Clap-Trap Tweets and Epideictic Episodes: Two Years of Evaluative Praise from President Trump

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Abstract

This two-part study content analyzed tweets sent by President Donald Trump during the first two years of his presidency. Part One analyzed the epideictic (praise and blame) nature of 7,290 tweets sent over 819 days (just over two years and two months) about administration and cabinet members who quit or were fired during this time period. Part Two analyzed the 6,291 praise tweets sent over 731 days (first two years exactly) used to manipulate various individuals and groups. The praise tweets were broken down into eleven subcategories and content analyzed according to their intended targets and how the tweet was designed to manipulate. The concept of "mass self-communication," as used by Castells (2009), is utilized as the theoretical foundation for examining the prolific nature of the president's dominant online rhetoric.

KEY WORDS: Twitter, tweets, Trump, president, praise, mass self-communication,
clap-trap, epideictic, basking, burnishing, rhetoric

The Rise of Twitter in Political Communication

Conway, Kenski, and Wang (2015) recently found that social media, and Twitter, specifically, are invaluable political tools. Interactive platforms like Twitter are particularly suited for accommodating dialogue between political actors and their followers, as well as greatly expanding the reach of isolated communication events and taking conversations to a national level and beyond. With a nod to previous work in this area, Conway et al. point out that "in terms of retweets, politicians and political parties have been labeled 'influentials' on Twitter" (p. 4). Wright (2018) used the term "super-posters" (p. 157) to describe individuals who submit at least two percent of the posts in a given discussion forum and who may then have a tendency to "dominate" (p. 157) the discussion, at least quantitatively, and, sometimes, substantively. Regarding the latter, super-posters can be expected to exert greater influence than casual posters on the language used in the discussion, the degree of civility appropriate in each forum, and perhaps even how inclusive the dialogue will be.

Social Media and Mass Self-Communication

Referring to the technological structure of social media, as well as how it is implemented on a daily basis, Castells (2009) coined a most interesting term: "mass self-communication" (p. 8). That the horizontal nature of social media acts as a levelling mechanism across social strata is not a novel concept; nevertheless, Castells asserts that social media users are "both senders and receivers of messages," (p. 4) and that the digital, interactive format allows users to take on multiple roles, even simultaneously, thus increasing the power of both the message and the messenger. Castells further recognizes this as an "historically novel" (p. 55) phenomenon which embodies the best that digital media/netcasting have to offer, easily interchangeable between interpersonal and large-scale communication modes and from synchronous to asynchronous utilization, depending on the predilection of the originator of the message. In his own words, Castells attributes the self-communication aspect of this hybrid-nascent form to three general areas:

> . . . the production of the message is self-generated, the definition of the potential receiver(s) is self-directed, and the retrieval of specific messages or content . . . is self-selected. The three forms of communication (interpersonal, mass communication, and mass self-communication) coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting for one another (p. 55)

Castells (2007) had previously touted the political benefits of mass self-communication for individuals seeking to fight the status quo and to independently achieve power vis-à-vis entrenched social systems (see also Castells, 2009). Such was the case for social revolutions in both Iran and Moldova, where Twitter was effectively implemented to spread the word (Heyman and Pierson, 2013; see also Morozov, 2009; Mungiu-Pippidi and Munteanu, 2009). Rikken (2015) analyzed how one multi-national, non-governmental campaign effectively used a mass self-communication strategy and subsequently won the Nobel Prize for its techniques in 1997. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) employed a combined effort of more than one thousand non-governmental organizations in over sixty countries and utilized a five-pronged approach across mostly traditional media (little Internet and no social media). Foreshadowing many of today's social media movements, ICBL's campaign successfully used information distribution to achieve awareness and to "generate an issue" (p. 3). Further, they controlled how the issue was framed, and they cleverly associated their message with already-trending topics that related to it. Finally, ICBL went so far as to "shame nations who did not sign," (p. 3), that is, join their cause, and they managed to put the onus of discrediting the campaign on potential adversaries, rather than on validating themselves as much up front (Rikken, 2015).

Garbaşevschi (2015) suggests expanding Castells' concepts even further, proposing that "mass *self-identity communication*" (p. 16, emphasis in original) more adequately encompasses the content of online communication by individuals, as well as the identity mechanisms inherent to social media. Researching Romanian millennials' creation and management of their online personas, Garbaşevschi found that social media users increasingly express their ideal personas via "intentional and strategic self-branding," (p. 4). In the current online environment, users meticulously manage their digital selves for dual purposes: to self-aggrandize and to elicit favorable public feedback (Garbaşevschi, 2015; see also Mukhopadhyay, 2016). Further, they strive to be as convincing as possible to their online publics, many seeing it as a contest with tangible, real-world rewards for those who are successful in drawing others into their camp (see also Van Dijck, 2013). Ironically, because information on social media users is often retrieved out of context through various Internet sources, all online participants are empowered to include or exclude others from their feed because of perceived friendliness, professionalism, likeability, intelligence, and such traits—or the perceived lack of such traits, however accurate or inaccurate (Garbaşevschi, 2015).

Deltell et al. (2013), nevertheless, see mass self-communication as a less comprehensive phenomenon which privileges and empowers primarily traditional opinion leaders: politicians, those in authority, and media providers. These continue to set the public agenda, as they do via other information outlets. According to Deltell et al., the overabundance of information on social media typically confuses online users, who then seek clarification from established sources, including those already in power. The researchers studied Twitter communication both from and about the late Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez Frias, who has had a greater effect via Twitter than any Spanish-speaking political candidate and far more influence on social media than any leader Latin America has ever seen (Deltell et al.). Eerily foreshadowing the present-day U.S. scene, Deltell et al. (referencing Moreno, 2012) point out that "one of the fiercest
criticisms of his [Chavez'] office was, in fact, that he ruled the country by tweets" (p. 712).

Praise as Manipulation

As early as 1986, Bolton found that praise could be used to intentionally (i.e., manipulatively) induce a desired behavior in a target by pressuring them or others to imitate what the praiser is applauding. Bolton labeled this "praising evaluatively," (pp. 135-136) and categorized it as one of many types of verbal aggression; in this case, he described it as "'making a positive judgment of the other person, her actions, or attitude' when these are used 'as a gimmick to try

to get people to change their behavior' (pp. 135-136) or other ultimate goal that involves manipulation" (cited in Pascual-Ferra, 2016, pp. 15-16).

Self-Praise and Praise of Others

Tal-Or (2010) refers to research, such as that done by Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1986) indicating that people intentionally bolster their self-image for others by pointing to their own achievements and positive traits. And, while this seems rather intuitive, Pillet-Shore (2012) pointed out that "self-praising. . . is widely regarded as a social transgression. . ." (p. 181). Moreover, studies have found that overtly positive self-assessments can create bitterness (see for example Rosenfeld, Giacalone, and Riordan, 1995) and lead to suspicions (see for example Godfrey, Jones, and Lord, 1986). Citing Brown and Levinson (1987), Pillet-Shore indicated that being perceived as lauding one's own status or accomplishments may be simultaneously perceived as denigrating others. This can create uncomfortable interactions when the goal of the speaker may be to compliment another (non-present) individual, but the speaker's intention is interpreted as self-serving, or when, in order to avoid any appearance of arrogance, the speaker completely refrains from complimenting the other person or even acknowledging someone else's praise of the other person who is close to the speaker. For the purpose of this study, Pillet-Shore's research found that praising another can be tantamount to self-praise, perhaps even done simultaneously with self-praise, given the opportunity (see also Tal-Or, 2010).

Indirect self-promotion: basking and burnishing.

Tal-Or (2010) found several studies showing that "people promote themselves indirectly by associating themselves with successful others or by magnifying the characteristics of others to whom they are connected" (p. 163). Nevertheless, albeit indirect self-aggrandizement, it is both intentional and manipulative of the audience to whom it is directed. It is designed to endear the audience to the speaker or, in the case of this research, to the *tweeter*. The tweeter can then be seen as a person of importance with social weight and relevance and as a person who associates with similarly-viewed heavyweights. Two terms that have emerged in the research are *basking* (see also Cialdini, 1989) and *burnishing* (see also Cialdini and Richardson, 1980), the former referring to connecting oneself "with successful others in order to win prestige" (Tal-Or, p. 164), and the latter referring to building up the credibility of current associates "by mentioning their accomplishments or by describing their attributes" (Tal-Or, p. 164). Tal-Or's research has corroborated previous studies in the area of impression management, finding that building up the credibility of another will elicit the most favorable impressions the less an audience is familiar with the one being touted, and the more the one being touted is believed to be an associate of the impression manager.

Clap-traps and Epideictic Rhetoric.

Billig and Marinho (2014) identified the rhetorical technique of "'clap-traps' or spaces which audience members recognise [sic] as moments appropriate for showing support by applauding" (p. 166). Political rhetors, in particular, have had a penchant for using clap-traps, and while on the surface it seems innocuous enough, Billig and Marinho warn that the strategy has been used to trick audiences into showing support for political players and ideals to which they are opposed by speaking about general concepts that seem praiseworthy and for which people would feel "uncomfortable withholding applause" (p. 168), especially in a public venue. The researchers assert that clap-trapping is always intentional, given the sophistication of it, and given that it is, in fact, cleverly-disguised manipulation of the audience.

