Legitimation Strategies on President Trump's Twitter Account: A Case Study on @realDonaldTrump's Tweets Related to the Russian Interference Investigation

Julia Järvinen
MA Thesis
English, Language Specialist
School of Languages and Translation Studies
Faculty of Humanities
University of Turku
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UNIVERSITY OF TURKU
School of Languages and Translation Studies / Faculty of Humanities
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This thesis studies how the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, uses his Twitter account, @realDonaldTrump, to (de)legitimate his views and stance on the Russian interference investigation and the charges he faced. In addition, this study examines whether the different (de)legitimation strategies used change when the official results of the "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election" are published. The aim was also to examine the underlying meanings behind these different (de)legitimation strategies.

In order to answer my research questions, I comprised a micro-corpus comprised of @realDonaldTrump's tweets. To locate the related tweet, I used a selection of key words that were used to discuss the matter. Retweets, direct quotes, pictures, videos and comment sections were left out, since the focus was mainly on @realDonaldTrump words. The corpus was analyzed with Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework of (de)legitimation and Van Dijk's (1998) theory of ideological square. This study was also aimed to test if these frameworks can be applied to this type of topic and data.

After carefully examining the corpus, it became evident that @realDonaldTrump relies heavily on delegitimating his opposition through the use of moral evaluation, morally loaded language and other modal elements. He also uses these elements to legitimate his side. Legitimation through authorization is used to corroborate his stance. @realDonaldTrump emphasizes the negative aspects of the other side, while emphasizing what is positive on his side. He also concentrates on suppressing negative aspects related to him or his team. Rationality and mythopoesis are also employed, but in some cases these strategies remain ambiguous and open for differing interpretations. The biggest perceivable changes, around the time of publication of the results of the investigation, are related to the lead investigator Robert Mueller. Especially, Mueller's placement on the Us/Them -axis and ideological square varies. It becomes clear that these (de)legitimation strategies are used to convince the reader of President Trump's innocence, decrease the legitimacy of the investigation and link the reader to the side of @realDonaldTrump.

This study proved that both of the frameworks can be successfully applied to this topic in this dataset, even though some limitations exist. Having said that, the scope was relatively small and further research on a different topic in the field of political discourse with possibly a larger data could prove itself very interesting.

Key words: legitimation, delegitimation, ideological square, president, political discourse, Twitter, United States, social media

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| | |
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| D1 | Dataset 1 |
| D2 | Dataset 2 |
| DNC | Democratic National Committee |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Investigation |
| MAGA | Make America Great Again |
| Mueller report | Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election |
| POTUS | President of the United States of America |

# 1. Introduction

During the past few decades, the platforms for political discussion have widely changed. There are fewer debates held on the streets and more discussions taking place in the social media. Different social media sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. have become popular platforms to discuss politics and to convey messages and ideologies. Technology and globalization have made it possible for people around the globe to communicate simultaneously. Celebrities, corporates, politicians and media have seized this opportunity and used it to their advantage. "The social web is about using the internet to enact relationships rather than simply share information although the two functions are clearly interconnected" (Zappavigna 2012, 2). Today, even the most influential people in the world have their own social media accounts and they connect and spread, not just information, but also their agenda there to as many people as possible. Twitter is one of these tools and it has become very visible social media platform, especially in the United States (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9).

The microblogging site Twitter is used by some the most influential people in the world, one of them being the current President of the United States (POTUS), Donald J. Trump. Trump is known for his unique communication style both in spoken and in written form. This style is perceived so distinctive that it has been the topic of multiple studies and articles. Clarke and Grieve studied @realDonaldTrump's linguistic style in tweets posted between 2009 and 2018 and noted that he employs "self-promotional discourse" (2019, 22). Kurt Andersen (2018) wrote an article "How to Talk Like Trump – A short guide to speaking like the president's dialect", where he lists phrases and grammar choices that the president favors. Andersen remarks Trump's use of vague source attribution and special phrases such as "believe me", "in the whole world" and "…okay?" (ibid.). It is also widely acknowledged that he is exceptionally active in social media, especially on Twitter, and his tweets have been discussed widely even outside the U.S. On few occasions, President Trump has published tweets containing information that were not public information until he made them public through tweets. For example, in September 2019 President Trump used his Twitter account to announce how he had canceled a secret meeting with Taliban leaders and the Afghanistan President at Camp David (Shah 2019). The general public or the media didn't know that this

meeting was even taking place, before Trump announced that it had been canceled through his Twitter timeline. This demonstrates that is a significant social media platform where political discussion takes place.

One of the themes, that has been quite visible on President Trump's Twitter, is the FBI's investigation where the President and his campaign team's actions during the presidential election in 2016 were questioned. The President has been quite vocal in expressing how he perceives the investigation, and this has gathered media attention around the world. Trump has expressed vast amount of criticism against the investigation and he has quite overtly talked against the investigation and investigators and on behalf of his innocence. This type of discourse can be linked to both legitimation and delegitimation, which are important key elements in political discourse (Chilton 2004, 8). In this thesis, I am interested to investigate how President Donald Trump uses his personal Twitter account to (de)legitimate his stance regarding the investigation. This is particularly interesting because legitimation focuses on multiple linguistic decisions that Trump seems to employ in his speeches, writings and interviews. (De)legitimation directs attention to the language that creates the conditions for the discourse and portrays who ought to be trusted and who not. This thesis will concentrate on the (de)legitimation that occurs in Trump's Twitter. The aim is to analyze the tweets posted on the topic and see how he legitimates his stance towards the accusations made against him, his campaign team and the investigation conducted by FBI's lead investigator Robert Mueller (see section 2.3). I am also keen to find out whether these (de)legitimation strategies change after the Mueller report verdict was submitted and published on 23rd of March 2019 and what might be the underlying meaning behind these tweets.  Thus, the research questions are as follows:

1. In what ways does Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump) use the different (de)legitimation strategies in his tweets about the FBI's investigation?
2. Do the (de)legitimation strategies used in the tweets change after the results of the FBI's investigation are published?
3. What might the different (de)legitimation strategies and their possible change mean (in terms of the investigation)?

The aim of this study is to investigate President Trump's linguistic legitimation choices on social media platform Twitter, analyze how they justify his stance, see if any changes occur after Robert Mueller's completed report is published and understand meanings behind the tweets.

My hypothesis is that the legitimation strategies employed in the tweets regarding the Russia investigation change in certain respects around the time of the publication of the "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election". I believe that if these changes occur, it might be because the President was (at least on some level) prepared for inculpatory outcome (because he argued that the investigation was rigged), and when the investigation could not prove that a crime had taken place, his stance shifted. I suspect that in the tweets before the publication of the results @realDonaldTrump tries to legitimate his claim of innocence and delegitimate the value of the investigation and the credibility of Mueller more than in the later dataset. I also expect that @realDonaldTrump will use the *Us/Them* binary distinction as way of legitimizing his own views and diminish the opposing views. I'm interested to see who and/or what groups belong to these semantic categories of *Us* and *Them*.

This thesis will begin with an overview of the social media platform Twitter and how it works. Next, I will provide a brief outline of Trump's character, ideology and politics, in order to give the reader a better understanding of the person and politician behind the tweets. I will also introduce the background and timeline of the Russia investigation to help the reader understand the context of the tweets discussed in the analysis section. After this, I will briefly go through the main findings of the previously mentioned "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election" written by the FBI's Robert Mueller (from here on Mueller report). After this, I will move on to the second part of the theory section and introduce the key element of the theories used in this thesis in order to help the reader to understand the discussion section better. Then, I will introduce the data in my micro-corpus and then go through the methods that were used to conduct this study. In the analysis sections, I examine @realDonaldTrump's tweets on the topic based on the theory of (de)legitimation. First, I will examine the tweets posted before the publication of the Mueller report (dataset 1) and then the tweets after (dataset 2). I will also compare the results in these two datasets in order to comprehend better the similarities and possible

differences and analyze if any notable changes occur and see if the use of these legitimation strategies can be explained. Lastly, I will conclude the thesis by summarizing all my major findings and note the possible future research.

# 2. General Background

This section will give the reader a better understanding of Twitter as a social media platform, political environment and as a place to conduct a study. I will also address President Trump's role and the complicated political situation in the United States. Then, I will elaborate the key elements that led to the Russia investigation and explain the results to give the reader a better understanding of the underlying context in which these tweets were written. This is necessary for the reader to fully understand the purpose of Trump's political discourse in his tweets.

## 2.1 Twitter

Twitter is a social media and microblogging platform that was created by Jack Dorsey on 21st of March 2006 (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9). The idea is that people from all over the world can freely sign up and post (tweet), repost (retweet), like and participate in the communication that takes place in real time. Communication occurs via short messages written by users. The maximum amount of characters per tweet used to be 140, until the fall 2017, when the character limit was lifted to 280 (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 10). The character limitations can be seen both as Twitter's advantage and as a disadvantage (ibid.). The character limits force the users to compress their main message to small space, which makes it easier for a message spread to a vast audience in a short period of time (ibid.). However, sometimes this means that some relevant information is omitted (ibid.). In Trump's Twitter this character limitation problem was solved by sometimes splitting the messages into two or more tweets and this explains why some tweets might seem incomplete when inspected separately.

Tweets are on a public domain which means that they accessible to anyone unless the user knowingly makes his profile private (Zappavigna 2012, 3). What sets Twitter apart from other social media platforms is the fact that anyone can read the posts

from another user by visiting their profile or by following the person (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 10). The reader does not need permission (for example "friend requests") to see the content (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9). The reader can see the content even without logging in (ibid.). Twitter is widely spread across the globe, but it is hard to give an exact number of users, since Twitter does not publish that information itself (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 12). Based on some estimates Twitter has about 320 million active users around the world and over 1.6 billion registered users (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 13).

Twitter is one the most popular social media platforms in the world (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 13) and even though the popularity of the platform varies between countries, it is very popular in the United States (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 23). Twitter is used by many celebrities, athletes, politicians and individuals and some say that in Twitter it matters more who is communicating and not how many users there are in total (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9). The previous POTUS Barack Obama (@BarackObama) was the most followed Twitter user in the 2019 and he had over 110 million followers (Statista 2020). This gives an idea of just how popular politicians' Twitter users can become. Twitter is described as an "elitist" social media platform since many policymakers and media representatives communicate and discuss there just among themselves (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9). However, this varies between cultures and in the United States, for example, Twitter seems to be people's media as well as a media for celebrities, journalists and politicians (ibid.). Twitter is so interesting due to the fact that tweets are short and easily accessed and because they get attention and media coverage all over the world (2018, 9). Tweets can go viral quickly have a vast impact on the audience.

Due to the fact that Twitter is such a popular social media platform, various researchers from different fields have utilized it to conduct studies. Twitter has caught the attention of multiple media and communications researchers, political scientists, linguists and behavior analysts just to mention a few. Matikainen and Villi have studied news media and journalists on Twitter and if their behavior resembles more mass communication or interaction (2018, 193-210). Mari Marttila has studied how the Members of the Finnish Parliament utilize Twitter to their advantages and what might explain the ways in which it is done (2018, 88-89). Johansson et al. have studied what kind of social interaction took place in the tweets that were posted with the hashtag

#jesuisCharlie (referring to the terrorist attack on the editorial office of Charlie Hedbo magazine) and what opinions these tweets included (2018, 90-101).

Donald Trump's language choices, both in real life and social media context, have gained a lot of attention since they are quite different to what the public is used to. Trump's twitter has also been studied from multiple different angles. Pérez, Román and Rodríguez have done a comparative study on Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's twitter usage during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign (2019, 13-32). Dawn Colley has analyzed how Trump uses illusive truths when it comes to the ideology behind patriotism and language in the Twittersphere (2019, 33-51). Anish Dave has studied President Trump's tweets on Middle East, North Korea and Russia (2019, 73-92) and Smith-Frigerio and Houston have focused on Trump's tweets regarding mental health issues and attacks made against media personalities (2019, 114-130). In addition, Oliver Boyd-Barrett has studied discourse related to the "RussiaGate" (claims of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential elections) and the disinformation in the age of social media (2019). However, there has not been any previous studies on the use of (de)legitimation practices on Trump's Twitter timeline regarding the Russia investigation.

## 2.2 President Donald J. Trump

Donald John Trump (born June 14, 1946) is the incumbent and 45th president of the United States. Donald Trump took office on January 20, 2017 (Whitehouse.gov 2018) and in June 2019 he informed that he is running for president in the 2020 election as well (Al Jazeera 2019). Trump is a republican right-wing politician who advocates for tax cuts and tighter border control and immigration practices. His slogan in the 2016 presidential run was *MAGA* which means "Make America Great Again" (Whitehouse.gov 2018). Trump is fairly new to the political sphere and some say that that is part of his appeal. He has been seen as an outsider to traditional politics, that are perceived as rigged, slow and ineffectual, and that is what made him appealing to the voters tired of traditional politics (Richer and Haslam 2017). However, others argue that this is what makes him and his politics so dangerous (Huffpost 2017).

Donald Trump is widely known for his blunt style, which he uses both in traditional platforms as well as in social media. He is a particularly controversial figure since his politics are sometimes quite extreme and his linguistic style is widely different

to his predecessors and other politicians in the United States. During his speeches, discussions and interviews, he has referred to Mexicans as criminals, drug dealers and rapists (Reilly 2016). Trump has also called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" and has referred women that he does not agree with as fat pigs, slobs, animals, dogs and his style includes these type of insults (Winberg 2017). When confronted and asked about his linguistic word choices, he said his style is fun and that he is just kidding and that he does not have time for "political correctness" (ibid.). His communication style has induced a lot of support since some regard it as a "breath of fresh air" (Fox Business 2017). There have been strong indications that he won the presidential campaign in 2016 because of his differing (and at times controversial rhetoric) and not in spite of it (Winberg 2017). However, some people, especially members or supporters of the Democratic party (and even members of the Republican party), do not agree with his style and behavior and some describe his style simply as insulting and derogatory (ibid.). Since his style is quite different, it is no wonder why some of his comments have made the headlines both inside and outside the United States of America and they remain a popular topic for research. It is beneficial to note that my objective is simply to indicate how his style usually differs from other politicians and demonstrate the reader how the audience might perceive his language choices. I am not moralizing the style choices he makes.

Before his presidency, Trump built a successful career as a businessman. His focus was especially in the real estate industry (Whitehouse.gov 2018) and the Trump Organization still owns multiple properties, hotels, vineyards, golf courses and other real estate holdings in various states in North America and in Europe as well (Trump.com n.d.). Trump has also hosted a famous reality TV-show called the Apprentice, in which he starred in over 180 episodes during the years 2004 until 2015 (IMDb n.d.). Donald Trump has a degree from University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance, and he is married to Melania Trump and they have a son, Barron, together (Whitehouse.gov 2018). In addition, Trump has four adult children (Donald Jr., Eric, Ivanka and Tiffany) from previous marriages (Business Insider 2017). Donald Jr., Eric and Ivanka have also appeared on the Apprentice on multiple occasions together with their father (IMDb n.d.).

Donald Trump is one of the politicians who use Twitter as one their main platforms for conveying messages (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 9). As mentioned previously, his Twitter account, @realDonaldTrump, was created in March

2009, before his presidency, and when he became president, he kept the original account to tweet and his personnel uses the official @potus account to tweet (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 16). In September 2020, @realDonaldTrump had over 85.9 million followers and he was following 50 other users (Twitter 2020). @realDonaldTrump has posted over 55.9 thousand tweets (includes text tweets, retweets, pictures and videos) in ten years (ibid.). The number of tweets is immense compared to other politicians or world leaders.

President Trump's tweets repeatedly make headlines both in the media in the United States and outside the U.S. because the contents are sometimes quite controversial and have sometimes been perceived as racist and derogatory against women, immigrants, foreigners and sexual minorities. Trump uses his Twitter to comment on the current world events and political debates as they are happening, sometimes even before the official platforms (such as the White House) has the chance to do so. Michele Lockhart writes how it is sometimes questioned which forum, White House channels or Trump's Twitter, is actually the official messenger of the White House (2019, 1). She also talks about how the private opinions sometimes differ from official stance and how these communicational differences can cause concern (2019,1).

## 2.3 Robert S. Mueller

It is beneficial to briefly introduce the FBI's lead investigator, Robert S. Mueller, to help the reader understand the analysis and the personal dynamics between Mueller and Trump because it is a key element in multiple tweets in the analysis section. Robert Mueller (born 1944) served as the director of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation during the years 2001 to 2013 (Biography.com 2019). In 2017, he was appointed as special counsel to conduct the FBI investigation regarding the Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and he was asked to gather intelligence data of whether Trump and his campaign team had committed crimes (ibid.). Mueller has a bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton and a justice degree from University of Virginia Law School (ibid.). Mueller has worked as an attorney for the Northern District of California and as a deputy attorney general for George W. Bush's administration (ibid.). In March 2019, the special counsel Mueller submitted the results of his 22-month investigation ("The Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In the 2016 Presidential Election") to the

Attorney General William Barr (ibid.). Since the publication of the Mueller report, Mueller has noted that Trump "was not exculpated" and he has warned the public about Russia interfering in U.S. elections to come (Smith 2019).

## 2.4 Timeline of the Russia Investigation on Trump

In this chapter, I will introduce briefly the main events that lead to the investigation on Trump and his campaign team in order to help the reader understand the context that the tweets were posted in. Explaining the context behind the tweets helps the reader to understand the underlining meaning behind the tweets. The "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election" is an official document of the U.S Department of Justice and in this thesis I will account the timeline of the related events based on the information provided by the report. From here on, the "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In the 2016 Presidential election" is referred also as the "Mueller Report" since this a faster way to refer to the report and because it is a name that the media and the public has adopted to refer to the investigation report in everyday life.

The investigation on Trump (and his campaign team) started in mid-2016, when evidence started to appear that the Russian government had been involved and had interfered in the 2016 presidential election. Mueller states in the report that this interference occurred in a "systematic fashion" (Mueller 2019a, 1). In June 2019, the Democratic National Committee's (DMC) cyber team announced that hackers, that were identified as Russians, had breached and compromised their networks (ibid.). Releases that were traced back to the Russian government began in June and more appeared until November 2016 on the website WikiLeaks (ibid.). In July, Trump's foreign campaign advisor, George Papadopoulos, suggested to a Russian government representative that it could assist the Trump campaign with anonymous release of information that were aimed to hurt the campaign of Trump's opponent Hillary Clinton from the Democratic party (ibid.). This information then lead to the FBI opening an investigation aimed to resolve whether individuals in Trump's campaign team were coordinating cyber hacks with the Russian government (ibid.). After the election, the United States Government imposed sanctions on Russia due to their interference with the U.S. presidential elections and in 2017 more congressional committees joined the investigation (ibid.).

When the investigation on Trump and his campaign team began, the president was seemingly unhappy about the media coverage it was given. He was also displeased with the claims made and enquiries directed to him and his team. He then started writing doubtful tweets questioning the credibility of the investigation and the people in charge (Mueller 2019a, 1). In May 2017, President Trump dismissed the FBI Director James Comey from his position, because he felt critical of Comey's investigation and said that "while I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation, I nevertheless concur with the judgment of the Department of Justice that you are no able to effectively lead the Bureau" (Letter of Termination of Employment, 2017). The Trump administration noted that they felt that Comey had handled the Hillary Clinton email probe inadequately (CNN Politics n.d.). A few days after the dismissal of Comey, the Deputy Attorney General appointed a new lead investigator and thus Robert S. Mueller III agreed to take over the investigation (Barrett, Horwitz and Zapotosky 2017). The special counsel was authorized to investigate "the Russian government's efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential elections", including any links or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the Trump campaign" (Mueller 2019a, 1). Mueller was also given the authority to pursue "any matters that may arise directly form the investigation" (ibid.).

The final and completed "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In the 2016 Presidential election" was submitted to Attorney General William Barr on 22$^{nd}$ of March 2019 and it consists of two different volumes. First, only a four-page summary was released but the democrats demanded the publication of the full report. On 18$^{th}$ of April 2019, the Department of Justice published the full 448-page report to the general public. However, some parts of the report still remain redacted due to national security issues. Next, I'll introduce the main aspect of the two volumes.

### 2.4.1 Volume I

The objective of the Volume I was to answer whether Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential elections and whether the individuals working on Trump's presidential campaign were coordinating interfering actions with the Russian government. The results of the "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election" are somewhat incomplete, and no final answer on Trump's involvement in the

charges, is given. Mueller first sums up, that based on his and FBI's investigation, it is a fact that Russia did interfere in the presidential election in 2016 and that they did that mainly through two processes (Mueller 2019a, 1). First of these operations was a social media campaign made in favor of the presidential candidate Donald J. Trump and that undermined his democrat opponent Hillary Clinton (ibid.). The second operation that Mueller points out was that "a Russian intelligence service conducted computer-intrusion operations against entities, employees, and volunteers working on the Clinton Campaign and then released stolen documents" (ibid.). Mueller notes that numerous links between the Russian government and Trump's campaign exists and that the Russian government probably perceived that they would benefit more of Trump's presidency and they worked in order to secure that outcome (ibid.). Mueller writes that Trump's campaign would have benefitted from this leaked information, however, he goes on to state that no "conspired or coordinated" actions could be proved (Mueller 2019a, 1-2).

### 2.4.2 Volume II

The Volume II of the report sets out to explain and summarize the President Trump's reactions to the ongoing FBI investigation in 2017 and whether his actions could have been treated as obstruction of justice. Again, the results are somewhat inconclusive. It states, that even if the report does not include a "traditional prosecution decision or declination decisions, the evidence supports several general conclusions relevant to the analysis of the facts concerning the President's course of conduct" (Mueller 2019b, 156). Volume II didn't fully exonerate the president on obstruction of justice because they couldn't with full confidence state that he was innocent after examining the evidence (Mueller 2019b, 8). The "investigation found multiple acts by the President that were capable of exerting undue influence over law enforcement investigations, including the Russian-interference and obstruction investigations" (Mueller 2019b, 157). The report notes, that after Trump found out that he was personally being investigated for obstruction of justice, he began with "public attacks on the investigation and individuals involved in it who could possess evidence adverse to the president, while in private, the president engaged in a series of targeted efforts to control the investigation." (Mueller 2019b, 158) However, President Trump's "efforts to influence the investigation were mostly

unsuccessful, but that is largely because the persons who surrounded the President declined to carry out orders" (ibid.).

