
Executive Summary

How has the Latino community been targeted by digital propaganda during the 2018 midterm elections in the US? How might this affect their involvement in and around the election? This working paper starts to answer these questions through a data analysis on two of the most prominent and popular social media platforms for political discussion: Twitter and Reddit. We collected 2,423 tweets and 1,463 Reddit posts mentioning topics related to Latinos, US politics and elections from September 24th, 2017 to September 24th, 2018. We analyzed people's posting patterns over time and the digital traces of the individuals pushing the majority and most popular content. Our research provides evidence that on Twitter there are two main actors discussing Latinos and politics: "Pro-Latino NGOs" and "Pro-Trump one hit wonders." The NGOs discussed political events sporadically and focused more on helping Latinos who had been long term in the US to obtain better work opportunities, as well as registering to vote. The one hit wonders were celebrities who posted one tweet highlighting the positive things US president Trump has done with Latinos and received massive attention from audiences (in terms of retweets and likes). On Reddit we identified that there was a mix of highly active people: (1) individuals posting about president Trump being racist against Latinos; (2) people who simply posted news stories about Latinos and politics; and (3) political trolls focused on mobilizing people to vote republican (pro-Trump) in the elections. The political trolls shared stories of how Latinos across the US were also supporting Trump and how Trump's policies against illegal immigrants from Latin America was beneficial to the US. They also appeared to coordinate with celebrities on Twitter to gain mass visibility outside Reddit for their cause.

As the Latino voters prepare to head to the polls, and as they are second largest population group in the US, humanizing the effects of disinformation against Latinos becomes crucial. Our research is currently highlighting that there is gap between Latinos and the US midterm elections. Most political actors are not mentioning or organizing Latinos. The political organizations, specifically NGOs, that do focus on Latinos rarely discuss politics and focus more on helping Latinos to thrive in the US. It appears that it is more the extremist voices, such as political trolls, who are engaging Latinos for months before the election. In the data we analyzed, there currently does not appear to be any group that is actively mobilizing Latinos to vote without falling into extreme behaviors. We finish by discussing recommendations to counterattack and diminish the effects of disinformation targeting the Latino community and increase their involvement in future US elections.

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1. Introduction

In the 2008 and 2012 U.S. presidential campaigns there was a belief that digital tools could enhance democracy by expanding citizen empowerment and engagement (J. Tucker et al., 2018). However, after the 2016 US presidential campaign new concerns arose highlighting that social media may have been weaponized to undermine democracy (Persily, 2017). Current research has been investigating how social media was used as a tool to share computational propaganda for spreading disinformation or causing social disruptions (Woolley & Howard, 2017; Wooley & Howard, 2016).

While most current research has focused on how disinformation is targeting populations at large, we currently lack an understanding of how it is targeting minorities, especially Latinos. Understanding how Latinos are targeted is important to ensure fair elections. According to Pew Research Center, 27.3 million Latinos were eligible to vote in 2016, a share greater than any other racial or ethnic group of voters, representing 12% of all eligible voters (Krogstad, 2016).

The goal of this working paper is to build an understanding of how the Latino community is targeted on social media during political elections. We also make an effort to start to untangle how disinformation campaigns might be specifically targeting or involving Latinos. We explore these research questions within the context of the 2018 US midterm elections and using one year of posts, from September 24, 2017 to September 24, 2018, from some of the most popular online platforms for political discussions: Twitter and Reddit. We characterize the content that people post about Latinos and the 2018 midterm elections using analytical techniques similar to those for examining discourse between politicians and their audiences (Flores-Saviaga, 2018; Howard, Savage, Saviaga, Toxtli, & Monroy-Hernández, 2016; Larsson & Moe, 2012). Our aim is to explore the context under which Latinos and electoral content gains attention over time and to investigate the behavioral patterns of the people pushing such content.