Likewise, in his survey of research on epideictic rhetoric Lauer (2015) found it to be particularly suited to political addresses, especially those given by American presidents. Because of its natural affinity with the structure, purpose, and audiences of political messages, the Aristotelian technique of "praise and blame" (p. 9, 10) has been used to purposely manipulate target audiences. As mentioned in the *Rhetoric*, "If you desire to praise, look what you would suggest; if you desire to suggest, look what you would praise" (I.ix.37, cited in Lauer, p. 12). O'Gorman (2005) also connected epideictic rhetoric to manipulation, as "encomia which encourage the direction of action" (p. 15, cited in Lauer, p. 11). Thus, Lauer notes the penchant that presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton to George W. Bush (and beyond) have had for employing epideictic rhetoric. Again referring to the *Rhetoric*, Lauer also posits that "Aristotle conceptualized epideictic primarily as a written genre delivered before an audience of spectators, which praises or blames a subject. . ." (p. 5). Thus, in this study it seems appropriate—even necessary—to analyze President Trump's tweets as epideictic rhetoric, particularly, regarding members of his cabinet and his administrative circle who were fired or who resigned.

Considering these findings, this study posits the following research questions:

RQ1: Do President Trump's tweets about his own cabinet and staff who were fired or quit use epideictic rhetoric?

RQ2: Did President Trump write more epideictic tweets about men or women in his cabinet and staff?

RQ3: Did President Trump write more epideictic tweets about cabinet and staff members who were fired, or about those who quit on their own?

RQ4: Do tweets by President Trump praising others indirectly function as self-praise by associating him with successful others and/or by magnifying others with whom he associates?

RQ5: Do tweets by President Trump praising others also serve a motivational or manipulative function to bring about a desired behavior, such as clap-trapping?

Method

Collecting the Epideictic Tweets

The first part of this study coded for tweets sent by President Trump about his seventy administration, staff, and cabinet members both before and after they left their positions. Two sources provided information on their names, termination causes, and termination dates: *The New York Times* and CNN.com, each of which included some information that the other did not have. Where possible, cross-corroboration was done between the two. Tweets for this analysis were collected from the president's first full day in office (January 21, 2017) through April 19, 2019, for a total of 7,290 tweets over 819 days (a mean of 8.90 tweets per day).

Coding the Epideictic Tweets

Each of the president's tweets about his personnel was broadly coded, according to whether the tweet indicated criticism or praise of the person, or whether it was an incidental mention with no evaluative content, in which case the tweet was coded as neutral. The neutral tweets are accounted for in the "Sum" column on Table 1 and can be deduced when the "+" and "-" don't add up to the total reported. For example, on row two, 3 (+), 0 (-) and 6 (sum) are recorded, indicating that *three* neutral tweets about Kirstjen Nielsen were found, but not listed.

Collecting the Praise Tweets

The second—and most comprehensive—part of this study content analyzed 6,291 tweets sent by President Donald Trump during his first two years in office (January 21, 2017-January 21, 2019). *The New York Times* "Trump Twitter Archive" (online) was utilized to collect each tweet during the time period. In his first year the president sent 2,617 tweets, averaging 7.17 per day; in his second year he sent 3,674 tweets (1,057 more), averaging 10.07 per day (i.e., 40.4%, or 2.9, more tweets per day on average in the second year). During the 25-month, 731-day period, the average number of monthly and daily tweets varied slightly (see Figures 1 and 2); however, the overall monthly average of tweets over the two-year period was 251.68, and the overall daily average for the two-year period was 8.57. As this research will further explain,

certain months saw tweet totals dip far below average, while certain months saw totals far above average.

Coding the Praise Tweets

The second part of this study coded for only one of Bolton's (1986) "roadblocks" themes (as mentioned above). Specifically, all 6,291 Trump tweets were content-analyzed to determine whether all or part of each tweet demonstrated the characteristics of *praising evaluatively* (pp. 135-136, emphasis added). While Bolton's (1986) definition of this theme was fairly broad, encompassing "making a positive judgment of the other person . . . 'as a gimmick to try to . . . change their behavior' or other ultimate goal . . . [of] . . . manipulation" (pp. 135-136), this study further broke down the themes into eleven subcategories, as elaborated below. Appropriate subcategory placement was based on a determination of whom or what Trump was primarily praising, which was usually the main focus of the tweet. Individual, consecutive tweets, wherein a continuation of thought was indicated from one to the other (usually by ellipses), were each coded as an additional example of the same subcategory, unless the praise target clearly shifted to another recipient in subsequent comments. Likewise, when a particular source's quote was praised and that praise ran into subsequent tweets, the initial subcategory code was employed across all tweets encompassing the length of the quote.

Subcategories of evaluative praise.

Elec. In this very prolific category President Trump reminisced about his 2016 election win, sometimes giving the length of time since his victory, in order to give context to all that has been accomplished (his claims). He also brought attention to his continued platforms (especially MAGA), on which he had campaigned and drawn his base, as well as agendas which he implemented after the inauguration. Many of these tweets can be read as "rubbing people's noses" in his victory—a tactic that continued at least to January 12, 2019 (near the end of this data collection). Moreover, a large percentage of ELEC tweets included praise and support for other politicians Trump has stumped for since taking office.

Biz. Tweets in this category were very upbeat, self-praising or government-praising reports about the good, strong, and/or improving economic numbers, particularly, the Dow Jones and other Wall Street numbers and such indexes. A big focus here was on recent, new job creation and/or increases in employment, as well as unemployment numbers going down. Trump also pointed to business growth and growth opportunities. Sometimes these tweets included "JOBS, JOBS, JOBS" in all caps and exclamation point(s). Additional references in this category included the following: jobs and manufacturing coming back to the U.S., lower regulations, lower gas prices, and/or lower taxes for citizens and for businesses. Finally, a few tweets included independent

reports (not mentioned in the FOXY or TVPOP categories) and praise for businesses, in general, doing things the way Trump recommends.

Foxy. These tweets praised a particular Fox Network program, particularly, Fox News, as well as reporters, anchors, and discussants, giving them credit for reporting good news about Trump or his administration. At times, the president literally thanked them for favorable coverage and/or for giving him credit for something. These tweets all make it clear that the person or the favorable mention was on Fox. When this was not made clear, the tweet was sometimes classified as TVPOP, or perhaps as BIZ, depending on the context of the praise given.

For. These tweets included Trump praising himself for meeting in the White House or abroad (or talking by phone) with foreign leaders, as well as praising foreign leaders or countries for doing things he approves. In some cases these tweets made favorable mention of foreign policy, but the emphasis in the wording was clearly on the countries more than the details of the policy. Trump also referenced NATO and his working to improve our benefit from it, in particular, getting European countries to pay their fair share. These tweets frequently referred to other countries' actions and efforts (when good) and sometimes the degree to which they were successful in different areas. A few tweets merely gave general recognition or favorable mentions of other countries and/or their leaders.

TVpop. These tweets not only praised favorable mentions of the Trump administration on television (except Fox, which were coded as FOXY), but they also praised some books, websites, and social media feeds, such as "Drudge Report" and "Bloomberg Markets," as well as public opinion polls reporting favorable results, such as @ProgressPolls, the Rasmussen and Quinnipiac polls, and even a few print sources, including *The Washington Examiner*, *The Washington Times*, and *The New York Post*. Trump also praised (or re-tweeted) a few specific individuals, including TV, film and other celebrities, who either touted Trump on social media (e.g., James Woods), or who quoted media that was favorable to the president. Herein, Trump also touted his own success in using social media, and he sometimes credited a media source or company for doing something with which he agrees.

Fam. In these tweets Trump praised members of his own family as a key part of the tweet. This usually involved something Melania (@FLOTUS), Ivanka, Don, Jr., or Eric, had said or done that the president wanted to highlight. He also re-tweeted comments sent by his wife, sons, or daughter when favorable to him or to his administration.

Idid. This code was given to tweets in which Trump gave himself praise and/or took most or all of the credit for success in one or more distinct areas. At times he literally said "I" or "I did" in the tweet; however, this was not common. Specifically, these included comments about his job performance in general, as well as Trump contrasting his job success versus others, particularly,

the Obama administration. At times these tweets included positive evaluations of Trump's character and/or his conservative values and Republican way of thinking. The president also praised himself for doing things he felt were beneficial to society as a whole. And while, ostensibly, a majority of praising tweets could have potentially been coded as "I did," simply due to excessive self-referencing and aggrandizement, these were coded as such whenever something more specific was not indicated, such as winning the election (ELEC), the economy (BIZ), Fox News (FOXY), his policies (POL), etc.

