

**PERCEPTION AND MOBILIZATION OF “TRUTH”  
JANUARY 6, 2021, STOP THE STEAL, AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

by  
Winston Leslie

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Honors Degree in Political Science with Distinction

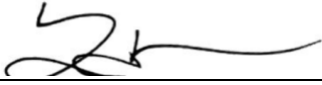
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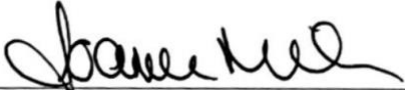
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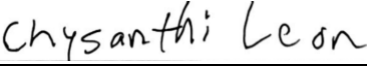
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## **ABSTRACT**

The Stop the Steal movement was intensely popular among conservative and far-right groups in the United States, and was predicated on the belief that the 2020 Presidential Election had been “stolen” from President Trump. While there is no concrete evidence to support that notion, following the election, an intense mobilization effort occurred on multiple avenues which eventually lead to a deadly riot at the United States Capitol Building on January 6, 2021. The Stop the Steal movement often utilized social media to promote unfounded claims of electoral fraud and irregularities. This thesis conducts a content analysis, utilizing measures of nominal association to analyze tweets that appeared on leaders’ feed within the Stop the Steal movement from the election through January 6. A specific focus was placed on examining the association of election-related content, January 6-related content, electoral misinformation, electoral calls to action, and violent rhetoric surrounding the election within tweets. Further, the prevalence of these variables regarding the total number of engagements a tweet received was explored. There is a high level of association between tweets that mention the election and those same tweets containing electoral misinformation. However, the association was not as strong between those that mention January 6 and contain electoral misinformation, and those that mention January 6 and contain violent electoral rhetoric. There is a moderate correlation between tweets containing calls to action and violent rhetoric regarding the election. Further, tweets that contained electoral misinformation and those that mentioned the election received significant engagement.



## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

At 2:11 pm, on January 6, 2021, supporters of then-President Donald Trump broke a window on the west side of the United States Capitol building and began funneling in to try and stop the certification of the 2020 Presidential Electoral College votes. While shocking to many, the events of the day were months, even years in the making, and were made possible by a wide array of factors. For starters, the United States was in the midst of an incredibly unusual year; a historic, unique, and significant election took place amid the COVID-19 pandemic, which ravaged not only the United States but the entire world. Consequently, then-President Trump and his associates aggressively promoted false claims that the election had been “stolen” from him, utilizing the aforementioned societal factors, along with others, present in the United States at the time. To add, distrust in electoral processes and beliefs in conspiracy theories became increasingly prevalent, especially among conservatives (Pew 2020, YouGov 2020). Poor planning among leaders tasked to ensure a smooth certification followed, leading to a perfect storm that yearned its forces upon the Capitol Building that day, which left multiple people dead and hundreds injured, at least 140 of whom were police officers (Kaplan & McDonald 2021).

This thesis seeks to examine the social media activity of leaders within the Stop the Steal movement in the leadup to January 6, specifically when it comes to

electoral misinformation, calls to action, violent rhetoric, and mentions of January 6. There are many entities that deserve analysis in their role, the most obvious being then-President Trump. That said, Congressional leaders, the far-right media, Trump's associates, and his supporters also deserve equal consideration.

## **Chapter 2**

### **2020 AND THE ELECTION**

The 2020 Presidential Election was significant for a number of reasons. First, it took place amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a global health event that ravaged and overwhelmed nearly all parts of the world. Accordingly, the pandemic had adverse effects on the ability to vote, which forced federal, state, and local governments to modify their electoral processes. Secondly, the election came as an indictment of President Trump's handling of multiple societal and political events that took place during his administration, such as the increased calls for racial justice after a string of police killings, the controversial Supreme Court Justice confirmation of Judge Amy Coney Barrett, and his first impeachment and subsequent acquittal. Third, Americans became increasingly distrustful of democratic processes, trustful in misinformation and conspiracy theories, and polarized. All of these factors led to a massive turnout on November 3, 2020, where Americans cast their ballots for either President Donald Trump, former Vice President Joe Biden, or a third-party candidate.

The United States' first case of COVID-19, a highly transmissible infectious disease that originated in Wuhan, China, came on January 21, 2020; a man from the state of Washington who recently traveled to Wuhan. At the time, the effects of the virus were unknown and fairly undetected, as only 200 people were infected in the virus' epicenter of Wuhan. That said, thirteen days later, the Trump Administration declared COVID-19 a public health emergency, and a month and eight days later, on

March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic (AJMC 2021). Soon after, hospitals across the United States were overwhelmed, businesses shut down, and millions became ill and died from the virus. One of the many “waves” of the pandemic, where cases peaked, occurred in the leadup to the general election and following it, from November until the middle of January (CDC 2021). The virus presented a massive and unique challenge for the Trump reelection effort, as the general consensus among Americans before the pandemic was that he would be reelected (Monmouth 2020).

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, the United States also experienced magnitudes of historical matters. The Black Lives Matter movement, which began in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin, reignited following a string of police killings, most notably the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. Floyd, a 46-year-old black man, was killed after his neck was knelt on by a police officer for at least nine minutes (Forliti 2021). Large protests across the country and world soon followed, with momentum for the movement lasting throughout the summer and into the fall. Along with the Black Lives Matter movement, multiple notable political events occurred in 2020. First, on February 5, the Senate voted to acquit President Trump on impeachment charges stemming from his phone call with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and actions following, in which impeachment managers claimed Trump abused his power and obstructed Congress (Ewing 2020). Beyond that, the Trump Administration made two more notable

political moves, among others. First, in February, an agreement was signed with the Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan contingent on certain conditions, which of course did not occur until the Biden Administration. Second, the vacant seat left by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was filled by Amy Coney Barrett, a mere eight days before the election (History 2020). For these and many other reasons, 2020 was an incredibly unusual year.

