

A Networked Family:  
How Fans Talk about *The Bachelor* on Twitter

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THESIS

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## DEDICATION

Shout out to 14 years of absurd, beautiful friendship with Brittney Nichol Jackson.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aimed to research the topic of reality TV, specifically *The Bachelor*. It discussed how fans perceive and discuss reality TV on Twitter, with methodological interest in qualitatively assessing framing, public sentiment, and the use of Twitter platform architecture, such as hashtags and @ mentions, in order to affectively frame this sentiment. This was also explored through the general narrative of *The Bachelor* and the changes that have occurred throughout its tenure. Results showed that the frames of value judgment and everyday life were predominantly used. The most popular sentiment types were annoyance and amusement. When looking at Twitter architecture, likes and hashtags were commonly used, while retweets, comments and @ mentions were not prominent. Retweeted, commented, and liked tweets supported the themes found in the prior analysis for frames and sentiment. The themes did not differ much between addressivity type. Hashtags supported content that utilized frames of value judgment and everyday life, while mentions almost exclusively supported the theme of everyday life.

Key words: The Bachelor, reality TV, fandom, Twitter, networked framing, judgment, sentiment, language

“Since we cannot change reality, let us change the eyes which see reality”

-Nikos Kazantzakis

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

*The Bachelor* is a campy reality television series documenting a bachelor’s quest to find his true love, as well as the competition amongst the female contestants in their desire to be chosen as the bachelor’s mate and ultimate “winner” of the season.

Premiering in 2002, the series capitalized on the massive success of other reality TV programming such as *The Real World* and *Survivor*, though *The Bachelor* aimed to differentiate itself by blending elements of these shows: love, competition, soap opera-type drama, low-stake challenges, and a cinema verite camera style. A fandom quickly grew for *The Bachelor*—the idea of a man finding love and offering engagement to a woman in as little as six weeks was preposterous to many, but audiences could not deny the tawdry appeal. Almost fifteen years later, the appeal has held up and fans have remained loyal.

The show’s first season helped boost ABC’s overall ratings (Collins, 2002 as cited in Dubrofsky, 2006); and according to Forbes online, *The Bachelor* was “among the top five most profitable U.S. reality-based shows, pulling in a profit of \$38.2 million for the fourth season” (Patsuris, 2004 as cited in Dubrofsky, 2006, p.41). Despite many reality television programs that have burned bright but faded quickly, *The Bachelor* has remarkable staying power and influence after several seasons on the air. The season 20 finale had an average of 9.5 million viewers (Kissell, 2016) compared to the popular

Keeping Up With the Kardashians's season 12 premiere of just over 3 million viewers (Kissell, 2016). And though *The Bachelor* Twitter base is only half a million followers, it is still topping ratings charts ("Ratings," 2016). Nielsen Ratings listed *The Bachelor* at number four on the list of "Top 10 Series on Twitter" with an average of 248,000 tweets per episode (Nielsen, 2016). Poggi (2015) said that *The Bachelor* has become "more relevant to viewers and advertisers" with the franchise bringing in "\$187.3 million in advertising for ABC during the 2014-15 season." *The Bachelor* franchise also secured a multi-year deal with Clorox, which resulted in an eight-percent engagement rate on Facebook and Twitter—double the industry standard. Because of this, the show has been a prototype for other reality-based shows for its promotional ventures such as its ongoing promotion deal with other ABC shows such as Jimmy Kimmel Live! and Family Feud.

The Bachelor's influence is not only limited to the original programming. As of this writing, there have been 37 seasons and nearly 400 episodes of *The Bachelor* franchise-wide. *Bachelor* alums have published over 20 books. *The Bachelor's* success has also enabled many spinoffs including over 10 seasons of *The Bachelorette*, even more perversely amusing iterations in the form of *Bachelor Pad* and *Bachelor in Paradise*, and global exports. Perhaps most importantly, the show is still widely discussed and parodied. Shows such as Yahoo!'s parody *Burning Love* (nominated for an Emmy), *SNL*, and even scripted dramas such as *Law & Order: SVU*, have given weight to *The Bachelor's* permeable message (Lear, 2016); and typing "The Bachelor" into Google one will find recent reports from various entertainment sites, Business Insider, and even CNN (Thomas, 2016).

Though some audiences may even question its place in the television landscape (Bondebjerg, 2012), reality TV's longevity and broad, global appeal speaks to its relevance. The general topic of reality TV has immediate interest— The smash hit *Survivor*, which monitored the daily lives of several contestants competing for a \$1 million prize and enduring a “back to basics” existence on a tropical island off the coast of Borneo, became a runaway success, drawing an average of 25 million viewers per episode and earning the record for the most popular summer TV series. *Survivor* also received more than twice the pre-debut news media coverage that *ER* received several years prior (more than 270 news articles in major newspapers as compared to *ER*'s 131 news articles). Because of its success, reality television was rapidly transformed from a cheap form of niche programming to a trending genre, spanning two new Emmy categories in the United States (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 1-4). Since then the reality TV genre has become a pervasive phenomenon. When “viewership and profit margins are used as a litmus test” (Oprea & Kühne, 2016), then reality TV could be considered “the success story of television in the 1990s and 2000s” (Hill, 2005, p.2). The success of *Survivor*'s first season allowed reality TV programming to become a mainstay for prime time (Dubrofsky, 2008). Another examples resides in the first season of *American Idol* in 2002, “where more people voted by phone to help select a winner than voted in the 2000 U.S. presidential election” (Dubrofsky, 2006 as cited in Albiniaak, 2002, p. 22). Despite its somewhat vast changes throughout the decades, Kavka (2008) and Deery (2015) argue that the reality genre will be a formidable contender in the television market for the foreseeable future.

Quite simply, there has always been a predominance of entertainment in regards to audience interest and their consumption of media. When the public has a choice, they flock to entertainment media or media that does not actively curtail their interest in a fan community. In fact, Boczkowski & Mitchelstein (2013) found that while most major media websites cover topics that center on politics, international news and economics, user/public preference tends to focus more on crime, entertainment and weather. Boczkowski's (2010) study also argued that "a growing separation in the temporal patterns of hard and soft news production is intertwined with major differences in critical aspects of editorial practice in which the common ground between hard and soft news work has traditionally been assumed to be significant" (p. 2). This observation can begin to explain where some of the public's fascination with entertainment is rooted. While Pew Research Center's for the People & the Press "news interest" division does not specifically focus on reality television or even entertainment news, many of their headlines show a fairly constant disinterest in hard news topics and a high interest in softer news ("Benghazi Investigation" 2013; "Eight-in-Ten Following Olympics," 2012). Considering there is a decline of public trust in traditional news outlets (Turcotte, York, Irving, Scholl & Pingree, 2015), this divergence is not especially surprising.

