five (35) years old and have lived in the US for fourteen (14) or more years. (Sabato & Ernst 13-14)

- Article II. Section I. establishes the electoral college, which is an indirect system of electing the president in which citizens vote for electors than the electors vote for the president. In turn, the presidential candidate with the majority of electoral votes wins the election. (Sabato & Ernst 13-14)
- The 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment made a change to the electoral college system so that the electors vote separately for president and vice president. (Sabato & Ernst 458-459)
- After a person is elected president, the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment sets the inauguration date as January 20<sup>th</sup>. Presidents had been inaugurated in early March. Prior to this amendment. The 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment also establishes what happens if the person elected president who is unable to become president. Most notably that if he or she dies before being inaugurated, the person elected vice president will become president. (Sabato & Ernst 460)
- The 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment outlines presidential succession after a president is inaugurated. In short, it says that rather than holding a new election, the vice president will take over for a president who dies, resigns, is removed or is otherwise unable to fulfill the presidential duties. (Sabato & Ernst 382-383)
- The president serves a four-year term, according to Article I. Section I., and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment sets a two-term limit. When a person takes over for a president in the first two years of a president's term, that term counts as one of the two terms. But when a person takes over and serves less than two years of a president's term, he or she can still be elected to two full terms. (Sabato & Ernst 12-13)

Several amendments to the constitution were adopted to give more citizens the right to vote and most of these apply to elections beyond just presidential elections. These amendments are as follows:

- The 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment gives people the right to vote regardless of race. (Sabato & Ernst 151)
- The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed specifically to give women the right to vote, but more broadly it prevents voting discrimination based on sex. (Sabato & Ernst 249)

- The 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment gives residents of Washington DC the right to vote in presidential elections by giving DC the same number of electoral votes as if it were a state, but not more than the least populous state. (Sabato & Ernst 463-464)
- The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment prohibits charging citizens attacks to vote in federal elections so that all citizens can vote regardless of income or wealth. (Sabato & Ernst 460-461)
- The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment lowered the voting age from twenty-one (21) to eighteen (18) years old. (Sabato & Ernst 463)

## **II. The Electoral College**

Americans believe they have the right to vote for the president of the US but in fact, citizens do not directly cast votes for these offices. Rather, they cast votes for electors who in turn elect the president. At the constitutional convention, there was heated debate on how to select the executive some wanted Congress to appoint the president, others wanted to state legislatures to do it, still others wanted the president to be directly elected through a popular vote. James Wilson of Pennsylvania was the first to propose the system we now know as “the Electoral College.”

### **II.1 The Electoral College in the US Constitution**

For the sole aim of electing a president and a vice president every four years, the body of electors established by the Constitution is known as the Electoral College. This body consists of 538 electors. To win the election, the absolute majority of 270 electoral votes is required (Dixon 215). The Constitution says that the president is not elected by the popular votes. Rather, he is elected by the electoral college, which is composed of electors who are appointed by the several state legislatures. According to the US Supreme Court's ruling in 1890:

“The sole function of the presidential electors is to cast, certify and transmit the vote of the State for President and Vice President of the nation. Although the electors are appointed and act under and pursuant to the Constitution of the United States, they are no more officers or agents of the United States than are the members of the State legislatures when acting as electors of federal senators, or the people of the States when acting as electors of representatives

in Congress” (In re Green, 134 U.S. 377, 379 -380)<sup>6</sup>

That is to say, the delegates of any political party simply do not matter because they do not elect any candidate to become the president. That constitutional prerogative belongs solely to the electors within the electoral college. According to the United States Constitution Annotated which is published by the government printing office: “electors constitutionally remain free to cast their ballots for any person they wish and occasionally they have done so.” (343 U.S. 214 in 1952)<sup>7</sup>

To briefly recap, the Supreme Court judges are nominated and confirmed by the President and the Senate, respectively. The entirety of the Congress is now elected by the popular votes. An individual vote only counts towards electing congressmen and senators. So, unless an individual is also going to vote state legislatures into their public offices as well. Then individuals have absolutely no influence whatsoever in who becomes the next president of the US. (Dixon 217-218).

## **II.2 The Electoral College in the History of Presidential Elections**

The first design of the Electoral College shows that each state would appoint a number of presidential electors equal to their representation in Congress. The winner would become president, provided he had a majority of electoral votes. The runner-up would become Vice President. If no candidate won a majority in the Electoral College, the House of Representatives would choose the president from among the top five contenders. (Dixon 215).