Soc. The coding here primarily references social *events*, for example, specific public events or ceremonies that Trump or an administration representative attended and/or which he supported. This category also included the people, social causes, rallies, and social *movements* that Trump recognized, including favorable public showings at which he spoke, sometimes contrasting these with protests that occurred. Also complimented were various ethnic and social groups, as well as meetings with religious leaders, showing support for various religious causes. Sometimes the president praised entire states and often lauded working people, farmers, and Americans in general. And he pointed out ways he was promoting the country's goodwill, such as working to get the Olympics here again.

Hero. Primarily, these were tweets recognizing and praising the military, law enforcement, and first responders, either as groups or individuals, for their service, bravery, and accomplishments. However, the president occasionally honored outstanding civilians, athletes, and/or companies, especially those who helped during crises. These tweets sometimes mentioned regular people doing their jobs very well, but especially when they exceeded expectations. Particular individuals who were praised include the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rossello (after the hurricane), Andrew Jackson—more than once, and General John J Pershing, as well as the boy who mowed the WH lawn.

Pol. Trump gave positive evaluations for his own executive orders, as well as bills or deals he signed and changes that were made in policies by his administration. He would frequently cheer for stronger regulations, and, as they worked their way through Congress, he would encourage Congress to push them through and praise individuals or groups in the House or Senate for getting them approved. Sometimes a list was tweeted of several successful policies, such as ones for veterans or changes made to the Affordable Care Act ("ObamaCare") and efforts to replace it. Specifically, these tweets iterated the benefits of a specific policy or agenda, including foreign relations, trade, and immigration. He also spent considerable time justifying some policies already in effect, describing how a specific policy is working—sometimes in contrast to past administration policies. Tweets that didn't praise specific policies or details of them, but rather praised general foreign relations with other countries were coded as "FOR," but if they praised a policy for how it specifically helped some

aspect of the U.S. economy, business, or type of industry, they were coded as "BIZ."

Gov. These were tweets wherein Trump spoke positively about meetings with his entire cabinet or some members of the cabinet, as well as his meetings and interpersonal dealings with other *federal* government leaders. They occasionally referenced the military as a whole, but not their job performance (which was always coded as "HERO"). Moreover, these meetings dealt with governing and/or the government itself, including the president's meetings at Camp David and elsewhere, as well as appointments he had made—or would make—to his cabinet or to the Supreme Court. The president also used these tweets to praise the favorable actions of some government body (e.g., Congress, Supreme Court) or person in government. He also gave reciprocating praise to those in government who had praised, supported, and/or defended him, particularly, when these were tweeted or spoken from someone's official government position. Some of these tweets literally included the words "my," "our," or "this" "administration."

Results

Part One: Epideictic Tweets About Former Personnel

During the 819-day period in which 7,290 tweets were collected for this phase of the study, President Trump made 374 tweets regarding 70 different individuals in his administration and cabinet personnel who ultimately left during this time period, due to being fired, resigning, being forced out, or for unknown reasons (see Table 1). Specifically, 61.4% (n = 43) of the personnel resigned, while 30.0% (n = 21) were fired, 2.9% (n = 2) were forced out, and 5.7% (n = 4) left for unknown reasons. Considerably more men (77.1%, n = 54) became unemployed than women (22.9%, n = 16) during this time period. In general, both men and women tended to resign rather than being fired 61.1% (n = 33) and 62.5% (n = 10), respectively, but looking at only those who resigned, a significantly higher percentage were men (76.7%). A similar disparity was found among those who were fired. Of all who became unemployed, slightly more men were fired than women, 31.5% (n = 17) and 25.0% (n = 4), respectively, but looking at only those who were fired, a significantly higher percentage were men (81.0%). Further, women were never listed as being "forced out," but had a much greater percentage than men of leaving for "unknown reasons," 12.5% for women (n = 2) and 3.7% for men (n = 2), respectively, even though the total for each was identical.

A further breakdown by monthly cycle for termination type and frequency is indicated in Figure 3. Generally speaking, firings tended to happen in warm weather periods, while resignations were associated with winter months—some of which were purposely scheduled to take place at the beginning of the calendar year. However, secondary trends for firings and resignations were found, namely, late fall-early winter and spring-summer,

respectively. Furthermore, both firings and resignations were clustered together in three general time periods of the Trump presidency: summer, 2017 (year one), winter to spring, 2018 (year two), and winter to spring, 2019 (year two into year three).

RQ1 was, generally speaking, answered in the affirmative; however, no specific pattern of epideictic rhetoric for individuals was noted. Overall, of the president's 374 tweets about the 70 people whose employment ended, 99 were positive, while 176 (43.8% more) were negative, and 99 were neutral (see Table 1). However, considering only the 275 non-neutral tweets, the percentages are more striking, with 64% being negative.

RQ2 and RQ3 were also answered affirmatively, as differences were noted in the number of positive and negative tweets about men and women, depending on the type of termination. Specifically, for all ten women who resigned, the president sent a total of 13 positive tweets (mean = 1.3) and a total of 0 negative tweets. This contrasts slightly with the 33 men who resigned, for whom the president sent a total of 36 positive tweets (94.7%, mean = 1.1) and a total of two negative tweets (5.3%), both for Secretary of Defense, General Jim Mattis (see Table 1). Further differences in presidential tweets were also noted between genders for those who were fired. Specifically, for the four women who were fired, there were only two positive tweets (15.4%, both for Omarosa Newman), and 11 negative tweets (84.6%, between Newman and Sally Yates). Nevertheless, for the 17 men who were fired, both the positive and negative comments were more prevalent, as well as more widely distributed. There were 46 positive tweets (22.0%) for these men and 163 negative tweets (78.0%), making this the only true epideictic category of tweets about people who left (for any reason). However, while 11 (64.7%) of these men received some positive tweets, the majority (63.0%, n = 29) were about three men: John Kelly (37.0%. n = 17), Jeff Sessions (15.2%, n = 7), and David Shulkin (10.9%, n = 5). Furthermore, the tweet rhetoric about Sessions was the most epideictic in nature, in that he also received 22 negative tweets (see Table 1), and the others received none.

Regarding the 163 negative tweets about the men who were fired, only seven individual men (41.2%) actually received negative tweets, with the vast majority (94.5%, n = 154) about three men: James Comey (62.0%, n = 101), Andrew McCabe (19.0%, n = 31), and Jeff Sessions (13.5%, n = 22). Comey received 226% more negative tweets than McCabe, who received 41% more than Sessions; nevertheless, as mentioned before, tweet rhetoric about Sessions was the most epideictic, (7 pos., 22 neg.), compared with those about Comey and McCabe, who only received two and zero positive tweets, respectively. This also reiterates the overall affirmative answer to RQ1, in that there were no specific findings of epideictic tweets for most individuals.

Part Two: Subcategories of Evaluative Praise

Although all 6,291 tweets in the president's first two years were content-analyzed for this study, 3,375 (53.6%) were found to not contain any evaluative praise as explained herein (see "Method"). This left 2,916 tweets (46.4%) which were further broken down according to one of eleven subcategories of evaluative praise. For the time period studied, there were considerable differences in the subcategory totals (see Figure 4), a mean of 265.09, a median of 284.00, no mode, and an average deviation from the mean of 100.81. It should also be noted that, due to the starting date of this study, January 21, 2017 (the first full day after inauguration), and the corresponding 25-month ending date of January 21, 2019, these two Januarys are partial months.

RQ4 and RQ5 were answered overwhelmingly in the affirmative, given that the top seven-highest subcategories of praise tweets point to people, groups, and/or institutions which the president wished to promote and/or with which he wished to associate himself. Furthermore, his efforts to promote all targets of the praise tweets—including himself (see "IDID" below), clearly demonstrate a praise-for-purpose (i.e., manipulative) rhetorical intent. Specifically, ELEC had the highest total (n = 411), making up 14.1% of all praise tweets (6.53% of all tweets). ELEC was 7.6%, 10.2%, and 10.5% larger than second- , third- , and fourth- highest subcategory totals, BIZ (n = 382), GOV (n = 373, 2.4% less than BIZ), and HERO (n = 372, .3% less than GOV), respectively. BIZ made up 13.1% of all praise tweets (6.1% of all tweets), while GOV and HERO each made up 12.8% of all praise tweets (5.9% of all tweets, each.) (See Figures 4 and 5.)

Totals for the next three subcategories of praise tweets drop off considerably, the fifth-highest subcategory total, TVPOP (n = 323) being 15.2% less than HERO. Moreover, ELEC was 27.2%, 44.7%, and 74.9% larger than the fifth- , sixth- , and seventh-highest subcategory totals, TVPOP, FOR (n = 284, 13.7% less than TVPOP), and SOC (n = 235, 20.9% less than FOR), respectively. TVPOP made up 11.1% of all praise tweets (5.1% of all tweets), while FOR and SOC made up 9.7% and 8.1% of all praise tweets (4.5% and 3.7% of all tweets), respectively (see Figures 4 and 5).