Research and reporting show that entertainment and self-performance is not merely a popular topic amongst viewers and readers. Rather, it is essential to media consumption. Gerbner's Cultivation Theory states that "heavy exposure to mass media leads to attitudes consistent with the 'reality' that the media has created, which in turn leads to making assumptions about people, events, and other facets of life" (Escoffery, 2006, p.136). Given this, if fans of *The Bachelor* continuously watched the program, the

“reality” of marriage, love, whirlwind romances, etc.—as its represented by the show—might become ensconced in their minds. Much like studying history, studying entertainment-based media allows individuals and communities to interpret characters and narratives in order to provide ways of thinking about identity politics.

Deery (2015) rightfully argued that among academics, reality TV is becoming one of the most thoroughly analyzed areas of media production. It brings to the fore issues such as comparisons between the real and fictional, self-presentation, commodifiable culture, and the role of TV in a mobile environment. Reality TV programming allows us to think about a cluster of contemporary concerns, “including the requirement that we all perform...because of the marketization of everyday life and because of the demand for individual impression management” (p.2). Because of this, reality TV has become emblematic of a “contemporary commercialization of performed and mediated identities” (p.2). These interpretations are not to be taken lightly as they act, in part, to define one’s world.

In seeking this “definition,” people often turn to existing fandoms that cater to their specific, often idiosyncratic, interests. But at its most rudimentary elements, fandom is a way for people to find a new language and a way to communicate that they may not have readily or easily available in their offline lives (Kresnicka, 2016). Though, fandom by definition is not just a personal endeavor—it is a bevy of academic pursuits from comic books to movies to animation to television to game shows to sports to video games and so on. No matter the subgenre of fandom, there is a parallel amongst all fans as consumers that scholars can learn from. Fans are “knowledgeable about a topic, forthcoming with information, and passionate” (Kresnicka, 2016).

It is important for this study to ask the hard questions of fandom and to recognize the nuance in fan studies. While fan groups are linked in their interest or even passion of a particular topic or subject, the group is not a homogenous mass. Fandom is often viewed as trivial because it is housed under the umbrella of pop culture studies. When it is given attention in academic research or discussion, the result is often a central thesis of fan groups as “obsessed” or “cult-like,” which is an overall negative stereotype (Jenkins, 2015) and not conducive to discussing the role fans have played in cultivating program content. Hill (2005) suggests that word associations with the term “fan” usually elicits responses in the vein of “geek,” which seems to suggest that some underestimate the significance of a fan. However, fans have significance in many societal avenues, the immediate being economical. Kresnicka (2016) notes that fans were once targeted just in terms of viewership but are now sought after in order to understand a group that has a lot of leverage with the marketing, format, and even length of the show.

### Significance of Research

This study is significant because it uses a mixed method approach of content analysis and critical discourse analysis in order to look at the agency of fandom in regards to networked framing and sentiment. The predominance of Twitter use is an important factor in this study/ as the platform is wholly connected to reality TV fandom viewing, content sharing, and online conversation. The blurred nature of low and high culture in *Bachelor* fandom is only heightened further in regards to Twitter use. The collective of nonelites and elites working in tandem to frame issues, both intimate and relatable, support the lens of networked framing. In addition, this study shows an undercurrent of gendered and racial political economy that may not be immediately

obvious using the more popular and streamlined content analysis method. This study is looking to elucidate all of the above in examining fan tweets. In observing these tweets, this thesis gives voice to a group that most would outright deem insignificant because of its connection to “low culture”.

#### Low vs. high culture in Reality TV and *Bachelor* fandom

Reality TV has long been positioned in the lower tier of media culture. Hirschorn (2007) said, “is there an easier position to take in polite society than to patronize reality TV? Even television programmers see the genre as a kind of visual Hamburger Helper: cheap filler that saves them money they can use elsewhere for more-worthy programming” (p.2). Couldry (2008) posited that harsh competition amongst individuals, voyeurism, and surveillance, amongst others, also influences this characterization. Because reality TV is widely seen as a low culture television genre that seeped into the mainstream, this may automatically characterize *Bachelor* fans in a derogatory light.

However, *The Bachelor* and its fandoms are especially interesting because of this blurred nature. Most of the characters on the show are well off, good-looking and young, but they are characterized as having been unlucky in love. This duality, therefore, actually mirrors aspects that are typical of both high and low culture. In what people describe as high culture, *The Bachelor* is concerned with aesthetic quality and romantic gestures—everything is on a grand scale. Though, the manipulative drama also allows viewers to empathize while distancing their lives from that of the contestants. This sense of commonality is typical of low culture (Harrington et al, 2015).

Dubbing reality TV as trashy (Lavie, 2016) is as fair an opinion as any, but the fans that support and criticize the show are anything but a reductive collective. Most



people absorb culture from a wide array of options that may fall in the categories of high and low culture (Scandaville, 2009). Therefore, the question is less about why reality TV is good or bad but rather why reality TV, *The Bachelor*, and this specific fandom are useful academically and societally. Ultimately, fandom gives people a space to participate in a way that is visible and not shut out from the masses or from other, more powerful fandoms.

### Political Economy

Lavie (2016) argued that the counterpart relationship between between and high and low culture is also “compatible with modern conceptions of art versus commerce” (Alexander, 2003). In other words, art possesses autonomy and authenticity and not merely capitalistic pursuit. Of course, this argument is blurred when considering that high culture is just as much connected to capitalistic pursuit. However, reality TV, and *The Bachelor* specifically, is certainly worthy of reflection in its political economy of fandom. Collins (2008) argued that reality TV’s political economy has a direct line to interplay concerning celebrity commodity. Celebrity is “dependent on strategies of capitalist production that try to predict the capriciousness of audience’ preferences and tastes” (p.91).

Chalaby (2011) said that the business of reality has driven how producers and fans relate to each other through a low cost model that involves the participants, producers and even the equipment. This *Bachelor* fandom, therefore, is responding to a form of television, more specifically entertainment, that is part of a wholly powerful model of a market-oriented economy (Kreuger, 1974). In 2015 alone, over 700 reality TV shows aired compared to a mere 400 for scripted programming. As with other reality TV

genres, the show “enjoys great economic legitimacy” (p.502). In addition to cultural significance, *Bachelor*’s low-cost economic model has afforded a commodification of what scholars call self-performance. McKenzie (2001) claimed that self-performance would be the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s central feature (Skeggs, 2009). Kavka (2006) noted that reality TV’s practice of using “ordinary people” is in line with their economic model. It allows those seeking out some form of celebrity to bask in their opportunity, while those who are invested in the Twitter fandom can also perform themselves. Meanwhile the network is mining this self-performance in fandom for their economic viability.