Through our analysis we uncover that on Twitter there is a strong presence of political NGOs targeting Latinos. However, these NGOs primarily focus on improving the work opportunities of Latinos who had been in the USA long term instead of discussing the elections. In the cases where they did cover more political topics it was usually those that concerned Latinos who had been in the country for decades (e.g., they discussed DACA extensively which is something regarding Latinos who came into the US as children.) Political issues regarding new Latino immigrants (such as the separation of Latino families in the border) were discussed much less. We also identified that on Reddit the conversations on the different subreddits came mainly from extremist voices, such as pro-Trump political trolls. Political trolls had numerous strategies for engaging people in topics around Latinos and the elections, such as creating posts where people could directly talk with politicians (AMAs) and having

MEGA-Threads where people could have deep discussions around the topics they cared about. They also tended to cover more of the political topics regarding Latinos than NGOs on Twitter.

We finish by discussing the combined implications of our findings, with particular concern for the gap that exists between Latino communities participation in the US elections and political NGOs trying to help them to thrive but not necessarily focused on discussing about politics or covering all political issues regarding Latinos.

As the Latino voters prepare to head to the polls, and as they are second largest population group in the US (Research, 2017), humanizing the effects of disinformation against Latinos becomes crucial. Our investigation suggests that political issues regarding Latinos are primarily being covered by extremist voices. Our data analysis starts to expose the extent to which this is happening. While news media had covered the lack of interest of different actors to cover political events involving the Latino community, the data analysis in this working paper reveals that in effect there are extremist voices targeting Latinos that appear to be louder than their supporters and that this might contribute to an increase in the disinformation efforts targeting them.

2. Literature Review

Disinformation and its Effects in Democracy

Social media allows anyone to easily initiate public political debates, but it can also give a voice to extremist voices and actors seeking to manipulate the political agenda in their own financial or political interest by spreading disinformation (J. Tucker et al., 2018; J. A. Tucker, Theocharis, Roberts, & Barberá, 2017). The spread of political disinformation and propaganda online is considered to have negative societal outcomes (Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Previous research has shown that disinformation can be amplified in communities where people with similar point of view coincide and can be accepted as true partly due to a lack dissenting voices that could challenge it, creating a *filter bubble* effect (Pariser 2011). This bring as a consequence a society that is polarized (Sunstein 2017). Minorities are most often one of the groups most susceptible to disinformation (J. Tucker et al., 2018). Disinformation can lead to distortions in the collective public opinion about minority groups and that that could affect policy and election outcomes (J. Tucker et al., 2018). These distortions may be created, encouraged, and/or disseminated by political actors who seek to promote their policies, win an election, or avoid accountability for their actions (Fritz, Keefer, & Nyhan, 2004; Flynn, Nyhan, & Reifler, 2017).

3. How are Latinos targeted by Digital Propaganda in the 2018 midterm Election?: Twitter and Reddit analysis

Our data analysis is interested in responding the question: How are Latinos being targeted in the midterm elections by digital propaganda? To answer this question we performed a data analysis on two prominent and popular social media platforms: Twitter and Reddit.

We conducted quantitative content analysis over Reddit posts and tweets related to the midterm elections and Latinos. We made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. This mixed-method approach enables the case studies to speak to concerns at the intersection of several disciplines: especially those focused on social science, and computer science.

3.1. Methodology

Our goal was to understand how Latinos were targeted on social media during the midterm elections. In this case we consider that “targeting Latinos” means discussing, mentioning Latinos directly on social media. We first collected Reddit posts and tweets related to Latinos and elections from September 24, 2017 to September 24, 2018. Our data collection on Twitter consists of approximately 2,423 unique tweets and 651 unique users. Meanwhile on Reddit our data collection consists of 1,463 unique posts and 968 unique users. The data was collected using the Twitter streaming API and the Reddit streaming API, which collects posts across different subreddits (communities on Reddit). We identified that the posts we collected came from six different political subreddits: r/Ask_Politics, r/Politics, r/News, r/True_News, r/Political_Humor, r/The_Donald, r/Democrats, r/Republicans.