Since its design, the electoral college worked smoothly through three presidential elections. But in 1800, there came a bump in the road. Republicans had stated Thomas Jefferson for President and Aaron Burr for Vice President (Chambers 23-24). At the time, the Constitution required electors to cast votes for president; and the winner would become president in the runner-up would become Vice President, but in 1800 there was a deadlock. Jefferson and Burr received exactly the same number of votes. The election was decided in the House of Representatives. (Linden 61-62)

Such a deadlock could never happen again. In 1804, the states ratified the 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. Electors would now cast separate votes for President and

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<sup>6</sup> Annotations of Article II. From <https://constitution.findlaw.com/article2/annotation02.html#f79> Accessed on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 2019

<sup>7</sup> Electors as Free Agents, from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution-conan/article-2/section-1/clause-2%E2%80%9334/electors-as-free-agents#fn118> Accessed on Feb 24<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Vice President. The 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment also lowered the number of candidates the house would consider from five to three (Wead 58). This became a factor in 1824 when another election was thrown into the House of Representatives. For the first time, no candidate won a majority of the electoral vote. Andrew Jackson had a big lead in electoral votes and led in what was considered the popular vote at that time. The House of Representatives voted among the top three candidates and selected John Quincy Adams. The support of Henry Clay<sup>8</sup>, the speaker of the house, was crucial to Adams to win. (Wead 59-60)

Another challenge came in 1876. Democrat Samuel Tilden won the popular vote. He was leading in the Electoral College until results from South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida appeared to give the victory to the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. Tilden accused the Republican officials of those states of stealing the election for Hayes, and the Congress created an independent commission to resolve the dispute involved. The solution was not even hinted at in the Constitution. It was composed of five members each from the house, the Senate and the Supreme Court. The commission determines that Hayes had won after the Congress finished counting the votes on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1877. (Hamilton & Friedman 163-164)

In 2000. Florida was once again at the center of a disputed presidential election; With forty-nine (49) states accounted for, Gore led the Republican George W. Bush in the electoral college, 266 to 246. Florida's twenty-five (25) electoral votes were enough to give the electoral vote majority to Bush. Gore challenged the outcome asking for manual recounts. The US Supreme Court overruled the Florida court holding that with no uniform standard to judge voter intention statewide manual recount would violate the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's "Equal Protection Clause."<sup>9</sup> The court's decision was greeted by a fear of protest from Democrats. Gore agreed to abide by its decision, finally George W. Bush was declared the victor more than a month after election day. (Lund 37-39)

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<sup>8</sup> As no candidate won a majority of the electoral vote in 1824, the contingent election was held by the House of Representatives to determine the president, and Adams won with the support of Clay.

<sup>9</sup> The clause, from the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment that took effect in 1868, provides "nor shall any State deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

**Conclusion**

The American president is indirectly derived from the choice of the people. The Electoral College is an example of the American commitment to popular sovereignty as well as the federal character of the Constitution. Notwithstanding the indirect cast of votes, Americans' votes in the last few Presidential Campaigns (since 2004) have become triggered and motivated by what is known in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as "social media". How does the latter contribute to the Presidential Campaigns? And what makes Americans think of one of the candidates for presidency as the right one for them and for the UN nation?

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2016**

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Presidential Election in 2016 is the 58th quadrennial in American history. It was held on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. The Republicans won, Donald Trump as the 45th President, and Mike Pence as the 48th Vice President. They took their offices on January 20, 2017. The present chapter attempts to re-consider the presidential campaigns of both Republican and Democrat runners along the year of 2016. It highlights the debates and media conflicts during the campaigns. American's views and attitudes are also taken into consideration for they contributed to the rise of social interactions with the runners.

### **I. Trump and Clinton**

Donald John Trump was born on June 14, 1946 and raised in New York. He had a degree in economics from the Wharton School. He became in charge of his family's company in 1971 and named it The Trump Organization. He licensed his name for real estate and products. Also, he wrote and co-wrote some books and hosted a TV show known as "The Apprentice" from 2003 to 2015. Entering the race of the 2016 presidential as a Republican

made Trump the defeater of sixteen opponents in the primaries. His views pushed commentators to describe him as populist, protectionist, and nationalist.<sup>1</sup>

The former Secretary of State, the Democratic candidate, the New Yorker, Hillary Clinton was born on October, 26th, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. She was raised in a religious and politically conservative family. She studied political science at Wellesley College. She has attracted the public's attention since the presidential election of 1992 that her husband, Bill Clinton, won. She served as a Senator for New York State and ran for presidential election in 2008. As an experienced politician, she carried out the participation in the presidential campaign in 2016. She has specific views about a number of issues such as abortion, free trade, energy policy, environmental issues, foreign policy, war on terrorism, immigration, gun control, health care, tax issues.<sup>2</sup>

## II. Nominations and First Runners

It was late in 2013 when the 2016 election began to be talked about. Americans were wondering who was going to run for the elections. News outlets had already started speculating about who the contenders are for the next presidency. It seemed that the general consensus for Democrats was the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who would run and likely become the nominee. As Republicans were unhappy with President Obama's job, many senators and governors seemed to run and talked about presidency to be back in power. Some of the Left Democrats started also giving a challenge, namely the socialist Bernie Sanders in 2014. Moreover, Jim Webb was the first candidate to form an exploratory committee for presidential campaign.

Mitt Romney, against whom Obama won the 2012 elections, was thought to be running again in 2016. Yet, he officially declined his run in January 2015. In March 2015, Ted Cruz became the first candidate to officially announce their candidacy in the 2016 race. Many politicians from both parties followed Cruz and announced their candidacies. In June 2015, other Republicans like Ben Carson, Chris Christie and Carly Fiorina announced their candidacies (Linsh). Donald Trump got the most attention from his announcement speech when he started talking about a 'great wall' to be built in southern borders. (Sides, Tesler, Vavreck and Heitsch 82)

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Trump. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/02/us/politics/donald-trump-draft-record.html> Retrieved on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Hillary Clinton. *The White House* <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/1600/first-ladies/hillaryclinton> Retrieved on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

Starting polls in July 2015, Trump was in the lead among Republicans, with Jeb Bush as second. On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton was in a distant lead, and Bernie Sanders as second. With eighteen major Republican candidates, it was time to start having debates. The first Republican debate took place in Cleveland and hosted by Fox News (Olsen and Scala 38). During the election cycle, Clinton was having some issues that were later discovered as the private email server issue. She started making contradictory statements as it was allegedly less secure to use private email.

