

Social Media's Impact on Immigration Policies

Public's response to children in cages

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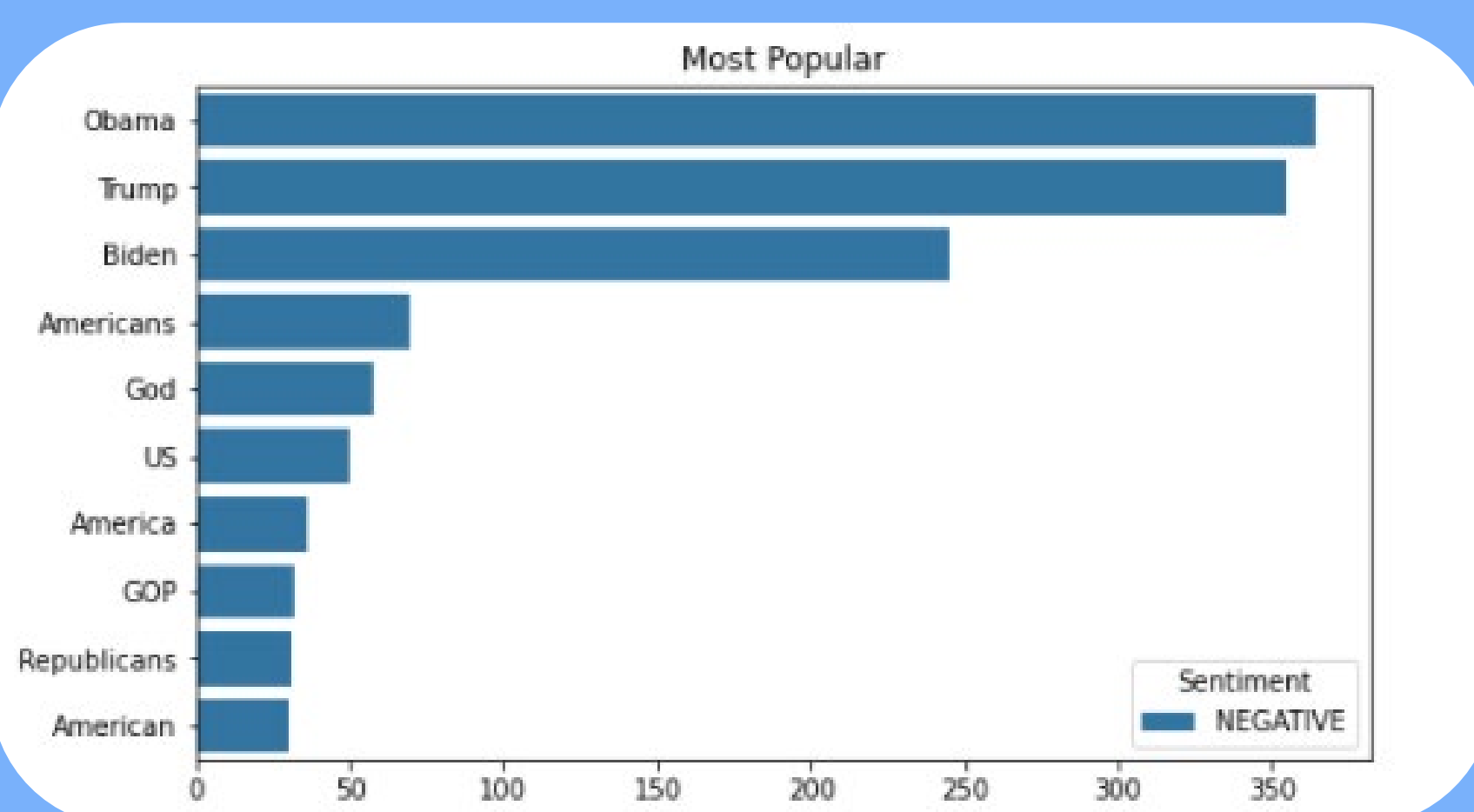
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Introduction

- Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been many political movement and involvement throughout social media regarding each political party's response to the economic situation undergoing in the United States as well as how they prepare to target certain issues within the political agenda. One of the first points for both parties was to ensure the most accurate response to the safety and protection of U.S residents who are affected by this pandemic in many ways. However, there was a question if the current administration was also considering the lives, safety, and protection of those in facilities where they are to remain until their fate is decided in a court. Before the pandemic, there was a large group of immigrants who attempted to come to the United States who had travelled in a caravan to seek a way to find refuge and safety in the U.S.