Notice that to identify the Twitter and Reddit content related to Latinos and the midterm elections we manually created a list of keywords related to the Latino Community and the midterm elections. We included synonym words that were used for “Latino” in order to collect posts and tweets from different social groups referencing them (e.g., some people call Latinos “beeners” to reference them in a derogatory form; Latinos from California sometimes call themselves “Chicanos”). To identify keywords related to the midterm elections we collected news reports and the midterm election Wikipedia pages to identify all proper names (i.e., list of candidates, and the related people involved) and major group organization participating in the election. We aimed for these news sites to involve all political views and inclinations to avoid bias on the information we collected.

3.1.1. Understanding How Targeting Happens Overtime

In this analysis we wanted to understand how much people were posting and targeting Latinos around political topics on Twitter and Reddit. To achieve this, we plotted the total number of tweets

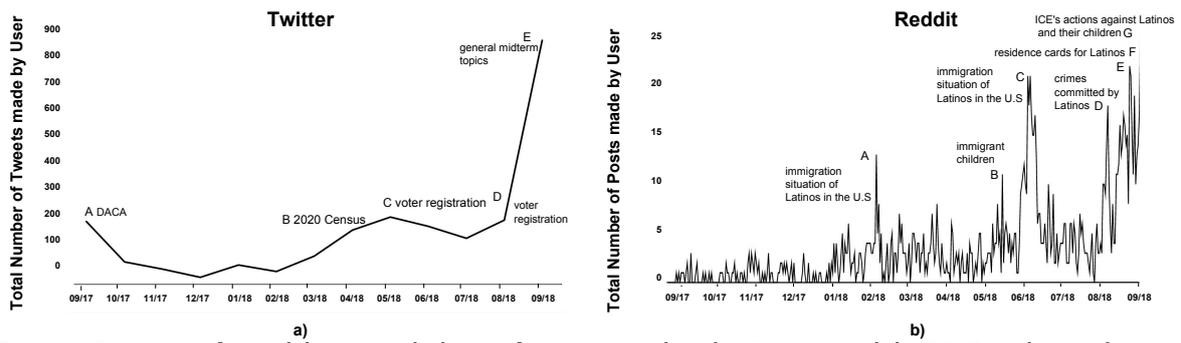


Figure 1: Overview of people's posting behavior for content related to Latinos and the 2018 midterm election. We also showcase the total attention their content obtained from others on Twitter (a) and Reddit (b).

made per day with data collected from Twitter, see Figure 1 a). While with the data collected from Reddit, we plotted the total number of posts per day. We used one year data from September 24, 2017 until September 24, 2018, see Figure 1 b).

3.1.2. Understanding Who Are the People Behind the Targeting

We use this analysis to start to uncover who are the main people driving conversations around Latinos and the election. For this purpose we aimed to identify the individuals who posted greatly about Latinos and politics, and who received wide attention from other citizens. With data collected from Twitter, we plotted the total number of tweets per user vs their popularity (favorite count) per tweet. While with data collected from Reddit, we plotted the total number of subreddit posts per user vs its score (upvotes-downvotes) per post.

3.2. Results

We collected one year of tweets and posts from Reddit and Twitter to uncover how much people were targeting Latinos around political topics on social media. We also made an effort to uncover *who* was driving these conversations. The data collection took a snapshot of all activity starting from September 24, 2017 until September 24, 2018. The details of the dataset are shown in Table 1.

	Twitter		Reddit
Tweets	2,423	Posts	1,463
Users	651	Users	968
Favorites	47,218	Score	851,628

Table 1: Twitter and Reddit Data

3.2.1. Understanding How Targeting Happens Overtime

We wanted first to understand how much people were targeting Latinos around political topics on Twitter and Reddit. For this purpose, we plotted the total number of tweets and posts made per day about Latinos on each platform. Figure 1 illustrates the total number of tweets (a) and the total number of Reddit posts (b) made per day. The X axis represents the date the tweet or post was made, and the Y axis represent the total number of tweets or posts shared that particular day.