However, in the first Democratic debate in October 2015, the topic of gun control was brought into discussion. Clinton confirmed that it is time for the country to stand up against gun violence. In their second debate, Democrats discussed terrorism. The political insiders of the Republican Party were not doing as well as the political outsiders. Donald Trump was still leading in the polls. (Sides et al 94)

In the fourth Republican debate, Trump defended his proposal of Border Wall. In a following debate, Trump announced his plan to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. the ban was opposed by Republicans and Democrats alike. The Iowa caucuses occurred for the first time on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, many candidates dropped out of the race. Other states' caucuses started to occur and most of them indicated Clinton and Trump as winning the race. (Crotty 71)

Jeb Bush suspended his campaign after losing in South Carolina. March 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 brought the first Super Tuesday<sup>3</sup>. For the Republicans, Trump won the most states; for the Democrats, Clinton won more states than Bernie Sanders. After that, more primaries and caucuses were held with Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton. In March 1<sup>th</sup>, there was a protest against Trumps' rally in Chicago, and Trump cancelled it. March 15<sup>th</sup> primaries were very important for both parties because they were in Florida. Trump won for Republicans and Clinton won for Democrats. Some candidates suspended their campaigns.

The Colorado and Louisiana Republican primaries were controversial because Trump won the popular vote and Cruz ended up receiving the delegates. The New York primary was correctly expected to be Trump-Clinton victory; Cruz was despised by New York Republicans due to his comments earlier a year about New Yorkers. The battle for the northeast occurred on April 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. Trump won every county in every state of the

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<sup>3</sup> Informally refers to one or more Tuesdays early in a U.S. presidential primary season when the greatest number of U.S. states hold primary elections and caucuses.

Republican side; Clinton performed well for the Democrats. After that, Trump accused Clinton of playing the women's card; nevertheless, he won the Indiana Primary. Cruz, eventually, suspended his campaign making Trump the presumptive nominee for the Republicans. (Crotty 82-83)

### III. From Nomination to Election

Clinton reached 2.383 delegates making her the presumptive nominee for the Democrats. That made her the first woman to become a major party's nominee for the American election. After the Democratic convention, Clinton and her mate Tim Kaine accepted the nomination. The polls were showing that Clinton was in the lead but not by a run a way. In September 2016, Trump-Clinton debate fights went far. Clinton called Trump's supporters as deplorables<sup>4</sup> and described them as sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, and Islamophobic.

The first general election debate was on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. The main takeaway from the debate was that Trump would frequently take the bait from Clinton. The latter asked him to release his tax returns. In a second debate, Trump apologized for his comments and he was asked about a tape where he sexually assaulted women; his reply was that it was a locker room talk. Trump also threatened to persecute Clinton if he becomes president. Most outlets considered Hillary Clinton the winner of the debate. The third debate, however, was on immigration, building the wall on the southern borders and the Russian relations.

Two weeks before the election day, the FBI re-opened the investigation in Clinton's emails scandal. However, the polls at that time shows Clinton in the lead by about three points. Americans, including Trump, were sure the election would end in the Clinton's victory. Suddenly, Trump had taken Ohio to reach 167 electoral votes. Throughout the night, a tight race to win Florida ended in Trump's victory of the 29 electoral votes. Later at night, Trump broke the so-called blue wall and scored other states. In the end, Hillary ended up taking the popular vote, but Donald won the electoral victory and won the American Presidency.

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<sup>4</sup> *BBC News* <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/election-us-2016-37329812/clinton-half-of-trump-supporters-basket-of-deplorables> Accessed on April 14th 2019

#### IV. The U.S. Nation's Attitudes

Many Americans thought that Trump was running as a joke. On TV shows and social media communications, they started commenting on his announcements. Even people who legitimately supported Trump were laughed at. Trump's comments, moreover, received heavy backlash even resulting in NBC's severing ties with Donald. Later on, Trump made a harsh comment about Arizona Senator John McCain (Denton 105). Americans thought that Trump should apologize to the people who did offend.

In addition, in the first Republican debate, journalist Megyn Kelly talking to Trump in his first debate: "your twitter account has several disparaging comments about women's looks ... Does that sound you like the temperament of a man we should elect as president?" Trump, later, responded viciously her a "bimbo" and "blood coming out of her wherever" as he asked for her apology (Sides et al 189). In the seventh debate, Trump opted out due to his bad experience with Journalist Megyn Kelly.

Trump's views on illegal immigration were emphasized when Jeb Bush's wife was brought into the conversation. The latter replied that subjecting his Mexican-born wife to a political conversation was "completely inappropriate" hoping Trump would apology. Again, Trump tweeted a picture insulting Ted Cruz's wife (Heidi), Cruz responded viciously "I don't get angry often. But you mess with my wife, you mess with my kids; that'll do it every time. Donald, you're a snivelling coward and leave Heidi the hell alone."<sup>5</sup> That fight was taken as a social media event for the Americans.