#### The Making of an Online Community

Fan influence of this nature simply would not have been possible a decade ago, before the advent of social media. Twitter was chosen for this study because of its clear influence on how the fandom has evolved since 2002. Reality TV is in part “surviving because they are at the forefront of new and innovative media developments” (Edwards, 2013, p.1) which include social networking. Many have described social media as a tool that once connected humanity but is now driving people apart, though Parker (2017) argued that this “current pessimism about technology” is partly due to the idealistic assumption that the Internet would be a salvation of sorts. Social media may not be able to wholly connect humanity, but connecting a fandom and giving them a voice is manageable. The ubiquitous and immediate conversation that is now so prevalent on social media in regards to television shows simply did not exist in 2002 when *The Bachelor* began. Even Facebook and Twitter, only a few years away (two and four, respectively), would not become part of fandom communication until the end of the decade (Poggi, 2015). Now, online conversation has progressed to something called

“searchable talk”—findable data/discourse such as hashtags (Zappavigna, 2012). In fact, Meraz & Papacharissi (2013) argue that the sociological affordances of Twitter in relation to networked framing are driven by the hashtag, “which functions as lightweight, semantic annotations that publics assign to tweets in their efforts to self-tag generated content. Hashtags thus contextualize content in a bottom-up...manner” (p.104). Twitter is an answer to the challenge that producers are faced with because it is essentially built for fandom (Highfield, Harrington & Bruns, 2013):

It serves in the first place as a backchannel to television and other streaming audiovisual media, enabling users to offer their own running commentary on the universally shared media text of the event broadcast as it unfolds live. Centrally, this communion of fans around the shared text is facilitated by the use of Twitter hashtags – unifying textual markers, which are now often promoted to prospective audiences by the broadcasters well in advance of the live event itself (p.1).

In fact, more and more Americans are getting news from Facebook and Twitter (Barthel, 2015) which only further points to the changing media landscape. Only three years after its inception, Twitter had more than 41 million users (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010) and rapidly grew to 302 million active users in 2015 (Quintaro, 2015). In addition to popularity, Twitter has a depth to it that may not be immediately obvious. LaFrance & Meyer (2014) said the assumption that Twitter’s restrictive 140-character format “precludes it from being a place for depth has always been a red herring,” as Twitter can also be differentiated from other social media platforms in the way users interact with other users and information. Twitter specifically acts as a kind of TV guide with a built-in participatory audience. Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon (2010) said, “unlike on

most online social networking sites, such as Facebook or MySpace, the relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation. A user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back” (p.2). This creates a community that is less concerned with checking in with friends and family (as with Facebook) and more inclined to share information with others and feed off of that information. Bakshy, Hofman, Mason & Watts (2011) support the motivation to use Twitter as it “presents a promising natural laboratory for the study of diffusion processes. Unlike other user-declared networks (e.g. Facebook), Twitter is expressly devoted to disseminating information, in that users subscribe to broadcasts of other users” (p.65). This corpus of data grows every hour (Pak & Paroubek, 2010) and the users vary from elite to non-elite (celebrities, politicians, presidents, regular people, etc.) and thus can afford a diverse look at “social and interests groups” (Kumar & Sebastian, 2012, p.373). Kumar & Sebastian (2012) suggest that this variety is “a valuable source of people’s opinions” (p.373).

However, this should not be confused with a focus on relationship between users (like Facebook) instead of content, as fans flock to Twitter to “create, modify, and share Internet content” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011, p.1). Not only does this content have an interestingly cyclical existent, Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon (2010) argue that Twitter is an important platform to host these communities. And Twitter has quickly become a well-tapped resource for connecting to an audience, specifically fans. Ultimately, the push to get audiences to engage with content has always been an aspiration for anyone with a stake or interest in media (Moe, Poell & Dijck, 2015). Twitter just made that process more streamlined. It is possible, for example, to observe contenders for upcoming seasons of *The Bachelor* by looking at fan Twitter feed. *The*

*Bachelor* community's 518 thousand followers will tweet at those they know, many of whom will be part of an unknown collective of users.

This large collective of users on one end is connected to simple, observable online actions. However, it is also connected to an undercurrent of social issues, which makes up an integral facet of this study in addition to ruminations on architecture affordance. The aforementioned spotlight on everyday life is often a cisgendered, white, affluent experience. Therefore, this promotion of everyday life is regularly linked to heteronormative lifestyle, and in turn promotes heteronormative fantasies. This makes issues such as genderism and homophobia contentious because of the fragmentation in what constitutes "everyday life."

#### Underlying Issues of Heteronormativity and Race Relations

The political economy of *Bachelor* fandom is apparent from the power struggle amongst fans and amongst fans and the producers of said show. However, there has also been an evolution of social issues on reality TV and the general landscape of television (Hunt, 2006) that naturally deserves a place in reality TV analysis. Issues such as heteronormativity, homophobia, and racial tension permeate many different spheres of life, including online discussion. This work actively examined *Bachelor* fan tweets for these discourse strands.

As this thesis will discuss, *Bachelor* fandom is quite the mirror of other online communication in its prominent framing of judgment and everyday life. In addition, this thesis will examine the prominent unabashed dedication to the trope of the bachelor as the man of every woman's dream, as well as the roles that are normally proscribed to men and women in romantic narratives. Pozner (2010) reads reality TV shows as our

“prime purveyor of...cultural hegemony” (p.97). Women on reality TV are frequently characterized as bitches, stupid, incompetent at work and failures at home, and possibly as gold diggers (p.97). Logically, we might expect women to ban together in light of these characterizations. However, Dubrofsky (2009) argued that this often results in envy and value judgment amongst women, despite many of them labeled as “fallen women.” Like other media, “reality TV has the power to educate its audience about various topics while also perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing dominant ideologies” (Andrejevic, 2004; Andrejevic & Colby, 2006; Banet-Weiser & Portwood-Stacer, 2006; Bell-Jordan, 2008; Biressi & Nunn, 2005; Engstrom, 2009; Pozner, 2010; Johnston, 2006, as cited in Goldman, 2009, p.13). This is important because viewers grow attached to cast members and their narratives, according to Biressi & Nunn (2005). Bachelor producers have capitalized on this by reusing many of the same cast members throughout the franchise.