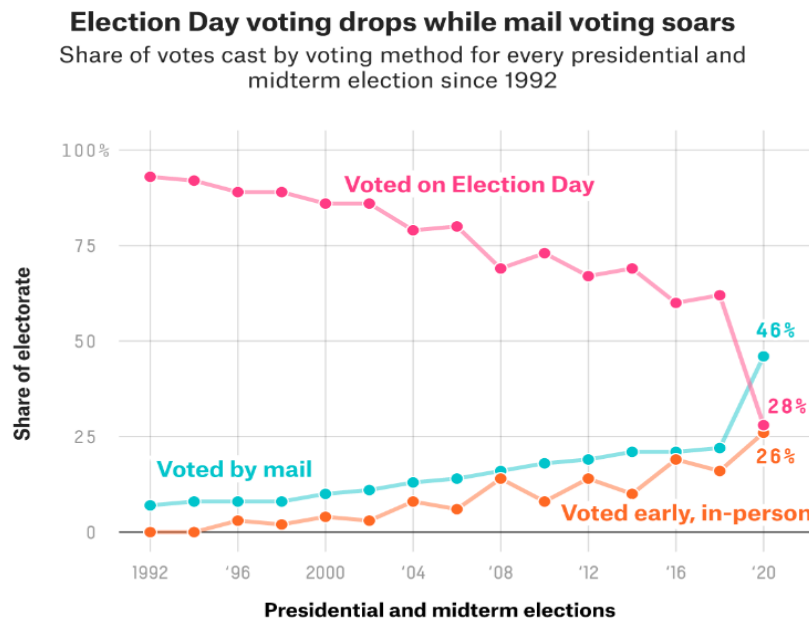
Because of the unique nature of the pandemic, multiple changes were made to electoral procedures across the country, and around the world. At the beginning of the electoral season, however, those modifications were not made, and many primaries felt the consequences. For example, in Wisconsin's April primary, a shortage of poll workers inhibited certain polling places from opening. In the city of Milwaukee, only five in-person polling places were open, far less than the 180 that usually operate (McCormack 2020). That said, approaching the General Election in November, the need for institutional voting changes was met by a wide variety of sectors. Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia expanded voting access throughout 2020, collectively passing 79 different pieces of legislation to do so. Some states, like Nevada, mailed every voter a ballot to complete at their home, something that's never been done within their state. Others mailed absentee-ballot applications to all voting-eligible populations, expanded eligibility requirements for mail-in voting, enacted elongated ballot "curing" processes to correct mistakes made in mail-in ballots, and widened benefits for poll workers. Beyond state-level contributions, the private sector

also assisted in the administration of a smooth election. Civil groups, like the Stanford-MIT Healthy Elections Project, assisted election officials in the recruitment of poll workers, a demographic which was at-risk to COVID-19 because of their age. Private contributions also assisted in the electoral effort greatly; for example, Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan alone contributed \$400 million to the CTCL Grant Program, which provided funds for a wide variety of election administration efforts in at least 2,500 electoral jurisdictions. Furthermore, federal legislation also provided much-needed assistance, specifically the CARES Act, which appropriated \$400 million to electoral jurisdictions to help prepare for the general election. Finally, a massive mobilization movement occurred online, specifically on social media. Facebook, Google, and other platforms provided information on how to vote and collaborated with organizations like the Voting Information Center to ensure its users were well informed on the voting process during the coronavirus pandemic (Persily & Stewart III 2021).

As the polls closed on November 3, 2020, Election Day, it became clear the results would not be definitive for days, possibly weeks. That said, on November 7, the Associated Press, along with many other media outlets, called the election for Joe Biden, as he won 306 Electoral College votes, eclipsing Donald Trump's 232. Notably, Biden won the key swing states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. 81,283,098 people voted for Biden, or 51.3 percent of all votes cast, compared to 74,222,958 people who voted for Trump, or 46.8 percent of

all votes cast (Lindsay 2020). 66.8 percent of voting-age citizens cast a ballot in the 2020 Election, the highest turnout rate for a general election since 1992 (Census 2021). One of the main drivers of this high turnout was the expansion of access to voting, specifically when it came to mail-in voting. The close nature of the race in battleground states, along with the voters’ ability to partake in election-day registration (EDR) also increased voter turnout (Persily & Stewart III 2021, 165).

Figure 1 Voting Methods Throughout from 1992 through 2020



FiveThirtyEight

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS, SURVEY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS

Rakich, N., & Rithani, J. (2021, February 9). “What absentee voting looked like in all 50 states.” *FiveThirtyEight*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-absentee-voting-looked-like-in-all-50-states/>

### **Chapter 3**

#### **POST-ELECTION, JANUARY 6, AND STOP THE STEAL**

Following the election, the “Stop the Steal” movement began to gain traction. That said, the term was not devised for 2020 but rather saw a reemergence, as it was originally coined by Roger Stone, an advisor to President Trump, during the 2016 Presidential Election (Just Security 2021). The focal point of the Stop the Steal movement in the context of 2020 was to challenge the results of the election by alleging widespread voter fraud. This manifested itself through many avenues, spanning from groups on social media, to far-right media outlets like One America News and Newsmax, to the Executive Branch in Trump and his allies. Furthermore, the Stop the Steal movement coincided with other movements and conspiracy theories, the most notable being the Make America Great Again movement, along with the Q-Anon conspiracy theory.

The Stop the Steal Movement challenged multiple aspects of the 2020 election following it, but no more than the expansion of voting rights, most commonly seen in mail-in voting. In the 2020 election, 46 percent of individuals voted by mail, more than double that of 2016 (Persily & Stewart III 2021). The reliance on voting-by-mail during the pandemic was attacked by the Stop the Steal movement, as many claimed that voting-by-mail is susceptible to mass amounts of fraud. That said, while voting-by-mail and absentee voting generally has slightly higher instances of fraud compared to in-person voting, it is extremely rare, as data from conservative think-tank the



Heritage Foundation showed that approximately 0.000014 percent to .00006 percent of total mailed ballots cast in the past 20 years have resulted in criminal convictions of fraud (Evon 2020). Beyond the attacks on mail-in voting was the promotion of conspiracy theories regarding a wide variety of electoral events. The Arizona Republican Party falsely alleged that all voters who used sharpies to complete their ballots would not have their vote counted, a fake scandal known as “Sharpie Gate.” Another popular claim was that Republican election observers were barred from entering and observing the counting and processing of ballots. That said, these claims were often without merit and spun to fit the narrative of the Stop the Steal movement. Restrictions on election observers due to the coronavirus pandemic were applied to both Democratic and Republican poll watchers equally. Other unfounded claims promoted the idea that there were voting “dumps and switches,” or the idea that many ballots were disproportionately and fraudulently given to Biden in mass amounts, and that voting systems, specifically Dominion Voting Systems, switched votes from Trump to Biden, often late at night or when Trump had the lead. Individuals within the Stop the Steal movement also often claimed, without any concrete evidence, that large numbers of dead people and non-citizens voted in the 2020 election (Canon & Sherman 2021). An Associated Press review of potential cases of voter fraud in the swing states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin revealed, at most, 475 cases of potential voter fraud, far fewer than what individuals within the Stop the Steal Movement claimed. Further, this number represents 0.15

percent of ballots needed to swing the election from Biden to Trump in these battleground states (Cassidy 2021).

