

Comprehensive Analysis of #TrumpCamps

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Introduction:

Numerous topics are continuously being circulated around social media gaining awareness as they spread. Twitter is the most notable social media platform to analyze a subject as the users themselves are actively engaged with the conversation throughout the entire process. Slang for users that post on the platform are referred to as “Tweeters” and they use the hashtag followed by the topic of their tweet to form groups. These groups of tweeters all discuss the same issue and if a topic gains a large amount of activity, then the subject appears on the “Trending Topics” page for other tweeters based on different factors.

#TrumpCamps is one of the most recent hashtags and has been gaining popularity like wildfire. The hashtag is related to the Trump Administration’s detention centers that hold illegal immigrants near the border (Trafecante, Meyersohn, 2019). Detention centers are most commonly used to hold people until their identity can be verified and they can be transferred to another location (Halper, 2019). Currently, the situation at these camps has escalated due to an influx of migrants trying to cross the border into the United States (Meyer, 2019). Conditions at the camps have reached intolerable levels as there is the spreading of diseases from sick migrants, no basic dental products, low access to showers, and worst of all is the overcrowding of migrants into limited spaces (Villarreal, 2019).

This study is the breakdown of #TrumpCamps into various things in order to capture the connections between the data. It is key to understand how tweeters view the policy, what they know about the camps, and the type of support they use for any claims they make. These help to further the analysis into the group and essentially capture the essence the “why” of tweeters talking about this specific issue?

Methods:

Organizing tweets is extremely important to a researcher as they need to be able to get a respectable random sample size. Using a simple web-browser based program named Twitter Archiving Google Spreadsheet (TAGS) to gather tweets that contained #TrumpCamps gave a large set of unfiltered tweets. The initial amount of tweets collected was 2,424 in which 2,392 were considered “unique tweets” by the program. Filtering these into a usable amount that can be handled by a human was the most important part. Retweets were deemed as unusable data as the user never adds their personal opinions on the topic. They were eliminated in the archive by deleting tweets that contained the word “RT” as it is the abbreviation for a retweet placed in front of the original tweet. Deleting the retweets left a filtered set of 864 original tweets out of the total 2,424 that the program initially collected. The last filtering task was to only have tweets that were written in English in order to make the categorization process more faster. Other languages were weeded out by selecting the language column in the archive and only keeping the entries that had “en”. 742 tweets that fulfilled the filtering process were left, out of this the first 150 tweets were selected to be analyzed and categorized. Categories were then created to see how the tweets are distributed among different factors. They were based on what was most common attributes noticed by skimming among the sample set. The categories used, their description, and examples are all listed below.

1. Position- This category was used to describe the position of the tweeter to the situation at the detention centers. It is necessary to know how the majority of people feel about the situation as it gives the most general view. Support, oppose, or N/A was tagged on to the

tweets based on the context of the tweet itself. An example of a support tweet is: “The President is right! .@TheDemocrats are responsible for #IllegalAliens piling up at the border. The conditions are their own creation because they refuse to do their jobs! Send them all back! #TrumpCamps #CloseTheCamps #MAGA #KAG

<https://t.co/CB8FdocBvn>” (NewfoundStudio, 26/06/2019 13:46:58). The tweet shows that the user does not see fault in the camps, which would indicate support. Opposition tweets are similar to this example: “@realDonaldTrump Real Americans don’t want to see children dying in #trumpcamps No matter how many times you lie, true patriots see your cruelty and deception. #CloseTheCampsNOW” (njmerritt, 26/06/2019 14:18:07).

This tweet shows that the user is speaking out against children dying in the detention centers indicating opposition. The last is N/A and this was simply placed onto tweets that stated absolutely nothing except a media link. The media link could possibly reveal their position but the user didn’t specifically state anything else which could falsify the data collected.

2. Impeachment- This category was used to tag tweets that called for the impeachment of Donald Trump. An example of a tweet that would fall into this category is:

“@realDonaldTrump congrats to that restaurant employee @EricTrump ,he deserves a medal, one member of the #TrumpCrimeFamily got what they all deserve #TrumpCrimeFamily #LockThemAllUp #TrumpCamps #TrumpConcentrationCamps ”

(juniorandjoe, 26/06/2019 13:41:17). The tweet shows that the user is claiming that not only did Donald Trump commit crimes but also his family and that they should be locked up, which is another way for calling for impeachment.