In the second Republican debate, Trump was asked about a comment he had made about Carly Fiorina saying: "Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president!"<sup>6</sup> Trump's words have been shared by Americans on social media. News journalists have not been safe from his live words, tweets or comments. For that, Americans' popular votes went much to Clinton; however, analysts and commentators consider that a point of power that discretely helped Trump win on both social media and elections.

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<sup>5</sup> Flores, Reena. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ted-cruz-bashes-sniveling-coward-donald-trump/> Accessed on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2019

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Trump. *Rolling Stone Magazine* <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/trump-seriously-on-the-trail-with-the-gops-tough-guy-41447/> Accessed on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2019

Some studies proved that most Americans have been worn out by the amount of news coverage of the 2016 presidential campaign. The Pew Research Center survey<sup>7</sup> conducted a study that shows about 60% of Americans feel exhausted by the amount of election coverage. The feeling of fatigue is proved among those who do not follow news. That does not imply that there was no attention to or interest in the elections. However, the same survey showed that, compared to previous campaigns, the 2016 campaigns have reached greater interest (Bitecofer 37). Such survey by the Pew Research Center investigated the commitment of Americans to the voting idea as well as their views on how it should work in practice. Those surveys explain the policy debates across the country.

One major tool that helped Americans express their reactions, beliefs and attitudes is social media. Since the election of 2008, the use of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube during the campaigns of 2008 and 2012 elections has noticed different ways of communicating the news about elections, sharing opinions and even criticizing candidates and Party leaders. However, the use of Twitter in the USA seems to be more socially-fashioned than any other social networking site. For that, Clinton and Trump have used social media, particularly Twitter in their presidential campaigns. The familiarity of Americans with tweetstorms, funny retweeting and famous leading hashtags triggered many Democrats and Republicans to be in public with Americans via Twitter.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has reviewed the process, steps and debates of the American Presidential Campaign for the 2016 elections. Clearly, Trump and Clinton have been the target individuals to highlight. Starting by introducing both candidates, the chapter has gone through the year of 2016 with some spotlights on major events. Later, the results of the elections have been covered briefly. American politicians and citizens' attitudes towards the election events have also been instanced. Throughout their campaigns, Clinton and Trump made use of Twitter as a supporting tool for their popularity and /or victory. In this respect, one might ask "how could Twitter be a point of an importance and power to the candidates for presidency?"

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<sup>7</sup> Gotfried, Jeffery. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/14/most-americans-already-feel-election-coverage-fatigue/> Accessed on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2016**

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Presidential Election in 2016 is the 58th quadrennial in American history. It was held on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. The Republicans won, Donald Trump as the 45th President, and Mike Pence as the 48th Vice President. They took their offices on January 20, 2017. The present chapter attempts to re-consider the presidential campaigns of both Republican and Democrat runners along the year of 2016. It highlights the debates and media conflicts during the campaigns. American's views and attitudes are also taken into consideration for they contributed to the rise of social interactions with the runners.

### **I. Trump and Clinton**

Donald John Trump was born on June 14, 1946 and raised in New York. He had a degree in economics from the Wharton School. He became in charge of his family's company in 1971 and named it The Trump Organization. He licensed his name for real estate and products. Also, he wrote and co-wrote some books and hosted a TV show known as "The Apprentice" from 2003 to 2015. Entering the race of the 2016 presidential as a Republican

made Trump the defeater of sixteen opponents in the primaries. His views pushed commentators to describe him as populist, protectionist, and nationalist.<sup>1</sup>

The former Secretary of State, the Democratic candidate, the New Yorker, Hillary Clinton was born on October, 26th, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois. She was raised in a religious and politically conservative family. She studied political science at Wellesley College. She has attracted the public's attention since the presidential election of 1992 that her husband, Bill Clinton, won. She served as a Senator for New York State and ran for presidential election in 2008. As an experienced politician, she carried out the participation in the presidential campaign in 2016. She has specific views about a number of issues such as abortion, free trade, energy policy, environmental issues, foreign policy, war on terrorism, immigration, gun control, health care, tax issues.<sup>2</sup>

## II. Nominations and First Runners

It was late in 2013 when the 2016 election began to be talked about. Americans were wondering who was going to run for the elections. News outlets had already started speculating about who the contenders are for the next presidency. It seemed that the general consensus for Democrats was the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, who would run and likely become the nominee. As Republicans were unhappy with President Obama's job, many senators and governors seemed to run and talked about presidency to be back in power. Some of the Left Democrats started also giving a challenge, namely the socialist Bernie Sanders in 2014. Moreover, Jim Webb was the first candidate to form an exploratory committee for presidential campaign.

Mitt Romney, against whom Obama won the 2012 elections, was thought to be running again in 2016. Yet, he officially declined his run in January 2015. In March 2015, Ted Cruz became the first candidate to officially announce their candidacy in the 2016 race. Many politicians from both parties followed Cruz and announced their candidacies. In June 2015, other Republicans like Ben Carson, Chris Christie and Carly Fiorina announced their candidacies (Linsh). Donald Trump got the most attention from his announcement speech when he started talking about a 'great wall' to be built in southern borders. (Sides, Tesler, Vavreck and Heitsch 82)

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Trump. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/02/us/politics/donald-trump-draft-record.html> Retrieved on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Hillary Clinton. *The White House* <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/1600/first-ladies/hillaryclinton> Retrieved on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019.