The choice of Rachel Lindsay, an early 30s African-American lawyer from Dallas and second runner up in a previous season of *The Bachelor*, for the 2017 season of *The Bachelorette* seemed like it would satisfy the demands of diversity from fans, the requirement of a familiar face from producers, and a savvy business move from the network. This was something different and therefore could possibly boost ratings. However, while ratings remained steady throughout the season and the contestant pool was the most diverse in *Bachelor* history, the season was emblematic of the many heteronormative and racial issues the show propagates (Garber, 2017).

Fandom studies need a deeper discussion about the meaning and implications of reality TV’s support of and contradictions to these issues. As with other discourse strands, these issues are part of a very specific construction of consumer culture (Deery,

2015) that has only been further sustained by social media. While a lot of these issues are spread through the use of manipulative editing techniques via show producers (Duplantier, 2013), and this has only strengthened the political economy of reality TV (Edwards, 2013), the changing face of social media has greatly impacted how fans communicate with each other and with contestants and the network itself (Hunt, 2006).

Because this *Bachelor* community is not insular, it affords researchers the opportunity to look at a more diverse snapshot of sentiment. Tweets may be representations but there are material consequences; tweets have influence on how people react to and form opinions. Tweets from this community are frames that show us how one understands the world, at least in some small way. Therefore, if tweets from this community are frames, what substantive content frames may emerge, and how do fans go about the framing using tone and sentiment? And considering the affordances of Twitter's platform, how would its architecture support or sustain any frames that emerge from fans in their discussion of *The Bachelor*? Transitioning from this background and significance section, Chapter 2 lays out the literature that guides the study in understanding these frames. Chapter 3 lays out the methodological framework of the study, and a discussion of the sampling, data collection and coding process. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 lay out the results for RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3, respectively. Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the results, as well as rumination on limitations and future studies.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

Scholars have traditionally analyzed tweet content using various perspectives, such as the lens of a top-down, elite to citizen approach, by a media effects model, or by a bottom-up approach focused on networked publics. However, when discussing fandom, taking a bottom-up approach is much more applicable when considering the idea that a fan is influencing others in the fandom and the purveyors of the content. Therefore, the literature review section begins with a discussion of the study's theoretical lens of networked framing and affect. Next, it explores a history of reality TV and *The Bachelor*. The chapter ends with an explication of fandom literature.

### Theoretical Lens: Networked Framing

Goffman's (1974) argued that humans frame things in order to organize their understanding of something and to provide a guide of sorts. Tversky & Khaneman (1974) operationalized the term frame as a manipulation of the way information was presented. Goffman (1974) contrastingly thought of primary frameworks as interpretive mechanisms that allow people to understand the world around them. Analysis of frames illuminates the "precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location...to that consciousness" (Entman, 1993, p. 51-52). Entman provides a representation list of framing citations which include work on public opinion (Edelman, 1993; Zaller, 1992), elite and the media (Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Graber, 1988; Iyengar, 1991; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Tuchman, 1978), social cognition (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), political analysis (Gamson, 1992; Riker, 1986), physical determinants of choice (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), and social movements (Snow & Benford, 1988). Definitions are dependent on the worldview of the



study, which are usually centered in positivism, constructivism or the critical view. In this study, framing is centered on framing as a social practice. Though this study is observing sentiment and affect (which is inherently part of cognitive research), it will be observed through the lens of how *The Bachelor* is presented to fans, as well as how they discuss the show.

Entman (1993) begins to explain framing by the basic fundamentals—all communication in its simplest form requires a sender, a message and a receiver. More specifically, he defines framing as the promotion of “a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment condition” (p.52 as cited in Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016). These definitions can easily be applied to the framework of this study. The sender and receiver are simultaneously the official Twitter account for *The Bachelor* and fans of the show that have an account. The message is in the form of a tweet. Frames in communication are the frames that are employed by the sender as they deliver a message. Though the intent may be quite different in comparison between the official *Bachelor* account and fan accounts, the process is much the same. The problem at hand is that *The Bachelor* is a show that depends on how fans market the characters and plot points. In observing fan accounts, it is possible to analyze and discuss how fans promote the show and if their tweets are geared more towards marketing or discussion. These are some of the critical questions in place when observing a specific reality TV program on Twitter. While Entman’s definition allows an overview of framing, Reese & Lewis’s definition of frames “as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time” (2009, p.87) complements the overall *Bachelor* narrative. There are consistent tropes that have remained through to the present iterations of the show, as the

previous seasons of the show serve as a guide for episodes' narrative structure. Frame analysis affords a look at this specific set of language present on the web.

Defining framing theory is a necessary grounding to this study, though understanding how frames work is even more important. Entman's focus on salience as placement and repetition (1993) provides a particular framework for this study in attempting to answer what kind of frames are successful in *Bachelor* fan discourse. Whether by the use of "culturally familiar symbols" (p.53)—such as emoticons, hashtags, and addressivities—or an intentional dose of sentiment, fans frame "bits of text" (p.53) in like-minded and contrasting ways. This study is seeking to examine and analyze the textual.

The selection process of frames is also related to the theory of gatekeeping, a concept first coined by Lewin (1947) as a way to "explain the focal points of social changes in communities" (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008, p.1493). Though it has become rooted in an array of scholarly fields, gatekeeping literature in communication is "conceived mainly as a selection process" (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008, p.1494). Shoemaker and Vos (2009) have acknowledged the role of networks in the gatekeeping process, but "suggested that the primary gatekeeping role remained the job of the traditional media newsroom, relegating the audience to the secondary gatekeeping process of interacting with traditional mass media content" (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016, p.97). This view of gatekeeping, however, is influenced by the limited view of new media and publics. Ultimately, how fans frame and select certain bits of text is as extensive as explicating the theory (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Factors that influence fan framing may be highly subjective (Bagdikian, 2004; Livingston & Bennet, 2003), visual (Abbott & Brassfield,

1989), size-related (Gieber, 1956), sender-related (Klobas & McGill, 1995; Metoyer-Duran, 1993), associated with standards of existing texts (Davison & Yu, 1974), connected to opinion leaders—such as frequently retweeted fan accounts—(Allen, 1977; Dimmick, 1974) related to group consensus (Bantz, 1990), and linked to market pressure (Donohue et al, 1989). Based on this study’s explication of fandom, fan framing is more likely a crowd endeavor. As in Papacharissi (2014, p.4), this study’s argument is “grounded in research suggesting that social media facilitate feelings of engagement” (Dean, 2010; Gregg, 2011; Karatzogianni & Kuntsman, 2012; van Dijck, 2013).