3. Rhetorical Appeal- This category is used to tag tweets that fall into either a logos, ethos, or pathos appeal. Logos most commonly fits into this style: “@BusyBroncoMed1a @Wayfair Also when people see that @Wayfair is selling furniture why are we assuming that they are talking about beds? Maybe they are just providing computer desks and chairs for the employees of the contracting firm running these #TrumpCamps. We have a list of actual furniture sold?” (LiberalDanRadio, 26/06/2019 14:19:14). The tweet is calling for more information to be collected on the situation and that the community shouldn’t just make assumptions on the situation. An example of pathos is: “@thedailybeast She is beyond ridiculous. They are children. CHILDREN #TrumpCamps” (CJNewland, 26/06/2019 14:11:33). Tweets such are using the treatment of the children to invoke opposition to the issue. Unfortunately, there were no tweet that fell into the ethos category out of the 150 sample set.
4. Children- This category was tagged onto tweets that brought up children specifically when tweeting about the detention centers. “@Wayfair I'm happy to know every brand you own or sell from because i never want to give you a dime! Unconscionable greed at the expense of children is unforgivable. You'll be out of business soon. #WayfairWalkout #TrumpConcentrationCamps #TrumpCamps” (LadySkye1, 26/06/2019 14:20:27) is a perfect example of this. The tweet brings up Wayfair and their support of detention centers that harmed children.
5. Conditions- This category was used to tag tweets that directly stated the conditions of the detention centers. The perfect example of a tweet that would fall into this category: “Dear #EricTrump are you sleeping on concrete floors with no food or soap, then STFU!!

#TrumpCamps” (cindyvolkosh, 26/06/2019 14:17:22). This tweet brings up the concrete floors of the detention centers that the children are sleeping on which is the conditions of the camp.

Data Analysis:

Once all the tweets were tagged in their correct categories based on the content of the tweet itself, the next step was to form graphs of the categories. The most interesting categories that showed useful data were position, rhetorical appeal, and children.

- ❖ Opposed- 140 out of 150 users in the random set were opposed to the #TrumpCamps
- ❖ Support- 2 out of 150 users in the random set were identified as in support of #TrumpCamps
- ❖ Unidentified- 7 out of 150 users were not able to be placed into the two aforementioned categories listed above

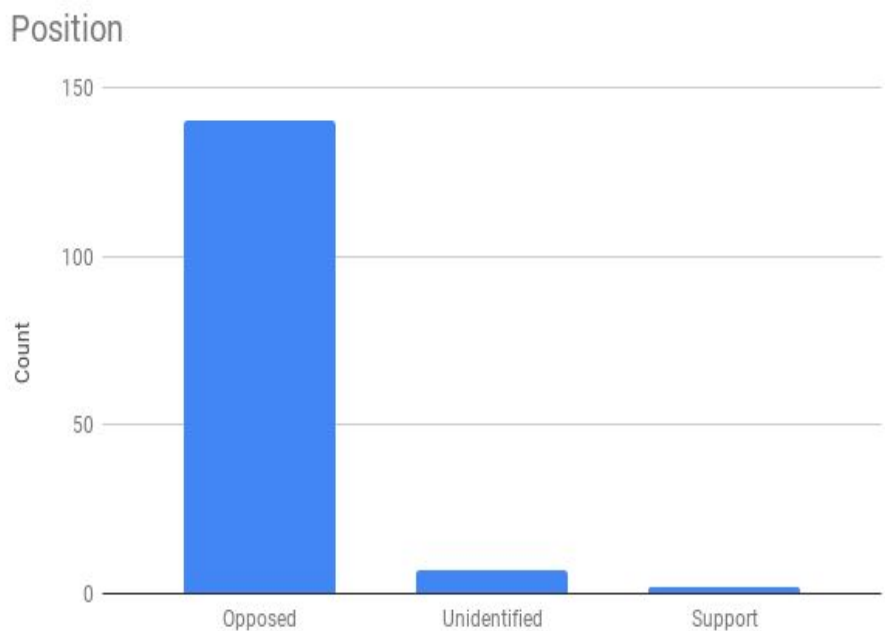


Figure 1.

Stances of tweeters on the #TrumpCamps were mostly opposed to the entire situation occurring in detention centers. The tweets that were opposed called for reform and viewed the problem as a human rights violation. Support tweets were very few in number and viewed the situation as justified as the migrants had committed a criminal offense by trying to cross over illegally. Unidentified tweets were similar to the support tweets as they were also few in number in the sample set.