Starting polls in July 2015, Trump was in the lead among Republicans, with Jeb Bush as second. On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton was in a distant lead, and Bernie Sanders as second. With eighteen major Republican candidates, it was time to start having debates. The first Republican debate took place in Cleveland and hosted by Fox News (Olsen and Scala 38). During the election cycle, Clinton was having some issues that were later discovered as the private email server issue. She started making contradictory statements as it was allegedly less secure to use private email.

However, in the first Democratic debate in October 2015, the topic of gun control was brought into discussion. Clinton confirmed that it is time for the country to stand up against gun violence. In their second debate, Democrats discussed terrorism. The political insiders of the Republican Party were not doing as well as the political outsiders. Donald Trump was still leading in the polls. (Sides et al 94)

In the fourth Republican debate, Trump defended his proposal of Border Wall. In a following debate, Trump announced his plan to ban all Muslims from entering the U.S. the ban was opposed by Republicans and Democrats alike. The Iowa caucuses occurred for the first time on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, many candidates dropped out of the race. Other states' caucuses started to occur and most of them indicated Clinton and Trump as winning the race. (Crotty 71)

Jeb Bush suspended his campaign after losing in South Carolina. March 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 brought the first Super Tuesday<sup>3</sup>. For the Republicans, Trump won the most states; for the Democrats, Clinton won more states than Bernie Sanders. After that, more primaries and caucuses were held with Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton. In March 1<sup>th</sup>, there was a protest against Trumps' rally in Chicago, and Trump cancelled it. March 15<sup>th</sup> primaries were very important for both parties because they were in Florida. Trump won for Republicans and Clinton won for Democrats. Some candidates suspended their campaigns.

The Colorado and Louisiana Republican primaries were controversial because Trump won the popular vote and Cruz ended up receiving the delegates. The New York primary was correctly expected to be Trump-Clinton victory; Cruz was despised by New York Republicans due to his comments earlier a year about New Yorkers. The battle for the northeast occurred on April 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. Trump won every county in every state of the

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<sup>3</sup> Informally refers to one or more Tuesdays early in a U.S. presidential primary season when the greatest number of U.S. states hold primary elections and caucuses.

Republican side; Clinton performed well for the Democrats. After that, Trump accused Clinton of playing the women's card; nevertheless, he won the Indiana Primary. Cruz, eventually, suspended his campaign making Trump the presumptive nominee for the Republicans. (Crotty 82-83)

### III. From Nomination to Election

Clinton reached 2.383 delegates making her the presumptive nominee for the Democrats. That made her the first woman to become a major party's nominee for the American election. After the Democratic convention, Clinton and her mate Tim Kaine accepted the nomination. The polls were showing that Clinton was in the lead but not by a run a way. In September 2016, Trump-Clinton debate fights went far. Clinton called Trump's supporters as deplorables<sup>4</sup> and described them as sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, and Islamophobic.

The first general election debate was on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2016. The main takeaway from the debate was that Trump would frequently take the bait from Clinton. The latter asked him to release his tax returns. In a second debate, Trump apologized for his comments and he was asked about a tape where he sexually assaulted women; his reply was that it was a locker room talk. Trump also threatened to persecute Clinton if he becomes president. Most outlets considered Hillary Clinton the winner of the debate. The third debate, however, was on immigration, building the wall on the southern borders and the Russian relations.

Two weeks before the election day, the FBI re-opened the investigation in Clinton's emails scandal. However, the polls at that time shows Clinton in the lead by about three points. Americans, including Trump, were sure the election would end in the Clinton's victory. Suddenly, Trump had taken Ohio to reach 167 electoral votes. Throughout the night, a tight race to win Florida ended in Trump's victory of the 29 electoral votes. Later at night, Trump broke the so-called blue wall and scored other states. In the end, Hillary ended up taking the popular vote, but Donald won the electoral victory and won the American Presidency.

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<sup>4</sup> *BBC News* <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/election-us-2016-37329812/clinton-half-of-trump-supporters-basket-of-deplorables> Accessed on April 14th 2019

#### IV. The U.S. Nation's Attitudes

Many Americans thought that Trump was running as a joke. On TV shows and social media communications, they started commenting on his announcements. Even people who legitimately supported Trump were laughed at. Trump's comments, moreover, received heavy backlash even resulting in NBC's severing ties with Donald. Later on, Trump made a harsh comment about Arizona Senator John McCain (Denton 105). Americans thought that Trump should apologize to the people who did offend.

In addition, in the first Republican debate, journalist Megyn Kelly talking to Trump in his first debate: "your twitter account has several disparaging comments about women's looks ... Does that sound you like the temperament of a man we should elect as president?" Trump, later, responded viciously her a "bimbo" and "blood coming out of her wherever" as he asked for her apology (Sides et al 189). In the seventh debate, Trump opted out due to his bad experience with Journalist Megyn Kelly.