Finally, the lowest four subcategory totals again drop off considerably, the eighth-highest subcategory total, FOXY (n = 184) being 27.7% less than SOC. Moreover, ELEC was 123.4%, 156.9%, 177.7%, and 834.1% larger than the eighth- , ninth- , tenth- , and eleventh-highest subcategory totals, FOXY, IDID (n = 160, 15.0% less than FOXY), POL (n = 148, 8.1% less than IDID), and FAM (n = 44, 236.4% less than POL), respectively. FOXY made up 6.3% of all praise tweets (2.9% of all tweets), while IDID, POL, and FAM made up 5.5%, 5.1%, and 1.5% of all praise tweets (2.5%, 2.4%, and .7% of all tweets), respectively (see Figures 4 and 5).

Overall monthly trends. Consistent with the *warm weather trend* found in a previous study in this series (see Roe, 2019), the greatest number of presidential praise tweets (as for all tweets) were found in the late summer and fall months, followed by the late spring and early summer months. Specifically, the summer and fall months of 2018 had the highest percentages and totals of all 2,916 praise tweets analyzed for this study. The top six months were September, August, October, November, June, and July (all 2018), with 233 (8.0%), 219 (7.51%), 214 (7.34%), 178 (6.10%), 169 (5.8%), and 166 (5.7%) of the 2,916, respectively. Together, this fall/summer group of months made up 40.43% (n = 1,179) of all the praise tweets. These totals are well above the monthly averages of most praise tweets (overall mean = 116.640) for the two-year period studied (see Figure 5).

Another fall/summer trend for praise tweets was observed in 2017. Following a slight aberration in totals, with January, 2019, and December, 2018, having the seventh- and eighth-highest totals (n = 141 and n = 138, respectively)—although, December lies partially within the "fall" months—the seven next-highest grouping of totals (ninth- through fifteenth-highest) reiterate the fall/summer pattern, including (in 2017) October, September, and August, then April, 2018 (spring tendency), followed by (in 2017) December (late fall), November, and July, with 129 (4.42%), 126 (4.32%), 123 (4.22%), 112 (3.84%), 109 (3.74%), 107 (3.67%), and 94 (3.22%), of the 2,916, respectively. Together, this second fall/summer group of months made up 27.43% (n = 800) of all praise tweets. Moreover, the July, 2017, total is part of a three-month tie for the fifteenth-highest total (all n = 94), along with January and May, 2018 (spring tendency), which was the *mode* of the monthly praise tweet totals in this study (see Figure 5).

Monthly trends for praise subcategories. The totals of the praise subcategories (as mentioned above) ranged from 411 (ELEC) to 44 (FAM), with an overall average (of the 11 subtotals) of 265.091 for all occurrences of all subcategories, an overall average of means (for each subcategory over the 25-month period) of 10.604, an overall average median of 8.727, an overall average mode of 6.727, and an overall average deviation from the mean of 6.151.

Elec. For the 25-month period of this study, the 411 occurrences had a mean of 16.440, a median of 9, a mode of 5 (five occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 13.834 (the highest of any subcategory). Moreover, this most prolific subcategory saw its highest totals, not surprisingly, around the time of the 2018 midterm elections; specifically, the six-month consecutive period of June, July, August, September, October, and November (2018), had individual totals of 39 (9.49%), 26 (6.33%), 59 (14.36%), 20 (4.87%), 54 (13.14%), and 72 (17.52%), of the 411, respectively, and together constituted 65.69% (n = 270) of all ELEC praise tweets. There were two similar, seven-

month consecutive stretches with contrastingly lower totals than the high streak just mentioned; specifically, the seventh months just prior to the high streak, November and December (2017), January, February, March, April, and May (2018), had individual totals of 5 (1.22%), 11 (2.68%), 3 (.73%), 5 (1.22%), 5 (1.22%), 6 (1.46%), and 11 (2.68%), of the 411 respectively, and together only constituted 11.19% (n = 46) of all ELEC praise tweets. In addition, the first seventh months of this study had very similar totals, that is, January (a partial month), February, March, April, May, June, and July (2017), had individual totals of 0, 5 (1.22%), 8 (1.95%), 13 (3.16%), 2 (.49%), 9 (2.19%), and 6 (1.46%), of the 411, respectively, and together only constituted 10.46% (n = 43) of all ELEC praise tweets for the two-year period (see Figure 6).

Biz. For the 25-month period of this study, the 382 occurrences had a mean of 15.280, a median of 13, a mode of 13 (four occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 6.918 (only the fifth-highest); thus the monthly totals for BIZ were not nearly as widely distributed as those for ELEC. A couple of monthly trends were observed for this subcategory, namely, the late fall/early winter cycle of 2017-18, wherein October, November, December, and January had individual totals of 18 (4.71%), 25 (6.54%), 22 (5.76%), and 22 (5.76%), of the 382, respectively, and together constituted 22.77% (n = 87) of all BIZ praise tweets. A later monthly trend had higher totals, namely, the mid-summer/early fall cycle of 2018, wherein June, July, August, and September had individual totals of 27 (7.07%), 25 (6.54%), 34 (8.90%), and 31 (8.12%), of the 382, respectively, and together constituted 30.63% (n = 117) of all BIZ praise tweets. These two monthly trends were considerably different, with sums of 87 vs. 117, means of 21.75 vs. 29.25, medians of 22 vs. 29, mode of 22 (group one only—two occurrences), and average deviations from their respective means of 1.875 vs. 3.25, for 2017 and 2018, respectively. Combined, these two monthly trends constituted more than half (53.40%, n = 204) of all BIZ praise tweets for the two-year period (see Figure 6).

Gov. For the 25-month period of this study, the 373 occurrences had a mean of 14.920, a median of 13, a mode of 13 (three occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 6.637. For this subcategory two eight-month trends were compared, that is, the summer-to-winter cycles of 2017 and 2018. Specifically, the 2017 individual totals for June (2.41%, n = 9), July (2.14%, n = 8), August (6.17%, n = 23), September (3.49%, n = 13), October (5.63%, n = 21), November (4.02%, n = 15), December (4.83%, n = 18), and January, 2018 (2.95%, n = 11), each a relative percentage of the 373, and together constituting 31.64% (n = 118) of all GOV tweets, were compared with the same months in 2018, that is, June (6.17%, n = 23), July (5.36%, n = 20), August (3.49%, n = 13), September (6.43%, n = 24), October (5.63%, n = 21), November (4.83%, n = 18), December (7.51%, n = 28), and January, 2019—a partial month (8.31%, n = 31), each a relative percentage of the 373, and together constituting 47.72% (n = 178) of all GOV tweets. These two monthly

trends were considerably different, with sums of 118 vs. 178, means of 14.75 vs. 22.25, medians of 14 vs. 22, and average deviations from their respective means of 4.5 vs. 4.25 (and no mode for either group), for 2017 and 2018, respectively. Combined, these two eight-month trends constituted more than three-fourths (79.36%, n = 296) of all GOV praise tweets for the two-year period. Moreover, it was quite surprising to discover that the highest monthly total for GOV occurred in one of the two partials months in the study (i.e., January, 2019). (See Figure 6.)

Hero. For the 25-month period of this study, the 372 occurrences had a mean of 14.880, a median of 14, a mode of 6 (three occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 7.075. Specifically, a couple of monthly trends were observed for this subcategory. The first was the six-month, mid-summer/fall cycle of 2017, wherein July, August, September, October, November, and December had individual totals of 14 (3.76%), 21 (5.65%), 25 (6.72%), 21 (5.65%), 15 (4.03%), and 12 (3.23%), of the 372, respectively, and together constituted 29.03% (n = 108) of all HERO praise tweets. However, the corresponding six-month, mid-summer/fall cycle of 2018 had considerably higher totals; specifically, July, August, September, October, November, and December had individual totals of 23 (6.18%), 20 (5.38%), 36 (9.68%), 30 (8.06%), 22 (5.91%), and 19 (5.11%), of the 372, respectively, and together constituted 40.32% (n = 150) of all HERO praise tweets. These two monthly trends were considerably different, with sums of 108 vs. 150, means of 18.0 vs. 25.0, medians of 18 vs. 22.5, mode of 21 (group one only—two occurrences), and average deviations from their respective means of 4.33 vs. 5.33, for 2017 and 2018, respectively. Combined, these two monthly trends constituted more than two-thirds (69.35%, n = 248) of all HERO praise tweets for the two-year period (see Figure 6).

TVpop. For the 25-month period of this study, the 323 occurrences had a mean of 12.920, a median of 13, a mode of 13 (three occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 7.370. Specifically, a couple of monthly trends were observed for this subcategory. The first was the six-month, late summer/early winter cycle of 2017, wherein August, September, October, November, December, and January had individual totals of 13 (4.02%), 14 (4.33%), 8 (2.48%), 7 (2.17%), 18 (5.57%), and 13 (4.02%), of the 323, respectively, and together constituted 22.60% (n = 73) of all TVPOP praise tweets. However, the corresponding six-month, late summer/early winter cycle of 2018 had considerably higher totals; specifically, August, September, October, November, December, and January had individual totals of 21 (6.50%), 42 (13.00%), 16 (4.95%), 16 (4.95%), 20 (6.19%), and 41 (12.69%), of the 323, respectively, and together constituted 48.30% (n = 156) of all TVPOP praise tweets. These two monthly trends were considerably different, with sums of 73 vs. 156, means of 12.17 vs. 26.0, medians of 13 vs. 20.5, modes of 13 vs. 16 (two occurrences each), and average deviations from their

respective means of 3.11 vs. 10.33, for 2017 and 2018, respectively. Combined, these two monthly trends constituted more than two-thirds (70.90%, n = 229) of all TVPOP praise tweets for the two-year period. Moreover, it was quite surprising to discover that the second-highest monthly total for TVPOP occurred in one of the two partials months in the study (i.e., January, 2019). (See Figure 6.)