If “framing is a way to describe the power of a communicating text” (Entman, 1993, p.51), networked framing is a way to describe the power of a public in communicating said text. Networked framing can be defined as a process through which “particular problem definitions, casual interpretations, moral evaluations, and/or treatment recommendation attain prominence through crowdsourcing practices” (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, p.22). This theoretical framework is significant when considering the changing landscape of information consumption. New technologies, such as Twitter, create a more “distributed and decentralized form of control, allowing a bottom-up resurgence of citizen participation as opposed to a top-down form of media control” (Meraz, 2007, p.1). This participation allows for crowds to collaborate online and frame things in their vision, in a forum that is viewable to the public. Networked framing specifically looks at the connectivity amongst diverse publics.

This means that the framework of network publics support elite and non-elite framing. Elite framing is focused on how elites choose to frame issues. Often citizens’ opinions about an event or issue depend on whether elites frame the event from a

particular perspective (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Non-elite framing usually seems to be focused on a conflict between citizens engaging in an issue and grappling with the “opposing frames that are intended by opinion leaders to influence public preferences” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 100). Though focused on blogging (Twitter is also described as microblogging), Meraz (2009) noted that social media is a “vehicle of democracy” because it allows some citizen autonomy as opposed to elite control. Twitter fits in with this description as, “this inversion of elite control is the social outcome of a more interactive format” (p.682). Twitter is also designed, like blogs, to “support participation, peer-to-peer conversation, collaboration, and community” (O’Reilly, 2004 as cited in Meraz, 2009, p.682). In the case of *The Bachelor*, the community is comprised of many celebrity fans (the elites) and non-celebrities (non-elites).

When discussing elites and non-elites, notions of inclusion and exclusion also arise (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016), as well as power. Studies reveal that the power in framing is most commonly influenced by elites, whether socially or in regards to the media. Power is considered to be the most central component in understanding social structures and processes in networks (Castells, 2009; Nahon, 2011). In networked framing, however, this power is also in the hands of the crowd, often the non-elites. Networked framing’s model, however, is not rooted in competition. This is an important component to consider for the qualitative analysis. Meraz & Papacharissi (2016) argue that crowds drive networked framing. After all, “social media publics receive and share news items through the process of social filtering and recommendation from their friends and networks” (Hermida, 2012; Purcell et al., 2010 as cited in Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016, p.100).

In this study, there is not a clear distinction between users even though prior studies suggest that there is utility in this method (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016; Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012; Lim 2012). The theoretical lens of networked framing is about the symbiosis between elites and nonelites. Therefore, this lack of distinction and emphasis on the actions of all in the collective is fitting. Massanari (2014) argued that since the mid-2000s media gatekeepers no longer exclusively controlled dialogue and relied on elites for access. Social networking popularity encouraged citizens to reach out directly to elites, “reducing the need for intermediaries between the two groups” (p.8). This study is not about networked gatekeeping as the researcher is less interested in the actions of specific users and more about the outcome of the large, public frames that emerge from the fandom’s *Bachelor* tweets on Twitter. It is looking at the aggregate actions of the crowd as opposed to grouping users as elites and nonelites.

This decision is justified when looking at the influence of nonelites in filtering and promoting content. Prior research has shown that ordinary users have influence and even a “powerful role” in social media (Lotan et al. 2011; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012; Meraz, 2011; Potts 2009a; Potts, 2009b), which mirrors the influence elites have on a daily basis, whether online or offline. Meraz & Papacharissi (2013) noted that preliminary research suggests influence by “ordinary” people in the framing of an issue. Though this was specifically in reference to power roles ascribed to non-elites in times of turmoil, it will be valuable to fill this research gap in relation to reality TV and Twitter. In keeping with the networked framing lens, this study should look at elites and nonelites, or ordinary users, as a collective working to promote specific frames of *The Bachelor*.

In summary, networked framing is enacted by all the aforementioned processes of collaborative filtering that enable ideologically similar publics to engage in the framing of issues through various processes afforded by Twitter (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016, p.103). Ideology may not immediately be on the minds of fans as they use addressivity markers (likes, hashtags comment, retweets, and @ mentions), though manifest and latent discourse band them together in framing the show. This affords publics a sense of power that previously was not given theoretical weight.

### Affect & Sentiment

This study's theoretical lens also includes affect, which coincides with the very integral component of sentiment analysis. This is an important layer to the study's lens as social media interaction is imbued with affect (Forgas & Smith, 2003, p.161). Sentiment analysis, specifically, is a complex lens to approach simply because of the inherent subjectivity in the analysis. When considering sentiment, it is difficult to be objective as both a reader and creator. However, an important part of information gathering behavior has always been to find out what people think (Pang & Lee, 2008), and sentiment is factored into this.

Kavka (2008) suggests that "affect is opposed to cognition, or in the vernacular, feeling is opposed to thinking" (p.29). In that way, affect is a complimentary pathway to drives and feelings (Hemmings, 2005). It can also more specifically be explained as a link "occurring between an experience and the formation of a reaction" (Marshall, 1997, p.73). What these articles have in common is an exploration of the relationship between those experiences and the resultant sentiment, as well as the formation of a reaction.

The degree to which a fan expresses humor or excitement or even hatred towards *The Bachelor*, and the way they express it via retweeting and the use of hashtags and addressivities, will vary the affect or intensity of experience. Dean (2010) describes affective attachments as having the ability to not produce communities but “feelings of community” (p.22). There is a clear parallel to *The Bachelor* in that producers and host Chris Harrison consistently refer to the fan community as a family. This family, however, is of course not a family at all; but this further produces feelings of connection. Papacharissi (2015) argues that a community’s narrative, rather than the utilized technology, establishes a connection to affective attachments. It is, in fact, “common for ambient platforms that enable social awareness to host expressions that frequently combine opinion, emotion, and fact to release emotion through the act of expressing it...this form of emotional release simultaneously invigorates and exhausts tension...” (p.12).