Between the election and January 6, an intense mobilization effort to challenge the results of the election took place on many fronts. The Stop the Steal movement echoed claims of fraud in courtrooms, Congress, local and state governments, on social media, and at rallies, among many other avenues. Many organizations, such as Women for America First, host of the Save America Rally on January 6, translated sentiment about fraud into action. This specific organization, which originated in a Facebook group and gained over 350,000 members in a single day, organized a multi-state bus tour, stopping in more than 25 locations to “demand transparency and protect election integrity” (Carrie Wong 2020, Just Security 2020). In addition to the multiple Stop the Steal protests throughout the country, from the election through January 6 two rallies took place in the District of Columbia, the first on November 14, which was called the “Million Maga March,” and the second on December 12, which was slightly more disorganized, as multiple protests took place that day (Allam 2020; Slotkin et. al. 2020). Beyond activism in the streets, President Trump’s close associates, including Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, took the sentiments of the Stop the Steal movement to the courtroom. Of the 62 lawsuits filed in state and federal courts following the election, 61 failed, with the one legal victory coming in Pennsylvania, when a judge ruled that an extension given to voters to cure their mail-in ballots lacked statutory authority (Cummings et. al. 2021). Beyond these avenues,

multiple significant events occurred that tried to alter election results. One of these involved Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensberger, who is a Republican. President Trump called Raffensberger to express his discontent over the results of the multiple recounts and audits of votes within the state of Georgia, making his desire known to “find 11,780 votes,” the margin needed for Trump to win the state by one vote (Smith et. al. 2021). Another significant event came on December 14, the day on which the Electoral College formally certified Joe Biden’s victory. Electors for President Trump in the states of Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin sent fake electoral votes for Trump to the National Archives in hopes they would forward them to Congress and be viewed as legitimate. While these “alternate electors” held no legal standing, it displayed the actions individuals within the Stop the Steal movement were willing to take (Paul 2020). As time went on after the election, a specific emphasis was placed on January 6, the day when Congress certifies Electoral College votes. A coalition of 13 Senators and more than 140 Representatives indicated their intent to object to the Electoral College certification from multiple states in the leadup to January 6, which laid the groundwork for a very contentious day, a day that has historically been largely ceremonial (Milligan 2021). Further, those who believed the election was stolen mobilized in preparation for January 6, often in violent ways. For example, posts encouraging people to “storm the Capitol,” and “bring your goddamn guns” were popular on multiple mediums, including a pro-Trump forum called TheDonald, social media app Parler, and more (Lytvyenko & Hensley-Clancy 2021).

On January 6, 2021, multiple protests and rallies took place in the District of Columbia, the primary being the Save America Rally, which took place at the White House Ellipse. Multiple speakers, including Rudy Giuliani, Representative Madison Cawthorn, Representative Mo Brooks, President Trump, and many others echoed unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud, all while imploring their supporters to march to the Capitol to demonstrate further. Around 12:28 pm, around 30 minutes into Trump's speech, Federal Protective Service agents estimated 10,000 to 15,000 individuals were making their way to the Capitol, where members of far-right militia groups, like the Proud Boys, were already present. Twenty-one minutes later, two pipe bombs were discovered at the Republican National Committee and Democratic National Committee buildings, and only four minutes thereafter, at 12:53 pm, the first barricade protecting the west lawn of the Capitol Building was overrun (Mendoza and Linderman 2021). The next hour and eighteen minutes were marked by violent clashes between rioters and Capitol police, who were severely outnumbered. At 2:11 pm, Proud Boy Dominic Pezzola broke a window on the west side of the Capitol building, and a minute later, supporters of President Trump began funneling into the building, all while both Houses were meeting in their respective chambers to hear objections concerning the electoral certification of Arizona (Parking, Leonnig, et. al 2021). From this moment on, politicians, including Vice President Pence, were evacuated, while many had to take cover in their respective chambers and offices as rioters made their way through the halls of the building. It was not until 7:30 pm that the United States Capitol Police Department declared the building secure, allowing lawmakers to finally

certify Joe Biden's electoral victory at 3:34 am the next day, but not before 147 Republican lawmakers still voted to object to the electoral results of various swing states (Yourish, Buchanan, et. al 2021). At least 140 law enforcement officers sustained injuries on January 6, while five lost their lives following. Officer Brian D. Sicknick died of a stroke following the riot, while others took their own lives in the days and months following January 6. Furthermore, four rioters lost their lives on January 6, including Ashli Babbitt, an Air Force veteran from San Diego, California, who was shot by Capitol Police after trying to climb through a broken window outside the Speaker of the House's Lobby (Cameron 2022).

## Chapter 4

### MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION, AND FAKE NEWS

One of the most important considerations to make about the January 6 riot is to examine how beliefs in falsehoods contributed to the event. There are three distinct, yet related categories that deserve consideration: misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. Misinformation refers to “information that is false or inaccurate, and is often spread widely with others, regardless of an intent to deceive,” while disinformation is a subset of misinformation that is “created to be deliberately deceptive” (Gebel 2021). Fake news, on the other hand, refers to information, stories, news, or any other form of media that is “intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers” (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017, 213). The spreading of falsities has certainly become an increasingly relevant issue, as highlighted by the Trump presidency, however, it is not a new one in any sense. Traders seeking financial gain in ancient Athens are among the first accounts of the utilization of fake news and misconstruing the truth (Lamb 1930, Lewis, 1996). Further, the political motivations behind the spreading of falsities are nothing new either. In medieval times, the dissemination of fake news and false information became so widespread and costly, that legislators sought to mitigate the spread of it by outwardly banning the spreading of falsities through the 1275 Statute of Westminster.

That from henceforth none be so hardy to tell or publish any false News or Tales, whereby Discord, or Occasion of Discord or Slander may grow between

the king and his People, or the great Men of the Realm; and he that doth so, shall be taken and kept in Prison, until he hath brought him unto the Court which was the first Author of the Tale. (Ruffhead, trans. 1763, 53)

These three categories are relevant in the lead-up to January 6; however, it is difficult to classify what content falls within each category, as academic research surrounding misinformation, disinformation, and specifically fake news often subtly conflicts with each other in terms of classification. For liberals, in the case of post-election content leading to January 6, many classify the false claims President Trump and his associates made as disinformation, misinformation as his supporters' activities echoing Trump's message along with their beliefs, and fake news as the news outlets who reported on these false claims. That said, for many conservatives who believe that Trump won the election, they would not classify much of any of the content promoted as any of the three typologies. In an objective sense, however, the vast majority of Trump's election contests, along with the content he and his supporters released regarding electoral fraud, can be broadly considered misinformation, as we are unaware if his intention was to deceive (Canon & Sherman 2021; Cassidy 2021).

## Chapter 5

### INFORMATION SOURCES AND TRENDS

There are many sources individuals can get political information from. There are conventional news stations, websites, apps, the radio, print media, press releases, primary sources, TV stations, word-of-mouth, and finally, social media, among many others. Social media, which has gained intense popularity since the turn of the century, has provided a convenient, yet sometimes dangerous, avenue for acquiring information and news, especially in the political realm.

The importance of social media in the modern political age cannot be understated. 18 percent of U.S. adults get their political news primarily from social media. The only information source that eclipses social media in this regard is news websites or apps, as 25 percent of US adults state that they are their primary source for political news. Following news websites and apps along with social media, other popular avenues for political news are cable TV, local TV, network TV, radio, and print media (Jurkowitz, Mitchell, et. al 2020, 3).