The final conclusions in the Volume II are as follows (the emphasis is added to the text);

> Because we determined not to make a traditional prosecutorial judgment, we did not draw ultimate conclusions about the President's conduct. The evidence we obtained about the President's actions and intent presents difficult issues that would need to be resolved if we were making a traditional prosecutorial judgment. At the same time, if we had confidence after a thorough investigation of the facts that the President clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state. Based on the facts and the applicable legal standards, we are unable to reach that judgment. <u>Accordingly, while this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him.</u> (Mueller 2019b, 8)

In order to understand the analysis, it is noteworthy to highlight that the report does not fully exonerate President Trump, nor does it convict him on any of the charges. On May 29th, 2019, in a press conference, Muller stated that "[i]f we had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so. We did not, however, make a determination as to whether the president did commit a crime" (Phillips, 2019). He also noted that the public ought to keep in mind that a sitting president can't be charged with a federal crime while he is in office even if the crime charges are kept hidden and sealed from the public (ibid.). While it is true that investigators can't indict a sitting president, it is up to the congress to decide whether they want to take action against the president at a later time. Barr and Rosenstein decided in March 2019 that there wasn't enough evidence to officially charge Trump with obstruction of justice (Mazzetti and Benner 2019). It is possible that the president faces charges after his presidency, but at the time of writing this thesis no official indictments (related to this investigation) have been made. However, the president faced indictment charges regarding the military help that he offered to the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky, in exchange for looking into the actions of the former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden related to Biden's relations to a Ukrainian company (Breuninger 2019). However, the Senate acquitted President Trump from his charges in early February 2020 (BBC News 2020).

Donald Trump himself seems to regard the published results of the Mueller report as proof of his innocence. On March 24th, 2019, @realDonaldTrump tweets "No Collusion, No Obstruction, Complete and Total EXONERATION. KEEP AMERICA GREAT!" (@realDonaldTrump Mar 24, 2019, 10:42 p.m.). @realDonaldTrump seems to have simplified the results to corroborate his claim of innocence. On multiple occasions Trump writes that the results of the Mueller report "strongly stated that there was No Collusion with Russia" (May 3, 2019, 6:45 a.m.) and that the conclusions of the report fully exonerate him.

One more noteworthy aspect in the Mueller report is the fact that Trump's Twitter user, @realDonaldTrump, is mentioned 26 times in Volume II. Also, the word tweet or other derivations of the word (tweeted, tweets etc.) occur in the Volume II in total of 56 times. Special Counsel Mueller treats the tweets of @realDonaldTrump as evidence in the investigation and he seems to regard the tweets as Trump's own words. It seems that Trump's tweets are influential and significant enough to be treated as evidence of his actions in the FBI's official report which corroborates the claim that Trump himself is behind his tweets.

# 3. Theoretical Background

In this section I will go through theoretical framework used to conduct the study. First, I will explain the Van Leeuwen's (2007) theory on legitimation which is closely related to positive image building. Next, I will briefly mention Chilton's (2004) views on delegitimation which focuses on creating negative aspects. These language strategies focus on building positive and negative images mostly quite covertly (and in some cases overtly). President Trump is known for positive self-presentation and negative presentation of others, and that is why I want to inspect if this is in fact a language strategy that @realDonaldTrump uses to his advantage. These strategies are intrinsically intertwined because "legitimizing one position automatically implies the (de)legitimizing of alternative positions" (Reyes 2011, 804). Lastly, I will introduce the theory of ideological square by Van Dijk (1998). With the help of the framework of ideological square, I am hoping to simplify the categories and parties facing different (de)legitimation strategies. I will also briefly mention modal auxiliary verbs and their contextual usage in

political discourse. These theories are introduced to give the reader the relevant elements in order to understand the analysis section better. Finally, I will introduce other studies conducted with the legitimation framework and lastly note some critical aspects related to this theory.

## 3.1 Legitimation

In this thesis, I mainly follow Theo Van Leeuwen's and Chilton's intakes on legitimation and delegitimation. According to Van Leeuwen, legitimation framework analyses the ways in which "discourses construct legitimation for social practices in public communications as well as in everyday interaction" (2007, 91). Van Leeuwen recognizes four different key categories of legitimation:

> 1) 'authorization', legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom and law, and of persons in whom institutional authority is vested; 2) 'moral evaluation', legitimation by reference to discourses of value; 3) rationalization, legitimation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action, and to the social knowledges that endow them with cognitive validity; and 4) mythopoesis, legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non- legitimate actions. (ibid.)

Chilton says that legitimation is "usually oriented to the self, includes positive self-presentation, manifesting itself in acts of self-praise, self-apology, self-explanation, self[-]justification, self-identification as a source of authority, reason, vision and sanity, where the self is either an individual or the group with which an individual identifies or wishes to identify" (Chilton 2004, 47). I would argue that this definition of legitimation describes @realDonaldTrump's tweets fairly well. It is impossible, with absolute certainty, to know the reasons behind certain posts but I claim that Trump uses legitimation as a source of authority to self-praise and justify his opinions. Van Leeuwen also talks about multimodal legitimation where legitimation can be expressed through symbols, visuals, music etc. However, this study focuses only to written text and for this reason the theory on multimodal legitimation is left out.

### 3.1.1 **Authorization**

*Authorization* utilizes an actor "in whom some kind of authority is vested" due to their title, place, credentials etc. (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94). Authorization can be further divided into *personal authority, expert authority*, *role model authority, impersonal authority, authority of tradition* and the *authority of conformity* (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94-95). When one uses personal authorization, "legitimate authority is vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution" (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94). As an example, Van Leeuwen mentions teachers and children, and situations where children are supposed to follow the instructions given to them by teachers due to the hierarchy in school (ibid.). Trump's role as the president of the United States of America gives his tweets legitimate authority. In contrast, impersonal authority refers to the legitimation done through rules, laws, policies, guidelines etc. and not through a person (2007, 96). Legitimacy through expert authority is conveyed "by expertise rather than status" (ibid.). Van Leeuwen mentions that sometimes this type of expertise is shown explicitly by giving the credentials of the authority in question (ibid.). Van Leeuwen adds that when the expert is well-known in a certain context the credentials can be left out (2007, 95). As an example of expert authority, Van Leeuwen mentions instances where one legitimizes their point by saying things like "professor so-and-so believes" or by referring to "Doctor Juan" (ibid.) or in Trump's case when referring to a policy expert to corroborate own ideas.

The third authorization category is the role model authority which relies on the notion that people tend to follow the examples of opinion leaders and role models (Van Leeuwen 2007, 95). "The role models may be members of a peer group or media celebrities […] and the mere fact that these role models adopt a certain kind of behavior, or believe certain things, is enough to legitimize the actions of their followers" (Van Leeuwen). An example of this could be "the wise teacher" or "experienced teacher", where authority is given to them due to their role model position (ibid.).

When using impersonal authority, a person places the authority on laws, rules and regulations (Van Leeuwen 2007, 96). Hence, the authority is not based on anyone's personal authority but to impersonal institutions, rules and policies (ibid.). The authority of tradition is based on practice, custom or tradition and it legitimates with the help of the notion that "this is what we always do" and "this is how it has always been done" (ibid.).

The authority of conformity legitimates by noting that an action is legitimates "because that's what everybody else does" (ibid.).

### 3.1.2  **Moral evaluation**

Moral evaluation can be described as a legitimation which is based on some moral values, in opposition to being based on some kind of authority without any further justifications (Van Leeuwen 2007, 97). Moral evaluation can be as simple as asserting words that include moral nuances, such as *good* or *bad*, to text or speech (ibid.). If one looks at @realDonaldTrump's tweets, one sees words such as *fake* or *crooked*, that immediately reveal the moral stance of the writer. In majority of the cases moral evaluation is "linked to a specific discourse of moral value", however, these discourses are sometimes only hinted and not made explicit (ibid.). Van Leeuwen gives an example of this by telling that this can be done by using adjectives such as *natural*, *useful* or *normal* (ibid.). These words carrying hidden moral evaluations then "trigger a moral concept but are detached from the system of interpretation from which they derive, at least on conscious level" (ibid.). Van Leeuwen also notes that as discourse analysts, it is not "possible to find an explicit, linguistically motivated method for identifying moral evaluations" and that one can only recognize the instances based on the common-sense of cultural comprehension we have (2007, 98), thus making the analysis and findings debatable depending on the cultural background of the analyst.

Moral evaluation can be further divided into three subcategories; *evaluation*, *abstraction* and to *analogies*. In the first category, legitimation by evaluation, evaluative adjectives are a crucial element (2007, 98). Abstraction is a way of conveying moral evaluation by referring to certain practices "in abstract ways that 'moralize' them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values" (Van Leeuwen 2007, 99). Van Leeuwen gives an example by noting that instead of saying "the child goes to school for the first time", one might say that the "child takes up independence" (ibid.).  Lastly, analogies as a legitimation category is a method where moral evaluation is portrayed by comparison, in which the discourse has either legitimate or delegitimate function (2007, 99). In Van Leeuwen's example prison or military terms can be imported to school setting to compare the two (ibid.). In @realDonaldTrump's

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case this can be seen when criminal investigation is called a Witch-Hunt. In my opinion, all of these practices can be used to both legitimate and delegitimate.

### 3.1.3 Rationalization

The third category of legitimation is rationalization. Van Leeuwen mentions that when one uses rationalization to legitimize their message, the morality is usually submerged and remains hidden, even if rationalization cannot function properly as a legitimation without some morality (2007, 100). This means that rationalization is often covert and done for example by appealing to the audience's logic. From Van Leeuwen's point of view not all purposes given to actions serve as way of legitimation (ibid.). In order for something to function as a legitimate action, it needs to include at least some morality (ibid.). Van Leeuwen further divides rationalization into two subcategories; *instrumental* and *theoretical rationalization*. Instrumental rationalization legitimates discourse practices by referring to effects, uses and goals (2007, 101). This means that the purpose of the action itself, end goal, means of action or effect and outcome are moralized and legitimation relies on the evaluation if the action is morally justified (2007, 102-103). On the other hand, theoretical rationalization legitimation is related to "the way things are" and to "some kind of truth", and thus it is closely linked to *naturalization* (2007, 103). However, there is a difference between the two. Naturalization simply states that certain actions or practices are natural when 'theoretical rationalization' as legitimation provides explicit representations and reasons of "the way things are" (ibid.). Van Leeuwen mentions three different forms to apply theoretical rationalization: definition, explanation and prediction (2007, 104).

### 3.1.4 Mythopoesis

The last of the Van Leeuwen's legitimization categories is mythopoesis. It means legitimation which is achieved by storytelling and mythopoesis approaches can be divided into two categories; *moral tales* and *cautionary tales* (2007, 105-106). In moral tales, the protagonist is usually "rewarded for engaging in legitimate social practices or restoring the legitimate order" (Van Leeuwen 2007, 105). Van Leeuwen gives an example of a student who is afraid of going to school but overcomes this obstacle and the whole

story is followed by a happy ending (Van Leeuwen 2007, 105). In @realDonaldTrump's tweets, it looks like Trump is the protagonist who is being prosecuted of a crime he did not commit and is now being wrongfully harassed by the opposition made of democrats, FBI officials, media outlets and other individuals. @realDonaldTrump writes about playing along the Democrats' game and beating them in their own game by being righteous and transparent (Mar 16, 2019, 6:06 a.m.), thus he overcomes the obstacle. Another way of conducting mythopoesis is by utilizing cautionary tales. Cautionary tales focus on what will happen if certain social practices and norms are not confronted, when the protagonist engages in actions that are conceived to be bad or negative thus leading to less positive ending (Van Leeuwen 2007, 106). In Trump's tweets, this could be the group that Trump perceives to be his opposition, and by engaging in this wrongful witch-hunt, they can expect an unfortunate result when the investigation is completed.

## 3.2 Delegitimation

Legitimation and delegitimation are often described as opposite sides of a spectrum. The base of legitimation is making the views, opinions, choices accepted by the reader in the sense of promoting oneself. The act of delegitimation attempts the opposite; to undermine a view, opinion or a choice (Chilton 2004, 46-47). Chilton notes that delegitimation is the fundamental counterpart of others, such as unofficial opposition, foreigners, institutional opposition, strangers and the so-called 'enemies within' that tend to be presented in a negative light (2004, 46). These delegitimation techniques can include "the use of ideas of difference and boundaries, and speech acts of blaming, accusing, insulting, etc." (ibid.). One tends to legitimate himself/herself while delegitimating the other (Chilton 2004, 47). These strategies "may coincide with positive face (being an insider and legitimate) and negative face (being not only an outsider and thus not legitimate but also under attack) (ibid.). Chilton says that

> Delegitimisation can manifest itself in acts of negative other presentation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalising, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. The extreme is to deny the humanness of the other. (Chilton 2004, 47)

Van Leeuwen briefly mentions that the legitimation practices expressed in his theory can also be used to delegitimate and to criticize (2007, 92). Van Leeuwen mainly discusses legitimation and does not go into detail how these strategies are used in delegitimation. However, I would argue that it is quite possible to use most of his legitimation strategies to delegitimate. It is possible to use the different legitimation strategies both to promote one's own face and to undermine the other. For example, one can use authorization to promote their own agenda, but also to undermine the other by saying that his/her own view is corroborated by specialist in that field, but the opponent is not backed by specialist. Moral evaluation can be both positive and negative and one can use rationalization to explain why something can perceived to be good or bad, based on the logical reasons behind it. It is also noteworthy to mention that all the legitimation and delegitimation strategies can occur independently or in in combination (Van Leeuwen 2007, 92).

### 3.3 Ideological square

Legitimation is a form of discourse that explains social activity and the reasoning behind the choices being made and it usually provides "good reasons, grounds, or acceptable motivations for past or present action" (Van Dijk 1998, 255). In order to comprehend discourse, both text and talk, topics have an important role (Van Dijk, 1998, 267). He notes that to understand meanings, we need to understand ideological meanings that are incorporated into the text and that not all information is given but it is up to the speaker and writer to express those notions that they think the recipient should know (ibid.). According to Van Dijk, this is evidence of the writer's/speaker's ideology (1998, 267). Writer/speaker can omit aspects that might give a bad or an immoral impression against them ("relative incompleteness") or include something that will make them seen in a more positive way ("overcomplete") (1998, 267-268). The two principles of ideological reproduction are "presence or absence of information" and "the function of expression or suppression of information in the interest of the speaker/writer" (Van Dijk 1998, 267). The former of these principles can divided into four main moves:

| 1. Express/emphasize information that is positive about US |
|---|
| 2. Express/emphasize information that is negative about Them |
| 3. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about Them |
| 4. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about US |

Table 1. Ideological Square by Van Dijk (1998)

These four categories introduced are what Van Dijk calls the ideological square, and it plays a role in positive self-representation and face-keeping and "negative other-presentation" (ibid.). One can legitimate one's personal views by establishing a binary distinction between *Us* and *Them* (Oddo 2011, 288) and then using these strategies to focus on the aspect they think will help legitimate their claim in the best way possible. Van Dijk notes that these divisions to *Us* and Them do not primarily focus on individuals but groups members (Van Dijk 1998, 245). However, this study also focuses on individuals that seem to be part of *Us* and Them, based on the categorizations that @realDonaldTrump seems to be making. Van Dijk notes that "[b]iased discourses will tend to be very detailed about Their bad acts and Our good acts, and quite abstract and general about Their good acts and Out bad ones" (1998, 268), however, @realDonaldTrump's Twitter is at least in theory his personal Twitter account and portraying "bias" is generally more approved than it would be in other context or media.

### 3.4 Modal Auxiliary Verbs

On more addition that is beneficial to make when talking about moral elements is modality. Modality can be expressed through the use of modal auxiliary verbs. Modal verbs are used, for example, to express obligation, necessity, desire, intention, willingness, probability (Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994, 176-180). The modal verbs in English language are *can, may, must, shall, will, could, might, should* and *would* (British Council, n.d.). In addition, English language also includes so-called semi-modals that include verbs such as *dare, need, ought to* and *used to*, and other verbs that include a modal meaning such as *have (got) to, be going to* and *be able to* (Cambridge Dictionary s.v. "modal verbs," aux.). One uses modal verbs when one wants "to express an opinion

or attitude about a possible fact or to control a possible action. All modal expressions are about the speaker's or writer's view of the world." (Cambridge Dictionary s.v. "modal meaning," aux.). These modal words can also be further divided to having two different types of meaning. In the first category, the writer or speaker expresses the certainty they feel toward something in the past, present or future tense (ibid.). In the second category, the writer or speaker wants to have control of the action in question, and they either refuse or give permission with the help of the modal verb (ibid.). In these cases, one portrays necessity and obligation and what they would prefer or not prefer (ibid.).

## 3.5 Criticism and previous research

Legitimation and delegitimation have been used for other research as well. John Oddo has used legitimation theory to investigate and compare how two U.S. presidents (Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Bush) used the different legitimation strategies in four different "call-to-arms" speeches (2011, 287-314). In his study, Oddo concentrates on the binary distinction that is made between *Us* and *Them* and how this legitimates the claim to take action and justify the decision of going to war.

The theoretical framework of legitimation has also faced some criticism during the years. Van Leeuwen's theory and examples are mostly based on school environment and legitimation and political discourse is quite far from the school context. However, the framework of legitimation and legitimacy have been applied on multiple different scientific fields. Gilles Marion (2006, 245-262) studied legitimation in marketing ideology, and Chaemsaithong and Kim (2018, 286-310) studied legitimation in Boston marathon bombing trial narratives. I would argue that the underlining idea of legitimation theory functions well outside the classroom and is applicable to political context as well. Antonio Reyes employed similar legitimation strategies (legitimation through emotions, expertise and rationality) when he studied two previous U.S. Presidents' political discourse (2011, 781-807). Van Dijk's framework of ideological square has also used in the translation studies in a political context. Daghigh, Sanatifar and Awang (2018) have used the theory to study the manipulation occurring in political discourse translations.

Van Leeuwen's legitimation framework also focuses mainly on longer stretches of text and speech. In contrast, Twitter is used to convey short key messages to

vast audiences and some aspects (like mythopoesis and moral tales) are difficult to portray with shorter texts. Having said that, I still think the key elements can be found when one focuses on the underlining and implied meaning. The concise nature of tweets might cause the end result of a moral story to only be implied. On @realDonaldTrump's Twitter, however, the messages are sometimes longer (tweet sets) and some might treat the whole Twitter page as one large narrative.

# 4. Material and Methods

After introducing the reader to the necessary background information and theoretical frameworks, I now introduce the material and methodology used to conduct the present study. In section 4.1, I will begin by explaining the criteria used to collect the data in the micro-corpus and then the data itself. In chapter 4.2, I will introduce the methods that were used to conduct the study.

## 4.1 Material

The main objective of this study was to investigate in what ways Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump) uses the different (de)legitimation strategies in his tweets related to the FBI's investigation, and see if any changes occur around the time the results of the investigation were published. In addition, the goal was to investigate underlying meanings behind the tweets. The reason why I chose to analyze Trump's Twitter over his other social media sites is that the other social media platforms seem to be administrated by social media experts or staff. However, Trump's Twitter seems to have a more personal and informal style. It is interesting that Trump's Twitter account, @realDonaldTrump, was his personal account already before his political career or presidency and it seems likely that Trump himself is behind the tweets (Isotalus, Jussila and Matikainen 2018, 16). While it is possible that his staff or other guides him, @realDonaldTrump's tweets are portrayed to be the President's words. In addition, Robert Mueller's investigation regards @realDonaldTrump's as his own writing and it its quite safe to assume that Trump himself is mostly behind them. However, to avoid confusion, I will refer to the writer of the tweets as @realDonaldTrump instead of Donald Trump since there is no absolute certainty of the author. Another reason for choosing

Twitter over other social media sites is that Trump is very active in Twitter and for this reason his Twitter contains abundance of material to analyze.

As my primary data, I collected tweets from Trump's personal Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) that are related on some level to the FBI's investigation and the Mueller report. The tweets in the datasets were located with the help of keywords that were found quite frequently to refer to the investigation. The keywords used were *witch hunt, Mueller, special counsel, hoax, collusion, impeach** (see Table 2). Capitalization is not a key factor since the word is counted with and without capital letters. The key word *impeach* was used to search other derivations of the word, and consequently the word *impeachment* acts as a keyword. The words *investigation* and *Russia* located too many unrelated tweets and therefore they were left out of the search. The quantities of each key words @realDonaldTrump uses can be seen in Table 2.

| | D1: Quantity of Key Words in total | D1: Quantity of Key words inside quotes | D2: Quantity of Key Words in total | D2: Quantity of Key Words inside quotes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| witch hunt | 24 | (2) | 10 | |
| Mueller | 9 | (3) | 35 | (2) |
| special counsel | 4 | (2) | 0 | |
| hoax | 10 | | 10 | |
| collusion | 29 | (4) | 41 | (3) |
| impeach, impeachment | 7 | | 6 | |

Table 2. Key word quantities in D1 and D2

These tweets were then copied and used to create a micro-corpus. In order to analyze the possible changes around the time of Mueller report's publication, the data in the corpus was split into two parts. The Mueller report was published on 22nd of March and @realDonaldTrump first addressed the results on the next day which is used as the cutoff point. The first half of the micro-corpus (the dataset 1), includes 50 most recent tweet or tweet sets posted before 23rd of March. The second half of the corpus (the dataset 2) includes 50 most recent tweets or tweet sets posted on or after 23rd of March. The quantities are similar in both datasets in order to get results that can be compared reliably. The tweets are all posted by @realDonaldTrump and they either include at least one of the keywords or they are a continuation of those tweets. Thus, the time range of tweets in D1 vary from 18th of December 2018 to 22nd of March 2019

and for D2 from 23rd of March 2019 to 29th of April 2019. The time frame in the second dataset is notably shorter, however, this just demonstrations that major key events can cause an influx of tweets. As the investigation gathers public attention, it is only natural that also the number of tweets by @realDonaldTrump become more numerous. Even though the time period in D2 is shorter than in D1, I still argue that the tweets in dataset 2 are spread over a month's time and that this time frame is lengthy enough in order to locate any possible changes around the time that the Mueller report was published.