Figure 1.a shows that tweets talking about Latinos and elections started massively increasing until September, 2018. However, there are some small peaks before. The first peak on September 2017 (point A) on the chart were tweets discussing DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). This was a relevant topic to discuss since Trump's administration decided to stop DACA on September 5, 2017 (Edelman, 2017). We noted from our data that many NGOs supporting Latinos started tweeting about this and hence the small spike. The discussion appeared to revolve about the impact eliminating DACA would create in Latino community and were encouraging Latinos to renew their DACA application. In the Twitter graph we also observe a second small peak on March 2018 (point B). The tweets on this date were mostly conversations around what it might mean to add a citizenship question on the 2020 Census and what its consequences could be. The third small peak on May, 2018 (point C) had also tweets regarding DACA. However, this time, we also noticed a small portion of tweets urging Latinos to register to vote for the midterm election and how the Latino community could have the power to impact the results of election through voting.

"If change is what you want, you have to vote. Get engaged and spread the word. If you have not yet registered to vote or want to help spread the word, visit powerof18.com #PowerOf18"

The fourth peak on August, 2018 (point D) were discussions around voter registration and the challenges Latinos have been experiencing regarding this issue. Such as high school students who were not allowed to register to vote in Texas even though they had everything in order and ready (News, 2018). We also noted that through the time period we studied most tweets tended to be about informing Latinos of their work rights if DACA ended to help them thrive in the US:

"Questions about what Trump's #DACA decision means? Check out this video and know that you still have rights. <https://t.co/MYIQYytL7J>"

Meanwhile on Reddit, we observe (see Fig. 1.b) that posts about Latinos and elections increased very early on in the year (February 2018). The posts in February 2018 were about the primaries (Politico, 2018) that were happening that month in Texas, a state with a high number of Latinos (of Commerce, 2010). It is surprising that we did not see these peaks in the Twitter data we collected.

We noted that most of the peaks on Reddit were discussions around immigration issues. For instance on February 14, 2018 (point B), there is a spike on posts tweeting about immigration. This coincides with the open-ended debate on immigration that started on the Senate the evening before, and stalled when Democrats objected to the Republican's first amendment, which would punish so-called sanctuary cities. Again we did not see such spike on Twitter in our data.

On Reddit, we also saw evidence of an immigration debate happening before the Senate debate and after it took place via mega-threads and AMAs. A mega-thread is a thread initiated by a moderator of a subreddit, to organize the community and initiate political discussions. AMAs (Ask Me Anything sessions) are special threads where users can ask any questions they want to celebrities and high-profile individuals, in this case, users from Reddit invited mainly politicians. On May 29, 2018 (point B) the conversation revolved around the treatment of children separated from undocumented immigrant parents at the border. A topic that continued to generate debate on the platform. The spike on June 19, 2018 (point C) talked about state and federal lawmakers who were denied entry to a shelter in Florida, amid uproar over the federal government's break-up of families caught illegally crossing the U.S (Smiley, 2018). On September 11, 2018 (point D) there was a peak related to conversations around the murder of a teen in New Jersey allegedly by an illegal immigrant. Here there were also many posts discussing and encouraging others to support building the U.S. Border wall. The top posts on September 20 and September 23, 2018 (point E to point G) belonged to discussions about the policies Trump had proposed around immigrants, such as curtailing green cards for immigrants on public aid, and moving \$260M from cancer research HIV/AIDS and other programs to cover the costs of taking custody of the children of immigrants.

Contrasting these two platforms we can see that on Twitter the discussion around Latinos and elections started to grow much later than on Reddit where it started since early February 2018. We also note that on Reddit they had diverse dynamics to engage people in discussions, such as the mega-threads or the AMA dynamics. On Reddit the discussions around political events and Latinos appeared to have been much more steady and continuous. While on Twitter it was more sporadic and mainly around registering to vote. But not discussing other political events occurring (such as the primaries, or policies that might directly affect them, e.g., the policies around green card holders.) On Twitter there was also less discussions around new illegal immigrants. We also note that on Reddit there were not many discussions around the problems that Latinos went through to register to vote.