Trump's views on illegal immigration were emphasized when Jeb Bush's wife was brought into the conversation. The latter replied that subjecting his Mexican-born wife to a political conversation was "completely inappropriate" hoping Trump would apology. Again, Trump tweeted a picture insulting Ted Cruz's wife (Heidi), Cruz responded viciously "I don't get angry often. But you mess with my wife, you mess with my kids; that'll do it every time. Donald, you're a snivelling coward and leave Heidi the hell alone."<sup>5</sup> That fight was taken as a social media event for the Americans.

In the second Republican debate, Trump was asked about a comment he had made about Carly Fiorina saying: "Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president!"<sup>6</sup> Trump's words have been shared by Americans on social media. News journalists have not been safe from his live words, tweets or comments. For that, Americans' popular votes went much to Clinton; however, analysts and commentators consider that a point of power that discretely helped Trump win on both social media and elections.

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## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has reviewed the process, steps and debates of the American Presidential Campaign for the 2016 elections. Clearly, Trump and Clinton have been the target individuals to highlight. Starting by introducing both candidates, the chapter has gone through the year of 2016 with some spotlights on major events. Later, the results of the elections have been covered briefly. American politicians and citizens' attitudes towards the election events have also been instanced. Throughout their campaigns, Clinton and Trump made use of Twitter as a supporting tool for their popularity and /or victory. In this respect, one might ask "how could Twitter be a point of an importance and power to the candidates for presidency?"

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## CHAPTER THREE

### TWITTER: A PLATFORM FOR CAMPAIGNS

#### Introduction

Today nearly all citizens have access to social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter. For this reason, politicians and decision-makers utilize such mediums to promote for their campaigns and gain more votes. In 2016, the American Presidential Election spread widely across these platforms and news channels as well. The present chapter introduces the main strategies used by Trump and Clinton in their campaigns. The use of Twitter is targeted with some illustrations and explanations. The role of Twitter is examined based on use, database checking and effectiveness.

#### I. Digitalized Campaigns

In 2000, before the U.S presidential election, a meeting consisting of politicians, scholars and journalists was held at the University of Harvard with the purpose of studying the presidential politics and to uncover the role of internet in it. Back in 1963, television channels had a massive impact on President Kennedy's time. Based on this, journalists believe that the internet would have the same influence if not greater on today's elections. The strategy followed by Bill Clinton when preparing for his campaign was remarkable. Dick Morris – chief of Clinton's campaign- described benefitting from the internet as the direct democracy. He states, "the Internet will be the Congress. The Internet will be the Parliament. The Internet will be the election" (Morris, 1).

Few months before 2016, the start of an election year begins. Candidates count on their election campaign managers who would come up with new strategies to assure victory for their representative. The main goal of making such strategies is to gain public attention then persuade them to vote as much as possible.

### **I.1. Clinton's Strategy**

Clinton lost candidacy against Obama in 2008 who employed a "big-data strategy"; however, she returned after eight years to participate in another presidential run, only this time big data campaign is on her side. Since Clinton was eager to win the President seat, she carefully planned her strategy, as she hired statisticians and mathematicians to create a software called "Ada."<sup>1</sup>, which was planned to be exposed after she wins the elections. Nonetheless, "70% of Clinton's campaign budget went for television ads, and Ada determined virtually every dollar spent on these ads." (Smith)

The American journalist Matt Taibbi who wrote a book on the elections of 2016; he asserted that "simulated the responses of the population during an election season. Ada ran over 400,000 simulations a day of races against Trump." (17). However, the program later reported some issues and could not match the human potential. Bernie Sanders -the democratic candidate- , for instance, went in person to meet people and persuade them to vote.

Following the steps of Taibbi, the American Journalist Patrick Jake O'Rourke wrote also on the elections of 2016; he explained that Clinton should seek help from media experts and not software. (141) O'Rourke criticized Clinton for what he called, "'the traditional big-bucks- backers.'" which is the old-fashioned method of investing a huge amount of money in a lost cause. He added, "'she could have gotten to exactly where she wound up, for free, by tweeting everything that's on YouTube about Donald Trump" (170). that is, Trump's style was a propaganda for him on all platforms and social media websites, sometimes by revealing the past of his opponents and criticizing the government.

### **1.2 Trump's Strategy**

Theresa Hong- one of trump's campaign managers- worked mainly on promoting Trump's speeches and events through "Project Alamo<sup>2</sup>" which proved to be effective especially on Facebook and YouTube. This tool was made by Cambridge Analytica's database that stored a chunk of American's personal information. Hong confirmed that more than 70% of the U.S population was target by the program to count them as voters. The

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<sup>1</sup> The program name was in honor of a 19th-century female mathematician (Ada, Countess of Lovelace)

<sup>2</sup> A database of voter information developed by Cambridge Analytica and created for Trump's campaign.

program contributed in delivering personal information about what people liked on social media and what kind of topics they shared and discussed. (Kreiss 49)

Project Alamo was a collaboration between famous social media websites such as Facebook and YouTube as other partners that recommend how to utilize the platforms effectively. Political advertisement was done through this project on the official website of Trump. Adverts were then made specifically to target particular audiences identified and defined by data. Facebook proved to be the most successful and suitable medium for such campaign, and as Hong claimed, Facebook was the winning factor for Trump; it helped him to gain victory over Clinton and put him as the first man.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Presidential Campaigns on Twitter

In 2006, the creators of Twitter: Noah Glass, Jack Dorsey and Florian Weber. They come up with a new idea to forward texts from a person to another. (Business Insider). Nowadays, Twitter has over 330 million users (Statista)<sup>4</sup>. Users of Twitter write no more than 140-character texts (posts that are known as tweets). Activities on Twitter can be considered as blogging except that tweets were reduced to the length of an SMS message (160 character) to make people choose what they post carefully.