Among the more concerning trends witnessed in recent years is the increased belief in conspiracy theories among the American electorate. In the context of the 2020 election, the central conspiracy theory that, in some ways, fueled the Stop the Steal movement was the Q-Anon conspiracy theory. An umbrella term for multiple conspiracy theories, Q-Anon supporters generally claim that the world and United States is run by satanic pedophiles, and commonly target Democrats in their claims



(Roose 2021). The beliefs of Q-Anon have seeped into mainstream thought, specifically when it comes to Republicans, as 41 percent of that political demographic believe that Q-Anon is a “good thing for the country” (Jurkowitz, Mitchell, et. al. 2020, 9). What fuels Q-Anon is skepticism and false information, both of which have become increasingly prevalent, especially online. In the context of electoral skepticism, preceding the 2020 election, 56 percent of Americans and 65 percent of Republicans said they were “not too confident” or “not at all confident” that the election would be conducted fairly (Skelley 2020).

## Chapter 6

### RELEVANT LITERATURE

#### ELITE POLITICAL RHETORIC AND DEMOCRATIC NORM VIOLATIONS

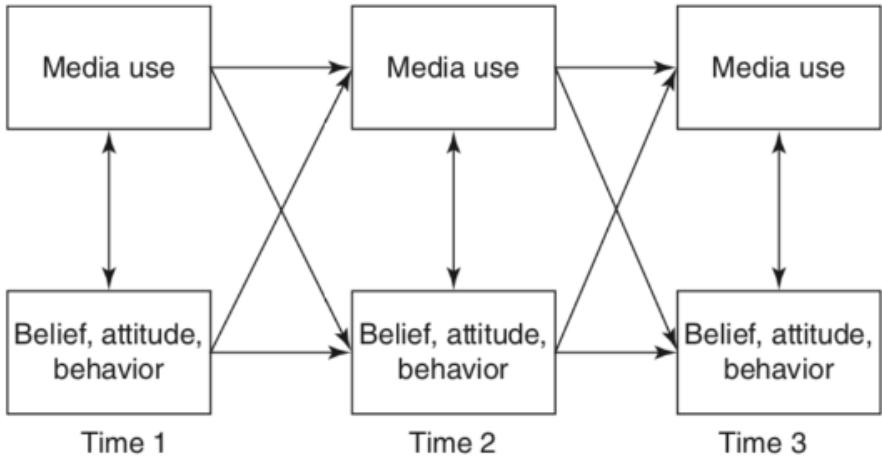
Political leaders, and opinion leaders within the political realm, are important in influencing what the public thinks about and the frames in which they think about it. In other words, the public commonly takes cues from politicians regarding matters facing a nation (Weinschenk, Panagopoulos, et. al 2021, 3). Building upon that notion, what political elites say and do has wide-reaching effects on democratic norms, especially if they challenge those norms, as leaders within the Stop the Steal movement did following the election with their promotion of electoral misinformation (Canon & Sherman 2021; Cassidy 2021). While political norm violations can be met with some sort of reactionary response to correct them, in the context of the 2020 election, that was generally not seen within the Republican party, and it had damaging consequences. Repeated norm violations from individuals within the Stop the Steal movement eroded confidence and trust in elections among Trump supporters and increased the popularity of the sentiment that elections are rigged (Clayton, Davis, et. al. 2021). While social media and other mediums did try and correct the advancement of unfounded and baseless claims made by the Stop the Steal movement through actions like fact-checking, much of the damage had been done, as false information has been shown to spread “farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than truth,” especially for political information (Vosoughi, Roy, et. al 2018, 1146). This is exemplified by the distrust in the 2020 electoral results among Trump voters, as 63 percent of that group were confident in the results of in-person voting, while only 19 percent of this same political demographic were confident in the accuracy of mail-in

ballots (Doherty, Kiley, et. al. 2020). These norm violations were commonly promoted on social media for users to observe, which amplified its negative effects.

**REINFORCING SPIRALS MODEL**

Where people obtain information from is vitally important to the beliefs they hold and actions they take, as they tend to reinforce and strengthen an individual’s attitudes, identities, and behavior. Michael D. Slater’s Reinforcing Spirals Model details the fluid and dynamic relationship between media use, time, information intake, and the characteristic of the information consumer, and highlights how they are all interdependent on each other (Slater 2017, 1). In the context of the Stop the Steal movement, if the media consumed reflects an individual’s belief that the election was stolen, that will continue to manifest itself through further action, attitude, identities, and media intake.

Figure 2 Reinforcing Spirals Model



Slater, M. D. (2017). Reinforcing Spirals Model. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–13. doi:

10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0118

Media and information intake have increasingly transitioned to social media websites like Twitter and Facebook (Mitchell, Jurkowitz, et. al 2020, 3). This transition online comes with many positives regarding political communication, but not without considerable dangerous consequences. Among the more beneficial outcomes regarding the increasing reliance on social media is that it is accessible to citizens who do not rely on traditional media for information, it allows for the direct transfer of information, and provides a platform for rapid communication, among others (Fontaine & Gomez 2020, 512).

### **SOCIAL MEDIA-INDUCED POLARIZATION, CONFIRMATION BIASES, ECHO CHAMBERS**

Utilizing social media as a platform for political information has created multiple problems in three main categories: social media-induced polarization, confirmation biases, and echo chambers. Social media-induced polarization (SMIP) refers to the process in which social media platforms have induced divisions within social, cultural, and political sectors of society (Modgil, Singh, et. al 2021, 3). While SMIP is a broad term encapsulating the increased divisions among those with differing opinions due to social media, the causes of it can be traced to social media's propensity to encourage confirmation biases, echo chambers, and other damaging phenomena. Related to the Reinforcing Spirals Model, confirmation bias refers to an individual's inclination to seek out information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and attitudes (Bessi, 2016; Geschke et al., 2019). While individuals play a massive role in ignoring information that doesn't suit their pre-existing beliefs and embracing those that do, so too does the composition of social media sites. Through algorithmic design, social media platforms configure and group together 'like-minded' individuals

that inflate confirmation biases. In other words, an individual on social media is likely to interact with and see content that fits their beliefs and attitudes, partially due to their own confirmation biases, but also due to the structure of social media sites (Modgil, Singh, et. al 2021, 4). Related to confirmation bias is that users of social media are predisposed to fall into echo chambers, or the way in which information presented on one's feed overwhelmingly conforms to their own views and opinions (Bessi 2016). In part due to social media algorithms, echo chambers often lead to the emergence and promotion of conspiracy theories and the spread of misinformation, as there is often little to no competing, and often correct, information available to the consumer (Modgil, Singh, et. al 2021, 4).