3.2.2. Understanding Who Are the People Behind the Targeting

We were also interested in uncovering *who* were the main people driving conversations around Latinos and the election. For this purpose we plotted the total number of tweets or Reddit posts a

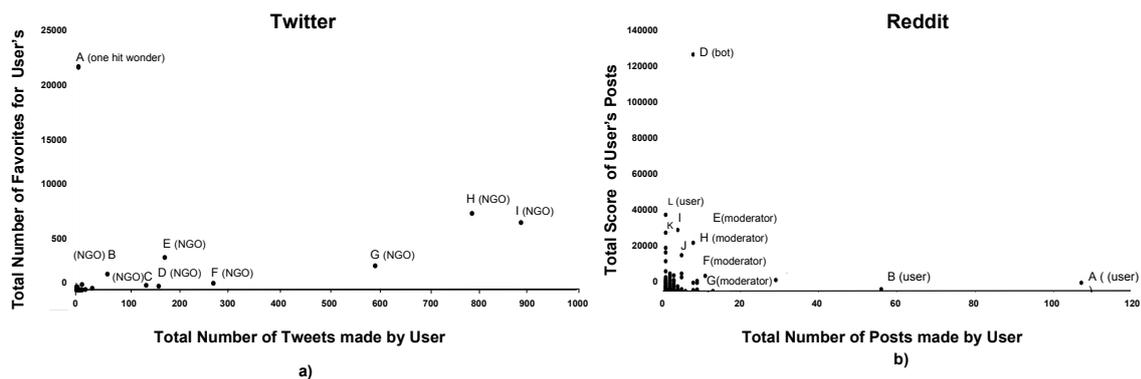


Figure 2: Overview of how much each individual person posted on Twitter (a) and Reddit (b) and the attention they received from others.

particular user generated vs their popularity. The X axis in Figure 2 represents the total number of tweets or Reddit posts made by each user. The Y axis represents the total popularity of the user's tweets or posts combined (number of upvotes or favorites). Each point in Fig. 2 represents a user on Twitter (a) or Reddit (b).

For both Reddit and Twitter we identified the most active users by finding those individuals whose favorite count or number of posts was higher than three times the standard deviation (normal procedure to find outliers). We then profiled these active users (they are each labeled with a letter). We analyzed the type of topics that they mentioned in their content.

On Twitter we identified two distinct types of behaviors adopted by highly active users:

- **Type A (“Pro-Trump one hit wonders”)**: This group (11.1% of the active users) was conformed primarily of celebrities who with one tweet about how Trump helped Latinos received massive attention from audiences. We found one Twitter user who posted only two tweets related to Latinos and elections, but had the highest level of engagement from audiences: 21,149 favorites in total and 6,197 retweets. We noted that all of the Tweets from these individuals supported president Trump’s policies. This level of engagement and behavior led us to name people in this group the “Pro-Trump one hit wonders”.

One particular user in this cluster was talking about how Latino household income increased in 2016 and 2017 due to Trump’s policies and shared a link to a news article about the topic. This user used to work for Fox News, a network well known for its support to Donald Trump. (Hasan, 2018). One of the tweets read:

"I am a proud Hispanic woman,“... "I'm really proud to say this president has created a big tent. There is room for everyone.”

- **User Type B (“Pro-Latino NGOs”)**: All of the users in this group (88.9% of active users) belonged

primarily to NGOs. The NGOs discussed political events sporadically and focused on helping Latinos to obtain better work opportunities. For this reason we called this group “Pro-Latino NGOs”. 87.5% of these active users referenced primarily the topic DACA. On average, 30% of the tweets of these accounts mentioned DACA, 27% the Latino community, less than 1% the US census and citizenship questions for voting in the midterm elections. Two NGOs (Voto Latino, Mi Familia Vota) were the ones that contributed most of the content for this group. A sample tweet:

“RENEW YOUR DACA ASAP! Call us at 844-411-DACA (3222) for real-time information on DACA renewals, resources in your community and more! DREAMers”

Apart from that, other of the accounts present in this group came from different self defined political-organizations, such as *Hispanic Caucus*, *MALC*. Their main aim has been increasing the Latino voters during this midterm election and fighting the separation of Latino families. However, these accounts rarely discussed voting rights of Latinos. They focused more on encouraging people to register to vote for the midterm elections, and have strongly been fighting to protect DACA.