This tension can only be an observed thing if others are actually responding to it. Affect suggests emotion. It is the display or indicator that shows an emotion. It is akin to when someone smiles and emits the sentiment of joy. For the purpose of this thesis, it is convenient to think of affect as separated by various intensities such as positive, negative and neutral. Positive affect is associated with the common emotions of happy and excitement, negative affect is associated with such sentiments as anger and fear, and neutral affect could be associated with ambiguous emotional displays such as surprise. Though it seems obvious that a sentiment under the positive category would yield the same kind of affective display, that it not quite true. Papacharissi (2015) said, after all, that the aforementioned tension might be manifest as positive support or negative

criticism. A crucial part of “successful” affective voice might also be a needed release of said tension. It is similar to the penultimate episode of every *Bachelor* season where all of the female contestants are asked to express their varying emotions in whatever fashion they choose, in front of a studio audience. Certain kinds of affective voice are rewarded with more airtime, and many are often ignored if the affect is too passive. Sometimes, a more “intense” or harsh affect will result in a strangely positive response, with clapping and cheers and perhaps even some subsequent followers on Twitter, for example.

Affective elements of tweets are a rich topic when researching Twitter content, as this type of expression “frequently lends virality to emerging frames or tags as framing devices” (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, p.105). Also, networked frames that do “go viral” are likely to use humor or sarcasm as a way to drive “crowd appeal and participation” (Shifman, 2012; Knobel and Lankshear, 2007). Humor also serves as a united front for publics who may have ideological differences (Papacharissi, 2014). Affect represents the capacity for sentiment and propagation (Hansen, et. al, 2011) or the “intensity with which we experience and express emotions like joy, sadness, pain and so on. The affordances of the Twitter platform invite the propagation of intensity when emotions align or diverge” (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, p.106). Papacharissi (2015) used affective publics as a parameter to study Twitter as a social artifact and as a way to explain how people discuss and make their point of views known on the platform. This thesis will aim to follow the same model.

### Statement of Purpose

Though microblogging platforms were once understudied this has changed in the past few years as new research has emerged on networked publics. Insights from



Goffman's (1974) work have been discussed across various fields, and this has influenced networked framing to focus on social movements and media tendencies (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2016). Some of this research has explored political realms and movements (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012); some have looked at sentiment polarity (Thelwall, Buckley, Paltoglou, Cai & Kappas, 2011); and others have explored, in general, the anxiety of affective networks (Dean, 2010). There is limited work on *The Bachelor*, most of which is taken up by Dubrofsky (2006; 2007; 2008; 2009). Of course, prominent work has been done on Twitter (Kwak, Lee, Park & Moon, 2010; Java, Song, Finin & Tseng, 2007; Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008; and Jansen, Zhang & Sobel, 2009), transformative narrative on social media (Page, 2013; Georgakopoulou, 2015), fandom (Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins, 2015; Fiske, 1992; Baym, 1999; Jenson, 1992), participatory culture (Wood & Baughman, 2012), reality TV (Kavka, 2008; Andrejevic, 2004; Biressi & Nunn, 2012; Hill, 2005; Murray & Ouellette, 2004), and sentiment analysis (Pak & Paroubek, 2010; Go, Bhayani & Huang, 2009; Liu, 2012). Despite this work, exploring all of these areas together is a gap in academic research.

While this is surely a motivation for the research, the purpose of this thesis is to observe the special language of *Bachelor* fandom on Twitter. Every fandom has its own issues, symbols, metaphors and conflict (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). Within these live the frames that a fandom produces. Active audience members are curating media content, filtering content, and amplifying certain topics while sharing “preferences in environments where algorithms collate these preferences and reveal possibilities through collaborative or social filtering” (Bruns, 2005, p.4). The consequences can be argued to be mostly positive in that it describes “multiple levels of relationships and symmetries

between variant actors who hold diverse levels of power and positions” (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008 as cited in Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, p.4). It is important to note that ordinary users (*Bachelor* fans) of the Twitter platform have a considerable, “measurable impact” (Bakshy et al, 2011 as cited in Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013, p.5), where people have something to say and want a mirror reflection of reality. This thesis is looking to capture this networked framing of themes commonly found in offline interaction.

### Research Questions

Utilizing networked framing and affect as a theoretical framework for this study, the following questions are advanced in an effort to understand how elites and regular citizens, as fans and a part of this particular reality show fandom, talk about *The Bachelor* on Twitter.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What substantive content frames emerge as publics engage in the networked framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do publics engage in the affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How does the architecture of Twitter support or sustain the networked frames that emerge from fan discussion of *The Bachelor*?

Before exploring the pieces of these questions in regards to fandom and the affordances of Twitter, it is necessary to lay the groundwork of how scholars define reality TV.

## Defining Reality TV

“We are all learning to live in the freakshow, it is our new public space”

-Jon Dovey

Reality TV can be defined as a “type of television which aims to show how ordinary people behave in everyday life, or in situations, often created by the programme makers, which are intended to be like everyday life” (Definition of ‘reality TV’”).

Kilborn (1994) said reality television should be defined as:

- “The practice of recording on the wing and often with the help of lightweight video equipment, of events in the lives of individuals and groups;
- The attempt to simulate such real-life events through various forms of dramatized reconstruction;
- The incorporation of this material in suitably edited form into an attractively packaged television program, which can be promoted on the strength of its reality credentials” (as cited in Holmes & Jermyn, 2004, p.2).

Similar to many other genres, reality television elicits polarizing reactions from its audiences. Some may view reality TV to be an escape from reality, while others view reality TV to be synonymous with actual real-life situations. It may be that the label of reality television is too general to be helpful or that the definitions available to scholars and even the public do not effectively emphasize that people will instantly understand its meaning. After all, Patterson (2000) said:

If I had been asked to define the term ‘reality TV’ a year ago I would have said it described footage of the Rodney King beating or the kind of crime shows that rely on security camera footage. Apparently I’ve got it all wrong. What the [US] networks dub reality TV comes at us with musical cues on the soundtrack, manipulative editing...and ill-managed anger, all enacted by a cast of wannabe models, actors and game-show hosts (p.12).

The theory of cultivation applies to any mass media option, though reality TV can be distinguished from the rest. One significant distinction is the raw appeal of the footage, or what seems to be raw footage. Reality TV is subject to editing, but documentary inspiration allows a less “forced” style. Though Kavka (2008) is referring to older programming from the 1980s and 1990s, it is still applicable to fan interest in *The Bachelor*. Reality TV has been thoroughly studied it seems, according to Kavka (2008), because it is often disarmingly simple and hence repeatable with endless variation (p.1). Though there is not a single feature that is shared amongst reality television programs, an individual is armed with the ability to label a program as within the reality TV genre. Perhaps this can only be explained by the simple fact that an individual knows something when they see it. The provocation may not be easily explained but it can be identified and categorized. Compare this analogy to Justice Potter’s famous statement on obscenity: “I know it when I see it” (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 1964). However, the framework that allows reality TV programming to be grouped together is not always so obvious (Kavka, 2008, p.2). Therefore, reality TV programming may only be fairly compared when discussing its various differences. These differences are significant because they contribute to the changing landscape of TV in general.