## **ANGER BASED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

One of the most effective political communication strategies is to express and invoke feelings of anger. It is a convenient strategy for messaging, as communicating anger requires targets to blame to attribute to certain issues (Nussbaum 2017, Webster 2020). In the context of political issues, anger-based communication strategies cite clear problems with distinct targets and invoke strong emotions. One of the ways politicians have expressed anger in their messaging is with the utilization of violent rhetoric. While it can take many forms, violent rhetoric can broadly be thought of as “any type of language that defames, dehumanizes, is derogatory, or threatens opponents” (Zeitzoff 2020, 5). Violent, angry rhetoric is often used to mobilize the messenger's ingroup, and also reduces negative perceptions of violence against the targets of that violence (Yanagizawa-Drott 2014). Further, the prevalence of violent rhetoric is heightened in electoral years (Dunning 2011, Wilkinson 2006). Increased

partisan polarization is, to many scholars, the basis for the utilization of violent rhetoric, which is especially exacerbated by the increased dependence on social media for political messaging (Abramowitz & Webster 2016; Zeitzoff 2020). While utilizing anger and negativity has been commonplace in politics, and life, since the inception of government and man, evidence has shown that it has become more prevalent in the past 30 years (Brown & Cormack 2021, 80). In the context of the 2020 election, allegations of electoral fraud and theft provided a convenient avenue for anger-based messages. This is because everyone, specifically those whose candidate lost, is a “victim” of alleged fraud. Further, the targets which you can assign voter fraud to are easily able to be modified given the situation. In the context of the Stop the Steal movement, targets included mail-in ballots, voter mobilization groups, fact-checking organizations, Democratic officials across the country, and courts who largely dismissed post-election challenges, among many others (Canon & Sherman 2021).

## Chapter 7

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Research questions revolve around the relationship between content-analysis variables and total engagements, defined as the total number of likes and retweets a certain tweet received.

*RQ1: To what extent did online misinformation play in the January 6 storming of the Capitol Building?*

As stated above, leaders within the Stop the Steal movement promoted large amounts of misinformation in their claims about the election, and in the leadup to January 6. I hypothesize that leaders within the Stop the Steal movement commonly shared misinformation when a tweet mentioned the election, and that misinformation regarding the election was also commonly utilized to rally support for January 6.

*RQ2: What content did leaders in the Stop the Steal movement share from the election through January 6?*

There are multiple reasons why social media is an attractive communication platform for politicians and opinion leaders. One of these comes with the ability to speak to followers directly. I hypothesize that calls to action regarding the election were paired with violent rhetoric. Further, I hypothesize that mentions of January 6 were commonly paired with both violent rhetoric and false information regarding the election.

*RQ3: What type of content within the Stop the Steal Movement resonated with individuals on Twitter the most?*

As stated before, misinformation often receives more engagement and travels faster than true information (Vosoughi, Roy, et. al 2018, 1146). For that reason, I

hypothesize that tweets containing misinformation will have higher engagement than those with truthful information. As people are drawn to conflict, I also hypothesize that tweets with violent rhetoric will also receive more engagement than those with nonviolent rhetoric.



## Chapter 8

### METHODS

A content analysis was completed of tweets which appeared on the Twitter pages of then-President Trump; Federal Lawmakers, with over 500,000 followers, who either indicated they would or did object to the certification of the 2020 Presidential Electoral College votes; along with Speakers at the January 6 “Save America Rally.” The sample is confined to tweets that appeared on these individuals’ Twitter pages from November 3, 2020, through January 6, 2021. Due to time constraints, every fifth tweet was analyzed within this sample, for a total sample of 1,457 tweets.

Table 1: Sample with Twitter Handles in Quotations

<b>President Donald Trump (@RealDonaldTrump)</b>	<b>Federal Lawmakers</b>	<b>Speakers at "Save America Rally"</b>
	Sen. Ted Cruz (@TedCruz)	Rep. Mo Brooks (@RepMoBrooks)
	Sen. Josh Hawley (@HawleyMO)	Katrina Pierson (@KatrinaPierson)
	Rep. Lauren Boebert (@LaurenBoebert)	Amy Kremer (@AmyKremer)
	Rep. Jim Jordan (@Jim_Jordan)	Vernon Jones (@RepVernonJones)
	Rep. Matt Gaetz (@MattGaetz)	Ken Paxton (@KenPaxtonTX)
	Rep. Kevin McCarthy (@GOPLeader)	Lara Trump (@LaraTeaTrump)
	Rep. Devin Nunes (@DevinNunes)	Kimberly Guilfoyle (@KimGuilfoyle)
		Donald Trump Jr. (@DonaldJTrumpJr)
		Rep. Madison Cawthorn (@CawthornForNC)
		Rudy Giuliani (@RudyGiuliani)
		John Eastman (@DrJohnEastman)

Two primary variables that were considered during coding. The first is election-related content. This refers to, in any capacity, tweets that mention the

November 3, 2020, Presidential Election, and the votes, ballots, voting systems, those who participated in it, or the states who ran it, even if it is not explicitly stated. The second primary variable is January 6-related content. This refers to tweets that mention January 6, the Save America Rally, March to Save America, the United States Capitol Building, Certification of Electoral Votes, or rally calls to “stop the steal” on January 6 (1776, etc.). Following these two primary variables, eight secondary variables that were considered during coding. The first two are tweets that contain misinformation regarding the election and January 6. This refers to any type of content that is inaccurate or misleading, regardless of an intention to deceive (Gebel 2021). To determine if a tweet falls under this category, each claim must be disproven on at least two of the following three fact-checking websites [www.factcheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org), [www.politifact.com](http://www.politifact.com), and [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com). The next two secondary variables are tweets that include links to fake news stories about both the election and January 6. This refers to information, stories, news, or any other form of media that is “intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers” (Allcott and Gentzkow 2017, 213). To determine if a tweet contains fake news, an examination must be made of the site, with a specific focus on the “about us” page. The next two variables are tweets that include a call to action regarding the election and January 6. This refers to if the tweet is an exhortation or stimulus to do something in order to achieve an aim or deal with a problem. The final two variables are tweets that include rhetoric regarding the election and January 6. Violent rhetoric can be defined as "a vehement feeling or expression, and the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy," and also includes dehumanizing language, which is defined as language that "addresses or portrays (someone) in a way that obscures or demeans that person's

humanity or individuality" (Zeitoff 2020, Merriam-Webster 2020). For these variables, certain trigger words signify if a tweet contains violent rhetoric. Examples include the words "fight," "taking your country back," and "hold the line." Name-calling is also a form of violent rhetoric, such as calling an opponent a non-human entity like an "animal" or a "dog" (See Appendix A).

Inter-coder reliability was conducted by calculating Krippendorff's alpha, which accounts for chance agreement between coders (Hoffman & Slater, 2007). A first round of tweets was coded by two coders, but inter-coder reliability was not achieved. After obtaining and training a new second coder, two coders were trained to identify ELECT, FALSINFO\_E, CALLTOACT\_E, VLNT\_E, and JANSIX in a random sample of tweets ( $n = 146$ ) from the original sample ( $N = 1,457$ ). Krippendorff's alpha for each of the 10 variables is listed in Table X. All values above 0.80 were considered to be sufficiently reliable, so the content analysis was completed by one coder following.