As mentioned above, both the D1 and D2 include 50 tweets or tweet sets which in total equals to 100 sets of tweets. A tweet set can include two or more related tweets. One tweet set in D1 is actually comprised of four tweets in total. The D1 includes 38 single tweets and 12 tweet sets, in total these make 65 tweets when inspected individually. The D2 includes 42 single tweets and 8 tweet sets, in total these make 60 tweets. In total there are 125 tweets in D1 and D2 together when counted individually. Out of the 65 tweets in D1, 56 include at least one key word and nine were added manually in order to keep the full message intact. Out of the 60 tweets in D2, 58 include one or more key word and two were manually added. Tweet sets are distinguished by three dots in the beginning and/or end of the tweet to indicate that the tweet is split. Since some of the tweets are cut to two in the middle of the sentence, I argue that the set of tweets make more sense when inspected together. For this reason, I will treat tweet sets as one tweet in order to convey the intended message more clearly.

| | D1<br>(18 Dec 2018 -<br>22 Mar 2019) | D2<br>(23 Mar 2019 –<br>29 Apr 2019) | D1 + D2<br>(18 Dec 2018 -<br>29 Apr 2019) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of tweets regarded as one entity | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| Number of single tweets | 38 | 42 | 80 |
| Number of tweet sets | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| Individually inspected number of tweets | 65 | 60 | 125 |
| Tweets that include at least one key word (inspected individually) | 56 | 58 | 114 |
| Tweets that do not include any key words (inspected individually) | 9 | 2 | 11 |

Table 3. Data in Micro-Corpus Clarified

## 4.2 Methods

In this section, I will account the methodology used to investigate how one of the most influential political figures, Donald J. Trump, uses the social media platform Twitter to legitimize his claims and views regarding the FBI's investigation and the Mueller report and its results. In addition, in this section I will demonstrate how the possible changes and the meanings behind the tweets in the micro-corpus, were examined. This study was conducted as a case study and it is empirical and qualitative in nature.

I started my research by simply reading through some of the tweets on @realDonaldTrump's timeline to get an overall picture of the tweets he posts to better understand the underlining linguistic style that he uses. Next, I started looking for the posts related to the FBI's Russia investigation and sought out and marked down the words that kept reoccurring. I used the Twitter's own advanced search and searched for tweets that would include the phrases "Russia investigation" or "Mueller". These are quite straightforward search elements and they do not leave much room for misinterpretations However, it soon became evident that they only cover a small portion of the tweets written about the investigation. I also tried using only the word "Russia" or "investigation", but these words brought up a vast amount tweets that included abundance of unrelated tweets into the mix and thus could not reliably be used as a key word. Next, I sought other reoccurring words and phrases in the tweets that would help me locate more tweets posted about the investigation. I quickly noticed that words and phrases like *Witch Hunt*, *hoax* and *collusion* kept reoccurring in the tweets and brought to light more related tweets and subsequently they were added to the list of key words. I ended up using *witch hunt, Mueller, special counsel, hoax, collusion, impeach** as key words.

It is noteworthy to mention that some of these interpretations rely heavily on context that they were posted in. For example, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the phrase *witch hunt* means either "a searching out for persecution of persons accused of witchcraft" or **"the searching out and deliberate harassment of those (such as political opponents) with unpopular views" (Merriam - Webster Dictionary, s.v. "witch hunt," n.). @realDonaldTrump uses the noun phrase "Witch Hunt" frequently in his tweets, speeches and interviews to refer to the FBI's investigation and due to the frequent repetition, the phrase and the investigation form a connection. Also, by writing the term in capital letters, he has created an association which almost

instantly links the investigation and a witch hunt in the reader's mind. At least in the mind of someone who is acquainted with Trump's language choices. Even if it is not possible to say with absolute certainty that all of the references to "Witch Hunt" are related to the investigation, they are presented to the public as such.

After using Twitter's own search tool, it soon became clear that it had some problematic features and limitations. The advanced search tool does not display the quantity of results and it only displays a portion of results at a time. The results' display includes all aspects (likes, comments, pictures etc.) simultaneously and they can't be omitted in order to display more results at the same time or concentrate on one factor at a time. It is also particularly difficult to export tweets from Twitter making the analysis process quite difficult. Due to Twitter's limitations, I decided to utilize a third-party website called trumptwitterarchive.com. Trumptwitterarchive.com is a web page that contains a database where one can search for @realDonaldTrump's tweets with the help of key words, time adjustments and other specifications. In trumptwitterarchive.com, one can see the result of the search in chronological order and the results are numbered. It is also possible to only display the text, while omitting retweets, pictures, comments, hashtags etc. The site automatically saves all the tweets published in real time and all of the tweets published on the site include a direct link to the original tweet in Twitter. I checked the tweets mentioned in the analysis section, and all of the can be found on Twitter.com exactly as they are on trumpwitterarchive.com. Having said that, one has to keep in mind that trumptwitterarchive.com is hosted by a private person and as a source needs to be treated accordingly. Also, the web page notes that approximately 4000 tweets published by @realDonaldTrump are missing from the page. These tweets include, for instance, tweets that @realDonaldTrump posted and deleted before September 2016. Having said that, deleted tweets would not be visible on the actual Twitter platform either.

The FBI's investigation of Russian involvement in the 2016 Presidential election has been active for a few years and Trump's Twitter page abundance of material regarding the investigation. The keyword search in the Twitter's search tool generated a dataset comprised of over 800 tweets, and due to the scope of the thesis, the material had to be limited. In order to investigate the legitimations used around the time of the publication, I decided to concentrate on 50 most recent tweet sets posted on the topic before and after the publication of the Mueller report. I'm confident that this scope is vast enough to indicate any relevant changes that might have occurred around the time of the

publication and provides enough data to acquire reliable results and a versatile overview of the content.

I also wanted to focus on the language that can be perceived as Donald Trump's (or @realDonaldTrump's), and for that reason comments, videos, images and plain retweets were left out. While they do reflect Donald Trump's views and they are choice of language use, they do not count as Trump's own words in the same sense. For example, plain retweets do not include any additional input from @realDonaldTrump, and while they do give the audience an idea of his views, they do not count as his own words. However, I did include tweets where others were quoted or paraphrased, and they included some input by @realDonaldTrump himself. In these cases, I focused on the text outside the quotation marks and that was portrayed as @realDonaldTrump's writings. Having said that, I kept the whole tweet intact because @realDonaldTrump's words are closely related to the quote or paraphrase and simply do not make sense on their own. In the running text, I italicized the part of the tweets that are direct quotes (and out of the scope of the analysis), to help the reader notice which part of the data was not analyzed. I also intentionally kept the tweets as they were originally posted and did not correct any spelling errors or change any capitalization choices. Capitalization of words is a characteristic feature in Trump's Twitter (Clarke and Grieve 2019, 17), and I kept the message in the original form to ensure that the message remains as authentic as possible.

As mentioned earlier, @realDonaldTrump Twitter is his personal page and some "errors" may occur when quoting or paraphrasing other parties. In some @realDonaldTrump's tweets, the way in which he indicates quotations, some ambiguity occurs. There were a couple of tweets that I found somewhat problematic. The main complication was that in some tweets @realDonaldTrump did not clearly indicate whether a piece of text was his own thinking or if it was a paraphrase, quotation or a reference. In few tweets, the tweet had quotation marks but no reference to the person being quoted (example a). In some cases, a reference element (such as a quotation mark) was missing (example b). These tweets still seemed to be quotations where a simple mistake on the quotation element occurred and thus, they were left out of the scope, since they are not portrayed as @realDonaldTrump's own words.

a) "The Special Counsel did not find that the Trump Campaign, or anyone associated with it, conspired or coordinated with the Russian Government in these efforts, despite multiple offers from Russian-affiliated individuals to assist the Trump Campaign." (@realDonaldTrump Mar 25, 2019, 12:20 p.m.)

b) When there is not an underlying crime with regard to Collusion (in fact, the whole thing was a made up fraud), it is difficult to say that someone is obstructing something. There was no underlying crime." @marthamaccallum @FoxNews (@realDonaldTrump Apr 19, 2019, 2:46 a.m.)

In few tweets @realDonaldTrump simply tags or mentions another user or person without any quotation marks. In example c, one can see a tweet by @realDonaldTrump, which does not include any quotation marks, and the user @GreggJarrett is only added to the end. One cannot know for sure if this tweet is a paraphrase on Gregg Jarrett's words or if @realDonaldTrump simply added @GreggJarrett to get his attention or inform him of this tweet. However, as there are no quotation marks, it is not perceived to be a quote and it is treated as @realDonaldTrump's own writing.

c) Not only did Senator Burr's Committee find No Collusion by the Trump Campaign and Russia, it's important because they interviewed 200 witnesses and 300,000 pages of documents, & the Committee has direct access to intelligence information that's Classified. @GreggJarrett (Feb 8, 2019, 2:23 p.m.)

It is also beneficial to note, that one popular feature in Twitter is the use of hashtags (#). One uses hashtags to connect their tweets to other related tweets to make them easier to find and characterize (Isotalus, Jussila and Martikainen 2018, 10). However, @realDonaldTrump uses hashtags quite rarely only one hashtag (#MAGA, Make America Great Again) was found in the whole dataset. Due to due to the scarcity of hashtags, they were left out.

As mentioned earlier, in some cases the search engine found a tweet that seemed incomplete and this was due to the fact that some tweets are divided into two or more tweets. The search engine only finds the tweets with the correct key word and in some cases I had to manually search for additional parts of the tweet. The addition was done by adjusting the time frame close to the time of the original post and by going through the results and matching the messages. Tweets divided into two or more tweets are actually signaled by three dots at the end or a beginning of a tweet to make it easier to see which messages ought to be linked together.

After adjusting the keywords, manually adding the missing continuations of tweets and deleting the ambiguous or unrelated tweets, I exported the 110 tweets or tweet sets into a separate file and created my micro-corpus and started my analysis. I

began doing my analysis by reading through tweets one by one (or one related tweet set at a time) and by trying to find different element of (de)legitimation. I first did these to the tweets that were posted before the publication of the Mueller report (D1). I read through the tweets and tried to find element of one legitimation strategy (moral evaluation, authorization, rationalization and mythopoesis) at a time to keep my focus on one thing and my notes organized. After this, I did the same for the latter half of the micro-corpus (D2). I analyzed both halves of the corpus six times. On the first four times, I was looking for legitimation patterns, then the use of ideological square and lastly other interesting elements that I might have noticed while doing my prior analysis and looked interesting. Then, I compared my results in D1 and D2 to see if any notable changes occurred and tried to analyze the underlying meanings. I must mention that my original intent was to count all the occurrences of the four different legitimation categories, but I soon realized that there are too many complicated and ambiguous cases to reliably categorize. This is mainly due to the fact that the tweets are short in nature and the message is at times only implied and not fully stated and the analysis varies from reader to reader. There is no point in counting the instances when such a large number of tweets can be analyzed quite differently. Having said that, while it was not possible count exact numbers or percentages, I was able to analyze in depth the ways in which @realDonaldTrump utilized different delegitimation strategies in his tweets about the Mueller investigation and find existing patterns.

It is noteworthy, that Twitter as a platform to conduct a study, is not the easiest and I did come across some limitations. As mentioned before, the advanced search only displays a small quantity of tweets and does not portray any quantities. Character limitations and Twitter's technical aspects might cause minor distortions. Also, words that are misspelled do not appear in the search. The keywords themselves are not all encompassing, and it is possible, and even probable, that some tweets related to this topic are simply outside the scope of this thesis because they do not include any of the key words. However, this study concentrates on the data that is brought up by the keyword and does not treat missing tweets as a problem.

One more aspect, that ought to be taken into consideration, is that some key words are already somewhat loaded and included a level of moral evaluation and the results are bound to reflect this. Also, one cannot be entirely sure that certain keywords always refer to the same thing. For example, it is possible that the word "collusion" might

in some cases refer to something else as well. Having said that, @realDonaldTrump repeatedly uses collusion to function as a synonym for the FBI's investigation and for the sake of this thesis, I think it is fair to assume that most of the key words repeatedly refer to the same thing.

As mentioned in the introduction, the tweets posted in Twitter are public in nature, thus the president's privacy wasn't violated in any way. They are available for anyone, anywhere, at any time and one can access the tweets even without the need of logging in as a user. The tweets are not posted by a private person, but the head of the United States, and they were most likely targeted to reach a vast audience. Thus, research ethics was considered, and President Trump's privacy was not violated in any way.

## 5. Results

In this chapter, I will present the analysis based on the two halves of the micro-corpus. First, I am going to go through my findings regarding dataset 1 (see section 5.1) and then in dataset 2 (see section 5.2). I will begin by going exemplifying the different (de)legitimation strategies employed by @realDonaldTrump with examples for each instance. Next, I will demonstrate how @realDonaldTrump uses ideological square and modal verbs to his advantage. Some of the (de)legitimation strategies are employed more than others, however, as mentioned in the methods section, it wasn't possible for me to reliably count an exact numbers or percentages to portray how much different legitimation strategies were used. Nevertheless, I am going to mention if a particular legitimation strategy was employed frequently or not. Some of the examples include an underlining which I added in order to highlight a specific text element. In some cases, this might help the reader to understand which parts of the tweet in particular demonstrate specific legitimation strategy.

### 5.1 Analysing @realDonaldTrump's Tweets in Dataset 1

While inspecting the tweets in D1, it soon became clear that the (de)legitimation strategy that @realDonaldTrump uses most frequently is moral evaluation. *Moral evaluation* is legitimation by referencing to different value systems, sometimes only covertly, and this type of legitimation might go undetected without careful investigation (Van Leeuwen

2007, 92). It is possible, that based on different background knowledge, the audience might interpret the underlying messages differently (Van Leeuwen 2007, 98). However, in the case of @realDonaldTrump's, his use of moral evaluation is quite overt, visible and frequent. In D1, he employs all three strategies (*evaluation, abstraction and analogies*). Having said that, it is extremely difficult to give any explicit figures on the legitimations used. All quantities ought to be treated with caution, however, I'm quite confident when I say that at least 48 out of 50 (set of) tweets included elements of moral evaluation.

It seems that @realDonaldTrump uses positive evaluation to legitimate his actions, politics, achievement and views. For example, @realDonaldTrump writes that under his time as president the unemployment and economy are the "best ever" and that the vets and military are "great" and on top of these there are "many other successes" (@realDonaldTrump Mar 13, 2019, 12:50 p.m.). He also describes himself as the "President with the most successful first two years in history" (ibid.). As one can see, he is legitimating his position as the President of the United States by showing the reader all these factors that carry morally positive evaluation. In contrast, @realDonaldTrump uses negative moral evaluation to delegitimate the opposing side and this seems to be the even more frequent that the positive moral evaluation. The negative moral evaluation is also quite visible in the use of morally evaluative adjectives. A single tweet can include several morally evaluative adjectives. Example one includes five different evaluative adjectives and one adverb to emphasize the meaning of the evaluative adjectives and example two incudes three negative adjectives and an adverb to strengthen @realDonaldTrump's stance.

(1) Wow, just learned in the <u>Failing</u> New York Times that the <u>corrupt</u> former leaders of the FBI, almost all fired or forced to leave the agency for some *<u>very</u> <u>bad</u>* reasons, opened up an investigation on me, for no reason & with no proof, after I fired <u>Lyin</u>' James Comey, a total <u>sleaze</u>! (@realDonaldTrump, Jan 12, 2019, 2:05 p.m.)

(2) The Mueller investigation is *<u>totally</u> <u>conflicted,</u> <u>illegal</u>* and <u>rigged</u>! Should never have been allowed to begin, except for the Collusion and many crimes committed by the Democrats. Witch Hunt! (@realDonaldTrump, Feb 18, 2019, 1:45 a.m.)

The moral evaluation is quite overt. @realDonaldTrump is visibly using these adjectives also to delegitimate the parties he regards as opposition. In the examples above, the

opposition seems to include the news outlet New York Times that has published unfavorable articles about Trump and thus it is described as *failing*. Also, the FBI's leaders are portrayed as an untrustworthy source by noting that were asked to leave for "very bad reasons" and that they opened the investigation without any reason or proof just to get back at him for firing James Comey (former director of the FBI). Comey is described to be a lying sleaze, and all of these suggest that the opposition that Trump faces is untrustworthy.

The strategy of delegitimating the (perceived) opposition through the use of negative morally evaluative adjectives continues throughout the whole first dataset. When @realDonaldTrump describes the people holding opposing views, he uses evaluative adjectives with negative connotation repeatedly. The adjective *fake* occurs in seven tweets, *illegal* in nine tweets, *crooked* in 15 tweets (14 of which refer to Hillary Clinton), *bad* in seven tweets and *unverified* in three tweets. Also, and the adjective *illegal* or the adverb *illegally* appear in eight tweets. One could say that the use of moral adjectives with negative connotations is frequent and word choices very repetitive.

While analyzing the use of moral evaluation in D1, it soon became quite evident that adjectives are not the only word class that @realDonaldTrump uses to express moral evaluation. I would argue that one strategy, that he employs in order to legitimate and delegitimate, is using nouns and verbs that also carry morally evaluative meaning. These can also be referred as *loaded words or loaded language*. Loaded language can be used when one refers to written communication that is aimed to elicit emotional responses from the person reading or listening it (Your Dictionary, n.d.). Loaded language can be used to motivate the audience, gain support or a political foothold, push an agenda, sway opinions or degrade opposition (ibid.) and sometimes words that are loaded with implications and meanings can even become "overstuffed" (Garber 2012, 6). For example, in January 2019 @realDonaldTrump writes that FBI was in "complete turmoil", about the "Clinton mess" and "usurpation" (@realDonaldTrump Jan 12, 2019, 2:33 p.m.). He also describes parties helping the investigation as "leaking machines" (@realDonaldTrump Jan 12, 2019, 2:53 p.m.). The first three examples include nouns that are directly linked to a negative quality to help delegitimate the other. *Machine* is not intrinsically negative, however, when paired with the word *leaking*, it includes a level of negative moral evaluation. The reason for choosing these particular words can be any of the examples mentioned above. It is impossible to know the reasons

indisputably, but it is safe to say that the word choices are chosen to reflect his ideology and stance.

The use of loaded language is closely linked to Van Leeuwen's abstractions. Abstractions are elements of moral evaluation that moralizes by linking a certain aspect to another in abstract ways (Van Leeuwen 2007, 99). @realDonaldTrump does this when referencing to the FBI's investigation as a witch hunt by using them almost synonymously and by transferring the qualities associated with a witch hunt to the investigation. The noun phrase occurs in total of 24 times in D1. In addition, the words *harassment* and *hoax* are frequently used to refer to the investigation and the negative qualities linked to these words are used to moralize. The use of the word collusion is quite frequent, and it occurs in D1 in total of 29 times.

@realDonaldTrump also uses some analogies (comparisons) but significantly less than the other two strategies mentioned above. In March 2019, he writes

(3) It's truly incredible that shows like Saturday Night Live, not funny/no talent, can spend all of their time knocking the same person (me), over & over, without so much of a mention of "the other side." <u>Like an advertisement without consequences.</u> Same with Late Night Shows...... (@realDonaldTrump Mar 17, 2019, 1:59 p.m.)

In example three, he writes that the show Saturday Night Live (SNL), a comical tv-show, is allowed to attack him repeatedly without a mention to his opposition (who @realDonaldTrump considers having committed crimes and illegal investigations) and compares it to advertisements that do not have any consequences. He seems to be saying that SNL does not seem to hold enough responsibility of its actions and acts in an irresponsible manner, thus delegitimating the content produced by it.

Significant amount of the moral evaluation in D1 is based on delegitimating the other, however, there are some instances where @realDonaldTrump uses positive evaluation to legitimate him and his side. In examples four and five, one can see that he describes the choices that he has made and the leadership he has shown by legitimating his action by using moral evaluation that carry positive values. @realDonaldTrump suggest that under his leadership the economy, military and veterans are doing great and that he has helped coin many other successes. @realDonaldTrump uses positive superlatives and phrases like "best ever" or "most successful".

(4) I greatly appreciate Nancy Pelosi's statement against impeachment, but everyone must remember the minor fact that I never did anything wrong, the Economy and Unemployment are the best ever, Military and Vets are great - and many other successes! How do you impeach.... (@realDonaldTrump Mar 13, 2019, 12:50 p.m.)

(5) ….a man who is considered by many to be the President with the most successful first two years in history, especially when he has done nothing wrong and impeachment is for "high crimes and misdemeanors"? (@realDonaldTrump Mar 13, 2019, 12:50 p.m.)

In addition, I noticed that @realDonaldTrump uses modal auxiliary verbs in order to express moral evaluation. In D1, @realDonaldTrump uses the modal verb *must* appears five times in total and it is used to expresses strong obligation (Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. "modal meaning" aux.) By using the word *must*, @realDonaldTrump expresses the audience aspects that he considers having strong urgency. In example six, he clearly expresses strong necessity by noting how the investigation must end. In D1, @realDonaldTrump also uses the modal verb *should* in total of eight times. The modal auxiliary verb *should* is used to convey what in his opinion should happen. In example seven, it is used to signal to the past and what should have been done differently. In this tweet, @realDonaldTrump suggest that the investigation (that he perceives as illegal and rigged) should have never been allowed to start. The word *should* expresses what is considered to be weak obligation (ibid.) but an obligation nevertheless. Even if the obligation is lesser than with *must*. For example, @realDonaldTrump writes as follows:

(6) This Witch Hunt must end! (Feb 1, 2019, 6:26 a.m.)