For. For the 25-month period of this study, the 284 occurrences had a mean of 11.360, a median of 7, a mode of 6 (five occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 7.392. Specifically, one monthly trend was observed for this subcategory, that is, the six-month, mid-spring-to-early fall cycle of 2018, wherein April, May, June, July, August, and September had individual totals of 24 (8.45%), 15 (5.28%), 25 (8.80%), 30 (10.56%), 13 (4.58%), and 22 (7.75%), of the 284, respectively, and together constituted 45.42% (n = 129) of all FOR praise tweets (see Figure 6).

Soc. For the 25-month period of this study, the 235 occurrences had a mean of 9.40, a median of 9, modes of 7 and 10 (three occurrences each), and an average deviation from the mean of 5.568. Specifically, one rather long monthly trend was observed for this subcategory, that is, the nine-month, late spring-to-mid-winter cycle of 2018, wherein May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, and January (2019) had individual totals of 17 (7.23%), 10 (4.26%), 9 (3.83%), 10 (4.26%), 18 (7.66%), 33 (14.04%), 14 (5.96%), 11 (4.68%), and 10 (4.26%), of the 235, respectively, and together constituted 56.17% (n = 132) of all SOC praise tweets (see Figure 6).

Foxy. For the 25-month period of this study, the 184 occurrences had a mean of 7.36, a median of 6, a mode of 2 (five occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 4.694. Specifically, one monthly trend was observed for this subcategory, that is, the five-month, late summer/late-fall cycle of 2018, wherein August, September, October, November, and December had individual totals of 27 (14.67%), 21 (11.41%), 8 (4.35%), 4 (2.17%), and 10 (5.43%), of the 184, respectively, and together constituted 38.04% (n = 70) of all FOXY praise tweets (see Figure 6).

Idid. For the 25-month period of this study, the 160 occurrences had a mean of 6.40, a median of 6, a mode of 3 (four occurrences), and an average deviation from the mean of 3.648. Specifically, one monthly trend was observed for this subcategory, that is, the seven-month, mid-summer-to-mid-winter cycle of 2018-2019, wherein July, August, September, October, November, December, and January had individual totals of 10 (6.3%), 11 (6.91%), 13 (8.13%), 10 (6.3%), 10 (6.3%), 12 (7.5%), and 12 (7.5%), of the 160, respectively, and together constituted 49.1% (n = 78) of all IDID praise tweets (see Figure 6).

Discussion

This two-part study first analyzed the epideictic nature of President Trump's tweets about his own administration and cabinet personnel sent during the first two years and two months of his time in office. The second and more in-depth part of the study content analyzed the president's evaluative (i.e., manipulative) praise tweets sent during his first two years in office. These evaluative praise tweets were grouped into eleven subcategories according to their targets and purposes and were also compared according to monthly trending patterns found in the data for each group. The meanings and potential implications of the results will now be addressed.

The results from the first part of this study have confirmed that President Trump sent a barrage of tweets about his own people beginning early in his administration and continuing to the present. As with much of the president's communication in general—and his Twitter feed, in particular—a clear penchant for epideictic (praise and blame) rhetoric is present. Regardless of whether the target was receiving praise or blame at a specific time, a couple of things were readily apparent. First, those who were initially praised were inevitably blamed (or insulted, ridiculed, berated) at some later point in their tenure, and it all occurred in the open arena of the president's favorite social media platform. There were few exceptions to this two-fold communication approach. Second, both praise and blame aspects of the epideictic episodes seemed to function as vehicles for the president to get out ahead of the press, social media, and general public opinion. In other words, these preemptive tweets gave him the first and, often, the definitive word about the hiring and termination of his staffers, and the tweets allowed him to create and mold the storyline about his successful management and control of each situation.

Epideictic praise was frequently found in the president's tweets prior to an administration person being confirmed, as well as in the early days and weeks of her/his tenure. These appeared to be indirect self-praise because they positively reinforced his own judgment in selecting the person, and they served as subtle self-congratulatory remarks afterwards. Furthermore, the praise tweets seemed less about the person and more about their role on the team and the pleasure it gave the president to have them on board. The praise could at times also be read as a victory lap being taken in front of political opponents, as they were worded to reflect positively on Trump himself.

On the other hand, epideictic blame was found almost twice as often and indicated the president's fervor in expressing displeasure openly and sometimes vehemently about his own people, both while they were serving in their posts and as they were on the way out (or had already left). Here the president seemed to be distancing himself from the people he had once—sometime vigorously—promoted and/or defended. This afforded him the opportunity to air out the dirty laundry of others before they could air out his, and to positively contrast himself with the latest ne'er-do-well. Thus, the ultimate epideictic rhetoric of the blame tweets was that they functioned as indirect praise for Trump. Getting ahead of

the political news on Twitter gave him control of the narrative frame to cast himself as the good sheriff cleaning up the town or the Washington renegade "drain[ing] the swamp." Moreover, these critical, often hostile and insulting posts were more likely to be repeated by rephrasing or simply by re-tweeting than were the epideictic praise posts; however, the vast majority was directed to a select number of targets, depending on the political situation at the time and to what extent the relationship of the president to the staffer had deteriorated.

A superficial overview of President Trump's praise tweets would likely indicate nothing but the occasional glowing rhetoric from the chief executive's office, and at times, perhaps, the occasionally selfish promotion of his agenda in various areas; however, the results from the second part of this study indicating the high frequency, volume, and targeting of such tweets strongly indicate the presence of cleverly and intentionally designed manipulation. These praise tweets employ subterfuge through indirect self-praise by way of clap-trapping, basking, and burnishing. The manipulation then trickles down to two important, multi-layered audiences: 1) the targets' followers and influencees and 2) the president's own Twitter followers and political supporters in general.

Each of the eleven subcategories of praise tweets were generally characterized by a particular sub-type of indirect self-praise, depending on the target, the occasion, the audience, and the opportunity for advantage that each tweetable episode represented for the president. For example, ELEC praise tweets were primarily burnishing, since their main objective was to promote a candidate, and FAM displayed burnishing for similar, albeit personal, reasons. In this context IDID was considered self-burnishing. However, FOR praise tweets were mostly basking, due to their magnifying the status of world leaders with whom President Trump met and the significance of those meetings. Likewise, FOXY and TVPOP were typified by basking in the favorable reports and publications which bolstered the president's position.

About half of the praise tweets analyzed could clearly be characterized as clap-traps. For example, BIZ praise tweets were mostly clap-trapping because they served to pressure readers to support American business growth and prosperity, that is, to get supporters and detractors to hop on the "MAGA" bandwagon. HERO and SOC, too, were mostly characterized by the clap-trap technique, highlighting people, events, and causes that would be hard to not support visually and publicly for fear of backlash. Similarly, POL had more clap-trapping than other sub-types because policies are ready-made for applause, at least when considering them superficially without trudging through the pragmatics, and also because basking and burnishing tend to work better when associating oneself with other people, rather than things. Likewise, GOV was mostly seen as clap-trapping because President Trump would likely have not seen himself basking in the glow of other government officials, but, rather, as their basking in his glow.

At this point it is important to mention that, while, in general, most of the praise tweets counted and categorized in this study would likely fall under one of the sub-types of indirect praise mentioned herein (i.e., basking, burnishing, or clap-trapping), it is more likely that an overlapping occurred among these sub-types of communication and that the overlapping occurred across the subcategories analyzed in the "Results" section above. However, it was not the purpose of this study to determine the degree to which each subcategory was, or was not, an example of each sub-type of indirect praise, as these sub-types are highly subjective and not necessarily exclusive in all cases.

Conclusion

The importance of the findings presented in this research lies in the propensity of the president to engage the Twittersphere with manipulative communication, and, by extension, the mass media and its publics. There are few topics for which the president does not seek to initiate the discussion thread, to set the boundaries of appropriateness for thread contributions, and to determine the specific direction in which the thread will progress. And the single most common tactic he uses as a topic controller is to *ingratiate* the audience to himself and to his targets, and away from his political opponents. Almost half of the nearly 7,000 presidential tweets (in his first two years) have been found to follow this pattern.