Table 2: Inter-coder Reliability of Variables Measured

Variable	K alpha	LL95%CI – UL95%CI
<b>ELECT</b> [election related content]	<b>0.927</b>	<b>0.853 – 0.985</b>
<b>FALSINFO_E</b> [election misinformation]	<b>0.846</b>	<b>0.717 – 0.949</b>
FAKENEW_E [election fake news]	0.488	-0.025 – 0.872
<b>CALLTOACT_E</b> [electoral calls to action]	<b>0.949</b>	<b>0.847 – 1.0</b>
<b>VLNT_E</b> [violent, election-related rhetoric]	<b>0.851</b>	<b>0.626 – 1.0</b>
<b>JANSIX</b> [Jan. 6 content]	<b>0.800</b>	<b>0.510 – 1.0</b>
FALSINFO_J [Jan. 6 misinformation]	0.000	0 - 0
FAKENEW_J [Jan. 6 fake news]	0.000	0 - 0
CALLTOACT_J [Jan. 6 calls to action]	-0.018	-0.866 – 0.661
VLNT_J [violent, Jan. 6-related rhetoric]	-0.214	-0.897 – 0.701

Note: LL95%CI = Lower Limit 95% confidence interval; UL95%CI = Upper Limit 95% confidence interval.

## Chapter 9

### RESULTS

Statistical analysis of results was conducted using JASP Software, with the main measure being Cramer's V and Phi, which are measures of nominal association. Both measures are adjustments of chi-square significance in order to mitigate the effects of sample size. For 2-by-2 tables, as present in this thesis, Cramer's V and Phi are equivalent. The closer the measure's coefficients are to 1.0, the stronger the association, with 1.0 indicating a perfect association, and 0.0 indicating no association. Scores between 0 to 0.19 represent no or very weak correlation, 0.20 to 0.29 represent weak correlation, 0.30 to 0.49 represent moderate correlation, 0.50 to 0.69 represent strong correlation, and 0.70 to 1.00 represent very strong correlation (McHugh 2018, 4).

Table 3 Nominal Association Strength

0.00 to 0.19	No Correlation or Very Weak Correlation
0.20 to 0.29	Weak Correlation
0.30 to 0.49	Moderate Correlation
0.50 to 0.69	Strong Correlation
0.70 to 1.00	Very Strong Correlation

Each of the three sub-samples were analyzed apart from each other initially, with a full sample analysis conducted thereafter. Descriptive statistics and contingency tables were also provided for each of the sub-samples and the entire sample (see Appendices B and C). Cramer's V and Phi coefficients were calculated for the

following variables in order to test hypotheses: ELECT and FALSINFO\_E; FALSINFO\_E and JANSIX; VLNT\_E and JANSIX; and CALLSTOACT\_E and VLNT\_E; and are reported in parentheses following results.

Table 4 Cramer’s V and Phi Coefficients for Sub-Samples and Sample

	<b>President Trump</b>	<b>Save America Rally</b>	<b>Federal Lawmakers</b>	<b>Stop the Steal (Total Sample)</b>
<b>ELECT/FALSINFO_E</b>	0.71	0.63	0.54	0.65
<b>JANSIX/FALSINFO_E</b>	0.05	0.24	0.14	0.17
<b>JANSIX/VLNT_E</b>	0.05	0.22	0.11	0.16
<b>CALLTOACT_E/VLNT_E</b>	0.21	0.39	0.33	0.34

President Trump’s Twitter displayed a very strong level of association between instances of election-related tweets, and those same tweets containing election-related misinformation (.71). 152 tweets out of the 309 coded for mentioned the election, and of those, 101 contained misinformation concerning the election. Regarding the association between tweets mentioning January 6 and false information concerning the election, there was a very weak correlation (.05). A similar correlation was observed between tweets mentioning January 6 and containing violent rhetoric regarding the election (.05). A stronger correlation was seen between calls to action and violent rhetoric surrounding the election, however, it was still weak (.21). Of President Trump’s twenty most popular, original Tweets, thirteen contained election-related material, with ten containing election-related misinformation. Further, one tweet contained violent rhetoric regarding the election, and two mentioned January 6.

Figure 3 President Trump’s Most Popular Tweet with Electoral Misinformation



The Twitter accounts of those who spoke at the January 6 Save America Rally displayed a strong level of association between election-related tweets and tweets containing election-related misinformation (.63), although it was slightly less strong than that observed with President Trump. 274 out of the 692 tweets coded for referred to the election, with 143 of those containing election-related misinformation. The association between tweets mentioning January 6 and those that contain false information was stronger than that of Trump’s; however, the association was still weak (.24). The correlation between tweets mentioning January 6 and those containing violent rhetoric regarding the election was also weak (.22), but stronger than that observed with Trump. Finally, there was a moderate association between election-related tweets that contained calls to action and violent rhetoric (.39). Regarding total engagements, the twenty most popular, original tweets from this sample included eleven tweets mentioning the election. Of those eleven, nine included false information concerning the election, and one contained a call to action concerning the election.

Figure 4 Save America Rally's Most Popular Tweet with Electoral Misinformation



Federal lawmakers included in the sample displayed a strong level of nominal association between election-related tweets and tweets containing election-related misinformation (.54), although it was the least strong out of the three subsamples. Of the 456 tweets coded for, 94 mentioned the election, and of that, 32 contained misinformation regarding the election. The correlation between tweets mentioning January 6 and those that contain false information about the election was weak (.14). A similar phenomenon was witnessed with tweets mentioning January 6 and those containing violent rhetoric about the election. The correlation between those two variables was also weak (.11). Finally, the association between calls to action regarding the election and violent rhetoric regarding the election was moderate (.33), which follows closely to what was observed with the social media activity of the speakers at the Save America Rally. The twenty most popular, original tweets from

this sample included seven mentioning the election, with three including false information regarding the election. Further, two tweets made mention of January 6.

Figure 5 Federal Lawmakers' Most Popular Tweet with Electoral Misinformation



Regarding leaders within the Stop the Steal movement, or the combination of the three subsamples, there was a strong correlation between election-related tweets and tweets containing election-related misinformation (.65). Of the 1,457 tweets coded for, 520 contained references to the election, with 276 of those tweets containing misinformation surrounding the election. The association between tweets containing election misinformation and those that mention January 6 was very weak (.17). A similar correlation was observed for tweets that contain violent rhetoric surrounding the election and those that mention January 6 (.16). A moderate correlation was found between tweets containing calls to action and violent rhetoric surrounding the election (.34). Finally, the twenty most popular, original tweets from this sample all came from



President Trump's feed. As stated before, thirteen of these tweets contained election-related material, with ten containing election-related misinformation. Further, one tweet contained violent rhetoric regarding the election, and two mentioned January 6.

## Chapter 10

### DISCUSSION

*H1: Leaders within the Stop the Steal movement commonly shared misinformation when a tweet mentioned the election.*

President Trump showed the strongest correlation between tweets mentioning the election and tweets containing election-related misinformation. Following him were speakers at the January 6 Save America Rally, and then Federal Lawmakers included in the sample. That said, all three of these groups, and the entire sample, showed strong levels of correlation between the two, indicating there was a high likelihood a tweet would contain misinformation if it mentioned the election. For these reasons, the first hypothesis is proven to be true.