(7) The Mueller investigation is totally conflicted, illegal and rigged! Should never have been allowed to begin, except for the Collusion and many crimes committed by the Democrats. Witch Hunt! (Feb 18, 2019, 1:45 a.m.)

Both the examples six and seven are clearly used to delegitimate the integrity and intentions of the investigation. This is done through a level of negative moral evaluation by using a modal auxiliary verb. The tweets also include other morally evaluative negative adjectives such as *conflicted*, *rigged* and the loaded term *Witch Hunt*. The use of modal auxiliary verbs adds a level of morality to the tweets. In addition, it is interesting that four of the eight tweets that included the modal verb *should*, it was followed with the word *never* to amplify the message. If one were to compare the sentences "should never have been allowed to begin" and "should not have been allowed to begin", the first is stronger and the effect of the legitimation stricter.

As mentioned in the methods section (see 4.2), the results are bound to include at least some level of moral evaluation since some of the key words alone include some aspect of moral evaluation. However, even if these key words were left outside the analysis, the majority of the tweets still include another morally evaluative element. The only tweets that do not include other morally evaluative elements are the tweets that are mainly made of the key words, such as "WITCH HUNT!" (@realDonaldTrump Jan 27, 2019, 3:51 a.m.) or "The Witch Hunt continues!" (@realDonaldTrump Mar 10, 2019, 12:19 a.m.).

Having said that moral evaluation is exceptionally frequent in D1 and it can be found in almost every single tweet in the dataset, there are a few tweets that are ambiguous in this sense and interpretation on @realDonaldTrump's input could vary. This variation is due to the fact that these tweets include a quotation by someone else (marked in italics) and then a short remark from @realDonaldTrump (underlined). This thesis is interested in what is perceived to be the words of @realDonaldTrump's, and it only concentrates to his remarks and not to the text inside the quotations. However, the two are intrinsically related. For example, in March @realDonaldTrump writes

(8) *"Now that the Dems are going to try & switch from Collusion to some other reason, it makes them continue to look like sore losers who didn't accept the WILL OF THE PEOPLE in the last election - they will do anything to get rid of the President."* @AriFleischer It will never work! (Mar 4, 2019, 10:06 p.m.).

(9) *" ....(The Witch Hunt) in time likely will become recognized as the greatest scandal in American political history, marking the first occasion in which the U.S. government bureaucrats sought to overturn an election (presidential)!"* Victor Davis Hanson And got caught! @FoxNews (Feb 19, 2019, 2:21 p.m.)

@realDonaldTrump's input in examples eight and nine consists only of few words and if inspected individually they do not express emphatic moral evaluation. However, when read together with the quotation, to which it is referring to, some might analyze them as moral evaluation. As Van Leeuwen notes, "it is not possible to find an explicit, linguistically motivated method for identifying moral evaluations" and "[a]s discourse analysts we can only 'recognize' them, on the basis of our common-sense cultural knowledge" (2007, 98). Thus, there is no one correct way to interpret all moral evaluations and in at times one must rely on common knowledge and intuition and again strict numbers and percentages are hard to give. To conclude, no matter how these few

individual tweets or key words are handled, it is fair to say that @realDonaldTrump uses moral evaluation abundantly and quite visibly in D1.

The recurring theme that @realDonaldTrump seems to display in order to legitimate in the D1 is his innocence of these accusations made against him. President Trump is made out to be the innocent victim of the FBI's illegal and rigged investigation. @realDonaldTrump seems to corroborate a storyline where he is unrightfully being persecuted. He portrays this by legitimating claims that agree with this claim and delegitimating claims against it. *Victimization* is one the strategies that @realDonaldTrump uses to express this. For example, as mentioned above, the abstraction *Witch Hunt* gives the audience a sense of a president being persecuted for something that he has not done. In example ten, @realDonaldTrump portrays his innocence by simply claiming that he is innocent and by saying just being persecuted by bad people who want his demise. He writes

> (10)    ...said was a total lie, but Fake Media won't show it. <u>I am an innocent man being persecuted by some very bad, conflicted & corrupt people in a Witch Hunt that is illegal & should never have been allowed to start</u> - And only because I won the Election! Despite this, great success! (Mar 3, 2019, 5:44 p.m.)

By doing so, @realDonaldTrump expresses that in his views he is wrongfully and incorrectly treated while being innocent. This is done by bad people in an investigation that is illegal and done for no good reason. He ends the tweet by saying that despite this all "great success", as if saying that even after all this, he will not let this injustice bring him down, but he will keep on fighting. In reality, the last sentence could refer to other things as well, but this is one way of interpreting it. In another tweet posted a short while later, he writes that "while I greatly appreciate Nancy Pelosi's statement against impeachment, but everyone must remember the minor fact that I never did anything wrong" (@realDonaldTrump Mar 13, 2019, 12:50 p.m.). Again, explicitly stating that he has done nothing wrong and delegitimating the whole investigation.

In D1, @realDonaldTrump legitimates through *authorization* in which legitimation is achieved by utilizing the authority of a person, institution, custom or tradition that is commonly accepted (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94). One of the authorization types, that @realDonaldTrump uses in his tweets, is role model authorization. Role model authorization relies on the notion that people are expected to follow the examples of role

models, instead of their role in an institution or they expert knowledge. In example 11, one can see how @realDonaldTrump quotes the words of Gregg Jarrett (Fox News commentator) and it seems that @realDonaldTrump relies on the authority of Jarrett's persona, celebrity status and media presence. @realDonaldTrump agrees with Jarrett's claims and thus vests authority in him. Jarrett functions as role models for the audience of the tweets. In January @realDonaldTrump writes

> (11)   Gregg Jarrett: "*Mueller's prosecutors knew the "Dossier" was the product of bias and deception*." It was a Fake, just like so much news coverage in our Country. Nothing but a Witch Hunt, from beginning to end! (Jan 18, 2019, 5:03 a.m.)

@realDonaldTrump legitimates his own claim by presenting a popular and famous figure who agrees with the claim that the "Dossier" (probably the Mueller report) is biased. @realDonaldTrump then continues the tweet by writing that "it was Fake" and by implying that some news outlets and actors behind the "Witch Hunt" should not be trusted. In addition to Jarrett, @realDonaldTrump quotes Catherine Herridge (who at that time was Fox News' Intelligence correspondent) and Graham Ledger (news anchor and television host). By quoting these well-known media personalities' words on topics that he agrees, he legitimates his own stance and claim. Van Leeuwen's (1998) theory on authority relies mainly on people being the role models and sources of authorization but @realDonaldTrump quotes and paraphrases institutions, especially the Fox News Channel (@FoxNews). Thus, Fox News also functions as a role model at least on some level.

@realDonaldTrump also legitimates his stance through the use of personal authorization. Personal authorization vests authority to a person due to their role or status in particular institution (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94). @realDonaldTrump utilizes personal authority by quoting and referring to other political figures that agree with him and his claims. For example, @realDonaldTrump refers and quotes Senator Richard Burr to whom power and authority is vested due to his role in the senate. In example 12, @realDonaldTrump highlights Burr's status by referring to him as a "Highly respected Senator Burr, Chairman of Senate Intelligence" (Feb 8, 2019, 4:05 a.m.). @realDonaldTrump introduces Burr by his title "Senator", which means that he has been elected to the upper chamber of the United States Congress, thus showing that claims are made by a figure of authority. @realDonaldTrump also adds in additional role of Burr's

"Chairman of Senate Intelligence" (ibid.) to add further authority to the opinion of the Senator. He then adds that this respected Senator stated that there isn't any evidence that he (President Trump) would have committed any crimes, thus, legitimating the claim of innocence. @realDonaldTrump legitimates his own views by repeating the words of someone, who through their status in politics, is considered to have authority. Some could argue that the references to Senator Burr in example 12 also utilize legitimation through expert authority since he is described to be the chairman of an important Senate Intelligence Committee. It might be implied that Burr is an expert in Senate Intelligence matters, however, I would argue that being the head of this committee does not make the Senator an expert on the investigation against Trump, and that this counts more as a personal legitimation.

(12)    Highly respected Senator Richard Burr, Chairman of Senate Intelligence, said today that, after an almost two year investigation, he saw no evidence of Russia collusion. "*We don't have anything that would suggest there was collusion by the Trump campaign and Russia.*" Thank you! (@realDonaldTrump, Feb 8, 2019, 4:05 a.m.)

(13)    The mainstream media has refused to cover the fact that the head of the VERY important Senate Intelligence Committee, after two years of intensive study and access to Intelligence that only they could get, just stated that they have found NO COLLUSION between "Trump" & Russia.... (@realDonaldTrump Feb 8, 2019, 3:48 p.m.)

(14)    The Senate Intelligence Committee: THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION BETWEEN THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN AND RUSSIA! (@realDonaldTrump Feb 13, 2019, 12:58 p.m.)

@realDonaldTrump mentioned Senator Burr by name in total of five tweet sets in D1. In addition, as can be seen in example 13, @realDonaldTrump uses authorization by noting that a person in a very important role could not find evidence against him. He uses the words "the head of the VERY important Senate Intelligence Committee" (Feb 8, 2019, 3:48 p.m.) without actually acknowledging directly who this person is. Having said that, it is quite possible (and even probable) that it is a reference to Senator Burr again. In this tweet, the status is thought to be significant enough to function on its own. @realDonaldTrump legitimates his claim of no collusion by quoting that this important person, with insight to the two-year investigation, did not find evidence of collusion. @realDonaldTrump attempts to convince the reader that the claim made is true and it should be taken as a credible statement because it is coming from a person with (political) authority.

Van Leeuwen also discusses authorization where authority is vested to an impersonal authority where the authority comes from regulations and rules (2007, 96). In example 14, the source of authority is vested to an institution, in this case to the Senate Intelligence Committee. @realDonaldTrump legitimates the claim that there was not any evidence of a collusion between his Campaign and Russia by using the authority of the official committee. The claim looks accurate since it is being corroborated by this institution with generally acknowledged authority. Quoting and referencing news channels also functions legitimation through impersonal authority. In one tweet, @realDonaldTrump quotes a USA Today Poll's results where 50% of Americans agree that the investigation is a witch hunt (Mar 18, 2019). In this tweet, the authority comes from the people who agree with his claim and this impersonal news platform whose reporting ought to be believed.

As established earlier, the nature of tweets is short, and it remains so even when the message is divided into two or more tweets. The style in tweets is expected to be brief and precise, and the tweets are usually thought to contain just the main points. Due to this, it is possible that legitimations in tweets are built up differently than in longer stretches of text. In some tweets, @realDonaldTrump simply tags another Twitter user (in many cases @FoxNews or reporters working for Fox News). Some might argue that due to the character limitations a simple tag of an institution or a person might function as an authorization. However, it is also possible that this tagging is done simply to get the attention of the tagged, and not to use their authority.

(De)legitimation, that is based on *rationalization,* is based on reason, but to count as a strategy for legitimation it has to include a moral element (Van Leeuwen 2007, 100). In D1, it was quite difficult to locate legitimations based on reasoning and rationality. Some of the instances, that could be treated as rationalization, could also be categorized simply as moral evaluation because the moral component is relatively strong and the rational element quite weak. Van Leeuwen says that the moral element in rationalization is usually oblique and submerged (ibid.), but in D1, the few instances where some level of rationalization was found, the moral element was quite visible.

(15)    On the recent non-binding vote (420-0) in Congress about releasing the Mueller Report, I told leadership to let all Republicans vote for transparency. Makes us all look good and doesn't matter. Play along with the game! (Mar 16, 2019, 6:06 a.m.)

In example 15, @realDonaldTrump uses rationalization to persuade the reader that he is being helpful by portraying examples of him being helpful and open. In this example, @realDonaldTrump makes it seem like he is in charge of Republicans' votes and by letting them vote for transparency, he highlights that he and the Republicans want to act in transparent and trustworthy manner. Here, he links the activity of telling the leadership with a purpose link "to" and the purpose of "letting all Republicans vote for transparency". He portrays himself as giving permission to these people. The rational element seems to be linked to the idea that the President would not be helpful and so transparent if he had committed this crime. This interpretation is based on my interpretation as an analyst and some might argue that the rational element in this tweet does not include enough morality to function as a legitimation and it is possible that other analysts might interpret it differently.

Legitimation or delegitimation built through *mythopoesis* is based on narratives in which legitimate actions are rewarded and non-legitimate ones are punished (Van Leeuwen 2007, 105-107). Analysing the use of mythopoesis in tweets in general is somewhat difficult due to fact that tweets are short, and they usually convey only one main message. One single tweet does not necessarily have the necessary space for a moral story that would also display the end result (punishment or reward). Sometimes the punishments and rewards are only implied or left for the interpretation of the reader. Trump's tweets are also somewhat ambiguous, and at times the cut off between moral evaluation and a mythopoesis is difficult to distinguish. @realDonaldTrump does sometimes divide his messages to more than one tweet in order to get longer messages across, however, I would still argue that even a single tweet can include legitimation by mythopoesis.

One of the main narratives that @realDonaldTrump is portraying is that the people involved in the investigation are bad or maleficent and should themselves be investigated. Examples 16 and 17 are a set of tweets in which @realDonaldTrump suggest that the people who have mishandled his case are now facing Senate inquiries due to these irregularities. He is insinuating that the people he has called out since the beginning of the investigation are now getting what they deserve at least on some level. @realDonaldTrump suggest in multiple tweets that the law enforcement should investigate the investigators and that it is "Time to start looking at the other side where real crimes were committed" (Mar 1, 2019, 3:26 p.m.). These tweets suggest that the

bad people ought to be punished (by investigating them) but they do not display any actual end results (rewards or punishments) and they function mainly as suggestions. Here @realDonaldTrump delegitimates the opposition through mythopoesis without singling out anyone in particular.

> (16)    Former FBI top lawyer James Baker just admitted involvement in FISA Warrant and further admitted there were IRREGULARITIES in the way the Russia probe was handled. They relied heavily on the unverified Trump "Dossier" paid for by the DNC & Clinton Campaign, & funded through a... (Jan 22, 2019, 5:53 p.m.)
>
> (17)    ...big Crooked Hillary law firm, represented by her lawyer Michael Sussmann (do you believe this?) who worked Baker hard & gave him Oppo Research for "a Russia probe." This meeting, now exposed, is the subject of Senate inquiries and much more. An Unconstitutional Hoax. @FoxNews (Jan 22, 2019, 6:06 p.m.)
>
> (18)    New York State and its Governor, Andrew Cuomo, are now proud members of the group of PRESIDENTIAL HARASSERS. No wonder people are fleeing the State in record numbers. The Witch Hunt continues! (Mar 13, 2019, 12:17 a.m.)

In the first half of the corpus, @realDonaldTrump uses mythopoesis through cautionary tale in multiple tweets a means to delegitimate the opposition. In example 18, it is suggested, that because Governor Cuomo engaged in these delegitimate and deviant activities of presidential harassment or the Witch Hunt, he is now being punished. His punishment can be seen in the influx of people fleeing the state. This functions as cautionary tale because it promotes the narrative that Cuomo has acted in deviant way and is now paying the price. If a person wants to avoid this, they should not act in a similar way. Most cases of mythopoesis, that I could find and reliably count as mythopoesis in D1, were cautionary tales i.e. they portrayed a delegitimate action that should/would/will be punished. Example 18 is another case of narrative where a significant part of the interpretation is relied on the reader, however, I still argue it includes elements of narrative with specific outcomes even if the causation is only implied. If one reads through all of the tweets in D1, the underlying narrative being legitimated seems to be that President Trump has not done anything wrong and that in the end he will prevail and that those fighting against him ought to be punished for their delegitimate actions.

John Oddo talks about using the Us/Them binary as a medium of legitimation technique (2011, 288). In order to legitimate *Us* and delegitimate *Them*, @realDonaldTrump seems to have adopted combined Oddo's dichotomy and the Van

Dijk's (1998) notions of ideological square. @realDonaldTrump uses repeatedly the first category of expressing positive information about *Us* or 'our side' and the second category by expressing what is bad about *Them*. He portrays himself as an innocent man who is being persecuted by people with bad intentions. He himself is the legitimate source who should be trusted, and the opposition ought not to be. This can be seen in the instances where @realDonaldTrump talks of Robert Mueller. Mueller's name is mentioned in D1 only nine times. Three of which appear inside of direct quotes. It seems that @realDonaldTrump wants to mention his name as little as possible, maybe to avoid giving him more attention or authority. Also, in the few instances where Mueller is mentioned, his name is followed with a negative moral evaluation as a way of legitimating Trump's claim and delegitimating the Mueller and his investigation. On January 12th, 2019, @realDonaldTrump writes that Mueller is protecting his "best friend" together with the angry democrats, thus linking all these actors together. Here, @realDonaldTrump implies that Mueller is working together with undesirable Democrats who started this investigation.

In D1, the division to *Us* and *Them* is quite clear cut. The distinction is not always made visible through the use of personal pronouns but with moral evaluation, mythopoesis and other submerged cues. For instance, it becomes quite clear that *Them* or his opposition includes the members of the Democrats or "Angry Dems", his opponent Hillary Clinton or "Crooked Hillary" and the DNC (Democratic National Committee). The opposing side also seems to include media outlets that @realDonaldTrump considers as "Fake News", such as the New York Times and the Washington Post. Other people that @realDonaldTrump calls out by name include James Comey and "Andrew McCabe, Peter S and his lover, agent Lisa Page" (Jan 12, 2019, 4:20 p.m.). The opposition or *Them* in @realDonaldTrump's case seems to include even the State of New York and its Governor as one saw in example 18 (March 13, 2019, 12:17 a.m.).

@realDonaldTrump repeatedly delegitimates *Them* by using ideological square's first and second categories by placing these opposing actors to different sides and emphasizing what is negative about *Them* and emphasizing what is positive about *Us*. This is done with the help of moral evaluation, loaded words and mythopoesis. In example 19 and 20, @realDonaldTrump delegitimates Hillary Clinton (part of *Them*) by noting that she lied in an interview. He also describes the investigation on Clinton as "rigged and botched" and he also delegitimates Comey's "poor leadership" and his way

of handling the "Clinton mess" caused the FBI to be in "complete turmoil" (Jan 12, 2019). All of these elements emphasize what is negative about *Them* and delegitimates the perceived opposition.

> (19)  Funny thing about James Comey. Everybody wanted him fired, Republican and Democrat alike. After the rigged & botched Crooked Hillary investigation, where she was interviewed on July 4th Weekend, not recorded or sworn in, and where she said she didn't know anything (a lie),.... (@realDonaldTrump, Jan 12, 2019, 2:33 p.m.)
>
> (20)  ....the FBI was in complete turmoil (see N.Y. Post) because of Comey's poor leadership and the way he handled the Clinton mess (not to mention his usurpation of powers from the Justice Department). My firing of <u>James Comey</u> was a great day for America. He was a Crooked Cop...... (@realDonaldTrump, Jan 12, 2019, 2:53 p.m.)

@realDonaldTrump delegitimates *Them* also by de-emphasizing what is positive about them. This can be seen for example, when one compares how he talks about certain individuals. @realDonaldTrump gives authority to the people he perceives to be on his side by noting their credentials and or roles in particular institutions. In contrast when he talks about *Them,* he leaves credentials out and employs somewhat offensive nicknames. James Comey is referred as "Crooked Cop", thus he links Comey to "Crooked Hillary" with the famous "nickname" that he has given Clinton previously. In addition, Robert Mueller is referred as "Bob Mueller" which makes him sound less of an expert or a figure of authority. In my opinion, these can be analyzed as examples of delegitimating *Them* by emphasizing the negative aspects, and the use of this strategy can be found extremely frequently in D1.

*Us* in @realDonaldTrump's tweets seems to consist of himself, Republicans (at least the majority of them), Fox News channel, some individual celebrities, politicians, journalists (the individuals who authority and credibility is invested) and in some cases the reader and the American public. *Us* also seems to include the audience of the tweets at least in some tweets. For example, in January @realDonaldTrump writes they "tried to do a number on your President" (Jan 12, 2019, 4:20 p.m.), thus linking the reader to his side and by suggesting that not only was the investigation a harassment against him but all of his constituents.

In example 21, @realDonaldTrump quotes the results of a Suffolk/USA Today Poll whose results demonstrate that half of Americans agree with the claim of the investigation being a Witch Hunt. By doing this, he expresses that he has got the support

of the (at least) half of the American people. He also seems to address the reader directly by asking if "we will soon find out?". He links the reader directly to *Us* by using the personal pronoun *we*. This can be categorized as using Van Dijk's first category by emphasizing what is positive about us.

> (21)    Wow! A Suffolk/USA Today Poll, just out, states, "*50% of Americans AGREE that Robert Mueller's investigation is a Witch Hunt.*" @MSNBC Very few think it is legit! We will soon find out? (Mar 18, 2019, 5:07 p.m.)

Even though @realDonaldTrump emphasizes what is good about *Us* in D1, it seems clear that the most frequent strategy is emphasizing what is negative about *Them*.

## 5.2 Analysing @realDonaldTrump's Tweets in Dataset 2

After carefully analyzing the data in the second half of the corpus (D2), it soon became evident that @realDonaldTrump relies heavily on (de)legitimation through moral evaluation in the second dataset as well. He employs all three strategies (evaluation, abstraction and analogies). As mentioned earlier, it is extremely difficult to give exact quantities on tweets where moral evaluation is present, however, it is safe to say that most (if not all tweet sets) include at least some level of moral evaluation. There is a heavy presence of negative adjectives to delegitimate the opposition in D2. For example, the adjective *angry* occurs in D2 in total of 12 times and all of these times it is used to refer to the Democrats or "Dems". The adjective *dirty* occurs seven times, *fake* occurs 11 times and *illegal* occurs eight times, just to mention a few. There is abundance of other morally evaluated adjectives as well. Just one tweet can include multiple different evaluations. In example 22, @realDonaldTrump legitimates his claim by negatively evaluating the New York Times that he perceives as a fake news platform with no legitimate sources, and whose reporting was illegal, incorrect and very bad.