Regarding Reddit (see Figure 2.b) we also identified and profiled the most active users. Here we identified three distinct behaviors in the most active:

- **User Type A (“Latino Aware + anti-Trump”)**: All users in this group (16% of the highly active users) referenced primarily the overall migratory situation of Latinos in the U.S. with an emphasis of considering president Trump a racist and anti-immigrant person.

This behavior lead us to call this group “Pro-Latinos + anti-Trump”. On average, 26% of all the Reddit posts that these users made discussed how Trump was racist, and how he was cruel and inhuman by separating immigrant children from their parents at the border.

A sample post that people from this group shared:

“Gratuitous cruelty by Homeland Security: Separating a 7-year-old from her mother - WHAT EXACTLY did a 7-year-old Congolese girl do to the U.S. to deserve the trauma that has been visited upon her including forcible separation from her mother by DHS Secretary Nielsen and her immigration agents?”

• **User Type B (“Pro-Trump + trolls”):** All authors in this group (41.5% of most active users) belong to r/The_Donald, a community known for its political trolling behaviour (Flores-Saviaga, 2018). Their posts focused on mobilizing people to vote republican (pro-Trump) in the midterm elections. This led us to call this group “Pro-Trump + trolls”. What is interesting is that 34% of the posts generated by these groups were mega-threads where they had deep discussions with others on reddit. These mega-threads occurred at least once per week (See Figure 3). They also organized AMAs with candidates and politicians participating in the midterm elections. For instance, one of their posts read:

“If you are a congressional candidate and are interested in holding an AMA(Ask Me Anything) on r/The_Congress, please contact The_Donald moderators by clicking the contact link on our sidebar”

All of these active users posted about the current immigration situation of the United States and occasionally posted news about crimes that illegal immigrants had done. There was also a tendency to use such news reports to show special favoritism towards Trump and his decisions relating illegal immigrant:

“Dad’s grief leads to quest to count deaths caused by illegal immigrant drivers. In the wake of a 2013 study by the California Department of Motor Vehicles that concluded that unlicensed drivers are almost three times as likely to cause a deadly car accident as a licensed driver.”

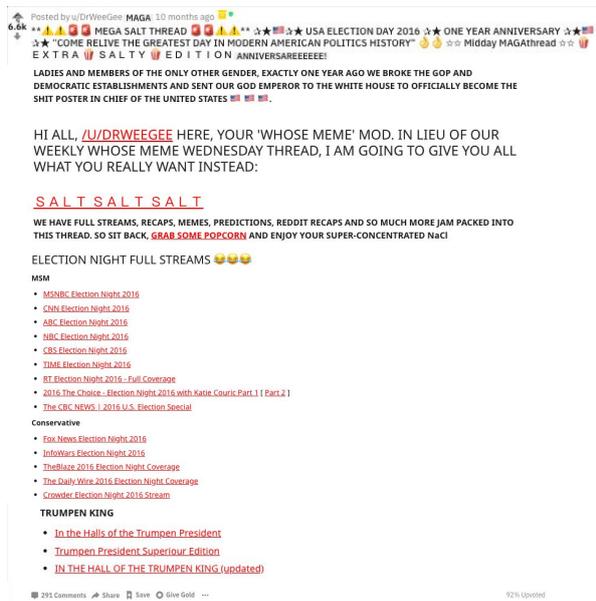


Figure 3: Example of political mega-thread from r/The_Donald where they discuss the political ecosystem, including political topics related to Latinos.

The people in this group also occasionally posted jokes about illegal immigrants (see Fig. 4).