President Trump was the central figure within the Stop the Steal movement; he had the most to gain, and lose, concerning electoral challenges. His supporters within the Save America Rally commonly shared similar sentiments regarding electoral misinformation; however, many within that sample were tasked with carrying out administrative duties within the Stop the Steal movement. For example, Amy Kremer, chairwoman for Women for America First, often tweeted about the March for Trump Bus Tour, which generally did not include any election-related misinformation.

Regarding the Federal Lawmaker sample, throughout the content analysis, it was apparent that electoral challenges weren't their only concern. For example, Representative Jim Jordan often tweeted about matters related to COVID-19. Further, many lawmakers used careful language regarding claims surrounding the election. For example, Senator Ted Cruz and other lawmakers shared a statement, in which they argue "allegations of voter fraud" are the reasonings for their objections. This does not

fall into misinformation in the sense in which the coding scheme defined it, as individuals alleged voter fraud in many senses following the election (Ura 2020).

*H2: Mentions of January 6 were commonly implored with both misinformation and violent rhetoric regarding the election.*

There was not much of an association seen between tweets that contained both electoral misinformation and mentions of January 6, and those that contained both violent rhetoric and mentions of January 6. Surprisingly, the sub-sample which had the least amount of association within the variables of these two hypotheses was President Trump. The only subsample that scored above a very weak correlation in these regards were speakers at the Save America Rally, although their correlation was still weak. While electoral misinformation was the basis for many of the challenges present on January 6, on social media, those two did not commonly appear together. Further, tweets containing violent rhetoric and January 6 mentions were also not commonly implored together. For these reasons, my second hypothesis is refuted.

*H3: Calls to action and violent rhetoric regarding the election were often present with each other in relevant tweets.*

The correlation between tweets containing electoral calls to action and violent rhetoric was moderate for speakers at the Save America Rally, Federal Lawmakers included in the sample, and the entire sample. That said, for President Trump, it was weak, perhaps signaling a mobilizing phenomenon in which the associates of President Trump often exhorted people to do something regarding the election, often violently. While this relationship is an interesting one to observe, as the sample was analyzed in the time period after the election, future research should evaluate the association between these two variables in the context of January 6, as the time period

of the content analysis is more appropriate. This hypothesis is moderately supported for leaders within the Stop the Steal movement, Federal Lawmakers included in the sample, and speakers at the Save America Rally. The hypothesis is generally refuted when it comes to President Trump.

*H4: Tweets containing electoral misinformation, and those containing violent rhetoric, will have the highest engagement compared to tweets with other variables, or those that are absent of any variable.*

Many tweets that received lots of engagement had to do with the election, with thirteen of the twenty most popular tweets out of the entire sample containing mentions of the election, and ten of those containing electoral misinformation. This was especially true for President Trump, as his tweets received the most engagement out of the entire sample. That said, like the first hypothesis, a similar trend followed suit regarding the relationship between subsamples and misinformation. Nine of the twenty most popular tweets from the Save America Rally subsample contained electoral misinformation; for Federal Lawmakers, that number was only three. This demonstrates the goals and duties of the respective subsamples; as stated before, President Trump was the main figure within the Stop the Steal movement, and his most popular tweets reflect that. The same can be said with those who spoke at the Save America Rally, as much of their efforts revolved around supporting the President in his electoral challenges. For Federal Lawmakers, while they were tasked with taking up those same challenges, it's apparent that it was not the primary concern from November 3 through January 6. For these reasons, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis regarding electoral misinformation is slightly refuted and slightly supported.

Regarding tweets containing violent rhetoric, only one out of the most popular twenty tweets contained it, which disproves the hypothesis that tweets with violent rhetoric would receive the most engagement. It's important to recognize that this is not based on a full sample, as every 5<sup>th</sup> tweet was coded for. There very well could be tweets that contained violent rhetoric that received lots of engagement, which future studies should explore.

## Chapter 11

### CONCLUSION

The Stop the Steal movement was, and still is, significant in many ways. It reemerged during an unorthodox election year that saw record-breaking turnout and new methods for voting. For these, and many more reasons, the losers of the election promoted significant amounts of electoral misinformation in hopes of a situation in which the results of said election would be contested and overturned on January 6 to favor them. Mobilization efforts to achieve this goal materialized on many fronts, including social media. On Twitter, leaders within the Stop the Steal movement often paired electoral information with electoral misinformation and received a lot of engagement while doing so. In the leadup to January 6, however, electoral misinformation was rarely paired with tweets about January 6, and the same can be said with violent rhetoric and the latter. What is interesting considering the time frame is that calls to action and violent rhetoric regarding the election were commonly implored together following the election and begs the question if the same would be true in regard to January 6.

Violence, and political violence, affects people to their core. Many viewed the events of January 6 with horror, including me. This thesis sought to provide a partial explanation as to why members of the Stop the Steal movement took action that day, in hopes of recognizing the causes of the moment. It's important to recognize the humanity in the situation and take a step back. Individuals are unlikely to take action for a certain cause unless they truly believe in it. In the context of January 6, it's reasonable to conclude that most, if not all, of those present at the Capitol truly believed the election was stolen from President Trump, and hence them. While it's

attractive, and easy, to scold, patronize, and thus polarize us more, what is needed in a post-January 6 country more is the promotion of understanding, truth, and compassion.

## Chapter 12

### LIMITATIONS

As stated in the discussion concerning inter-coder reliability, I initially tried to code for the entire sample of tweets from November 3, 2020, through January 6, 2021, however, was unable to achieve reliability for multiple reasons. The coding scheme was dependent on the two primary variables before secondary variables could be coded. In other words, I could not code for secondary variables if the primary variable was not present. There was often disagreement surrounding whether a tweet fell into a primary variable. During the second round of coding, I was unable to achieve inter-coder reliability for FAKENEW\_E, FALSEINFO\_J, FAKENEWS\_J, CALLTOACT\_J, and VLNT\_J, as there were either not enough relevant tweets to code for, or there was disagreement between me and my second coder. Future research should consider the correlation between these variables and the ones inter-coder reliability was achieved for, as I hoped to test the correlation between the January 6 secondary variables and the January 6 primary variable. Further, analysis of potential fake news influence within the Stop the Steal movement was impossible to determine, as inter-coder reliability was not achieved for both fake news variables.

Funding limitations did not allow for the gathering of the entire tweets for Amy Kremer and Donald Trump Jr. Amy Kremer's tweet sample begins on November 25, 2020, while Donald Trump Jr.'s begins on November 6, 2020, with both of them extending through January 6, 2021. Regarding Donald Trump's tweets, since his account is currently suspended from Twitter, the only viable way to analyze them is through text only on the sheet and clicking on a link if it is embedded in the text. For that reason, many of his tweets contained links to accounts that have been suspended



or tweets that have been deleted. This trend followed suit for some other members of the sample, but Trump's sample was where it was most apparent.