Specifically, reality TV changed how people relate to various television genres and their expectations for viewing. It “lays claim to reveal social, psychological, political and historical truths and to depict the rhythms and structures of everyday life with the least recourse possible to dramatization and artifice” (Biressi & Nunn, 2013, p.2) It is also rife with ethical concerns, intriguing content, and history. Amongst academics, reality TV is becoming one of the most exhaustively analyzed areas of media production and content. One reason is due to the “strong social response it generates” (Deery, 2015). According to Kavka (2008) scholars have looked into a variety of themes in reality TV, including:

- Hybridization of fictional and factual programming styles (Kilborn, 1994);
- Documentary film/realism or cinema verite (Murray, 2004);
- Reality TV’s ability to renew and extend itself (Madger, 2004; Bevan, 2015);
- Surveillance (Andrejevic, 2004);
- Gender roles and feminism (Ross and Moorti, 2004a, 2004b);
- The aesthetic of realism (Friedman, 2002);
- And reality TV’s impact (Murray & Ouellette, 2004).

Though a historical view of the evolution of reality TV has been the focus of academic work, how this history impacts an audience is a popular topic of study (McKenna, 2015, preface) that frames how fans relate to the canon/mythology that is *The Bachelor*.

### A History of Reality TV

With roots in documentary film, reality television has both expanded and blurred definitions of broadcast content and, some would argue, standards of acceptable content

(Taddeo, 2010). Biressi & Nunn (2012) said it “makes most sense to understand reality television within the context of the different but related historical trajectories of documentary film practice” (p.1). Reality television is not an adulterated, muddled derivative of documentary. Instead, “many of its forms owe something to or operate in dialogue with varieties” (p.1) of this genre. In fact, many of the debates within reality TV regarding value, aesthetics, politics and the future of the genre owe much to documentary genre’s agendas and political commitments (Biressi & Nunn, 2013, p.1). “This highly visible presence of ordinary people in ‘unscripted’ situations is both the watermark of reality television and arguably the explanation of its success with audiences” (Biressi & Nunn, 2013, p.3). Turning the camera on ‘regular Joes,’ after all, has become an essential ingredient of reality TV (Taddeo, 2010, p.3).

Bolter & Grusin’s (1996) work on remediation poses the question of how reality television remediates earlier forms of documentary and fictional filmmaking. Remediation is a concept that is used to describe the evolution of prior forms to new systems of hybrid media values. Though remediation does not neatly explain the link between documentary film and reality TV, remediation can be thought of as replacement or a connection to old media. While some new media repurposes old media to the point that “the work becomes a mosaic in which we are simultaneously aware of the individual pieces and their new, inappropriate setting” (p.40), reality TV has in no way replaced documentary filmmaking but merely repurposed elements of it for more mainstream commercial use and an exploration of spectacle. This focus on documentary style is what differentiated some reality TV programming from others, and this style still prevails today.

Scholars vary in what is considered to be the very first iteration of the genre, though most agree that 1971's *An American Family* is the pioneer, with some also favoring *Candid Camera* as the very earliest iteration (Kavka, 2008). *An American Family* aimed to showcase an unconventional family from California who were quite liberal and interested in counterculture. Despite this, the network also advertised them as a "normal" family. The "Louds" were narratively interesting because they represented the American ideals of marriage, as the parents had been together for 20 or so years. The children were also in some ways unremarkable, as they constantly complained about chores. The narrative was typical in that the characters differed from each other in many ways, affording various members of an audience to relate to the show. Despite huge popularity, however, the family received backlash for the show's depiction of their skewed moral compass, a season-ending divorce, and an out gay son. The Louds did not stand by the material as "reality." Instead, they claimed, "the material had been edited to emphasize the negative and call attention to how nonfiction narratives are fashioned. Some critics argued that the camera's presence encouraged the subjects to perform" (Biressi & Nunn, 2013, p.2). Some even said it invalidated the project. But many scholars argued that this would also invalidate documentaries (Murray & Ouellette, 2004). "The struggle to define exactly what *An American Family* was bespeaks much of what is at stake in our current generic placement of texts into the categories of documentary and reality TV" (p.41).

### Reality TV Waves

Because of this the format of reality TV is not particularly daring. When something works, networks stick with it for quite a while. It seems like a linear

progression in hindsight, but reality TV would go through several phases or waves before landing on one of the more recent hybrids of “competition and love” reality shows when specifically discussing *The Bachelor*. The popular style of reality TV today is most clearly recognized by audiences to be dated back to the start of the 1990s. However, the timeline more accurately begins in the 1940s when producers were becoming interested in portraying ordinary people in unscripted situations. Some examples of the 1940s-1950s wave include *Queen for a Day*, *Candid Camera* and *You Asked for It*. The 1960s-1970s wave brought homage to documentary film, as well as a new dating subgenre. Some examples include *Seven Up!*, *An American Family*, and *The Newlywed Game*. Whereas the previous wave focused more on catching participants off guard, this wave depended on participants shirking their desire for privacy in order to achieve a short-lived brush with fame.

The 1980s-1990s wave played with fantasy and illusion to create several competition shows, as well as the introduction to cinéma vérité formats that would come to dominate many of the reality TV programs audience view today. Some examples from this wave include *Real People*, *That’s My Line*, *Nummer 28*, *The Real World*, and *Survivor*. *The Real World* producers “have stated that their direct inspiration was *An American Family*” (Keveney, 2007)—from the genre’s previous wave.

The 2000s wave was an explosion of programming. This wave gave audiences *The Amazing Race*, *American Idol*, *Big Brother*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Who Wants to Be a Millinonaire?*, *America’s Next Top Model*, and *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, all of which continue to air new seasons or very recently ended after at least a decade-long run.