Figure 4: Meme from r/The_Donald mocking Latinos.

ordinated with this group.

- **User Type C (“The Neutrals”)** This group (41.5% of the most active users) had a more neutral view on the topic of Latinos and their rights in the U.S. They primarily posted news reports from sites that are known to have a neutral tone. For this reason we called the groups “*The Neutrals*”. 35% of the posts of these users were mega-threads where they discussed the political ecosystem in general (without supporting democrats or republicans). We also noted that people in this group shared posts where fake news regarding Latinos was debunked. However this was less than 1% of their posts. An example:

“Breitbart fabricated fake story that illegal immigrant started deadly Sonoma wildfires says Sherriff”

Contrasting these two platforms we can see that the main people driving conversations around Latinos on Twitter were celebrities who posted one tweet highlighting the positive things US president Trump has done with Latinos, while NGOs focused on discussing issues related to Latino immigrants who had been longer term in the US, such as dreamers or Latinos who had managed now to

These users also tended to post pictures of Latinos supporting Trump and encouraged Latinos to vote republican (see Fig. 5). We also identified that within this political troll group there was a tendency to organize collective action on Twitter (Robertson, Vatrappu, & Medina, 2010). We believe that some of the one-hit wonder behavior we observed on Twitter might have been coordinated with this group.

Posted by u/Yo_mamas_chest_hair 1 month ago
2.1k Blacks & Latinos For Trump. Rally in Evansville Indiana 2018



46 Comments Share Save Give Gold ...

Figure 5: Example of a post on r/The_Donald where they share pictures of Latinos supporting Trump.

have their citizenship. These NGOs' accounts tended to discuss current political events less. They also did not create dynamics with politicians or political candidates. Meanwhile on Reddit we identified that the majority of the most active (almost 50%) were individuals who participated within political trolling communities. They had diverse activities for engaging people to vote republican, including being able to discuss directly with real political candidates, and had mega-thread discussions regularly. They also appeared to create digital propaganda by actively sharing photos of Latinos supporting Trump.

4. Discussion and Future Work

Current research has focused on how political disinformation targets populations at large. However, we lack knowledge of how disinformation is targeting minorities, especially Latinos. Our research starts to address this gap by investigating how Latinos are targeted (mentioned, discussed) on Reddit and Twitter during the 2018 midterm elections. Through our analysis we identified that Latinos appeared to have been targeted differently on each social media platform. On Twitter the main actors targeting Latinos were NGOs. However, these NGOs did not appear to target all Latinos, but rather focused primarily on those who had been in the US for decades. The vast majority of their content was about DACA or voting registration (both policies related to Latinos who had been in the US since they were either kids or who had been long enough in the US to become citizens). These organizations seemed to rarely cover issues pertaining to other types of Latinos. This was especially noticeable when comparing their activity on Twitter to the people on reddit.

On Reddit we saw spikes in the number of posts early on in the year when people started mentioning and covering the situation of Latino families who had just arrived to the US and were being separated at the border. While the NGOs also briefly discussed these topics on Twitter, they did not give them the same visibility as the topics that pertained to long term Latinos in the US. It is important to note that the Latino community in the US is typically divided into subgroups like Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and these subgroups do not tend to socialize with each other (Stokes, 2003). This might be implicitly leading the NGOs to unintentionally also create subdivisions between Latinos in the US (Latinos who are new and Latinos who have been in the US for a longer time.) As a consequence, people following these NGOs (who in the media are presented as the main organizations targeting Latinos during the midterms) might obtain an incomplete picture of what is currently happening in the political ecosystem. This could also push a further division in Latinos (as in a way, the NGOs with their social media content are creating a narrative of separating "new and old Latinos").