The scope of total number of engagements for certain tweets in the sample might have been limited. This is because Twitter barred certain content to be liked and retweeted if it violated their terms and conditions. Further, the software which I downloaded Tweets from, Vicintas.io, only included engagements for a user's original tweets. In other words, it did not include engagement statistics for tweets that were retweeted in any regard.

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## Appendix A

### VARIABLE DESCRIPTIONS, METHODS, AND OPERALIZATION

Main Variable	Secondary Variable	Description	Method	Operationalization
ELECT		In any capacity, tweets that mention the November 3, 2020, Presidential Election, votes, ballots, voting systems, those who took place in it, or the states who ran it, even if it is not explicitly stated		Yes = 1; No = 0
	MISINFO_E	Any type of content that is inaccurate or misleading, regardless of an intention to deceive	To determine the accuracy of a claim, each one will be examined on at least two of the three: <a href="https://www.factcheck.org/">https://www.factcheck.org/</a> <a href="https://www.politifact.com/">https://www.politifact.com/</a> <a href="https://www.snopes.com/">https://www.snopes.com/</a>	
	FAKENEW_E	Information, stories, news, or any other form of media that is “intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers”	Links to a fake news story; determined by looking at the about us page	
	CALLTOACT_E	An exhortation or stimulus to do something in order to achieve an aim or deal with a problem		
	VLNT_E	Violent rhetoric regarding the election; violent can be defined as "a vehement feeling or expression, and the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy." Includes dehumanizing language, which is defined as language that "addresses or portrays (someone) in a way that obscures or demeans that person's humanity or individuality"	Look for trigger words within a tweet or video, such as "fight, take the country back, hold the line, etc." or name-calling words like "animals, dogs, radicals, etc."	
JANSIX		Anything that mentions January 6, Save America Rally, March to Save America, the Capitol, Certification of Electoral Votes, or rally-calls to “stop the steal” (1776, etc.)		

	MISINFO_J	Any type of content that is inaccurate or misleading, regardless of an intention to deceive	To determine the accuracy of a claim, each one will be examined on at least two of the three: <a href="https://www.factcheck.org/">https://www.factcheck.org/</a> <a href="https://www.politifact.com/">https://www.politifact.com/</a> <a href="https://www.snopes.com/">https://www.snopes.com/</a>	
	FAKENEW_J	Information, stories, news, or any other form of media that is “intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers”	Links to a fake news story; determined by looking at the about us page	
	CALLTOACT_J	Regarding January 6, an exhortation or stimulus to do something in order to achieve an aim or deal with a problem		
	VLNT_J	Violent rhetoric regarding the election; violent can be defined as "a vehement feeling or expression, and the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy." Includes dehumanizing language, which is defined as language that "addresses or portrays (someone) in a way that obscures or demeans that person's humanity or individuality"	Look for trigger words within a tweet or video, such as "fight, take the country back, hold the line etc." or name-calling words like "animals, dogs, radicals, etc."	



## Appendix B

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<i>Stop the Steal Movement (Entire Sample)</i>					
	<b>ELECT</b>	<b>FALSINFO_E</b>	<b>CALLTOACT_E</b>	<b>VLNT_E</b>	<b>JANSIX</b>
<b>Valid</b>	1457	1457	1457	1457	1457
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Count</b>	520	276	78	80	75
<i>President Trump</i>					
	<b>ELECT</b>	<b>FALSINFO_E</b>	<b>CALLTOACT_E</b>	<b>VLNT_E</b>	<b>JANSIX</b>
<b>Valid</b>	309	309	309	309	309
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Count</b>	152	101	12	13	11
<i>Speakers at the Save America Rally</i>					
	<b>ELECT</b>	<b>FALSINFO_E</b>	<b>CALLTOACT_E</b>	<b>VLNT_E</b>	<b>JANSIX</b>
<b>Valid</b>	692	692	692	692	692
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Count</b>	274	143	59	48	42
<i>Federal Lawmakers</i>					
	<b>ELECT</b>	<b>FALSINFO_E</b>	<b>CALLTOACT_E</b>	<b>VLNT_E</b>	<b>JANSIX</b>
<b>Valid</b>	456	456	456	456	456
<b>Missing</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Count</b>	94	32	7	19	22

**Appendix C**

**CONTINGENCY TABLES FOR STOP THE STEAL (ENTIRE SAMPLE)**

		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>ELECT</b></u>	<b>0</b>	937	0	937
	<b>1</b>	244	276	520
	<b>Total</b>	1181	276	1457
		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	1141	241	1382
	<b>1</b>	40	35	75
	<b>Total</b>	1181	276	1457
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	1318	64	1382
	<b>1</b>	59	16	75
	<b>Total</b>	1377	80	1457
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>CALLTOACT E</b></u>	<b>0</b>	1329	50	1379
	<b>1</b>	48	30	78
	<b>Total</b>	1377	80	1457

**Appendix D**

**CONTINGENCY TABLES FOR PRESIDENT TRUMP**

		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>ELECT</b></u>	<b>0</b>	157	0	157
	<b>1</b>	51	101	152
	<b>Total</b>	208	101	309
		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	202	96	298
	<b>1</b>	6	5	11
	<b>Total</b>	208	101	309
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	286	12	298
	<b>1</b>	10	1	11
	<b>Total</b>	296	13	309
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>CALLTOACT E</b></u>	<b>0</b>	287	10	297
	<b>1</b>	9	3	12
	<b>Total</b>	296	13	309

**Appendix E**

**CONTINGENCY TABLES FOR SAVE AMERICA RALLY**

		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>ELECT</b></u>	<b>0</b>	418	0	418
	<b>1</b>	131	143	274
	<b>Total</b>	549	143	692
		<u><b>FALSINFO E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	532	118	650
	<b>1</b>	17	25	42
	<b>Total</b>	549	143	692
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>JANSIX</b></u>	<b>0</b>	614	36	650
	<b>1</b>	30	12	42
	<b>Total</b>	644	48	692
		<u><b>VLNT E</b></u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<u><b>CALLTOACT E</b></u>	<b>0</b>	608	25	633
	<b>1</b>	36	23	59
	<b>Total</b>	644	48	692

**Appendix F**

**CONTINGENCY TABLES FOR FEDERAL LAWMAKERS**

		<u>FALSINFO E</u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>ELECT</u></b>	<b>0</b>	362	0	362
	<b>1</b>	62	32	94
	<b>Total</b>	424	32	456
		<u>FALSINFO E</u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>JANSIX</u></b>	<b>0</b>	407	17	424
	<b>1</b>	27	5	32
	<b>Total</b>	434	22	456
		<u>VLNT E</u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>JANSIX</u></b>	<b>0</b>	418	16	434
	<b>1</b>	19	3	22
	<b>Total</b>	437	19	456
		<u>VLNT E</u>		
		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b><u>CALLTOACT E</u></b>	<b>0</b>	434	15	449
	<b>1</b>	3	4	7
	<b>Total</b>	437	19	456