> (22)    The New York Times had no legitimate sources, which would be totally illegal, concerning the Mueller Report. In fact, they probably had no sources at all! They are a Fake News paper who have already been forced to apologize for their incorrect and very bad reporting on me! (@realDonaldTrump Apr 4, 2019, 6:04 p.m.)

Even though the data in D2 concentrates mostly on negative moral evaluation to delegitimate, there are positive moral evaluations, where President Trump himself, his views or his opinions are legitimated. @realDonaldTrump writes that "The Fake News

Media has lost tremendous credibility with its corrupt coverage of the illegal Democrat Witch Hunt of your all time favorite duly elected President, me" (Mar 27, 2019, 3:27 a.m.). In this tweet, he describes himself as an all-time favorite president. However, the main focus seems to be on delegitimating others with morally negative adjectives.

In addition to moral adjectives, @realDonaldTrump uses abstractions and analogies. The abstraction *Witch Hunt*, where the aspects of the term are distilled to the investigation, is still in use but less than in D1. Only ten of the tweets include this particular noun phrase. In contrast, the use of the word *collusion* has increased. The word appears in D2 in total 41 times. Out of these 41 instances 33 mentions appear together with the word *no*. The phrase "No Collusion" becomes a catch phrase of sorts. @realDonaldTrump also uses analogies or comparison, for example, when writing that "corrupt & dishonest Mainstream Media" is like a joke (Apr 7, 2019, 4:50 p.m.). In this example, he compares the mainstream media to a joke, and uses the word *joke* with its negative connotations. In example 23, he compares his situation to the situation President Bill Clinton faced when he was accused of wrongdoing and when he went through the impeachment process. @realDonaldTrump compares their situation by noting that in Clinton's case Representative Nadler opposed releasing the investigation report but now that this is happening to President Trump, he demands the release of the report. One of the goals of this tweet could be that @realDonaldTrump is trying to express to the reader how unfairly and unequally he is being treated.

> (23)  In 1998, Rep.Jerry Nadler strongly opposed the release of the Starr Report on Bill Clinton. No information whatsoever would or could be legally released. But with the NO COLLUSION Mueller Report, which the Dems hate, he wants it all. NOTHING WILL EVER SATISFY THEM! @foxandfriends (@realDonaldTrump, Apr 2, 2019, 2:58 p.m.)

As mentioned in 5.1, the use of moral evaluation is linked to loaded language. These morally loaded text elements can be described to be loaded with both positive and negative meaning. In the case of @realDonaldTrump in D2, the emphasis is also on the latter. @realDonaldTrump calls the Mueller report a *phony dossier, con job* and a *fraud* inside just one single tweet (Apr 6, 2019, 6:52 p.m.). By using these negatively loaded words, he makes sure that the reader links these negative elements associated with these words to the report. The corpus is full of examples of negatively loaded language. In April, @realDonaldTrump uses the noun *delusion* by asking "how the ridiculous Collusion Delusion got started" (Apr 4, 2019, 3:22 p.m.). *Delusion* is probably used to

refer to the claims that he had committed a crime or to the FBI's investigation. While the aim is not defined in detail, but it is quite safe to assume it is related to this particular investigation since he uses the *delusion* together with *collusion*. @realDonaldTrump links the investigation to "something that is falsely or delusively believed or propagated" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "delusion" n.) and delegitimates the trustworthiness of it.

The data in D2 also includes some elements in which the interpretation of moral evaluations might vary. The use of the word *left* is one the examples. In everyday speech the word left refers to a direction and lacks any explicit evaluative aspect. In political discourse, however, it often refers to the groups or individuals that are perceived to hold liberal views (Dictionary.com). Usually, the actors on the left side of the axis are known to support economic and social equality (ibid.), which are seemingly far from Trump's political goals. In American politics, the members of the Democratic Party are considered to be leaning to the left and the Republican members to the right. Even though the term might not be loaded in all settings, it seems that @realDonaldTrump uses the word *left* in a manner similar to an insult. "Radical Left", "Left Democrats" or "Radical Left Democrats" are mentioned in total of six times in D2. In other context, it would be possible to argue that the *left* is a neutral term. However, in this corpus it is used together with the adjective *radical* to delegitimate the people who are perceived to have leftist ideology. No matter how the use of *left* is categorized, it is still clear that the use of moral evaluation is very frequent in D2 and it can be located in almost all of the tweets.

@realDonaldTrump adds a level of moral evaluation with modal auxiliary verbs in D2 as well. The modal auxiliary *must* is used two times and the modal auxiliary verb *should* is utilized 16 times. The narrative legitimated in D2 is similar to the one in D1. By using *must*, he adds a strong sense on compulsion to the point he is trying to make. In April, he writes that the "Russia Hoax must never happen to another President" and that the "Law Enforcement must find out, HOW DID IT START?" (Apr 6, 2019, 6:57 p.m.). A theme that continues from D1 to D2 is the legitimation through modal verbs and the notion that the investigation "should have never been allowed to start" (@realDonaldTrump Apr 10, 2019, 10:45 p.m.) as one can see in example 24. *Should* is also used to express stance on who should now be rewarded and who should be punished. Interestingly, in six instances the modal verb *should* appeared together with the adverb *never*. This negation amplifies the gravity of the statement for example when he writes

(24)    So, it has now been determined, by 18 people that truly hate President Trump, that there was No Collusion with Russia. In fact, it was an illegal investigation that <u>should</u> <u>never</u> have been allowed to start. I fought back hard against this Phony & Treasonous Hoax! (Apr 10, 2019, 10:45 p.m.)

Victimization is visible in D2 as well. As mentioned earlier, @realDonaldTrump seems to have summarized the results of the Mueller report to the unembellished sentence of "No Collusion, No Obstruction" which functions like a catch phrase. This simplified notion of the results corroborates what @realDonaldTrump has been saying since the investigation started. @realDonaldTrump places himself into the position of a victim. He seems to be certain that the results from Mueller report exonerated him, and now that his doubters and investigators have been proven wrong, they should apologize to him. As one saw in example 22, @realDonaldTrump noted that the New York Times had "already been forced to apologize their incorrect and very bad reporting" (Apr 4, 2019, 6:04 p.m.). @realDonaldTrump suggests in multiple tweets that his efforts (perceived as obstruction of justice) were just his way of fighting back and an unwarranted investigation. In April, he wrote that he "fought back hard against this Phony & Treasonous Hoax" (Apr 10, 2019, 10:45 p.m.) and in examples 25 and 26 he writes that he was just fighting back against something he perceived to be untrue and unjust investigation.

(25)    So, let's get this straight! There was No Collusion and in fact the Phony Dossier was a Con Job that was paid for by Crooked Hillary and the DNC. So the 13 Angry Democrats were investigating an event that never happened and that was in fact a made up Fraud. I just fought back.... (Apr 6, 2019, 6:52 p.m.)

(26)    .... against something I knew never existed, Collusion with Russia (so ridiculous!) - No Obstruction. This Russia Hoax must never happen to another President, and Law Enforcement must find out, HOW DID IT START? (Apr 6, 2019, 6:57 p.m.)

By appearing in the role of the victim, he legitimates the claim that he has been treated unjustly.

@realDonaldTrump employs legitimation through authorization in D2. Again, the people and institutions in whose authority he relies are mainly journalist, political commentators and news channels that are known to support President Trump. Some of these sources are experts in political discourse and legislation politics, but they are not experts in criminal investigations and due to this I would mainly categorize the refers to them as use of role model authorization or personal authorization. In D2,

@realDonaldTrump refers and quotes individuals such as Frank Luntz (political consultant), Lindsey Graham (Republican Senator) and Doug Collins (Republican politician). @realDonaldTrump invests authority into their words. These quotes include statements and claims that corroborate @realDonaldTrump's stance and simultaneously legitimates it. He also refers to the Fox News network multiple times. In addition to these references, @realDonaldTrump uses impersonal authority in order legitimate his notion of a collusion. In April, @realDonaldTrump writes that "According to polling, few people seem to care about the Russian Collusion Hoax, but some Democrats are fighting hard to keep the Witch Hunt alive" (Apr 4, 2019, 3:22 p.m.). The reader does not know to which polls @realDonaldTrump is referring to or what has been asked or of whom, but they are given the idea that a certain poll has been made on this topic and that the result say that people do not care for the investigation. This legitimates the claim that the whole investigation is a waste of time and effort.

Another interesting aspect was that for the first time some authority was invested in the Mueller report. Once the results are out, @realDonaldTrump stops questioning whether the Mueller report will cover certain topics and instead starts repeatedly referring to the results of the investigation (at least in the way how he interprets the results). @realDonaldTrump refers to the findings of the Mueller report in the very first tweet that is posted in @realDonaldTrump's timeline after the submission of the report when he writes "No Collusion, No Obstruction, Complete and Total EXONERATION. KEEP AMERICA GREAT!" (Mar 24, 2019, 10:42 p.m.). Even though @realDonaldTrump does not explicitly state that he is paraphrasing the report, it can be quite safely assumed since it is posted right after the Mueller submitted the results and it even includes the abstraction of *collusion*.

There are other instances in D2 where the Mueller report results are explicitly mentioned and (at least) some level of authority are given to them. At the end of March, @realDonaldTrump writes that ratings of "CNN & MSNBC tanked last night after seeing the Mueller Report statement. @FoxNews up BIG" (Mar 27, 2019, 3:27 a.m.) and that the "ratings for "Morning Joe", which were really bad in the first place, just "tanked" with the release of the Mueller Report" (Mar 28, 2019, 1:04 p.m.). It is implied, that now that the truth (proof of innocence and total exoneration) is reported in the Mueller report, people have accepted the results and stopped reading *fake* news platforms. The MSNBC in particular is traditionally seen as

more liberal and left-leaning news channel (Morning Consult 2018, 158) and it has published articles quite critical of Trump, and that might be the reason its authority is being delegitimated. Also, as could be seen in example 23, @realDonaldTrump calls the Mueller report the "NO COLLUSION Mueller Report, which the Dems hate" (Apr 2, 2019, 2:58 p.m.), thus linking the Mueller report with the notion of "no collusion". His recognition of the report gives it more authority. The narrative seems to be that if this report, conducted by people who are against the President, say that there was no collusion, how can anyone claim otherwise.

However, it is noteworthy that all of these instances, where some authority is given to Mueller and his report, occur inside short time frame that starts right after the results are published. After approximately three weeks, it seems that the credibility of Mueller and the investigation continue being delegitimated and that no authority remains after this. In example 27, @realDonaldTrump goes back to delegitimating the Mueller report and its findings by calling the statements "fabricated & totally untrue" and calling the report the "Crazy Mueller Report" (Apr 19, 2019).

> (27)    Statements are made about me by certain people in the Crazy Mueller Report, in itself written by 18 Angry Democrat Trump Haters, which are fabricated & totally untrue. Watch out for people that take so-called "notes," when the notes never existed until needed. Because I never.... (Apr 19, 2019, 2:53 p.m.)

The *Us*/*Them* dichotomy continues in D2. The semantic category *Them* seems to include similar people and institutions both in D1 and D2. @realDonaldTrump also uses personal pronouns *they*, *them* and *their* frequently. *They* (or they've) occurs in the dataset in total of 19 times, *them* five times and *their* eight times. For such a small scope, I would argue that this is quite a lot. The mainstream media still seems definitely to be a part of *Them*. In March, @realDonaldTrump questions the integrity and delegitimates the New York Times, Washington Post (Mar 30, 2019, 1:25 a.m.), CNN and MSNBC (Mar 28, 2019, 1:04 p.m.). He asks why these media outlets are "allowed" to be on social media because he perceives their texts and news as fake. @realDonaldTrump writes that mainstream media is "the Enemy of the people" (Mar 26, 2019, 12:54 p.m.) and this seems to be the case with the news channels and programs that are known to publish articles and pieces critical of him. In addition, the Democrats (mentioned 37 seven times by @realDonaldTrump in D2) are clearly still part of *Them*. Also, Hillary Clinton, the

DNC and dirty cops and the "discredited author, Trump hater Christopher Steele" (Apr 17, 2019, 2:34 p.m.) are clearly placed on their side. The members of *Them* seem to be pretty similar in these respects as in D1.

However, as mentioned above, the stance on Mueller and the placement in the *Us/Them* binary seems to shift. In D2, Mueller's name is mentioned over 30 times and in multiple tweets @realDonaldTrump seems to create a distance between Robert Mueller and the Democrats. In examples 28 to 30, one can see multiple examples of this

> (28)    Now that the long awaited Mueller Report conclusions have been released, most Democrats and others have gone back to the pre-Witch Hunt phase of their lives before Collusion Delusion took over. Others are pretending that <u>their former hero, Bob Mueller, no longer exists</u>!  (Apr 1, 2019, 3:07 p.m.)

> (29)    <u>Robert Mueller was a God-like figure to the Democrats</u>, until he ruled No Collusion in the long awaited $30,000,000 Mueller Report. <u>Now the Dems don't even acknowledge his name</u>, have become totally unhinged, and would like to go through the whole process again. (Apr 2, 2019, 3:46 p.m.)

> (30)    <u>Bob Mueller was a great HERO to the Radical Left Democrats</u>. Now that the Mueller Report is finished, with a finding of NO COLLUSION & NO OBSTRUCTION (based on a review of Report by our highly respected A.G.), the Dems are going around saying, "<u>Bob who, sorry, don't know the man</u>." (Apr 29, 2019, 6:06 p.m.)

In these examples, @realDonaldTrump notes that Mueller used to be a "God-like figure" or a hero to the Democrats and noting that they used to trust him and look up to him. He also writes that now they do not even acknowledge his name, and they are pretending that they do not know him, since his findings did not find clear evidence against the President himself. @realDonaldTrump does not explicitly link Mueller with *Us* either but he is not clearly a part of *Them* either.

Having said that, in the later tweets Mueller is once again seen to be working with the Democrats. For example, later @realDonaldTrump writes that "Looks like Bob Mueller's team of 13 Trump Haters & Angry Democrats are illegally leaking information to the press" (Apr 7, 2019, 4:50 p.m.), thus presenting an attributive relationship between Mueller and his team made of 13 Trump haters. Three days later @realDonaldTrump writes that "it has now been determined, by 18 people that truly hate President Trump, that there was No Collusion with Russia" (Apr 10, 2019, 10:45 p.m.) and even though he does not explicitly name Mueller, it is quite possible (and even probable) that Mueller is considered to be a part of this group because he is seen as the one with the biggest influence on the investigation.

Defining the *Us* in D2 remains seemingly unclear and it is impossible to definitely know who is considered to be member of *Us* (besides Trump himself). @realDonaldTrump uses the personal pronoun *we* in total of nine times and the pronoun *our* five times, but the identity remains obscure. In April, he writes that the investigation is costing a lot to "our Country" (Apr 21, 2019, 3:51 p.m.), without specifying who is considered to be part of *our*. He might consider the reader to be part of it, but it could also refer to another entity. It seems that Fox News channel is still part of *Us* since they are promoted and legitimated, for example, by saying "@FoxNews up BIG!" (Mar 26, 2019, 3:27 a.m.). It could also be argued that @realDonaldTrump regards the people who he quotes or paraphrases to be on his side, but the interpretation might vary.

> (31)    The Mainstream Media is under fire and being scorned all over the world as being corrupt and FAKE. For two years they pushed the Russian Collusion Delusion when they always knew there was No Collusion. They truly are the Enemy of the People and the Real Opposition Party! (@realDonaldTrump, Mar 26, 2019, 12:54 p.m.)

In example 31, @realDonaldTrump states that the mainstream media is fake and that they are the real "Enemy of the People" (ibid.). In this tweet it seems that @realDonaldTrump links the people and himself to be on the side at least in the sense that they all have a common enemy.

In D2, @realDonaldTrump relies strongly on Van Dijk's (1998) second category in which one emphasizes negative information about *Them*. He also utilizes the first category in which one emphasizes positive information about *Us*. The narrative revolves heavily on delegitimating *Them* and this is done frequently by morally evaluating their actions. @realDonaldTrump repeatedly brings up how they have wrongfully accused him, how their investigation is illegal and how they are the ones who are guilty of committing crimes. In April, @realDonaldTrump uses the first category of ideological square to legitimate himself and his side by noting his victory over the Witch Hunt. He writes that "I have already won" the "Witch Hunt" (Apr 24, 2019, 4:52 p.m.). He also employs the fourth category (suppress information that is negative about US) by noting that the actions that could be seen as obstruction of justice, was just his way of fighting an unjust investigation. However, the use of ideological square's category three (suppress information that is positive about

Them) is quite hard to locate. @realDonaldTrump does not seem to focus any attention to the positive about *Them*, even to just suppress it.

As stated in section 5.1, it could be argued that @realDonaldTrump uses rationalization to (de)legitimate in the data in D1 but most of these instances were ambiguous and the interpretation could differ. In D2, the use of rationalization was more visible, and it was mostly based on the costs that the Russia investigation and the Mueller report had caused. By basing his opinions and stance on numbers and quantities, @realDonaldTrump seemingly rationalizes the idea that the investigation has been harmful and bad. As can be seen in example 32, the reoccurring theme is that the investigation has taken too much time, finances and other resources. It is noted that legislation and policymaking have suffered from lack of resources. He brings the problem closer to the reader by noting that not only is it costing to the Democrats, it is impacting the whole country. @realDonaldTrump also seems to suggest that this was all done in vain because the Mueller report only proved his "innocence" and if people had listened to him from the beginning, all of these costs could have been avoided. These themes can be seen for example when @realDonaldTrump refers to the report as the "long awaited $30,000,000 Mueller Report" (Apr 2, 2019, 3:46 p.m.) and by saying that it was a "big, fat, waste of time, energy and money - $30,000,000 to be exact" (Apr 19, 2019, 11:47 p.m.). The amount of money spent is mentioned in four different tweets, however, it is interesting that on April 2nd and 19th the amount is 30 million dollars, when on April 13th and 24th it's 35 million dollars. On April 24th, he goes as far as saying describing it as "unlimited money ($35,000,000)" (Apr 24, 2019, 3:10 p.m.). By using rationalization, @realDonaldTrump expresses his views and indicates to the audience, that the claim of an expensive investigation, is real. This legitimates his claim and delegitimates the rationality of the investigation and opposition.

(32)  Despite No Collusion, No Obstruction, The Radical Left Democrats do not want to go on to Legislate for the good of the people, but only to Investigate and waste time. This is costing our Country greatly, and will cost the Dems big time in 2020! (@realDonaldTrump Apr 21, 2019, 3:51 p.m.)

I would categorize these as effect oriented since they emphasize the outcomes (or costs) of investigation. @realDonaldTrump makes it clear that this has been an expensive procedure and that it has taken a lot of time and energy that could have be spent elsewhere. He says that the administration has not had the time to spend

on legislation because this has taken the priority and is places shame on the people behind the investigation. He does this by saying that "Congress has no time to legislate, they only want to continue the Witch Hunt" (Apr 24, 2019, 4:52 p.m.). It seems that @realDonaldTrump is attempting to rationalize the notion that if he and his team were guilty of the charges surely this "400 page" investigation report, that took over two years and an extensive amount of money to complete, would so state. It seems that the logic is that when so much time and energy has been given to this investigation, the results should be accepted without a question.

One more aspect, that I interpreted to include rationalization, is the suggestion that "Isn't it amazing that the people who were closest to me, by far, and knew the Campaign better than anyone, were never even called to testify before Mueller" (Apr 22, 2019, 10:31 p.m.). In this tweet, it is suggested that the investigation has been unfair and biased when the people closest to Trump were not asked to testify. Thus, through this logic he delegitimates how the investigation was conducted. He suggests that these people, who knew him the best, would have testified for his innocence and that for this reason they were not asked to voice their view. By noting this aspect, he legitimates the claim of a witch hunt. These instances are what I would categorize as rationalization. However, another analyst could argue that they function as mythopoesis. Rationalization is usually perceived quite subtle, but these examples have a quite visible moral element.

Again, the use of mythopoesis (or storytelling) is quite challenging to analyze. The tweets are short and the end results (rewards in moral tales and punishments in cautionary tales) are at times only suggested at and they simply rely on the audience's personal interpretation. Having said that, there are some element that could be treated as (de)legitimation through mythopoesis. One narrative, that functions as a mythopoesis and is repeated throughout the D2, is the notion that the fake media is now being punished for their bad actions. @realDonaldTrump seems to think that by noting this aspect, he legitimates his claim of media being against him. It is suggested that now that the results of the Mueller report are out, the media outlets regarded as biased are in trouble due to their untrustworthy reporting. In example 33, just five days after the Mueller report results were published, @realDonaldTrump notes how the ratings for MSNBC and CNN have gone down significantly and that this just shows that "Fake News never wins" (Mar 28, 2019).

(33)     Wow, ratings for "Morning Joe," which were really bad in the first place, just "tanked" with the release of the Mueller Report. Likewise, other shows on MSNBC and CNN have gone down by as much as 50%. Just shows, <u>Fake News never wins</u> (Mar 28, 2019, 1:04 p.m.)

Here @realDonaldTrump delegitimates news outlets (MSNBC, CNN, Morning Joe - program) that have not published supportive articles and it is suggested that now they are "getting what they deserve". A day later, @realDonaldTrump writes that the New York Times and Washington Post, that have been publishing "100% NEGATIVE AND FAKE" stories and have gotten a Pulitzer prizes, should now forfeit these prizes (Mar 30, 2019, 1:25 a.m.). This dishonest media narrative can be found in ten different tweets sets in D2.