Twitter became popular among people especially famous individuals because of its limitation in tweeting. This, in fact, made tweets much smaller in size, which pushed people to be creative, funny or smart (Piskar 6). However, limiting the number of characters per tweet was reconsidered. The tweet-limit was differently considered a cramming because in languages like Korean or Japanese, one character may convey more details than one character in English or French. Consequently, to solve the problem, Twitter announced that the character limit will be doubled to 280 characters (Twitter Blog). Eventually, people increased their engagement in tweeting though the average tweet length has not changed.

What kept Twitter popular all this time is the updates it receives. Also, the option of hashtags made search for a selection of posts of pictures easier than before. In addition, the reactions of ordinary people to celebrities and presidents give much impact on the use of Twitter. In the U.S., for instance, in the elections of 2008, Twitter has been immensely used

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<sup>3</sup> CBS News. Retrieved on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 from <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/social-medias-role-in-the-2016-election/>

<sup>4</sup> Statistics made in 2017

by Americans, especially in the recent elections of 2016, leaders and highly influential figures have been tweeting and retweeting posts to one another. People found pleasure in watching leaders interact, debate and throw hashtags. (The Verge)

In these elections, Donald Trump wanted to differentiate his campaign from the previous presidents and election candidates. Thus, he opted for the use of social media in order to personally communicate with Americans. As a factor of success, using social media would contribute to supporting nominees. Indeed, during his presidential campaign, Trump freely posted to maintain connections with supporters. That was a free publicity to his account, and attention was drawn to him by opponents and all citizens. Publicity went over that to television and newspapers.

Table 1 demonstrates the major initial statistics of using Twitter in the 2016 presidential campaigns from both parts: Democratic and Republican candidates.

	<b>Donald Trump</b>	<b>Hillary Clinton</b>
Twitter Followers (June 2016)	8.1 million	6.5 million
Campaign Tweets (Jan to Jun 2016)	1760 tweets	2270 tweets
Most Common Campaign Hashtags	#Trump2016 #TrumpVote #MakeAmericaGreatAgain (#MAGA)	#DemDebate #ImWithHer #GOPdebate

**Table 1. Trump's and Clinton's Use of Twitter (Jan to Jun 2016)**

Twitter had made Trump as the most quotable candidate because the way he called his competitors spread as common hashtags in Twitter like #LynTed (Ted Cruz), #LittleMarco (Marco Rubio), #LowEnergyJeb (Jeb Bush) and #CrookedHillary. Trump's tweets and hashtags had gone to become trendy, and that brought him popularity no matter how aggressive or bad his language was. Trump also attacked media figures by describing them in weird and funny ways on Twitter. (Schallhorn)

Trump's trending had no geographical pattern, yet people from different states tweeted about Trump. Hillary was most popular sporadically on the eastern side of the country. Both

sides benefited from Twitter as a tool to voicing public opinion, and to predict real world events including elections.

As a battleground, Twitter consisted of Clinton's and Trump's tweets that noted the gender differences in posting. For instance, Clinton discussed more "male issues" like gun control, immigration, and economy in her tweets more than Trump did. The latter mentioned these issues less frequently. (Evans, Brown and Wimberly 2)

Evans et al. collected 794 tweets of presumptive Republican and Democratic nominees. They reached several findings. Clinton -for being a female- far out-tweeted Trump. Besides. They found that Clinton spent significantly more time on healthcare, political, and female issues than Trump did. Notably, they concluded that Clinton attacked Trump more on Twitter than he attacked her. (Evans, Brown and Wimberly 3)

DOZ<sup>5</sup> analyzed the starting periods and rounds of the presidential candidates on Twitter. The study was interested in assessing each candidate's profile for a month following their campaign announcement tweet. The analysis covered the number of new Twitter followers and the topics of candidates' tweets. The results tended to explain the candidates' ways of presenting themselves to the public. It was, further, concluded that much of the signs predict Twitter-based campaigns.

From the start of campaigns and debates, O'Rourke described the difference between media and internet events by stating that "watching major media during the 2016 presidential campaign was like turning on the Weather Channel" (171). That explains the lack of Americans' interests in mainstream media. Subsequently, using Twitter was crucial among politicians and citizens for that it has become a platform of real-time communication and news updates.

### **III. The Role of Twitter in 2016 Election**

To assert influence, the hyperactive presence was required from those candidates on social media. The number of likes, retweets and views would simply determine the popularity of any profile. The political discourse, however, controlled the public during the campaigns. For that, what Trump tweeted was -for the public and number of views- innovative.

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<sup>5</sup> A company of global marketing. Source:

Democracy, then, had been more like interconnection represented more from the part of Trump who accounted for it in digital platforms.