The praise tweets represent a significant pattern of backdoor leadership via social media consistently initiated by the chief executive on a variety of fronts. Rather than occasionally weighing in on a topic, judiciously advocating for a person or a political position, or even attempting to drum up grass roots support of an underrepresented issue, what is evident in the inundation of tweets in each area is an aggressive communication style that seeks to dominate discussions. Rather than providing positive support or reinforcement, the praise tweets in their various subcategories mentioned herein function to polarize the audience and undermine the credibility of supposedly less praiseworthy—or altogether unpraiseworthy—counterpoints. Thus, it may be said that the subtext of each praise is really a carefully disguised insult, perhaps making the praise tweets—especially, the clap-traps—the most epideictic of all, given that each one is simultaneously positive and negative, laudatory and condemning (toward those who disagree).

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Name	Position	+	-	Sum	Departure

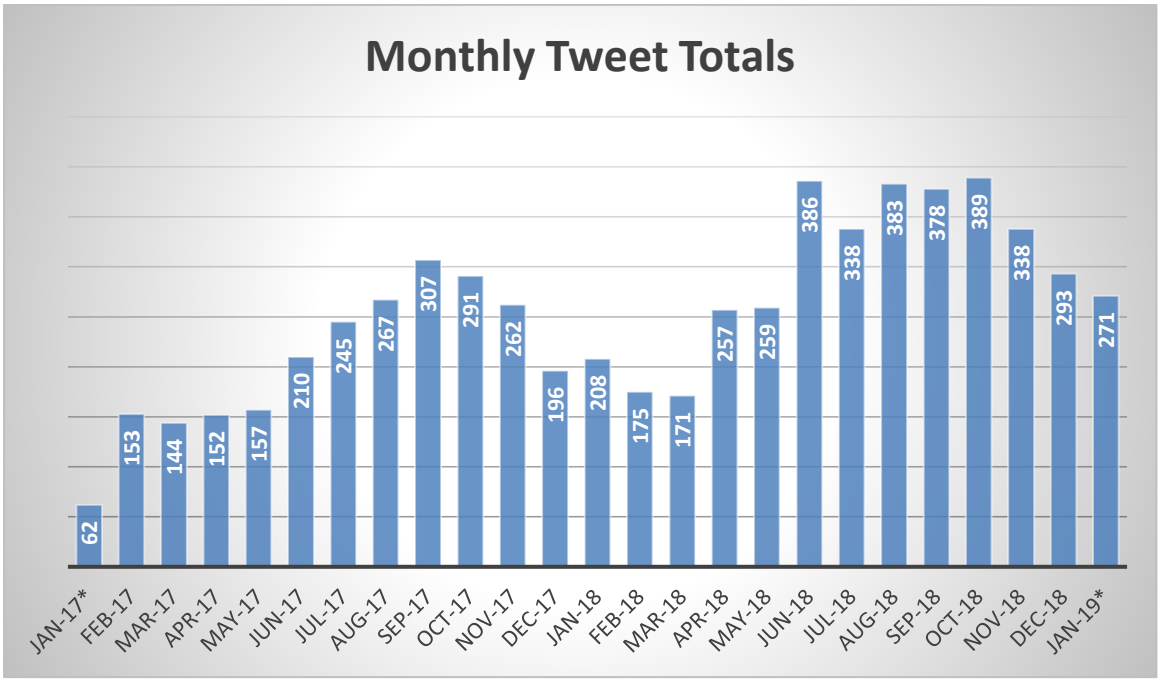

Figure 1. First 24 Months: Monthly Tweet Totals by President Donald Trump

*Jan. 2017 was 11 days, and Jan. 2019 was 21 days.

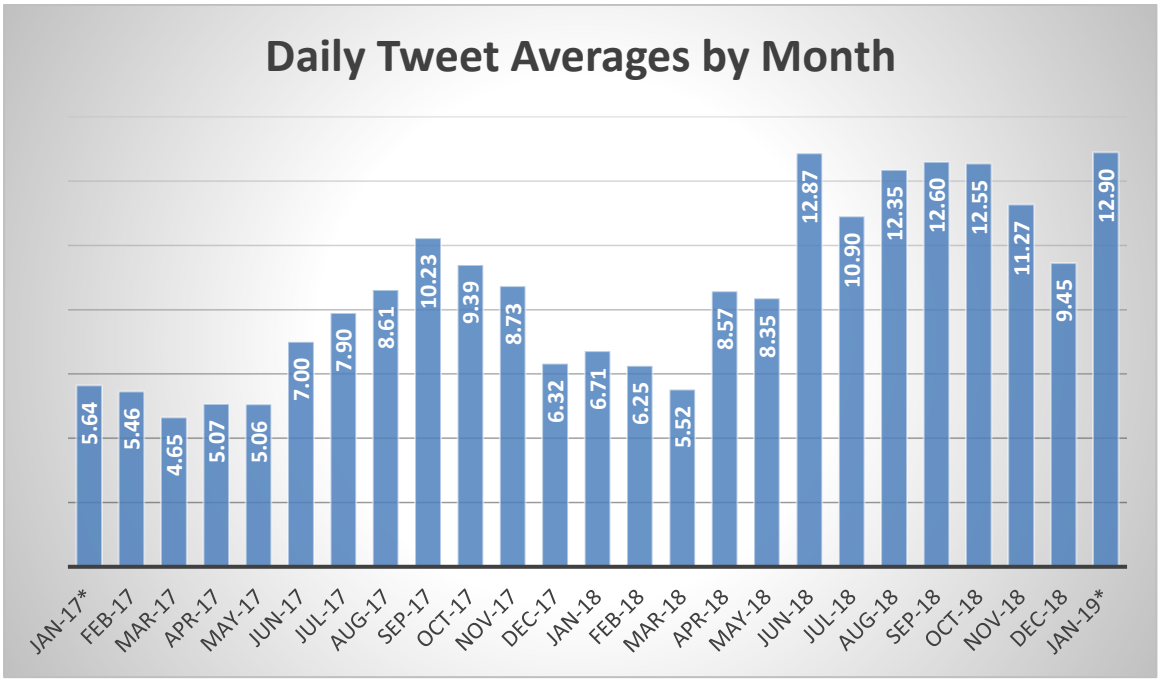

Figure 2. First 24 Months: Daily Trump Tweet Averages by Month

*Jan. 2017 was 11 days, and Jan. 2019 was 21 days.

Randolph D. Alles	Director of Secret Service	0	0	0	Resign A 04/08/19
Kirstjen Nielsen*	Secretary of Homeland Security	3	0	(6)	Resigned 04/07/19
Scott Gottlieb*	FDA Commissioner	2	0	2	Resigned 03/31/19
Linda E. McMahon	Small Business Administration Administrator	2	0	2	Resign A 03/29/19
Heather Wilson	Air Force Secretary	4	0	4	Resign A 03/08/19
Bill Shine	WH Deputy Chief of Staff (Communication)	0	0	0	Resigned 03/08/19
Brock Long	FEMA Administrator	3	0	(7)	Resign A 02/13/19
Raj Shah	Principal Deputy Press Secretary	0	0	0	Resigned 01/05/19
Ryan Zinke*	Secretary of Interior	2	0	(6)	Resigned 01/02/19
John F. Kelly*	White House Chief of Staff	17	0	(25)	Fired 01/02/19
Nikki Haley	U.N. Ambassador	4	0	(6)	Resigned 01/01/19
General Jim Mattis	Secretary of Defense	13	2	(22)	Resigned 01/01/19
Nick Ayers	Chief of Staff to Vice President	1	0	1	Resign A 12/09/18
Mira Ricardel*	Deputy National Security Adviser	0	0	0	Fired 11/14/18
Jeff Sessions	Attorney General	7	22	(41)	Fired 11/07/18
Donald F. McGahn II*	White House Counsel	3	0	(11)	Resigned 10/17/18
Joseph W. Hagin*	WH Deputy Chief of Staff (Operations)	0	0	0	Resigned 07/06/18
Scott Pruitt	E.P.A. Administrator	4	0	(7)	Resigned 07/05/18
Tom Homan*	Director of I.C.E.	1	0	1	Resigned 06/29/18
Ty Cobb*	WH Special Counsel	2	0	2	Resigned 05/02/18
Nadia Schadlow*	Deputy Natl. Security Adviser (Strategy)	0	0	0	Fired 04/27/18

Maj. Gen. Ricky Waddell	Deputy National Security Adviser	0	0	0	Resign A 04/12/18
Thomas P. Bossert*	Homeland Security Adviser	0	0	(1)	Fired 04/10/18
Michael Anton*	National Security Council Spokesman	1	0	1	Fired 04/10/18
Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster	National Security Adviser	2	1	(4)	Fired 04/06/18
Hope Hicks	White House Communications Director	0	0	0	Resigned 03/29/18
David J. Shulkin	Secretary of Veterans Affairs	5	0	(7)	Fired 03/28/18
Josh Raffel*	Deputy Communications Director	0	0	0	Unknown 03/23/18
John Dowd*	President's Lead Lawyer	3	0	3	Resigned 03/22/18
Andrew McCabe	F.B.I. Deputy Director	0	31	(37)	Fired 03/16/18
Rick Dearborn	White House Deputy Chief of Staff	0	0	0	Resigned 03/16/18
Rex W. Tillerson*	Secretary of State	4	1	(9)	Fired 03/13/18
John McEntee*	President's Personal Aide	0	0	0	Fired 03/13/18
John Feeley*	U.S. Ambassador to Panama	0	0	0	Resigned 03/09/18
Gary D. Cohn*	Chief Economic Adviser	0	0	0	Resigned 03/06/18
Rachel L. Brand	Associate Attorney General	0	0	0	Resigned 02/09/18
David Sorensen*	White House Speechwriter	0	0	0	Resigned 02/09/18
Rob Porter*	White House Staff Secretary	0	0	0	Resigned 02/07/18
Taylor Weyeneth	Deputy Chief of Staff/Office of Natl Drug Control	0	0	0	Resigned 01/31/18
Brenda Fitzgerald*	Director of C.D.C.	0	0	0	Resigned 01/31/18
Marc Short*	Director of Legislative Affairs	0	0	(1)	Resigned 01/20/18
Carl Higbie	Ext. Aff. Chief/Corp Natl & Comm Svc	0	0	0	Forced out 01/18/18