If a one looks at the whole D2 as one narrative, the story seems to be that the Mueller report's main finding was that there was "NO C OR O" (Apr 26, 2019, 3:39 p.m.). This is @realDonaldTrump's own abbreviation and it probably means "no collusion or no obstruction". @realDonaldTrump makes it clear that none of the charges could be proven and that this means that he is innocent of all claims made against him. The narrative also includes @realDonaldTrump's views on how all parties that have that accused him of being guilty, ought to apologize and are now getting a punishment. For news platforms this punishment is a decline in ratings and eradication of prizes given for incorrect reports. For Democrats the punishment could be the costs of the investigation which "will cost the Dems big time in 2020" (Apr 21, 2019, 3:51 p.m.). His own stance and actions are legitimated by saying that he has been right all along and that his fight against the false accusations has now been rewarded. One additional narrative is finding out how this investigation started to make sure that it never happens to another president again and investigating the opposition who caused this "illegal" investigation.

## 5.3 Comparing the Legitimation Strategies Used in D1 and D2

In order to see whether any changes occur after the publication of the Mueller report, it is necessary to compare the two halves of the micro-corpus (D1 and D2). It is clear that @realDonaldTrump relies greatly on moral evaluation as a legitimation strategy both in D1 and D2. While it is difficult to give any exact quantities, because some of the cases are quite ambiguous and the interpretations might vary, I would claim that

almost all (if not all) of the tweets in both datasets include moral evaluation. All three moral evaluation strategies are in use in both of the datasets, however, moral evaluation and abstractions significantly more frequently than analogies. Legitimation through analogies can be reliably located only in a handful of tweets. It is also noteworthy that the focus of the moral evaluations is primarily based on delegitimating the opposition. In this case the opposition includes the people who are making these accusatory claims, corroborating them or investigating Trump and his team. In some tweets @realDonaldTrump does legitimate himself and the people he perceives to be on his side by using morally positive evaluations or abstractions. However, legitimating himself is much less frequent than delegitimating others.

In addition to moral adjectives and abstractions, @realDonaldTrump seems to moralize and legitimate with an abundance of morally loaded terms and phrases. Same loaded terms occur in throughout the micro-corpus and this is partly due to the fact that some of the key words are intrinsically loaded and the results are bound to reflect this. The word *collusion* appears in D1 in total of 29 times and in D2 in total of 41 times. In the later dataset, the frequency of the word increases significantly. Also, the phrase *Witch Hunt* appears in D1 in total of 24 times and in D2 in total of ten times. The word *hoax* appears in both datasets ten times. When one keeps in mind the scope of the corpus, these numbers can be considered quite vast. In addition to these key words, there is a vast number of other morally loaded words (especially on negatively loaded words) and their heavy presence is quite visible throughout the datasets.

In some tweets, elements of legitimation by @realDonaldTrump are achieved through the use of modal auxiliary verbs. In D1, he uses the modal verb *must* five times which indicates strong obligation and urgency. In D2, *must* is used only two times. The obligation expressed in D2 is not as strong as in the earlier half of the corpus. @realDonaldTrump also employs the modal verb *should.* In D1, it is used in total of eight times. In D1, four of the eight instances where *should* was used it was amplified with the use of never. However, in D2, the usage of *should* increases notably. @realDonaldTrump seems to shift some of the urgency expressed to the modal aspects. In D2, the verb *should* occur in total of 16 times and again six of these occur together with the word *never* to emphasize the meaning.

@realDonaldTrump also employs legitimation through the use of authorization by utilizing the authority vested to a person, institution or tradition (Van Leeuwen 2007, 94). The use of authorization is relatively frequent in both D1 and D2 but less frequent than moral evaluation. It seems that @realDonaldTrump relies mainly on role model authorization and personal authorization. In a couple of tweets in D1, @realDonaldTrump refers, quotes and paraphrases Gregg Jarrett and brings up Jarrett's claims that he agrees with. He also refers to Senator Richard Burr in multiple tweets. In these cases, @realDonaldTrump utilizes Burr's authority through Burr's position in the Senate and as the Chair of the Senate's Intelligence Committee. In D2, the authorization occurs mainly through the use of personal or role model authority (borrowed from certain individuals) but there are instances where impersonal authority is used as well. For example, there is one tweet, where @realDonaldTrump refers to some polls that state that people do not care about the investigation, but no additional info on this particular poll is given.

One of the biggest changes between D1 and D2 is the authority given to Mueller and the Mueller report. When one looks at the quantities of the key word *Mueller* in D1, it can be clearly seen that his name comes up relatively rarely. In D1, @realDonaldTrump refers to Mueller only nine times (three of which occur inside a direct quote). In D2, there are 35 mentions of Mueller (and only two of them are inside a quote). For such a small scope, this increase is notable. In D1, very little attention (and authority) is given to the report, but in D2 the report is one of the key elements. In D2, @realDonaldTrump mentions the results of the investigation on multiple occasions and the refers to it, for instance, as the "NO COLLUSION Mueller Report" (Apr 2, 2019, 3:46 p.m.). In addition to the vast increase in the mentions of Mueller, the tone of the references becomes slightly more positive. It seems that the outlook on Mueller and his position on the *Us/Them* -axis changes.

Elements of this *Us/Them* distinctions are quite strong in @realDonaldTrump's tweets, and he utilizes Van Dijk's (1998) ideological square to both legitimate his side (us) and delegitimate the opposition (them). It is quite clear that *Us* seems to get less attention than *Them* in both datasets. In few tweets @realDonaldTrump does specifically write about "we". This *we* seems to comprise of himself, other Republican party members and the people he quotes and whose authority he utilizes. He also refers to himself as "your" president on multiple

occasions (Jan 12, 2019 and Apr 17, 2019) thus linking the reader to his side. However, more attention is actually given to *Them* which seems to include the DNC, Democrats and certain news outlets (the Washington Post, the New York Times, MSNBC, CNN) that are regarded as untrustworthy. In addition to these groups, *Them* seems to include certain individuals. In D1, @realDonaldTrump mentions for example James Comey, Andrew McCabe, Lisa Page, Cristopher Steele, Hillary Clinton and Robert Mueller. In D2, some of the same names (i.e. Hillary Clinton and Cristopher Steele) still come up but less frequently than in D1.

Even though rationalization in D1 and D2 is much rarer than the use of the other (de)legitimation strategies, I would still claim that it is there at least in few tweets. Van Leeuwen notes that rationalization is based more on reason than emotion, but all elements of rationalization must include some moral element (2007, 100). In the instances that I categorized as rationalization, the moral element was not as oblique as some might expect, however, they still seemed to be based on rationality. In D1, the presence of rationalization was quite difficult to pinpoint, but in D2 there were more instances that included a clear rational element (and usually a subsequently strong moral element as well). For example, @realDonaldTrump used rationality when he referred to the costs of the investigation in terms of money, time and resources spent in multiple tweets. He also argued that he found it "amazing" that the people closest to him weren't asked to testify, thus basing his claim of collusion on rationality by pointing out this dilemma. Some could argue that these examples function also as legitimation through mythopoesis.

Legitimation through mythopoesis (storytelling) usually concentrates on longer pieces of text, and I found it slightly problematic to combine legitimation through mythopoesis and tweets. In the case of the tweets, the space is so small and the messages concise that in most cases the reward or punishment was only suggested. I found several tweets that rely heavily on moral narratives and storytelling, however, in some cases the outcome is only suggested or hinted at. In D1, @realDonaldTrump seems to concentrate on shifting the focus to the "other side". He notes that the Democrats are actually the ones in charge of any crimes, and they should be the ones under investigation. He suggests that he is being investigated without good reason, and this narrative functions as the base for the victimization utilized in the tweets. @realDonaldTrump makes it clear that he is the innocent

victim who fights against bad forces and prevails. In D2, the use of mythopoesis seems to be more visible than in D2. The suggested focus in D2 seems to be that the Mueller report exonerated the president of all charges and finally all his actions are being rewarded. @realDonaldTrump repeatedly suggest that the ones who have been against him should now at last be investigated, and that people rewarded of these claims made against him should now be punished. The first half of the corpus relies more on cautionary tales and the latter half on moral stories.

The strategies, that @realDonaldTrump uses to (de)legitimate, follow exceptionally closely on Van Dijk's (1998) framework of ideological square. The most common uses of ideological square in D1 and D2 seem to be expressing what is positive about *Us* (first category) and emphasizing what is negative about *Them* (second category). The ways ideological square is used in D1 and D2 is very similar. @realDonaldTrump frequently focuses on delegitimating *Them* by using morally negative evaluations, cautionary stories, negative analogies and abstractions, negatively loaded language, rationalization, and omitting and decreasing any authority that they might have. @realDonaldTrump also legitimates himself and *Us* by using positive moral evaluations, abstraction, comparisons, moral stories, positively loaded language, victimization, authorization and rationalization.

I must add that there are not as many visible changes between the legitimation strategies used in D1 and D2 than I had originally hypothesized. If it was possible to count each instance of (de)legitimation reliably, it might be possible to locate more delicate variation between the two halves of the corpus. However, on this level of analysis it is clear that @realDonaldTrump uses legitimation strategies in similar ways both in D1 and D2. Having said that, there are shifts in the stance he takes on *Us/Them* dichotomy, especially regarding Robert Mueller. The authority that is vested in him and his place on this *Us/Them* -axis shifts. First, it shifts from *Them* to closer to *Us* and then back again.

## 6. Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to answer the third and final research question and interpret what these different (de)legitimation strategies employed by @realDonaldTrump's might mean (in terms of the investigation). These are my interpretations as an analyst, and the explanations and meanings portrayed are the ones that I find the most probable. It is not

possible, at least with absolute certainty, to claim that I can prove the intrinsic motivation and goals that @realDonaldTrump has, and that these interpretations are absolutely correct. The scope of this thesis is quite short and can only focus on surface level aspects. Further studies in this respect could prove themselves useful.

As noted in the results sections, moral evaluation seems to be the most visible source of legitimation and delegitimation in the whole micro-corpus. These different moral evaluation strategies are used repeatedly to delegitimate the opposition. The opposition consist of the people making these claims, agreeing with them or investigating Trump and/or his team. @realDonaldTrump legitimates himself (and his side) by using moral positive evaluation and abstractions. This moral evaluation is based on his own views and he makes it clear what view he regards to be legitimate. By delegitimating opposition, he simultaneously legitimates his side and vice versa.

One of @realDonaldTrump's main goals seems to be moralizing and (de)legitimating the opposition with morally loaded language that elicits emotional responses in the reader (Your Dictionary, n.d.). This is closely linked to repetition. @realDonaldTrump uses these terms repeatedly to create links and connotations between specific aspects and morally loaded words. After ample repetition, the repetitions create an association in the reader's mind. A good example of this is when President Trump uses the morally loaded adjective *crooked* together with the name *Hillary.* When the two words appear together enough times, they start form a connection. The bond between the words can become so strong that @realDonaldTrump (or even someone else) can use a phrase like "Crooked H" and the audience directly links it to Hillary. It is also possible, that in a totally different context, someone might connect the name Hillary (Clinton) with negative aspects of "crooked", since it the two aspects have become so closely linked. It is possible that one of Trump's aims is to repeat morally loaded words, phrases and concepts in order to connect these morally negative aspects with *Them* and morally positive elements with *Us*.

In addition to legitimation through moral evaluation, @realDonaldTrump bases some elements of legitimation on modal auxiliary verbs. In D1, he uses the modal verb *must* to express strong urgency and obligation. The use of *must* in the corpus is heavily linked to expressing the need to stop the investigation and presidential harassment. These are portrayed almost as compulsory elements. The modal verb should, on the other hand, is used to convey how in his opinion the investigation should have

never started in the first place. It is also used to add modality and recommend (in Trump's opinion) better courses of actions. The modality is included in narratives in which @realDonaldTrump notes that no president should ever have to face this kind of behavior, and how the someone should investigate the democrats and his investigators instead of him. The use of the modal verbs is aimed to legitimate @realDonaldTrump's claims of a crooked investigation and delegitimate the investigation itself. Also, as mentioned earlier, the impact of *should* is amplified with the help of the adverb *never*. The gravity of these recommendations is intensified and made more urgent.

In D2, @realDonaldTrump uses the modal verb *must* less than before. The obligation is still notable, but not as strong as it was in D1. Since the investigation is over, he does not highlight the obligation of ending it, but uses the verb to emphasize the urgency of finding out how the investigation started for it must never happen again. The use of *should* increases notably. *Should* is now used to direct more attention to the idea that now that the investigation is completed, people should stop harassing him and investigate the people behind this costly investigation and who have published incorrect information on him. @realDonaldTrump uses modal verbs to highlight that the investigation should have never been allowed to start in the first place. Again, the word never is used to really emphasize the meaning and magnitude of the modal element in the tweets.

In my corpus, @realDonaldTrump's use of victimization seems to be based on highlighting his own innocence and making it clear that he is being persecuted by people who only want bad for him and for no apparent reason. He makes it seem like the whole investigation is a personal vendetta, held by the democrats and what he calls the fake media, since they are bad losers and sore for losing the elections in 2016. In D2, @realDonaldTrump uses victimization to add that he expects apologies from the parties that wrongfully accused him of any wrongdoing. He also notes that the media and journalist, who have been awarded for these stories that he sees as fake and without legitimate sources, ought to be punished and their awards taken away. He also addresses the accusations of obstructing justice by noting that his goal was simply to fight against unfair and unjust claims. He portrays himself as the protagonist who fights maleficent forces and, but in the end prevails.

The authorization used in the corpus relies mainly on role model and personal authorization. When @realDonaldTrump refers and quotes Senator Burr, Gregg Jarrett,

FoxNews etc., he seemingly suggests that if these people (with different types of authority) speak on behalf of his innocence, it must be true. The sources he chooses to quote and paraphrase all back his claim of innocence, and by doing this he might want to promote that he has the support of these powerful people. He legitimates his claim by "borrowing" the authority of another. I noticed that most of the authorization instances employed by @realDonaldTrump are indeed role model or personal authorization and the use of impersonal authority is quite uncommon. Relying on the expertise of impersonal institutions is perceived to build legitimacy (Van Leeuwen 2007, 96) and I believe that this applies to political discourse as well. As mentioned, in one tweet @realDonaldTrump refers to a Suffolk/USA Today poll which states that half of the Americans agree that the investigation is a Witch Hunt (Mar 18, 2019, 5:07 p.m.) In another tweet a few weeks later, he just says "According to polling, few people seem to care about the Russian Collusion Hoax" (Apr 4, 2019, 3:22 p.m.) without specifying to which poll he is referring to. The tweet utilizes the authority of "a poll" but lacks the legitimacy which it would have if the poll was better specified. It would be interesting to see whether @realDonaldTrump relies on impersonal authority more in a larger corpus. The topicalization of the dataset focuses on the Mueller investigation and it is possible that some other topic might cause more cases of impersonal authority.

One interesting aspect that came up while inspecting the results is the change of tone towards Robert Mueller. As mentioned, @realDonaldTrump mentions Mueller in D1 only a handful of times. The scarcity could reflect the point that @realDonaldTrump might not want to acknowledge or give any additional credit to Mueller or his investigation. In contrast, in the early D2 Mueller is mentioned multiple times and in a more positive manner. It is possible that now that the report did not condemn him, he approves the legitimacy of the investigation, at least more than before. It is possible that @realDonaldTrump delegitimated the authority of the investigation in the fear of a more negative outcome. It might be easier to tackle the (unfavorable) results if he makes it clear that this investigation was rigged and illegal from the beginning. However, when the results are published and @realDonaldTrump seems to regard them as proof of "No Collusion and No Obstruction", acknowledging Mueller and his investigation gives credibility to Trump's claims. The legitimacy and trustworthiness that is now given to investigation benefits the President. In April, the tone becomes more negative again and the investigation is referred as "the Crazy Mueller Report" (April 19, 2019, 2:53 p.m.).

This might have something to do with the fact that multiple news sources (for example the Washington Post, the New York Times, BBC News) all wrote articles on how the Mueller Report did not actually exonerate Trump. When differing interpretations started to appear in the media, @realDonaldTrump added to one tweet that his intake on the results is based on the A.G.'s review on the results. This is probably a reference to Attorney General Barr. In April, @realDonaldTrump writes that the "Mueller Report is finished with a finding of NO COLLUSION & NO OBSTRUCTION (based on a review of Report by our highly respected A.G.) (Apr 29, 2019, 6:06 p.m.), as if to shift the interpretation to someone else. In this case, to a person whose authority plays a certain legitimate element.

In addition, I would argue that @realDonaldTrump's stance on Mueller is reflected on his placement and position on the *Us/Them* -axis. At first, Mueller is barely recognized and in the latter part @realDonaldTrump clearly attempts to create distance between Mueller and the Democrats. For instance, @realDonaldTrump writes that Mueller used to be the hero of the Democrats but now that the results are out, the Democrats do not acknowledge him, pretend that he does not exist and that they do not know him. This does not mean that @realDonaldTrump regards Mueller to be on his side, however, he is not clearly regarded as a part of *Them* either. Having said that, the more time passes the more Mueller shifts back to the opposing side made of Trump haters. For example, @realDonaldTrump writes that the report "was written as nastily as possible by 13 (18) Angry Democrats who were true Trump Haters, including highly conflicted Bob Mueller himself, the end result" (Apr 20, 2019, 2:53 p.m.). In this tweet, @realDonaldTrump directly links Mueller in the group of angry democrats, thus making Mueller part of *Them* again.

*Us/Them* distinctions are used throughout the corpus and the division between the groups are made quite clear. This might be because @realDonaldTrump wants to clearly showcase who he regards as legitimate sources and on his side. He also attempts to link the reader to his side and build a connection by calling himself "your president" and collectively talking about the good of the "American people". The audience of these tweets seems to be the American citizens. The binary distinction is used to create distance between the *Us* and the individuals, groups, institutions and media outlets with opposing views and delegitimate *Them*. One could argue that the instance where he notes that he let all Republicans vote for transparency, relies on the notion that he is displays (to the

reader) that he is being helpful and transparent. However, the rationality remains open for interpretation because the rational element is quite weak.

Even though rationalization in my corpus is much rarer than the use of the other (de)legitimation strategies, I would still claim that it is there at least in few tweets. The goal of rationality is to appeal to reason of the reader. In some cases, the rational elements can be harder to tackle than claims and expressions based on morally evaluative aspects. @realDonaldTrump mentions explicit figures and costs of the investigation and suggests that all of this could have been avoided if they had just listened to him. This claim seems to get more momentum after the results of "No Collusion -report" are published. When @realDonaldTrump expresses his concern for the costs of the investigation, he might be trying to gain popularity in the reader base for example in the Republican Party and assure the reader that the whole investigation has been a waste of time and money. Trump is a businessman and many of his supporters are as well. He might think that these people are interested in the costs, economical aspects and rationality more than emotions and moral implications.

Moral tales and cautionary tales rely on rewarding legitimate actions and punishing delegitimate action. In addition, the interpretation relies heavily on the context in which it was posted in and the personal interpretation of the reader. Even if the rewards and punishment weren't clearly stated, I found several tweets that rely on moral narratives and storytelling. In the micro-corpus, the focus is on delegitimating the actions of opposition with moral cautionary tales. It almost seems as if @realDonaldTrump is warning the audience by noting that the people who are against him ought to be investigated and punished. He seems to suggest that the reader ought to know better and not side with these people if they want to avoid similar fate. With the help of moral tales, he creates a link between himself and the people backing him. The moral tales suggest that because he is innocent, he will prevail, and his legitimate actions will be rewarded. The most common narrative and story (that is portrayed also with the help of mythopoesis) in the whole micro-corpus seems to be based on legitimating Donald Trump's claim of innocence by delegitimating the opposition. In D1, the narrative revolves around emphasizing the untrustworthiness of the investigation and the people behind it by calling it fake and rigged. In D2, the aim seems to be on legitimating the narrative in which the Mueller report exonerated the president of all charges. President is portrayed as the protagonist who faces the unfair

claims and is finally rewarded. Throughout the corpus, @realDonaldTrump repeatedly suggest that it is the opposition, the Democrats, Hillary and the "investigators" who should at last be investigated and punished accordingly (for example by taking away prizes and apologizing).

All the legitimation strategies used follow closely what Van Dijk (1998) describes as ideological square. The different legitimation approaches employed assure the audience that @realDonaldTrump's side and claim of innocence is the legitimate view. Throughout the corpus, @realDonaldTrump expresses what he regards to be positive about *Us* and especially what is negative about *Them*. He also suppresses what is negative about Us and positive about Them. To borrow Reyes (2011), the legitimation on *Us* functions simultaneously as a way to delegitimate *Them* and vice versa. When all these strategies discussed are used in a repetitive and systematic manner, it might cause shifts and changes in the views of the receiving audience.

## 7. Conclusions

This thesis set out to examine how the incumbent president of the United States, Donald Trump, discusses the charges he faced, regarding the Russian interference, on his personal Twitter account. The goal was to examine the different legitimation and delegitimation strategies used in these tweets and see whether any notable changes occurred when the results of this said investigation were published. I also wanted to aim attention to why these strategies might had been employed.

In this study, I created a micro-corpus of 110 tweets sets that were all written by @realDonaldTrump both before and after the publication of the Mueller report. The tweets were examined by using Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework of legitimation and Van Dijk's (1998) framework of ideological square. These frameworks had not previously been applied to this topic or to this type of data set. As noted, the theoretical framework worked relatively well with the given topic and political discourse and data set, but some complications still occurred. The biggest limitations were related to the data and the nature of the tweets. The tweets are short and sometimes the message and narrative are ambiguous and relies heavily on implied meanings. Also, the concise and short nature of the tweets makes it difficult to find examples for mythopoesis because there simply is not enough space to always portray the intended reward or punishment. In addition, there is no single correct way to interpret the messages and the interpretation

always rely on the analyst's personal affiliations (Van Leeuwen 2007, 98). This means that another analyst could argue that certain aspects ought to be categorized differently. Having said that, I am quite confident with my analysis.

After carefully examining the corpus, it became clear that @realDonaldTrump relies heavily on moral evaluation both as a legitimate and delegitimate strategy. He used morally negative adjectives to describe the other side and morally positive adjectives to describe himself and his side. In addition to using moral adjectives, @realDonaldTrump also utilized other morally loaded words, phrases and concepts. He also employed victimization and expressed modality and morality through the use of modal verbs.