America witnessed an increasing dependency on the internet. Being present on the internet supported Trump to hail himself as how nowadays presidents should be. Hollinger describes Trump's popularity as largely as the campaign budget. The latter was paid for digital outreach.<sup>6</sup> As more provocative, Trump "got most of his campaigning done on the cheap by making a public spectacle of himself. He set his pants on fire knowing that reporters and camera crews would have to cover the blaze." (O'Rourke 170)

As Twitter was a platform that provided political actors with a huge number of users (followers), a quick and cheap sharing of messages would prevent them the regularities and obstacles with the traditional media as it would avoid facing consequences. For that, Twitter was playing the role of spreading information in the U.S. Presidential Elections of 2016. Even media -public and mainstream- was monitoring their tweets.

However, quantifying the role of social media in the elections is much easier than particularly determining Twitter's role. That is justified by the fact that social media sites are a channel of communication with the public. Besides, political actors do not deny the role of Twitter in presenting political agendas and checking the reactions of the public.

Carr reported that Trump claimed after his Electoral College triumph that tech platforms like Twitter helped him win. However, it is impossible to limit the reasons of Trump's victory to the one platform of his online actions. Indeed, Trump's campaign on Twitter does not play the sole role of his success; yet, he could dominate such social media platform.

Subsequently, Twitter projected Trump's persona as well as his ideological views. Public discussion had been extensively generated because of the controversial tweets that Trump kept on sharing. Meanwhile, such discussion drew much attention to him. After all, his tweets started to change the way people think about political conflicts. (Johnson 79)

Trump's use of Twitter continuously attracts the public. His attacks on individuals or media outraged news agencies and international organizations. Despite all that, Trump's

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<sup>6</sup> Hollinger, Jordan <https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/Trump-Twitter-Based-Presidency> Accessed on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2019.

proposal to build a wall on the southern borders with Mexico has been the living Twitter agenda since the beginning of his campaign.

Twitter headquarters reviewed the predominantly workforce that candidates' tweets had during the campaigns. Reviews showed how tweets were viral in the sense that such platform is a dramatizing medium. Twitter employees reflected on the role their platform played in the whole story. Some employees wondered how such platform embraced all talks by all kinds and levels of people. (Carr)

Yaqub, Soon, Vijayalakshmi and Jaideep made a study on the effect of Twitter on political discourse of the 2016 election. They found that Twitter was a good proxy to identify daily events and a space for trends. They also highlighted that Twitter was used to predict news. (624)

Twitter usefulness in gauging public opinions and enthusiasm has been a point of debate. Yaqub et al. confirmed the accuracy of Twitter in terms of indicating public opinions. For them, the events related to the election and campaigns were also significantly apparent in the communications among the candidates, politicians and the public. However, they found lack of discussions of political opinions. (624)

Moreover, the platformed political discourse has been orienting Twitter to be used for broadcasting as well as making the public involved in conversations about the election, candidates and preferences (Schill and Hendricks 39). Candidates tended to practice their discourse rhetorically on Twitter. Rather than doing either traditional or modern campaigns, Trump, for instance, depended on several factors that helped him share his presidency agenda; nonetheless, his Twitter account and the echoes of his tweets are still a living evidence that Twitter was a theater of the U.S.2016 election. Indeed, the part Twitter played is still debatable among politicians, citizens and academics.

**Conclusion**

The chapter at hand has provided some reviews on how social media contributed to the campaigning processes managed by candidates for the 2016 U.S. elections. The major strategies by the major candidates have been briefly presented. Yet, a discussion of the role of Twitter in the elections has been provided. Noticeably, much discussion was conducted on Trump's tweeter-based elections for that Clinton did not find as much popularity as he did. For future political events, the focus on social media would be more effective and well-studied by experts and advisors.

## **General Conclusion**

Social media played a huge part of the 2016 U.S. Elections. It was used to deliver all needed-to-be-shared messages with the public. Indeed, there are some social networks that are far more influential than others. As Facebook worked with Obama in 2008, Twitter, as expected, represented a leading platform for reaching voters in the 2016 Presidential Elections.

Thus, the role of Twitter in supporting candidates was primarily significant. Twitter shaped as an important social network site for the campaign outreach. It was effective in the way it tested supporters' enthusiasm. Besides, it was integrated into cable newscasts and cheap non-traditional space for advertising. Moreover, it was a prominent resource for launching and carrying on campaigns.

Trump's and Clinton's twitter profiles could make Americans involved and motivated volunteers as they could draw the media attention to the campaigns' issues. Not just the platform could support Trump, strategic posting and tweeting actually tilt things in his favor. As a powerful political tool, Twitter played the expected role from candidates despite being largely an unregulated tool.

The victory of Donald Trump motivated him to be more active on Twitter. Different issues and debates that Trump raises through tweeting and media coverage keeps on describing Trump's tweets as making splashes (like the border wall tweets).

Twitter and tweets have always been monitored by public and mainstream media. Yet, such platform remains the avenue for politics. It is difficult to determine what roles social media, particularly Twitter, might play in the 2020 elections. Political players cannot ignore what Twitter did, for that, they would choose such medium of communication to build and share their political agenda.

Public reactions will always be the target of whoever wants to be a president. Planning through new smart technological strategies will be a necessity. Thus, the engagement in communication with the public, supporters and proponents will constantly be well planned for any future events.

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