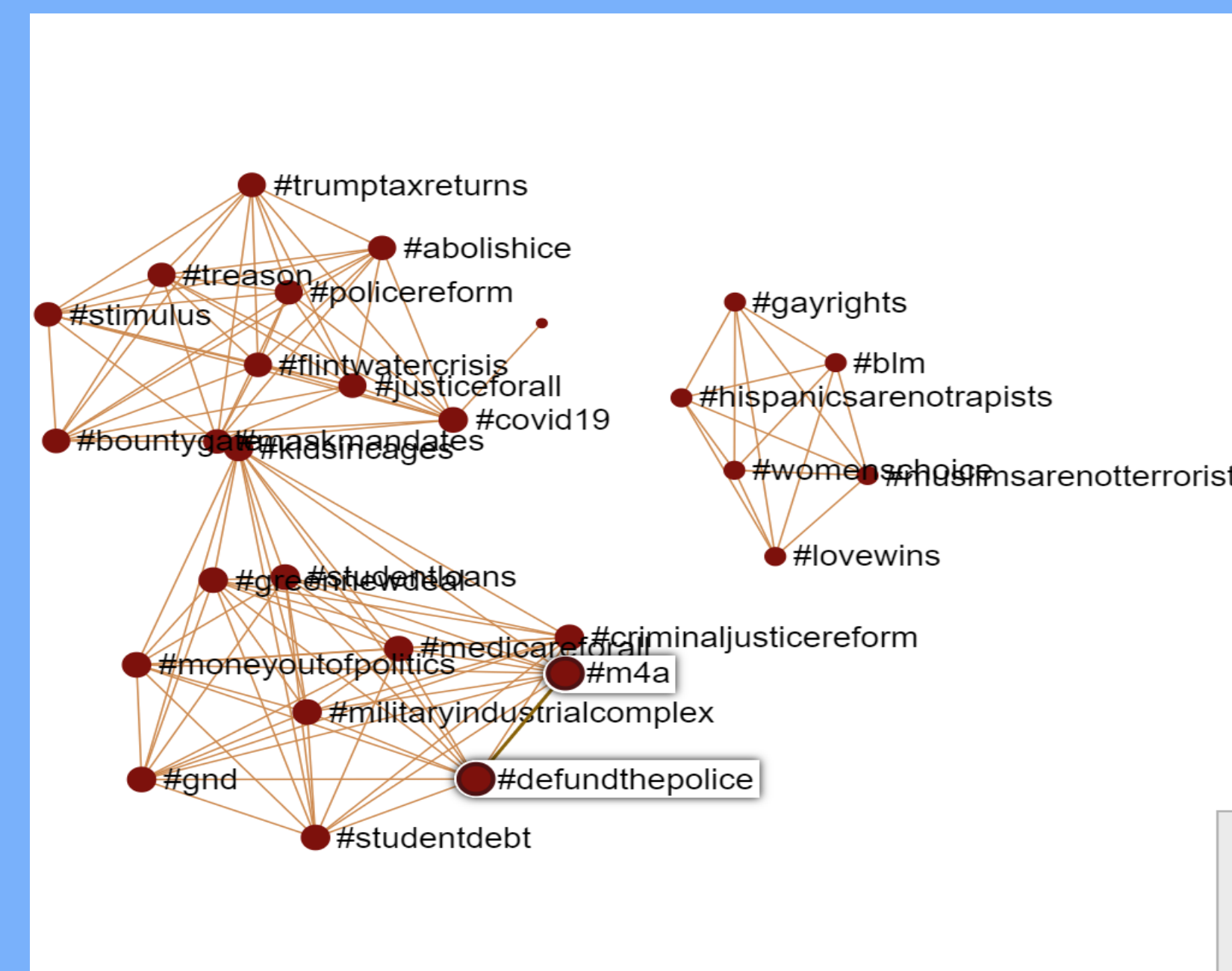


- Although they attempted to commit to requesting asylum in a lawful manner, individuals are still punished for breaking the law in stepping into foreign territory. Throughout my project, I will analyze the response to the immigration movement in wanting to eliminate crimes against humanity especially around election season where there were actions taken to vote the current administration out effective 2021. I will include different sources that represent both party's responses to the caravan as well as other immigration movements, specifically their point of view in allowing children to be separated from their parents and family and having the government decide what they will do with them.