In this corpus, @realDonaldTrump also employed relatively ample amount of authorization. The elements of rationalization and mythopoesis are also visible but sometimes quite ambiguous and open for interpretation. As for my hypothesis, I was expecting more changes in the legitimation strategies used when comparing D1 and D2. However, the most noticeable changes were in the topicalization and narratives and not as much on the (de)legitimation strategies used. Perhaps the most visible changes occurred on the *Us/Them* -axis, and especially Robert Mueller's position on this arbitrary scale. @realDonaldTrump used his personal Twitter to delegitimate *Them* and to legitimate *Us*. He also followed closely Van Dijk's ideological square and focused quite a lot of attention to expressing what is negative about *Them* and positive about *Us*.

The meaning behind the use of these different (de)legitimation strategies can only be speculated, but I believe that it was to gain support for his claim of innocence, presidency and decrease the support given to the other side. I believe the tweets were aimed to convince the reader of his side of the story by appealing to authority, moral elements, reason and narratives that corroborate his views. I also believe that the tweets in the earlier half of the corpus were mostly concentrated on delegitimating Mueller and his investigation as a precautionary measure in case the results turned out to be accusatory. In this way it would have been easier to deny the possible condemning results just by saying that this result proves that the investigation was rigged and an unfair witch hunt. I also believe that when the results were published and Trump considered them as liberating, he shifted his focus and gave Mueller and the investigation some unforeseen authority. It also seems that he tried to create distance discord in the opposition. However, when opposing interpretations on Mueller report's results gained momentum, he

continued delegitimating it. The main goal of these tweets might have been spreading a narrative where he is the victim of unfair investigations, and how he does not give up, but fights against the charges and prevails. However, it is close to impossible to be sure of the actual underlying reasons.

To conclude, the framework worked relatively well in political discourse taking place in the social media platform Twitter when inspecting the tweets of the current POTUS. However, the scope of the thesis is quite small, and the results could be different with a larger scope. Also, this study only focused on a single topic when @realDonaldTrump's Twitter is used to comment and discuss variety of topics. This investigation on Trump himself has both a political and personal dimension to it, and it is possible that with a fully political topic or fully personal one, the legitimation strategies used could vary. Also, President Trump has since faced impeach charges on a different topic, and it would be interesting to see if similar (de)legitimation strategies can be found in @realDonaldTrump's tweets regarding that impeachment process, trials and results. Further research is still needed to examine better whether the framework could be used with different set of data, scope of data and with a different topic as well.

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# 9. Appendix

## 9.1 Appendix 1. Primary Sources Mentioned in the Thesis

Trump, Donald J (@realDonaldTrump). 2019a. "Wow, just learned in the Failing New York Times that the corrupt former leaders of the FBI, almost all fired or forced to leave the agency for some very bad reasons, opened up an investigation on me, for no reason & with no proof, after I fired Lyin' James Comey, a total sleaze!". Twitter, 12 January 2019, 2:05 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1084058813047681025.

——. 2019b. "...Funny thing about James Comey. Everybody wanted him fired, Republican and Democrat alike. After the rigged & botched Crooked Hillary investigation, where she was interviewed on July 4th Weekend, not recorded or sworn in, and where she said she didn't know anything (a lie),....". Twitter, 12 January 2019, 2:18 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1084062079907229697.

——. 2019c. "....the FBI was in complete turmoil (see N.Y. Post) because of Comey's poor leadership and the way he handled the Clinton mess (not to mention his usurpation of powers from the Justice Department). My firing of James Comey was a great day for America. He was a Crooked Cop......". Twitter, 12 January 2019, 2:33 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1084065832941031424.

——. 2019d. ".....who is being totally protected by his best friend, Bob Mueller, & the 13 Angry Democrats - leaking machines who have NO interest in going after the Real Collusion (and much more) by Crooked Hillary Clinton, her Campaign, and the Democratic National Committee. Just Watch!". Twitter, 12 January 2019, 2:53 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1084070845826371586.

——. 2019e. "Lyin' James Comey, Andrew McCabe, Peter S and his lover, agent Lisa Page, & more, all disgraced and/or fired and caught in the act. These are just some of the losers that tried to do a number on your President. Part of the Witch Hunt. Remember the "insurance policy?" This is it!". Twitter, 12 January 2019, 4:20 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1084092774633353217.

——. 2019f. "Gregg Jarrett: "Mueller's prosecutors knew the "Dossier" was the product of bias and deception." It was a Fake, just like so much news coverage in our Country. Nothing but a Witch Hunt, from beginning to end!". Twitter, 18 January 2019, 5:03 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1086096691613323265.

——. 2019g. "Former FBI top lawyer James Baker just admitted involvement in FISA Warrant and further admitted there were IRREGULARITIES in the way the Russia probe was handled. They relied heavily on the unverified Trump "Dossier" paid for by the DNC & Clinton Campaign, & funded through a...". Twitter, 22 January 2019, 5:53 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1087740160559730689.

——. 2019h. "...big Crooked Hillary law firm, represented by her lawyer Michael Sussmann (do you believe this?) who worked Baker hard & gave him Oppo Research for "a Russia probe." This meeting, now exposed, is the subject of Senate inquiries and much more. An Unconstitutional Hoax. @FoxNews". Twitter, 22 January 2019, 6:06 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1087743320988835841.

——. 2019i. "WITCH HUNT!". Twitter, 27 January 2019, 3:51 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1089340201204441088.

——. 2019j. "This Witch Hunt must end! https://t.co/3og7H4uUw2". Twitter, 1 February 2019, 6:26 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1091191087702724609.

——. 2019k. "Highly respected Senator Richard Burr, Chairman of Senate Intelligence, said today that, after an almost two year investigation, he saw no evidence of Russia collusion. "We don't have anything that would suggest there was collusion by the Trump campaign and Russia." Thank you!". Twitter, 8 February 2019, 4:05 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1093692376093216769.

——. 2019l. "Not only did Senator Burr's Committee find No Collusion by the Trump Campaign and Russia, it's important because they interviewed 200 witnesses and 300,000 pages of documents, & the Committee has direct access to intelligence information that's Classified. @GreggJarrett". Twitter, 8 February 2019, 2:23 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1093847784573280256.

——. 2019m. "The mainstream media has refused to cover the fact that the head of the VERY important Senate Intelligence Committee, after two years of intensive study and access to Intelligence that only they could get, just stated that they have found NO COLLUSION between "Trump" & Russia....". Twitter, 8 February 2019, 3:48 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1093869087908941827.

——. 2019n. "The Senate Intelligence Committee: THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION BETWEEN THE TRUMP CAMPAIGN AND RUSSIA!". Twitter, 13 February 2019, 12:58 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1095638223861284865.

——. 2019o. "The Mueller investigation is totally conflicted, illegal and rigged! Should never have been allowed to begin, except for the Collusion and many crimes committed by the Democrats. Witch Hunt!". Twitter, 18 February 2019, 1:45 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1097280840156020736.

——. 2019p. ""....(The Witch Hunt) in time likely will become recognized as the greatest scandal in American political history, marking the first occasion in which the U.S. government bureaucrats sought to overturn an election (presidential)!" Victor Davis Hanson And got caught! @FoxNews". Twitter, 19 February 2019, 2:21 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1097833456254492672.

——. 2019q. "...and the fraudulent and dishonest statements he made on Wednesday. No way, it's time to stop this corrupt and illegally brought Witch Hunt. Time to start looking at the other side where real crimes were committed. Republicans have been abused long enough. Must end now!". Twitter, 1 March 2019, 3:26 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1101473899357880321.

——. 2019r. "...said was a total lie, but Fake Media won't show it. I am an innocent man being persecuted by some very bad, conflicted & corrupt people in a Witch Hunt that is illegal & should never have been allowed to start - And only because I won the Election! Despite this, great success!". Twitter, 3 March 2019, 5:44 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1102233209708924930.

——. 2019s. ""Now that the Dems are going to try & switch from Collusion to some other reason, it makes them continue to look like sore losers who didn't accept the WILL OF THE PEOPLE in the last election - they will do anything to get rid of the President." @AriFleischer It will never work!". Twitter, 4 March 2019, 10:06 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1102661631568461824.

——. 2019t. "The Witch Hunt continues!". Twitter, 10 March, 2019, 12:19 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1104506943887065089.

——. 2019u. "New York State and its Governor, Andrew Cuomo, are now proud members of the group of PRESIDENTIAL HARASSERS. No wonder people are fleeing the State in record numbers. The Witch Hunt continues!". Twitter, 13 March 2019, 12:17 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1105593613386428417.

——. 2019v. "I greatly appreciate Nancy Pelosi's statement against impeachment, but everyone must remember the minor fact that I never did anything wrong, the Economy and Unemployment are the best ever, Military and Vets are great - and many other successes! How do you impeach....". Twitter, 13 March 2019, 12:50 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1105783270262927360.

——. 2019w. "....a man who is considered by many to be the President with the most successful first two years in history, especially when he has done nothing wrong and impeachment is for "high crimes and misdemeanors"?". Twitter 13 March 2019, 12:50 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1105783271412113409.

——. 2019x. "On the recent non-binding vote (420-0) in Congress about releasing the Mueller Report, I told leadership to let all Republicans vote for transparency. Makes us all look good and doesn't matter. Play along with the game!" Twitter, 16 March 2019, 6:06 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1106949834739720192.

——. 2019y. "It's truly incredible that shows like Saturday Night Live, not funny/no talent, can spend all of their time knocking the same person (me), over & over, without so much of a mention of "the other side." Like an advertisement without consequences. Same with Late Night Shows......". 17 March 2019, 1:59 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1107250037854212096.

——. 2019z. "Wow! A Suffolk/USA Today Poll, just out, states, "50% of Americans AGREE that Robert Mueller's investigation is a Witch Hunt." @MSNBC Very few think it is legit! We will soon find out?". Twitter, 18 March 2019, 5:07 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1107659841538015232.

——. 2019aa. "No Collusion, No Obstruction, Complete and Total EXONERATION. KEEP AMERICA GREAT!". Twitter, 24 March 2019, 10:42 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1109918388133023744.

——. 2019bb. "The Special Counsel did not find that the Trump Campaign, or anyone associated with it, conspired or coordinated with the Russian Government in these efforts, despite multiple offers from Russian-affiliated individuals to assist the Trump Campaign." Twitter, 25 March 2019, 12:20 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1110124213690687488.

——. 2019cc. "The Mainstream Media is under fire and being scorned all over the World as being corrupt and FAKE. For two years they pushed the Russian Collusion Delusion when they always knew there was No Collusion. They truly are the Enemy of the People and the Real Opposition Party!". Twitter, 26 March 2019, 12:54 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1110495339369377793.

——. 2019dd. "The Fake News Media has lost tremendous credibility with its corrupt coverage of the illegal Democrat Witch Hunt of your all time favorite duly elected President, me! T.V. ratings of CNN & MSNBC tanked last night after seeing the Mueller Report statement. @FoxNews up BIG!". Twitter, 27 March 2019, 3:27 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1110714893039267840.

——. 2019ee. "Wow, ratings for "Morning Joe," which were really bad in the first place, just "tanked" with the release of the Mueller Report. Likewise, other shows on MSNBC and CNN have gone down by as much as 50%. Just shows, Fake News never wins!". Twitter, 28 March 2019, 1:04 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1111222415739244546.

——. 2019ff. "So funny that The New York Times & The Washington Post got a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage (100% NEGATIVE and FAKE!) of Collusion with Russia - And there was No Collusion! So, they were either duped or corrupt? In any event, their prizes should be taken away by the Committee!". Twitter, 30 March 2019, 1:25 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1111771337519972352.

——. 2019gg. "Now that the long awaited Mueller Report conclusions have been released, most Democrats and others have gone back to the pre-Witch Hunt phase of their lives before Collusion Delusion took over. Others are pretending that their former hero, Bob Mueller, no longer exists!". Twitter, 1 April 2019, 3:07 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1112687993528217602.

——. 2019hh. "In 1998, Rep.Jerry Nadler strongly opposed the release of the Starr Report on Bill Clinton. No information whatsoever would or could be legally released. But with the NO COLLUSION Mueller Report, which the Dems hate, he wants it all. NOTHING WILL EVER SATISFY THEM! @foxandfriends". Twitter, 2 April 2019, 2:58 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1113047970251931648.

——. 2019ii. "Robert Mueller was a God-like figure to the Democrats, until he ruled No Collusion in the long awaited $30,000,000 Mueller Report. Now the Dems don't even acknowledge his name, have become totally unhinged, and would like to go through the whole process again. It won't happen!". Twitter, 2 April 2019, 3:46 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1113060131917479936.

——. 2019jj. "According to polling, few people seem to care about the Russian Collusion Hoax, but some Democrats are fighting hard to keep the Witch Hunt alive. They should focus on legislation or, even better, an investigation of how the ridiculous Collusion Delusion got started - so illegal!". Twitter, 4 April 2019, 3:22 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1113778970145615878.

——. 2019kk. "The New York Times had no legitimate sources, which would be totally illegal, concerning the Mueller Report. In fact, they probably had no sources at all! They are a Fake News paper who have already been forced to apologize for their incorrect and very bad reporting on me!". Twitter, 4 April 2019, 6:04 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1113819627212169219

——. 2019ll. "So, let's get this straight! There was No Collusion and in fact the Phony Dossier was a Con Job that was paid for by Crooked Hillary and the DNC. So the 13 Angry Democrats were investigating an event that never happened and that was in fact a made up Fraud. I just fought back....". Twitter, 6 April 2019, 6:52 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1114556595663323136.

——. 2019mm. ".... against something I knew never existed, Collusion with Russia (so ridiculous!) - No Obstruction. This Russia Hoax must never happen to another President, and Law Enforcement must find out, HOW DID IT START?". Twitter, 6 April 2019, 6:57 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1114557659527532545.

——. 2019nn. "Looks like Bob Mueller's team of 13 Trump Haters & Angry Democrats are illegally leaking information to the press while the Fake News Media make up their own stories with or without sources - sources no longer matter to our corrupt & dishonest Mainstream Media, they are a Joke!". Twitter, 7 April 2019, 4:50 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1114888062884954114.

——. 2019oo. "So, it has now been determined, by 18 people that truly hate President Trump, that there was No Collusion with Russia. In fact, it was an illegal investigation that should never have been allowed to start. I fought back hard against this Phony & Treasonous Hoax!". Twitter, 10 April 2019, 10:45 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1116064789061439488.

——. 2019pp. "Wow! FBI made 11 payments to Fake Dossier's discredited author, Trump hater Christopher Steele. @OANN @JudicialWatch  The Witch Hunt has been a total fraud on your President and the American people! It was brought to you by Dirty Cops, Crooked Hillary and the DNC.". Twitter, 17 April 2019, 2:34 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1118477897356992512.

——. 2019qq. "When there is not an underlying crime with regard to Collusion (in fact, the whole thing was a made up fraud), it is difficult to say that someone is obstructing something. There was no underlying crime." @marthamaccallum @FoxNews" Twitter, 19 April 2019, 2:46 a.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1119024554431713280.

———. 2019rr. "Statements are made about me by certain people in the Crazy Mueller Report, in itself written by 18 Angry Democrat Trump Haters, which are fabricated & totally untrue. Watch out for people that take so-called "notes," when the notes never existed until needed. Because I never....". Twitter, 19 April 2019, 2:53 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1119207303700471809.

———. 2019ss. "....big, fat, waste of time, energy and money - $30,000,000 to be exact. It is now finally time to turn the tables and bring justice to some very sick and dangerous people who have committed very serious crimes, perhaps even Spying or Treason. This should never happen again!". Twitter, 19 April 2019, 11:47 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1119341792460247040.

———. 2019tt. "Despite the fact that the Mueller Report should not have been authorized in the first place & was written as nastily as possible by 13 (18) Angry Democrats who were true Trump Haters, including highly conflicted Bob Mueller himself, the end result is No Collusion, No Obstruction!". Twitter, 20 April 2019, 2:53 p.m. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1119569774286135297

———. 2019uu. "Despite No Collusion, No Obstruction, The Radical Left Democrats do not want to go on to Legislate for the good of the people, but only to Investigate and waste time. This is costing our Country greatly, and will cost the Dems big time in 2020!". Twitter, 21 April 2019, 3:51 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1119946842148622336.

———. 2019vv. "Isn't it amazing that the people who were closest to me, by far, and knew the Campaign better than anyone, were never even called to testify before Mueller. The reason is that the 18 Angry Democrats knew they would all say 'NO COLLUSION' and only very good things!". Twitter, 22 April 2019, 10:31 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1120409894799253504.

———. 2019ww. "The Mueller Report, despite being written by Angry Democrats and Trump Haters, and with unlimited money behind it ($35,000,000), didn't lay a glove on me. I DID NOTHING WRONG. If the partisan Dems ever tried to Impeach, I would first head to the U.S. Supreme Court. Not only......". Twitter, 24 April 2019, 3:10 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1121023509029892096.

———. 2019xx. ".....are there no "High Crimes and Misdemeanors," there are no Crimes by me at all. All of the Crimes were committed by Crooked Hillary, the Dems, the DNC and Dirty Cops - and we caught them in the act! We waited for Mueller and WON, so now the Dems look to Congress as last hope!". Twitter, 24 April 2019, 3:18 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1121025624632647682.

———. 2019yy. "....Congress has no time to legislate, they only want to continue the Witch Hunt, which I have already won. They should start looking at The Criminals who are already very well known to all. This was a Rigged System - WE WILL DRAIN THE SWAMP!". Twitter, 24 April 2019, 4:52 p.m. https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1121049166615142400.

——. 2019zz. "Weirdo Tom Steyer, who didn't have the "guts" or money to run for President, is still trying to remain relevant by putting himself on ads begging for impeachment. He doesn't mention the fact that mine is perhaps the most successful first 2 year presidency in history & NO C OR O!", Twitter 26 April 2019, 3:39 p.m.
https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1121755785246195712.

——. 2019aaa. "Bob Mueller was a great HERO to the Radical Left Democrats. Now that the Mueller Report is finished, with a finding of NO COLLUSION & NO OBSTRUCTION (based on a review of Report by our highly respected A.G.), the Dems are going around saying, "Bob who, sorry, don't know the man."". Twitter, 29 April 2019, 6:06 p.m.
https://Twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1122879760085004288.

——. 2019bbb. "OK, so after two years of hard work and each party trying their best to make the other party look as bad as possible, it's time to get back to business. The Mueller Report strongly stated that there was No Collusion with Russia (of course) and, in fact, they were rebuffed....." Twitter, 3 May 2019, 6:45 a.m.
https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1124158007921848320

## 9.2 Appendix 2. Finnish Summary

Sosiaalinen media on tuonut mukanaan ympäristön, jossa muun muassa poliittiseen keskusteluun voi reaaliaikaisesti osallistua valtava määrä ihmisiä ympäri maailmaa monilta eri tahoilta ja aloilta. Julkisuuden henkilöt, urheilijat, toimittaja ja poliitikot (valtionjohtajat mukaan lukien) ovatkin tarttuneet tiukasti tähän mahdollisuuteen keskustella, viedä eteenpäin agendaa ja osallistua julkiseen keskusteluun eri sosiaalisen median kanavilla. Yksi tunnetuimpia ja käytetympiä sosiaalisen median kanavia on yhdysvaltalainen Twitter, jota käyttää ahkerasti myös Yhdysvaltojen nykyinen presidentti, Donald Trump. Presidentiksi päästyään, Donald Trump jatkoi oman henkilökohtaisen (jo ennen poliittista uraansa perustetun) Twitter -tilinsä käyttämistä. Trump on käyttänyt tiliään sekä henkilökohtaisten että poliittisten asioiden tiedotuskanavana. Julkisessa keskustelussa onkin herännyt ihmetystä siitä, mikä oikeastaan on valkoisen talon pääasiallinen tiedotuskanava.

Donald Trumpin käyttämä kieli on tutkimuskohteena hyvin mielenkiintoinen, sillä hänen tyylinsä eroaa merkittävästi Yhdysvaltojen aiemmista presidenteistä ja perinteisistä politikoista. Ennen poliittista uraansa Trump on tullut tunnetuksi erityisesti kiinteistömarkkinoilla toimivana liikemiehenä ja Diili -nimisen TV -ohjelman keulakuvana. Trump on lähtenyt poliittiselle uralle verrattain myöhään, mutta on sittemmin tehnyt selväksi kannattajille omat poliittiset agendansa. Trump kuuluu republikaanipuolueeseen ja puhuu veroalennusten, tiukan rajavalvonnan ja talouden jatkuvat kasvattamisen tärkeyden puolesta. Trumpin ideologinen kanta on nähty republikaanipuolueen linjoja noudattavana ja konservatiivisena. Trump ei niinkään kiinnitä huomiota poliittiseen korrektiuuteen vaan ilmaisee näkemyksensä hyvinkin suoraan. Monet hänen kannattajistaan pitävätkin juuri tätä Trumpin yhtenä valttina. Välillä tämä suorapuheinen tyyli on aiheuttanut kiivaita keskusteluja sosiaalisessa mediassa ja uutisissa, sekä Yhdysvalloissa että sen ulkopuolella. Trumpin kielellistä ulkoasua, sekä tekstiä että puhetta, on lehdistössä ja sosiaalisessa mediassa kuvattu rasistisena, loukkaavana ja jopa misogyynisena. Presidentti Trumpin kielellinen ilmaisu, niin puheessa kuin sosiaalisessa mediassa, on saanut huomioita myös akateemisen tutkimuksen kentällä, mutta tutkimusta, joka keskittyisi twiitteihin legitimaation näkökulmasta, ei ole vielä tehty.