Dina H. Powell*	Deputy Natl. Security Adv. (Strategy)	0	0	(1)	Resigned 01/08/18
Jeremy Katz*	Deputy Director at the Natl. Economic Council	0	0	0	Resigned 01/01/18
Omarosa M. Newman	Comm. Dir./WH Public Liaison Office	2	8	10	Fired 12/13/17
George Sifakis*	Director of WH Public Liaison Office	0	0	0	Resigned 09/30/17
Tom Price*	Secretary of Health & Human Services	0	0	(3)	Resigned 09/29/17
Keith Schiller	Director of Oval Office Operations	0	0	0	Resigned 09/20/17
Sebastian Gorka	Adviser	2	0	(3)	Forced out 08/25/17
Stephen K. Bannon*	Chief Strategist	2	4	6	Fired 08/18/17
Carl Icahn*	Special Adviser on Regulatory Reform	0	0	0	Resigned 08/18/17
Ezra Cohen-Watnick*	Senior Director for Intelligence (N.S.C.)	0	0	0	Fired 08/02/17
George Gigicos*	WH Director of Scheduling/Advance	0	0	0	Resigned 07/31/17
Anthony Scaramucci	White House Communications Director	1	0	1	Fired 07/31/17
Reince Priebus	White House Chief of Staff	2	0	2	Fired 07/28/17
Derek Harvey*	National Security Council Adviser	0	0	0	Fired 07/27/17
Michael Short*	WH Assistant Press Secretary	0	0	0	Unknown 07/25/17
Sean Spicer	White House Press Secretary	2	0	2	Resigned 07/21/17
Rich Higgins*	Strategic Planning Aide	0	0	0	Fired 07/21/17
Mark Corallo*	Comm. Strategist/Trump Legal Team	0	0	0	Resigned 07/20/17
Walter Shaub*	Director of Office of Govt. Ethics	0	0	0	Resigned 07/19/17
Tera Dahl*	Dep. Chief of Staff (National Security Council)	0	0	0	Unknown 07/06/17
Mike Dubke	White House Communications Dir.	0	0	0	Resigned 06/02/17

K.T. McFarland	Deputy National Security Adviser	0	0	0	Resigned 05/19/17
James B. Comey	F.B.I. Director	2	101	(126)	Fired 05/09/17
Angella Reid*	WH Chief Usher	0	0	0	Unknown 05/05/17
Vivek Murthy*	Surgeon General	0	0	0	Resigned 04/24/17
Katie Walsh*	WH Dep. Chief of Staff (Implementation)	0	0	0	Resigned 03/30/17
Michael T. Flynn*	National Security Adviser	3	3	(9)	Fired 02/13/17
Sally Yates*	Deputy Attorney General	0	3	(5)	Fired 01/30/17
54 Male. 16 Female.		**9**	**17**	**(37**	**43 R/21 F/2**

Table 1. Epideictic Tweets About Administrative and Cabinet Personnel Lu and Yourish (2019); *Diehm, Petulla, and Wolf (2019)

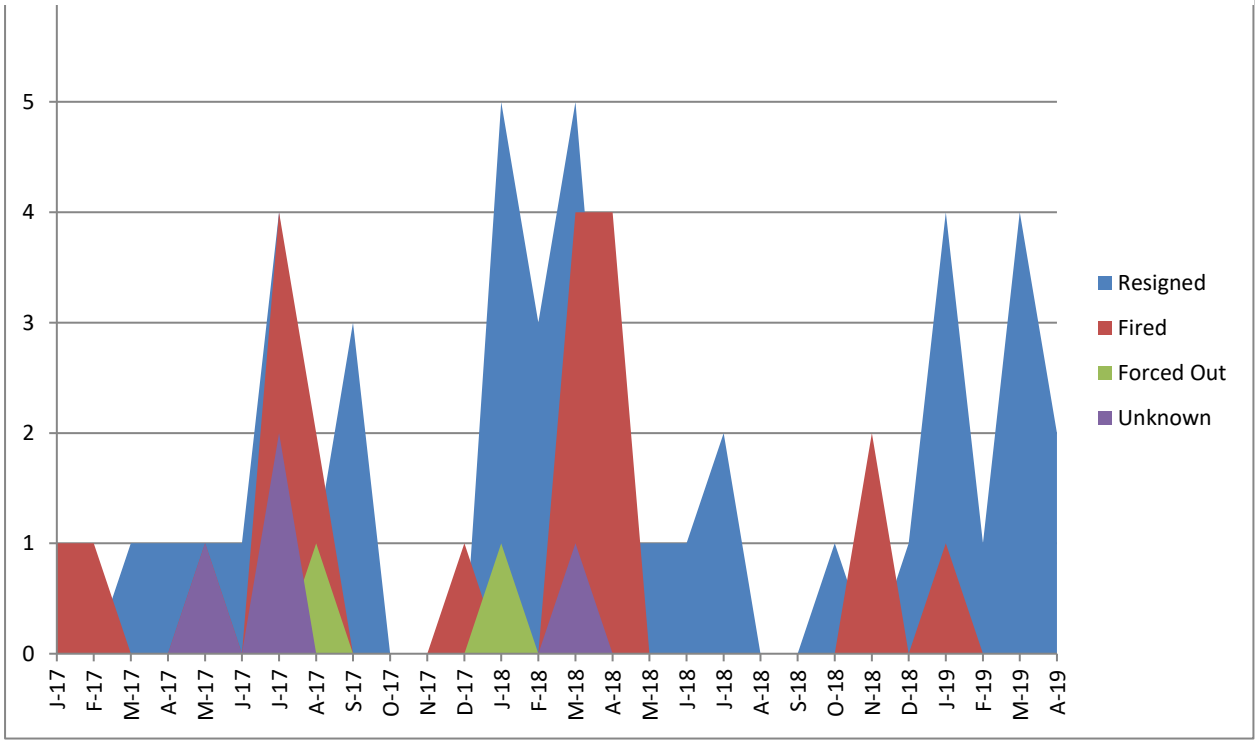

Figure 3. Types of Trump Administration Employment Termination by Month (Jan. 21, 2017 – Apr. 8, 2019)