It might also be alarming to consider that the groups that did target and covered more generally all Latino related topics, were primarily political trolls (i.e., users on the subreddit r/The_Donald). Political trolls also had a number of dynamics to turn conversations around Latinos into something interesting

and engaging for everyone. For instance, we found vast evidence of how political trolls introduced mega-threads to drive a large number of people to discuss topics around Latinos and the midterm elections. We found evidence that these mega-threads were happening at least once per week in the political troll subreddit. Through these mega-threads people on Reddit appeared to contextualize, explain, and discuss in detail the political ecosystem, especially related to all Latino groups. This type of social interaction where people take the time to explain in detail to others what is happening politically is something that our research had identified is effective for engaging and mobilizing individuals to action (Flores-Saviaga, 2018). Our analysis also uncovered that political trolls created several AMA's (Ask Me Anything sessions) on Reddit with congressional candidates and political personalities where they discussed political topics regarding Latinos and the midterm elections. This type of dynamics might also help to turn the topic of Latinos and politics into something interesting and through which they can more effectively mobilize people to the polls. Future work could investigate how these interactions on social media affect people's voting behavior.

People on Reddit also actively shared photos of Latinos supporting particular political candidates, especially Pro-Trump candidates. On Twitter we only observed such behavior by celebrities who also supported particular Republican candidates and appeared to push Trump's agenda among the Latino community. By having a right celebrity endorsement, a political party can gain a larger number of votes (Veer, 2010). Opera Winfrey's support to Obama increased vote contribution for Obama by about 1 million additional votes. (Zubcevic-Basic, 2016). Future work could also investigate the impact these type of celebrity endorsements are having on the Latino community.

As the midterm elections come closer, it becomes extremely important to understand how minorities are being targeted on social media. With our research we are observing that political trolls overall appear to have much more sophisticated techniques for targeting Latinos and creating engaging content. The NGOs on Twitter appeared to suffer from their own social cleavages that lead them to not cover all political events regarding Latinos. The NGOs also appeared to have less strategies for engaging their audiences. In the following, we provide some recommendations given our findings.

4.1. Recommendations

NGOs have a great window of opportunity for mobilizing Latinos to be more involved in politics. Previous research has shown that taking the time to explain the political ecosystem to individuals is important to mobilize them in political causes (Flores-Saviaga, 2018). We believe it can be important for NGOs to adopt more strategies for explaining the current political ecosystem to Latinos. Especially, to make an effort to cover all political events related to Latinos and perhaps even to adopt strategies that will facilitate deep discussions (similar to those used by political trolls). Given that Latinos are the

second largest population in the US, if mobilized they could potentially impact the US and create truly fairer situations for all Latinos. Having NGOs adopt these strategies might also be important given that currently it appears that it is primarily only extreme groups, such as the political trolls, who are covering all the political events regarding Latinos. But there could clearly be biases in what they report and we currently appear to lack anyone to counterattack them. We also believe it is important that NGOs take actions to actively debunk misinformation regarding Latinos, such as fake news reports about crimes done by illegal immigrants. Given what we saw on reddit where citizens actively debunked fake news, perhaps the NGOs and normal citizens could collaborate to have an army of people to help them identify and debunk misinformation. Here we can consider implementing crowdsourcing techniques to create effective collaborations to fight misinformation between citizens and NGOs.

In our study we also observed that NGOs did not seem to focus on mobilizing Latinos. Only republican partisans used celebrities to potentially mobilize Latinos in their favor. While NGOs might not be able to favor one particular party or candidate, they could still consider partnering with Latino celebrities that can help them to better engage with Latinos in the U.S.

Lack of socialization among different Latino communities from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba comes as a big hindrance when trying to address the Latino community as a whole. A networking system, that tries to bridge the gap between Latinos of different regions and also with different seniority in the US could help to bring their voices together, can be designed so that NGOs can address them properly.

5. Limitations

The insights this investigations provides are limited by the methodology and population we studied. Our investigation also focused on breadth, rather than on depth. As a result, we do not know much about the identities of the people participating in Twitter, Reddit or the organizations and their concern regarding disinformation targeted toward the Latino community in the US. Future research could involve conducting detailed interviews with actors of different organizations who have some relationship to the use of social media and/or a history of engagement in online politics and digital social life.

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