Trump käyttää Twitter-alustaa puhuakseen monista eri aiheista, mutta itseäni kiinnosti eniten twiitit, jotka liittyivät voimakkaita reaktioita synnyttäneeseen Venäjä-tutkimukseen. Venäjä-tutkimuksella viitataan Yhdysvaltojen oikeusministeriön vuonna 2017 alulle panemaan selvitykseen, jonka tarkoituksena oli selvittää Trumpin ja hänen kampanjatiiminsä mahdollisia yhteyksiä epärehelliseen ja laittomaan toimintaan venäläisten toimijoiden kanssa. Tutkimuksen yksi pääteema oli selvittää, oliko Trump tiimeineen toimineet yhteistyössä venäläistoimijoiden kanssa sabotoidakseen demokraattipuolueen presidenttiehdokkaan, Hillary Clintonin, vaalikampanja. Tutkimuksen toisena tavoitteena oli selvittää, oliko presidentti Trump syyllistynyt oikeuden estämiseen, kun kuuli olevansa tutkimuksen kohteena. Tutkimuksen päävastuussa olevaksi erikoistutkijaksi nimitettiin toukokuussa 2017 entinen Yhdysvaltain keskusrikospoliisin (FBI) pääjohtaja Robert Mueller. Tutkimuksen tulokset julkistettiin maaliskuussa 2019, mutta tulokset jäivät jokseenkin epätarkoiksi. Muellerin raportin mukaan, tutkimuksen avulla ei pystytty todistamaan, että presidentti olisi toimillaan syyllistynyt rikokseen. Mueller kuitenkin lisäsi päätelmään, että raportin tulokset eivät myöskään täysin vapauta istuvaa presidenttiä syytöksistä. Presidenttiä saattaa odottaa uusi rikosoikeudellinen tutkimus asiaan liittyen presidenttiviran päättyessä.

Trump on avoimesti kertonut pitävänsä Yhdysvaltojen keskusrikospoliisin tekemää tutkimusta täysin turhana ja demokraattien keksimänä noitavainona. Juuri tämän takia olikin mielenkiintoista keskittyä twiiteihin juuri kyseisen aihepiirin ympärillä. Aihe myöskin yhdistää Trumpin roolia ns. yksityishenkilönä sekä valtaapitävänä poliittisena johtajana. Tämän Pro Gradu – tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää, kuinka aikamme yksi vaikutusvaltaisimmista valtion päämiehistä käyttää henkilökohtaista Twitteriään legitimoidakseen omaa näkemystään Venäjä-tutkimukseen liittyen. Onkin mielenkiintoista tutkia, miten perinteisesti ns. epäpoliittisina kanavina pidettyjä sosiaalisen median alustoja voidaan käyttää samalla henkilökohtaisen ja poliittisen näkemysten levittämiseen ja edistämiseen. Tämä tutkielma pyrkii vastaamaan seuraaviin tutkimuskysymyksiin:

1. Millaisia legitimaatiostrategioita Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump) käyttää twiiteissään, jotka koskevat Yhdysvaltojen keskusrikospoliisin Venäjä-tutkimusta?

2. Muuttuvatko twiiteissä käytetyt legitimaatiostrategiat sen jälkeen, kun Yhdysvaltojen keskusrikospoliisin tutkimuksen tulokset julkaistaan?

3. Mikä on näissä kyseisissä twiiteissä käytettyjen legitimaatiostrategioiden ja niiden muutoksien merkitys?

Vastatakseni kahteen ensimmäiseen tutkimuskysymykseeni käytin apunani pääasiassa Van Leeuwenin (2007) legitimaatiostrategia -teoriaa. Van Leeuwenin teorian mukaan *legitimaatio* keskittyy erilaisiin kielellisiin keinoihin, joilla voi rakentaa positiivista kuvaa ja vahvistaa itselleen suotuisaa narratiivia. Legitimaatioteorian avulla tulkitaan eri keinoja, joilla diskurssit rakentavat sosiaalisia tapoja niin yleisessä keskustelussa kuin arkipäiväisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Van Leeuwen jakaa legitimaation neljään eri pääryhmään, joista jokainen jakautuu vielä eri alakategorioihin. Ensimmäinen näistä legitimaation pääkategorioista on *auktorisaatio* tai auktoriteettiin vetoaminen. Auktoriteettia itselleen voi lainata viittaamalla tai vetoamalla tavan, tradition, henkilön tai instituution auktoriteettiin.

Toinen Van Leeuwnin erittelemä legitimaation kategoria on *moraalinen arviointi*. Moraalinen arviointi perustuu tunteisiin ja arvoihin vetoamiseen, mutta voi välillä olla hyvinkin hienovaraista ja piilotettua, ja näin ollen se voi olla vaikeaa huomata. Legitimaatiota moraalisen arviointina voi hyödyttää mm. adjektiivinen ja substantiivien arvioinnin, abstraktoinnin ja vertailun avulla. Moraalisena arvioinnin apuna voidaan käyttää myös moraalisilla merkityksillä valmiiksi varusteltua kieltä. Moraalista ideologiaa voi välittää esim. fraasien, sanojen ja sanontojen avulla, jotka ovat valmiiksi ladattu tietyllä ennakkokäsityksellä tai vaikka erilaisten modaaliapuverbien avulla. Van Leeuwen kuitenkin sanoo, että ei ole mahdollista löytää yhtä kielitieteellisesti oikeaa tapaa tulkita moraalisia arviointeja, sillä tulkinnat ovat tiukasti kytköksissä tulkitsijan kulttuuriseen ympäristöön ja kontekstiin.

Van Leeuwenin kolmas legitimaatiokategoria on *rationalisointi*, joka perustuu tunteiden sijaan järkisyihin vetoamiseen. Toimiakseen legitimaationa rationalisointi tarvitsee kuitenkin aina moraalisesti arvioivan komponentin, vaikka tämä olisikin hyvin huomaamaton. Rationalisointi jaetaan puolestaan vielä instrumentaalisen- ja teoreettiseen rationalisointiin. Instrumentaalinen rationalisoinnin kautta viitataan päämääriin, keinoihin ja lopputulemiin ja teoreettisen rationalisoinnin avulla hyödynnetään perustavanlaatuisia "totuuksia".

Viimeinen neljästä legitimaation pääkategoriasta mytopoeesi, joka hyödyntää erilaisia narratiiveja ja tarinankerrontaa. *Mytopoeesi* voidaan jakaa edelleen kahteen eri ryhmään; moraalisiin tarinoihin, joissa hyvät teot ja henkilöt palkitaan ja varoittaviin tarinoihin, joiden lopussa pahoja toimijoita rankaistaan.

Nämä edellä mainitut legitimaatiostrategiat perustuvat oman näkemyksen oikeellisuuden korostamiseen ja omaa näkemystä tukevan narratiivin rakentamiseen. Legitimaation vastakohtana mainitaan yleensä *delegitimaatio*. Chiltonin (2004) näkemyksen mukaan delegitimaation tarkoituksena on heikentää mielipidettä, näkemystä tai valintaa. Delegitimaatio voi näyttäytyä mm. syyttämisenä ja syyllistämisenä, hyökkäämällä vastapuolen rationaalisuutta ja järkevyyttä vastaa ja esittämällä vastakkainen puoli negatiivisessa tilassa. Myös Van Leeuwen mainitsee, että legitimaation keinoja voidaan käyttää myös delegitimaation välineenä, mutta hän ei pureudu delegitimaation käsitteeseen erityisen syvällisesti. Tässä on kuitenkin mielestäni totuusperää, sillä esimerkiksi negatiivisen moraalisen arvioinnin ja rationalisoinnin avulla on mahdollista vähentää vastapuolelle annettavaa painoarvoa. Reyes (2011) mainitsee vielä, että yhtä asemaa tai näkemystä legitimoimalla automaattisesti delegitimoidaan vastakkaista näkemystä.

(De)legitimaatioteoriat toimivat myös *ideologisen neliön* teoriaan yhteydessä. Van Dijk:n (1998) mukaan, ymmärtääkseen puhujan tai kirjoittajan todellisia motiiveja ja merkityksiä, tulee ymmärtää ideologisia merkityksiä, jotka on sisällytetty itse kieleen. Van Dijk:n mukaan kirjoittaja jättää kieleen todistusaineistoa ideologiastaan. Ideologinen neliö perustuu tiedon korostamiseen tai puuttumiseen, ja siihen kehen nämä toimet kohdistuvat. Hän jakaa ideologiset perusteet luokkiin, joissa kieltä käytetään joko painottamaan mikä on hyvää *meissä* ja huonoa *heissä,* tai vaimentamaan näkemyksiä siitä, mikä on *meissä* huonoa ja *heissä* hyvää. On myös mielenkiintoista kiinnittää huomiota siihen, keiden nähdään kuuluvan *meihin* ja keiden nähdään kuuluvan *heihin,* sillä jaot ovat täysin kirjoittajan/puhujan itsensä päätettävissä.

Kuten ylempänä mainitsin, tutkimusaineistokseni valikoitui Presidentin omalla Twitter-tilillä (@realDonaldTrump) julkaistut twiitit, jotka käsittelivät Yhdysvaltojen keskusrikospoliisin alullepanemaa Venäjä-tutkimusta. Löytääkseni aiheeseen liittyvät twiitit, käytin apunani avainsanoja, joiden huomasin toistuvan kyseisessä asiayhteydessä. Twitterin oma hakutyökalu on suhteellisen yksinkertainen ja aineiston rajaaminen Twitter-alustalla hyvinkin hankalaa. Tämän takia keräsin

materiaalin yksityisen henkilön ylläpitämän trumptwitterarchive.com -sivuston kautta. Sivustolla on jokaisen twiitin kohdalla linkki alkuperäiseen julkaisuun Twitterissä, joten varmistaakseni tutkimusaineiston luotettavuuden, tarkistin kaikkien analyysissä käyttämieni twiittien alkuperän myös alkuperäisestä verkko-osoitteesta. Trumptwitterarchive.com sivustolla rajasin tutkimusaineistoani niin, että ulkopuolelle jäivät niin kutsutut 'uudelleentwiittaukset', videot, avainsanat, kommentit ja kuvat. Poistin manuaalisesti aineistosta myös twiitit, jotka sisälsivät vain suoran lainauksen, sillä ne eivät suoraan anna viitteitä Donald Trumpin kielestä. Twiittejä oli näiden rajauksien jälkeen edelleen valtava määrä, joten rajatakseni aineistoa valitsin 50 viimeisintä twiittikokonaisuutta ennen Mueller tutkimuksen tulosten julkistamista (23 maaliskuuta 2019) ja 50 viimeisintä twiittikokonaisuutta tulosten julkistamisen jälkeen. Yhteensä 110 twiitin twiittikokoelma sisälsi 125 yksittäistä twiittiä. Näistä kahdesta materiaalikokonaisuudesta loin analyysiä varten mikrokorpuksen.

Analyysin aloitin lukemalla korpuksen molemmat puolet kuudesti. Ensimmäisellä neljällä kerralla etsin twiiteistä vuorotellen eri legitimaatio- ja delegitimaatiostrategioita, viidennellä kerralla keskityin tulkitsemaan twiittejä ideologisen neliön teorian näkökulmasta ja viimeisellä kerralla keskityin muihin huomionarvoisiin seikkoihin, jotka olivat mielenkiintoisia tutkimuskysymysteni kannalta. Seuraavaksi vertailin analyysini tuloksia korpuksen kahden eri osan välillä yrittäen kiinnittää huomioni mahdollisiin muutoksiin. Tutkimustuloksia vertailemalla halusin selvittää, oliko Mueller raportin julkistamisella mahdollisesti merkitystä twiitteihin ja mikä näiden (mahdollisesti muuttuneiden) twiittien merkitys oli.

@realDonaldTrumpin käytetyin legitimaatiostrategia oli moraalinen arviointi, jota löytyi runsaasti mikrokorpuksen molemmilta puolilta. Tarkkoja numeerisia määriä on mahdotonta antaa, sillä jotkut twiiteistä ovat tulkinnanvaraisia ja eri tutkijat voivat tulkita tekstin erilaisin keinoin. Uskallan silti väittää, että moraalista arviointia löytyi lähes kaikista twiiteistä. Trump käytti twiiteissään kaikkia Van Leeuwenin mainitsemia eri moraalisen arvioinnin muotoja, mutta selkeästi arviointia ja abstraktioita enemmän kuin vertailua. Näiden lisäksi Trump legitimoi näkemyksiään myös käyttämällä moraalisilla merkityksillä varattuja sanoja ja fraaseja sekä painottamalla sanomaansa modaaliapuverbien avulla. @realDonaldTrump hyödynsi suhteellisen paljon myös auktorisaatiota, vaikkakin vähemmän kuin moraalista arviointia. Auktorisaatiossa Trump hyödynsi useaan otteeseen samoja henkilöitä, joilla voidaan nähdä olevan

auktoriteettia persoonansa tai virallisen roolinsa puolesta. Jälkimmäisessä aineistokokonaisuudessa (D2) Trump hyödynsi myös persoonatonta auktorisaatiota, viittaamalla muutamaan kyselyyn ja mielipidemittaukseen, joiden lopputuleman hän koki itselleen suotuisena.

Trump legitimoi näkemyksiään myös rationalisoimalla, mutta selkeitä tapauksia on reilusti aiempaa kahta legitimaatiostrategiaa harvemmin. Rationalisaatio perustuu järkeen ja logiikkaan vetoamiseen kuitenkin niin, että mukana on moraalisesti arvioiva elementti. Korpuksen aiemmasta aineistosta (D1) oli todella vaikeaa löytää rationalisaatiota, mutta jälkimmäisessä aineistossa vedottiin järkeen muun muassa tuomalla esiin tutkimuksen valtavat kustannukset ja syytöksien aiheuttamat ajan ja rahan hukkaaminen. Mytopoeesia oli haasteellista löytää twiiteistä, sillä lyhyeen tilaan on suhteellisen vaikeaa mahduttaa sellaista tarinaa, josta selviäisi myös lopputulema. Tarkan analyysin jälkeen tulin kuitenkin siihen lopputulokseen, että korpuksesta oli mahdollista löytää mytopoeesia, joissa tarinan lopputulemaa ainakin vihjaillaan. Korpuksen läpi yksi mytopoeesin pääteema on, että ihmisiä, jotka ovat panneet alulle koko tutkimuksen, tulisi itseään tutkia. Jos koko korpusta tutkii yhtenä tarinana, on lopputulemakin moraalisen tarinan mukainen. Tarinan päähenkilö, eli Presidentti Trump itse, joutui taistelemaan epäreilua ja laitonta tutkimusta vastaan, mutta lopulta kuitenkin voitti pahantahtoiset vastustajat. Korpuksen loppupuolella teemana on, että häntä vastaan kirjoittaneilta toimittajilta tulisi saada anteeksipyyntö ja heidän virheellisestä tekstistään (Trumpia syyllistävistä artikkeleista) saadut palkinnot tulisi viedä pois. Trump asettaa itsenä uhrin rooliin, joka kuitenkin selvittää eteensä asetetut esteet.

Erityisen mielenkiintoista korpuksessa oli myös *me* ja *he* jakolinjojen vetäminen ja ideologisen neliön hyötykäyttö *meidän* legitimoimisessa ja *heidän* delegitimoimisessa. @realDonaldTrumpin twiiteistä saa sellaisen kuvan, että *meihin* kuuluvat kaikki amerikkalaiset kansalaiset, joiden presidentti hän on sekä republikaanipuolueen kannattajat ja muut presidentti Trumpia puolustavat tahot. Vastapuoleen, eli *heihin*, yhdistetään pääasiassa tutkimuksen alullepanijat, Trumpin vastustajat, demokraatit, Hillary Clinton sekä tietyt uutissivustot ja uutisankkurit. Muellerin sijainti tässä jaottelussa on monimutkainen, mutta loppujen lopuksi Trump tekee selväksi, että Mueller toimii yhdessä demokraattien kanssa ja on osa *heitä*. Twiittien lukijan kanssa Trump tuntuu olevan ainakin osittain samalla puolella, sillä hän kutsuu

itseään useampaan otteeseen "teidän presidentiksenne" ja puhuu kollektiivisesti pitävänsä amerikkalaisten kansalaisten puolia, joille hän todennäköisesti myös suuntaa twiittinsä.

Ideologista neliötä @realDonaldTrump käyttää selkeästi hyödykseen legitimoidakseen *meitä* ja delegitimoidakseen *heitä*. Tämän tutkimuksen aineistossa painopiste on selkeästi eniten vastapuolen delegitimoimisessa. @realDonaldTrump käyttää eri legitimaatioteorioita korostaakseen, mikä on vastapuolessa huonoa ja moralisoidakseen vastapuolen argumentteja ja niiden esittäjiä (toinen kategoria). @realDonaldTrump toistuvasti korostaa, mikä on hyvää *meissä* ja miksi hänen näkemyksensä ja mielinpiteensä ovat ne oikeat (ensimmäinen kategoria). Hän korostaa toistuvasti mikä on *heissä* negatiivista muun muassa moraalisten arviointien, negatiivisilla merkityksillä varautuneen kielen, rationalisaation ja varoittavien tarinoiden avulla. Vastapuolten positiivisia puolia myös vähätellään mainitsematta jättämisellä ja auktoriteetin vähentämisellä. Omaa puoltansa @realDonaldTrump legitimoi muun muassa positiivisten moraalisten arvioiden, vertailujen, abstraktioiden, uhreistamisen, positiivisilla merkityksillä varautuneen kielen sekä auktorisaation ja rationalisaation keinoin. Korpuksen twiitit seuraavat läheisesti Van Dijk:n ideologisen neliön periaatteita.

Vaikka eroja aineiston 1 ja 2 välillä löytyy esimerkiksi avainsanojen ja modaaliapuverbien frekvenssissä, eroja on silti odotettua vähemmän. Selkein ero korpuksen kahden aineistopuolikkaan välillä löytyy, kun tarkastellaan ideologisen neliön jakoja Robert Muellerin suhteen ja hänen kuvainnolliseen sijaintiinsa *me* ja *he* -jaotteluissa. Muutoksen voi nähdä jo avainsanojen määrää vertailemalla. Ensimmäisessä aineistossa Mueller mainitaan vain muutaman kerran ja nämäkin maininnat löytyvät pääosin lainausten sisältä. Jälkimmäisessä aineistossa Mueller mainitaan nimeltä useassa eri twiitissä. Tämä saattaa kertoa siitä, että ennen tutkimuksen tuloksia, @realDonaldTrump tahtoo antaa mahdollisimman vähän huomiota ja painoarvoa Muellerille ja hänen tutkimukselleen. Kun tulokset julkistetaan ja Trumpiin kohdistuvia syytöksiä ei voida täysin vahvistaa, myös suhtautuminen Muelleriin muuttuu. Trump tuntuu antavan (oman tulkintansa mukaan) vapauttavan lopputuloksen jälkeen Muellerille enemmän huomiota ja auktoriteettia. Toisella puolikkaalla @realDonaldTrump ikään kuin luo välimatkaa demokraattien ja Muellerin väliin. @realDonaldTrump antaa ymmärtää, että alun perin Mueller on ollut demokraattien sankari tutkiessaan presidentin toimia. Mueller tekemän raportin tutkimustulokset ovat kuitenkin Trumpin mukaan vapauttavat, ja tämän takia demokraatit eivät enää myönnä

tuntevansa Robert Muelleria. Muellerin paikka näyttäisi ei tunnu olevan kummallakaan puolella vaan enemmänkin *meidän* ja *heidän* välissä. Tämä suhtautuminen kuitenkin muuttuu korpuksen loppupuolta kohden ja lopuksi Mueller taas niputetaan Trumpin vihaajien ja demokraattien joukkoon.

Trumpin twiittien tarkoitusperiä on mahdotonta tulkita täysin varmasti, sillä tulkinnat ovat aina sidoksissa lukijan omaan kulttuuriseen kontekstiin ja ymmärrykseen. Parasta mitä tutkija voi tehdä, on tiedostaa ja hyväksyä nämä rajoitteet ja pyrkiä tutkimaan aineistoa mahdollisimman objektiivisesti. Uskon, että tässä tutkimuksessa käsiteltyjen twiittien perimmäinen tarkoitus oli saada lukija vakuuttumaan presidentti Trumpin syyttömyydestä häntä vastaan esitettyihin syytöksiin liittyen. Uskon, että korpuksen aiemman puolen (D1) twiitit, joissa tutkimusta kuvailtiin laittomaksi, epäoikeudenmukaiseksi ja puolueelliseksi noitavainoksi, olivat ennakointia siltä varalta, että tutkimustulos ei olisi ollutkaan Trumpille mieleinen. Tulosten julkistamisen jälkeen Trump itse koki tulokset ensin syytöksistä vapauttavana, jonka takia tutkimukselle annettiin enemmän painoarvoa. Tässä tilanteessa Trump antoi tutkimukselle aiempaa enemmän auktoriteettia ja selkeästi yritti luoda etäisyyttä Robert Muellerin ja muiden vastustajiensa välille. Kun tutkimustuloksia ruvettiin julkisessa keskustelussa tulkitsemaan Trumpin näkemysten vastaisesti, jatkoi hän tutkimuksen ja päätutkija Muellerin delegitimoimista. Uskon, että Trump halusi kuvata itsensä henkilönä, joka taisteli epäreilua tutkimusta vastaan ja voitti. Hän peräänkuulutti useaan kertaan myös tutkimuksen alullepanijoiden tutkimista ja käänsi näin huomiota pois itsestään. Trump ilmensi lukijalle kuvaa hyvästä presidentistä, jolla on paljon huomionarvoisia tukijoita ja meriittejä, ja joka kovien syytösten jälkeen voitti eteensä asetetut haasteet ja nyt viimeistään ansaitsee vastustajiltaan anteeksipyynnön ja kunnioitusta.

Legitimaatioteorian ja ideologisen neliön soveltaminen tutkielman aiheeseen toimii yllättävän hyvin. Aihetta olisi kuitenkin kiinnostavaa tutkia keräämällä laajempi korpuksen mahdollisesti pidemmältä ajalta, vertaamaan legitimaatiostrategioita poliittisten johtajien välillä, eri sosiaalisen median kanavilla tai aivan eri aiheeseen liittyen. Legitimaatiota sosiaalisessa mediassa voisi hyödyntää myös yksilöihin poliittisten keskustelujen ulkopuolella. Mahdollisuuksia on monia.