Hillary Clinton is tweeting more than Donald Trump and attacks him more often than he does her.

LSE blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2016/07/09/hillary-clinton-is-tweeting-more-than-donald-trump-and-attacks-him-more-often-than-he-does

One of the major battlegrounds of the 2016 presidential election is Twitter, with both candidates slugging it out using 140 characters or fewer. **Heather Evans**, **Kayla Brown**, *and* **Tiffany Wimberly** *have been studying both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's tweets. They find that, in line with findings from previous studies on how women candidates tweet, in June Clinton out tweeted the Republican nominee, attacked him more often than he did her, and tweeted about political issues far more often.*

I've conducted lots of analyses on how candidates for the US Congress use Twitter, and have found that there are gender differences to what candidates tweet about. For instance, in both the 2012 and 2014 election cycles, women were more likely to tweet about issues and tweet attacks towards their competitors than male candidates. Women were also significantly more likely to tweet about issues concerning women (i.e. "female issues" such as healthcare, education, the environment, equality) than their male counterparts. In a forthcoming piece, I also find that female candidates for Congress talk about "male issues" more than male candidates as well.
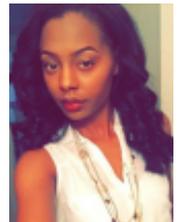
The 2016 election gives me the opportunity to examine a presidential contest on Twitter with a female candidate, and my work has already begun. I received a grant from my university to study the way the presidential candidates are using Twitter with two undergraduate students (Kayla Brown and Tiffany Wimberly).

In June, we collected the 794 tweets sent by both of the presumptive Republican and Democratic nominees. Examining that data alone, we find many of the things my previous research has shown.

First, **Hillary Clinton far out-tweeted Donald Trump**. In the month of June, Clinton sent approximately 493 tweets, 66 of which were re-tweets. Trump, on the other hand, sent 291, 55 of which were retweets. This parallels my work on Congress in 2012, when I found that women were significantly out-tweeting their male competitors.

Hillary Clinton spent significantly more time on political issues than Trump, who barely mentioned any issues on Twitter. We coded tweets for whether they either mentioned or took a side on a political issue. Retweets excluded, approximately 27 percent of Hillary Clinton's tweets were about specific policy issues, while only 9 percent of Donald Trump's tweets were about policy issues. In terms of my previous work on Congress here and here, female candidates were also out-tweeting male candidates about issues, but not to this extent.

When we look at the specific issues mentioned through a key word search, **Hillary Clinton discussed "female issues" in approximately 14 percent of her tweets, compared to only 2 percent for Donald Trump**. Clinton's tweets over the past month mentioned the LGBT community, women's access to reproductive services, education and healthcare. Out of the six tweets Donald Trump sent that fell into this category, five mentioned the word "women" or "LGBT" and were attacks against Hillary Clinton. The sixth tweet mentioned Obamacare.   This is also on par with my previous research on gender and issue mentions on Twitter.
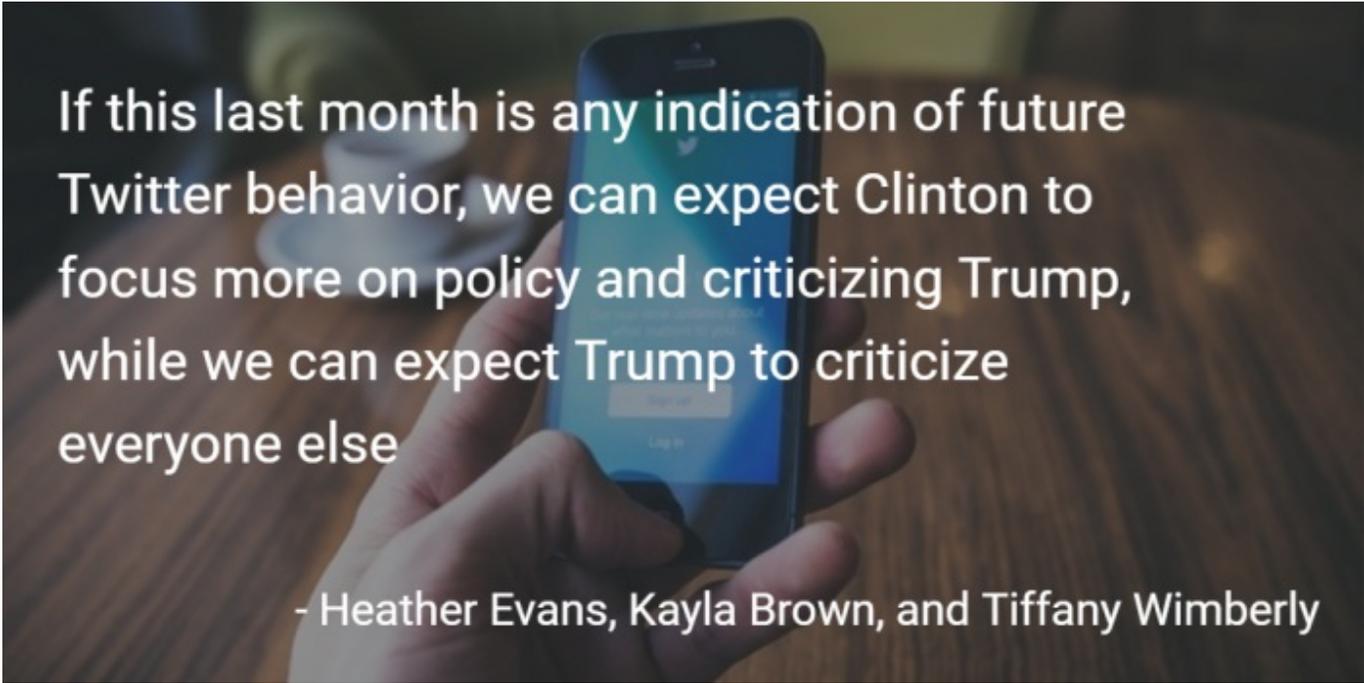
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- Heather Evans, Kayla Brown, and Tiffany Wimberly

Hillary Clinton also discussed more "male issues" in her tweets than Donald Trump. Over 20 percent of Clinton's tweets mentioned "male issues" like gun control, immigration, and economic issues. When it comes to Donald Trump's tweets, 15 percent mentioned these same issues, many of which were attacks towards Clinton.

Finally, **Hillary Clinton attacked Donald Trump more on Twitter than he attacked her** . Hillary Clinton is absolutely "trumping Trump." Last month, 34 percent of her total tweets criticized Donald Trump, while only 22 percent of his tweets criticized her. This is also in line with my previous research here, here, and here which shows that female candidates were more negative than their male competitors.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, spent a lot of time attacking other people on Twitter, like other Republicans, Democrats, government in general, and the media. Over 17 percent of his total tweets were spent criticizing these other groups, while less than 1 percent of Clinton's tweets were negative about these groups.

Overall then, it looks as though Hillary Clinton is adopting a more aggressive and issue oriented approach to Twitter, similar to female candidates for Congress in both 2012 and 2014.   Our future research will focus on the campaign messages sent from both candidates' Twitter accounts, as well as the content of the interviews they give through Election Day. If this last month is any indication of future Twitter behavior, we can expect Clinton to focus more on policy and criticizing Trump, while we can expect Trump to criticize everyone else.

Featured image credit: @HillaryClinton.

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Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USAPP – American Politics and Policy, nor the London School of Economics.

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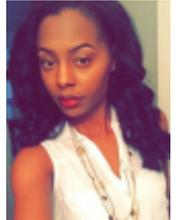
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