Methodology

- In order to best analyze the ways in which Twitter influences the political agenda of both parties but most specifically regarding immigration, I had to:
- Use the Collab Notebook provided to us by the course where I was able to input a key word or phrase. In this case, I used "Children cages" to reveal the popularity and use of these words in connection with the current debates surrounding the U.S/Mexico Border.
- I was able to clean the tweets and go through the notebook to focus on how many tweets were being produced from these phrases and what this meant in regard to the approximation of the 2020 Presidential Elections.
- I also used the Indiana University Conservatory of Social Media to pull tweets of relative terms and organizations that are following this movement which include: "United We Dream"; "Hugs not walls"; "Free the Children"; "Undocumented, Unafraid".
- I pulled academic journal, "Opinion leaders on Twitter immigration issue networks: combining agenda-setting effects and the two-step flow of information", written by Joseph Jai-sung, where he focuses on analyzing the way in which the public reacts to people positioned in power using social media to obtain a reaction in favor of their stance in an issue.
- The academic journal, "Malevolent Creativity and Social Media: Creating Anti-immigration Communities on Twitter", Constance speaks on behalf of the use of platforms to create a bias against immigration such as "Trump tweets" that influence the way in which people side on the subject.

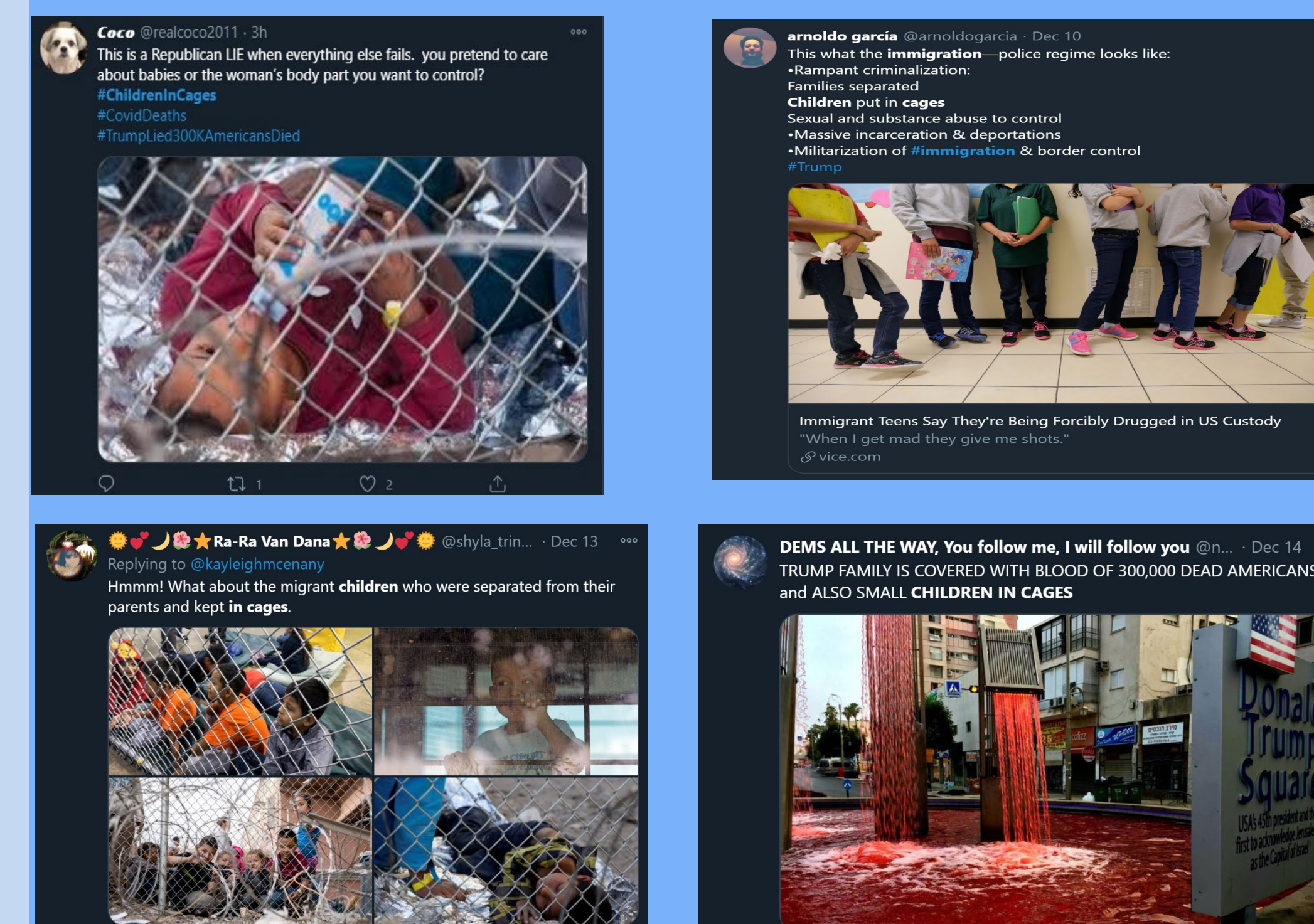


- When I inputted the words "Free the kids" as a hashtag into the Indiana University system it pulled tweets of the last 31 days in which there were connections with other slogans and hashtags like #AbolishICE and Hugs not Walls. Based on this result, I can make the connection with the academic journal, "How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration", where Rianne Decker makes the connection of how immigration reforms are created through the mobilization of organizations and especially now the rise of social media pressures that allow there to be a greater impact on the response to injustice in crimes against humanity.
- When inputting the keywords into the Google Collab Notebook using a Twitter API, Prof. Chun explained the process in which the number of tweets were going to vary according to the specific wording of each key term. When using "Children cages" there were a lot of other phrases including some of important political leaders who have impacted Immigration reform (As pictured in the "Most Popular" chart").

Analysis:

In my analysis, I was able to use a semantic analysis interpretation through Collab that allowed me to seek the results of Figure 2, which show the terms in popularity relevant to that of the words, "Children cages". All these terms especially closer to the elections in November, reveal the desire of immigration reform to be implanted within a political agenda according to constituents. This figure is important because it demonstrates the power of social media to articulate a narrative about certain policies based on the person or platform being used to tweet information to be exposed to the general public.

In the third figure, I went to the Indiana University Social Media exploratory data analysis where I was able to retrieve a network diagram that shows nodes corresponding to hashtags as well as links to more tweets. One of the most popular tweets that relate to the hashtag of non-profit organizations like United We Dream but also hashtags with more broader terms like "Children in cages" or "Hugs not walls". This figure demonstrates three small subnetworks that are divided into different categories under immigration and children in detention centers.