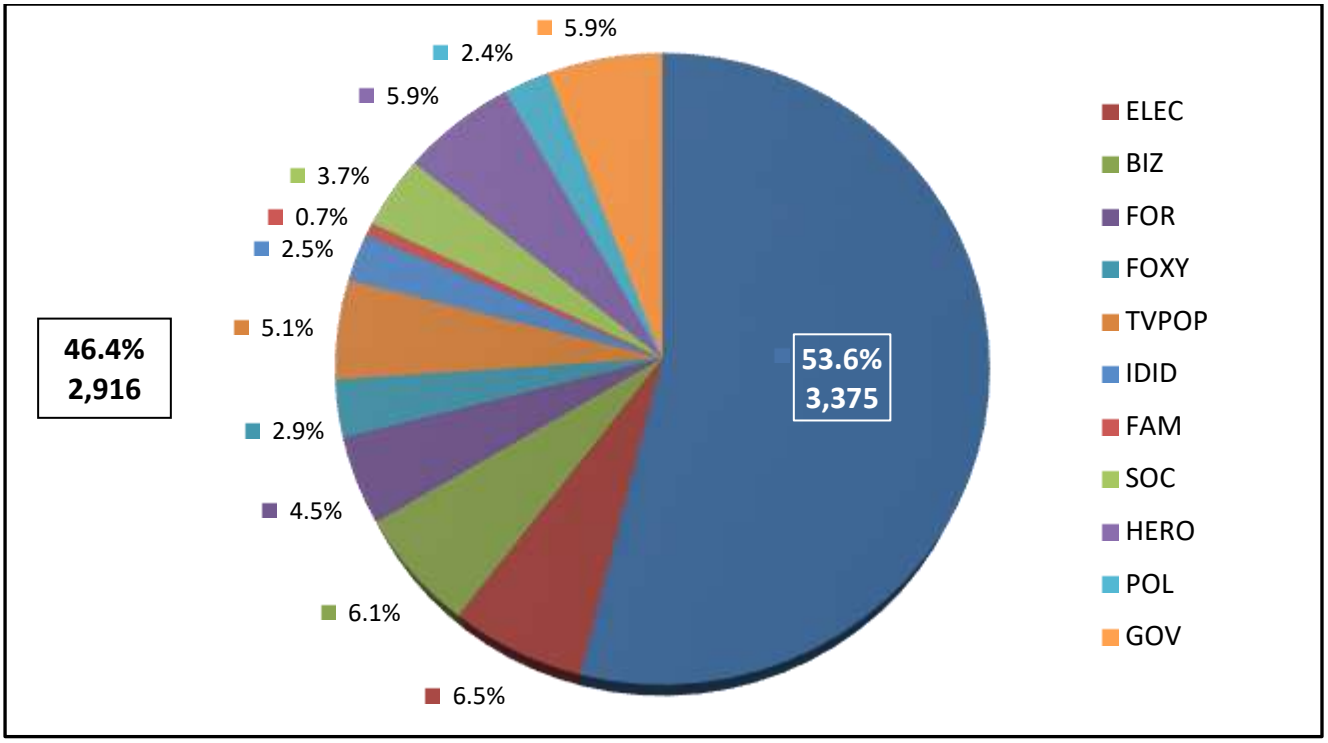

Figure 4. Percentage of Praise Tweets out of 6,291 Total Tweets for 2-Year Period (Jan. 21 2017 – Jan. 21, 2019)

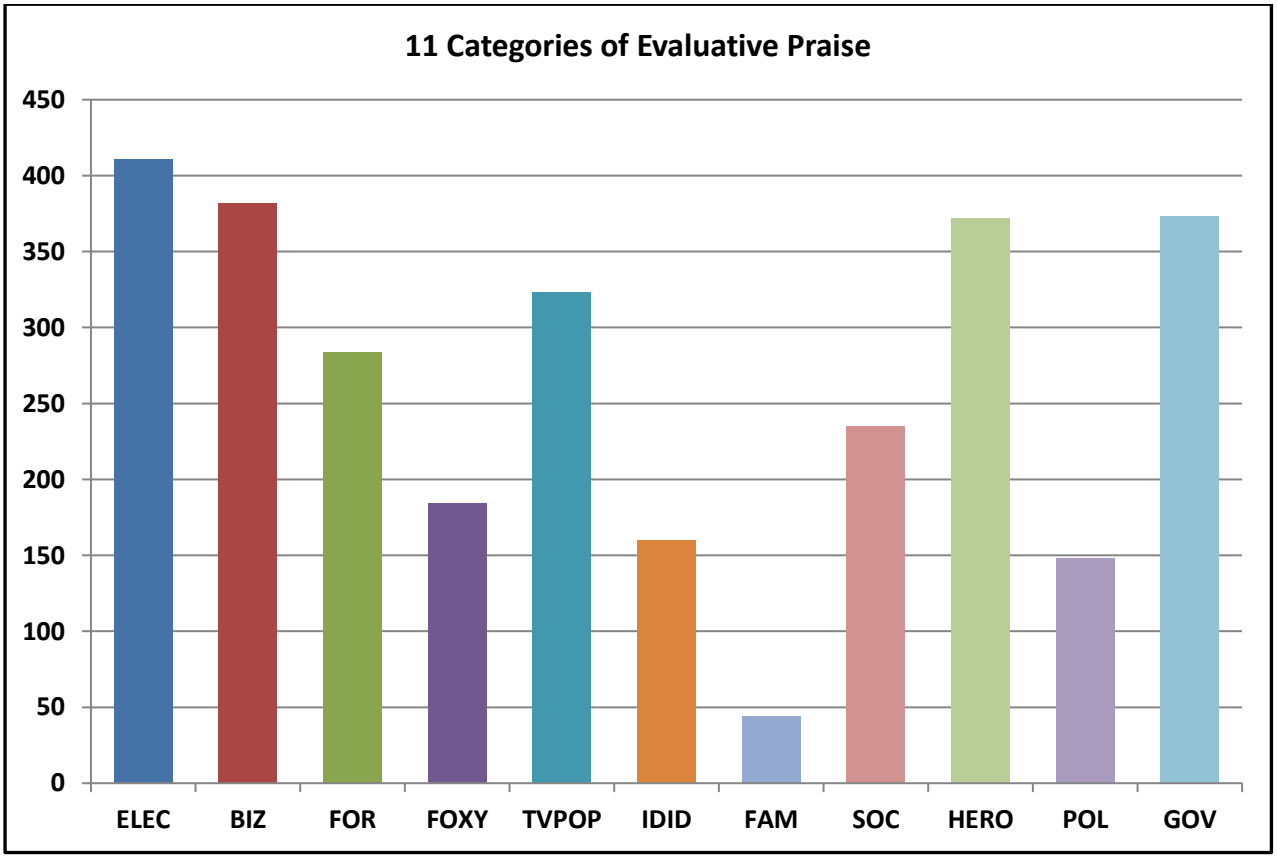

Figure 5. Total Number of Praise Tweets by Subcategory for 2-Year Period (Jan. 21, 2017 – Jan. 21, 2019)

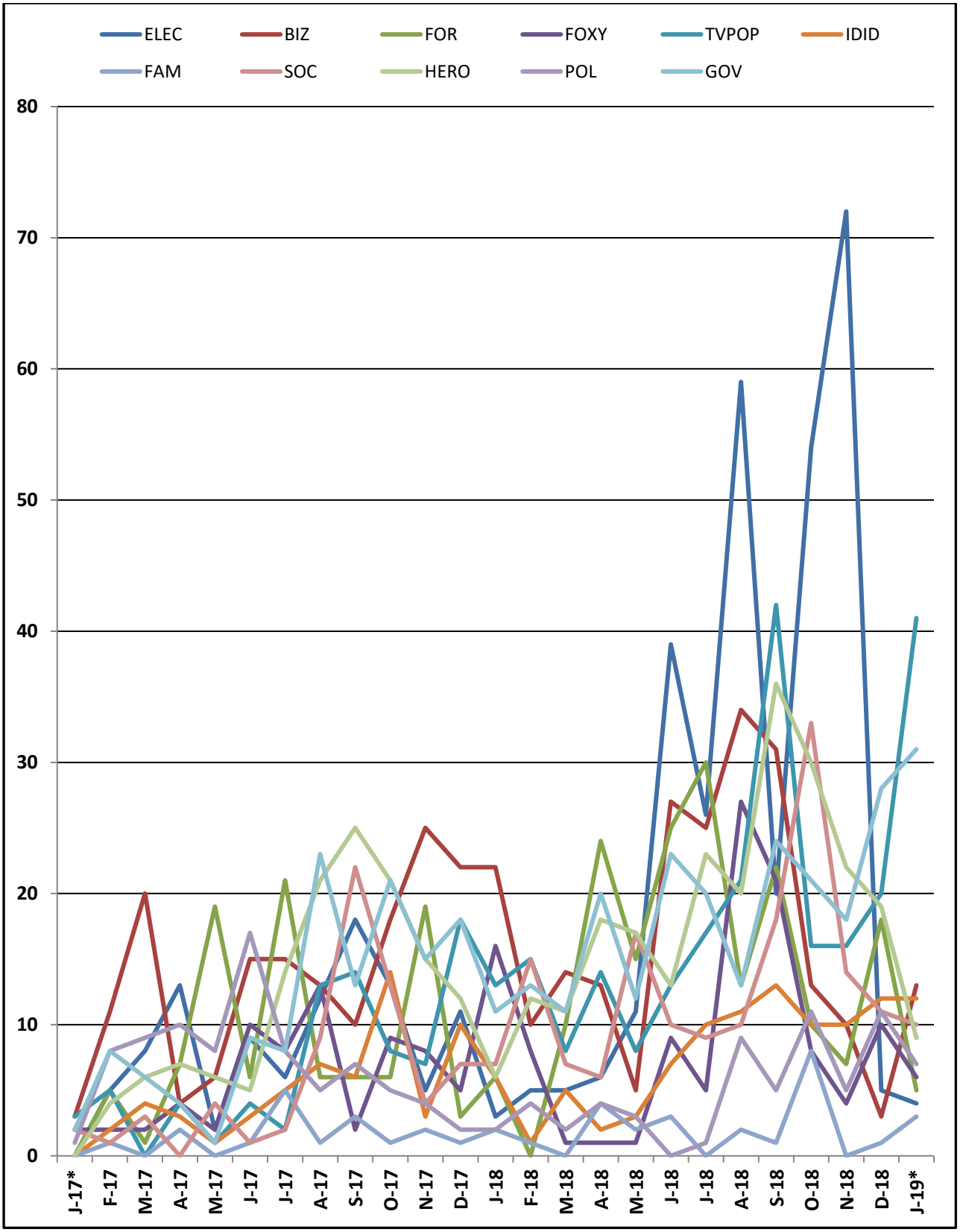

Figure 6. Number of Praise Tweet Subcategories per Month for 2-Year Period (Jan. 21, 2017 – Jan. 21, 2019)