- ❖ Logical (Yellow)- 37 out of the 150 sample set
- ❖ Emotional (Red)- 48 out of the 150 sample set
- ❖ N/A (Blue)- 63 out of the 150 sample set

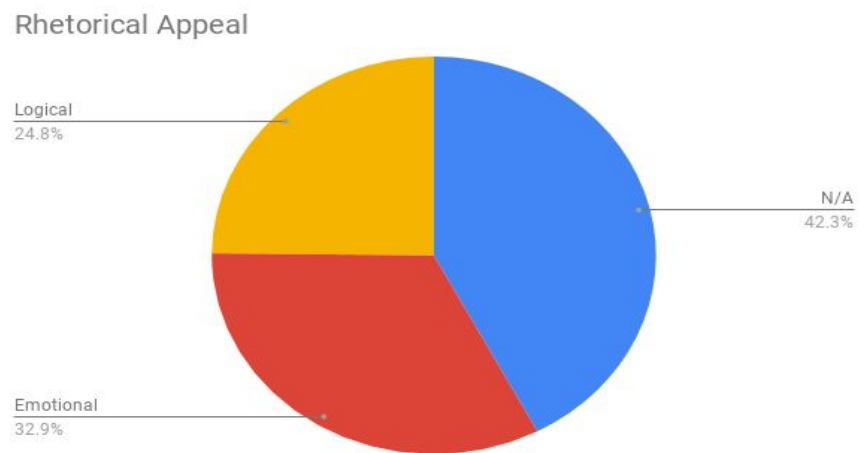


Figure 2.

Rhetorical appeal of the tweets showed how the users try to gain support for their side. The unidentified majority of the tweets were just statements and did not fit into the logos and pathos. The logical side showed a strong correlation with including links to their sources in their tweets and mostly brought up new ideas to fix or change the situation. Emotional was the most outraged about the situation and showed a positive correlation with the children and condition category.

- ❖ Yes (Blue)- 42 out of 150 directly brought up children in their tweets
- ❖ N/A (Red)- 108 of 150 did not specifically bring up children in their tweets

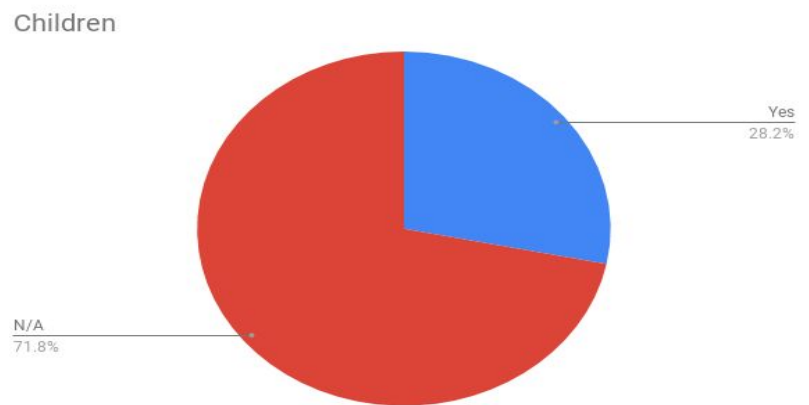


Figure 3.

A large portion of the sample set did not include children in their tweets but they still showed opposition to the camps in another way. The tweets that brought up children placed a large priority on their well being and security. These tweets were shown to be mostly showing a pathos appeal to other users.

Discussion:

The popularity of the topic itself has not gone unnoticed by politicians, companies and other researchers. Democratic senator Elizabeth Warren has frequently spoken out against the use of detention centers and more interestingly private prisons (Halper, 2019). Private prisons as a subtopic in #TrumpCamps has now gained traction as more tweeters are speaking out against both. This has not only led to strikes on companies such as Wayfair & WellsFargo that profit off of selling their products/services to detention centers and private prisons, but raises the question of who is lobbying for them in the first place (Trafecante, Meyersohn, 2019; Brown, Curtis,

2019)? Organizations such as CoreCivic that lobby for detention centers/private prisons have been brought up for their morality (Meyer, 2019). It is quite clear that the large backlash of #TrumpCamps has caused this response from all these different sources. With such an opposition to the topic, the politicians, organizations, and companies are forced to address their part of the issue.

Conclusion:

It is no doubt that the majority of the tweeters were radically opposed to the detention centers that the hashtag was related to. The tweeters were concerned about a variety of issues in their tweets such as the children, conditions, private prisons, and lastly the corporations involved. As this topic continues to trend on twitter, we should be able to see even more responses from people all over the world. Hopefully the awareness will finally cause the issue to be solved quickly and efficiently.

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