I wanted to continue my search of what these subgroups were and what categories they were grouped in by directing the nodes to tweet links. Some of the tweets I found are above where the first tweet on the top right shows a stance on the issue of immigration based on the difference in political agendas between Republicans and Democrats. The second tweet shows a more emotional and community approach as to how there are many sub issues undergone throughout the detention centers where these children are held. The third and fourth pictures are grouped under the category of COVID and economic stand points where the public questions how tax money and government money is used to expand the growth of these centers.

Throughout all figures, we can see that the subgroups under Children in cages includes, Economic sanctions, Mental Health and Wellness, and political agenda of the current and future administrations. Especially with the rise of COVID-19 cases and the uncertainties of the political agenda leading up to Election day, there was a rise of concerned constituents that reminded the public and their government representatives about the issues at the border and the demand for a more effective political agenda that will ensure the abolishment of ICE and the protection of families against Border Patrol. The popularity of these tweets throughout this year emphasizes the need for a push within immigration reform that ensures the security, protection, and well being of all immigrants.

Conclusion

After analyzing both factors for this course which are the data analytical and readings from this course, I can conclude that the growth of social media will skew heavily based on the participation of political leaders and their involvement in the political agenda. Individuals will flow towards social media to receive their most updated news without considering the possibility of it being misinformation and fake news. During this course we discussed cognitive biases and some of the ones that would fall under the immigration narrative across social media would include, framing cognitive bias, narrative fallacy and confirmation bias. All these biases surround the idea that individuals will focus on an idea or part of the information given and center on only that without considering whether the information is true or accurate. With the growth of social media, and the growth of politicians and important leaders using these platforms, there are smaller margins of aspects of information that will ultimately have a person create their own stance on a political topic. As we approached the 2020 Elections, in the middle of a pandemic, there were a few target categories that ultimately decided who a person wanted to vote for. In the beginning of the year, there was more political movement and action that wanted to dismantle crimes against humanity. These movements carried and progressed through Twitter and other social media platforms and ultimately up for debate amongst the two candidates for presidency. There were also more mobilization for voting registration and information on how to vote for first time voters again, surrounding the importance of changing the current policies of current areas such as immigration. Thus, Twitter alongside other platforms are growing in the impact they have in political movement and the narrative they give constituents on various topics of conversation.

CITATIONS:

Constance de Saint Laurent, Vlad Glaveanu & Claude Chaudet (2020) Malevolent Creativity and Social Media: Creating Anti-immigration Communities on Twitter, Creativity Research Journal, 32:1, 66-80, DOI: 10.1080/10400419.2020.1712164

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