## The Political Economy of Reality TV

Reality TV's evolution is certainly part of a media revolution (Edwards, 2013) that is due, in large part, to the economics of reality TV production. Ultimately, reality TV has blossomed due to its quick and cheap production model. Grant (2011) noted that when the writer's strike of 1988 occurred, networks were "a little bit wiser" as they relied on reality programming such as "Cops" and "America's Most Wanted." This continued up until the early 2000s when networks were already well supplied with reality TV programming. Where networks may "have considered it as a way of maintaining ratings during the last strike," they eventually perceived "the stuff of which hits are made" (Rutenberg, 2001). Though there is no official press release on the creation of *The Bachelor* in regards to this writer's strike, Grant (2011) argued that from this point on reality TV took over. Warren Littlefield, former NBC vice president, said:

"There was a sense of powerlessness of having your product stream absolutely dry up. At some point you say, 'We don't want to be in this situation again,' and you start to build alternatives. That process takes time" (Grant, 2011).

Newton-Small (2016) argued that the 1980s also planted the seed for reality TV's connection to political discourse and practice. The New Yorker's Ken Auletta warned in his co-authored book that the "new video democracy would have viewers voting with their clickers for style over substance, entertainment over news" due to TV networks successful lobby to undo government trust restrictions on news in 1987 (Kurtz, 1991). D'Addario (2016) similarly said that reality TV sprung from the "friction between new openness in the culture at large and relative conservatism on network TV."

As reality TV competition shows became more and more popular based off the massive success of *American Idol* and *Survivor*, producers tried their hand at various genres. In the midst of this, Donald Trump successfully fronted seven seasons of the *Apprentice*. Years later, some assumed he was running for office as a ratings ploy. In hindsight, many have argued that a significant material consequence of reality TV existence and viewership is the presidency of Donald Trump. Lanzendorfer (2016) wrote that Trump was once such a cartoonish presence that when writers made jokes about someone absurd becoming president, they thought of him. He argued that reality television not only legitimized Trump, but also that his campaign exploited reality TV formulas and used them to his advantage. Newton-Small (2016) further argued that politics in general have increasingly relied on fame and exaggeration. This supports the argument that celebrity is a key element to the political economy of reality TV (Collins, 2008).

This commodification of celebrity is, as argued, connected to the economic model of reality TV. In many cases, reality TV production costs about half as much as scripted programming (Steve, 2016). This model proved extremely beneficial for the global television market. “New players” to the television landscape required popular but also cheap programming as a necessity. The format of reality TV is simply “global program frameworks that can be adopted on a national level in order to fit into different cultures” (Bondebjerg, 2002, p. 159, as cited in Beck, Hellmueller & Aeschbacher, 2012). Reality TV programming fulfilled these needs.

Reality TV was once marked as unique due to the authenticity of using ordinary people. Also, audience participation could possibly finance the already low production

costs since the cameras used are mostly compact and inexpensive and no scriptwriters and professional actors were needed (Beck, Hellmueller & Aeschbacher, 2012, p.22). This restructured the TV network business by bypassing costly unionized actors. The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Screen Actors Guild attempted to contest the staple of unscripted shows and ordinary people (Carter, 2003, Collins, 2008, p.88) but did not succeed despite the proliferation of reality TV star commodity. Lowry (2009) argued that reality TV participants were once disposable commodities equipped with “a story to tell the grandkids,” but they now have ascension within celebrity circles. Many participants are greeted with talk show guest appearances, feature articles, commercial endorsements, club appearances, and agents asking to represent them (Wolk, 2002, p.33, as cited in Collins, 2008). Steve (2016) purports that the per-day rate for *Bachelor in Paradise* contestants is a mere \$400. He argued that contestants go on the show for “increased exposure, increased Instagram followings, and [to] try to capitalize post show.” This desire for exposure, however, is linked to a capitalist economic model. More exposure means more social media followers which leads to more opportunities for paid ventures. Deery (2015) argued that reality TV “casts interpersonal relationships as motivated by profit, turning friends into ‘commercial opportunities’ while ‘commercial providers are treated as ersatz friends” (p.89).

### The Bachelor

*The Bachelor* and its fandom are emblematic of this quest for interpersonal relationships as motivated by profit. Through the decades, many scholars have attempted to divide reality TV into convenient subgenres (Murray & Ouelette, 2004; Hill, Weibull, and Nilsson, 2007; Hill, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2003 & Kavka, 2008) in order to gauge for

easier advertising and less audience fragmentation. It is difficult, however, to apply this to *The Bachelor*. Research on subgenres can be challenging because it is “difficult to group the growing list of reality TV programs into categories that are meaningful, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive” (Nabi, 2007 as cited in Riddle & De Simone, 2013, p.238). The show is consistent in its love and competition subgenre, but it also has elements of cinéma vérité (or the desired style of this approach), the docusoap and even surveillance culture. In the competition and love genre, participants are competing for the “prize” of a person’s affection while cohabitating in a restricted space. Contestants are normally eliminated until one can be named the winner. Docusoaps are shows that often mimic soap operas and are accused of being at least somewhat scripted. Cinéma vérité uses handheld cameras and synchronous sound, “with a sense spontaneity” (Glossary of Rouchian Terms, n.d.). Surveillance culture may include hidden cameras or a show that is focused on the presence of said cameras and what they observe (such as *Big Brother*). These distinctions, while not the focus of the study, are significant in regards to how fans define and categorize the characters, events, and show as a whole. *The Bachelor* fits into this narrative by blending elements of various reality television tropes, which is why it is necessary to give an overview of the show’s specific history and purpose.

The series plot of *The Bachelor* is simple—there is one bachelor, a man, who begins the season along with a pool of 20 or so female contestants ranging in age, profession, and interests, all of who compete to win the bachelor’s heart. The bachelor woos the women with exciting dates that the producers, not the bachelor, arrange. Not only is the producers’ role obvious when a farmer from Iowa (Bachelor Chris Soules—Season 19) “plans” a travel date to Bali in Indonesia, it is also somewhat confirmed by

testimony from former Bachelor contestants and creators (Sher & Connelly, 2010). For the most part, the show is comprised of dates (one-on-one, group and even two-on-ones) and “rose ceremonies,” where the bachelor must decide who to keep around and who to bid farewell. Fan culture, however, is also fueled by private “venting sessions” where the women are encouraged to voice concerns about other contestants, the feelings for the bachelor, their general insecurities, and any stories that might make them stand out. For example, there is usually a contestant or two who has suffered loss in the form of a family member’s death or the abandonment of a significant other. What the contestant shares in these sessions certainly show up in fan tweets. Week by week the bachelor eliminates the contestants one by one until he singles out a woman to propose to or at least agree to continue dating, though there was an instance in season 11 where bachelor Brad Womack rejected the semi-finalists. While the episodes can deviate in some ways, the general formula remains intact from season to season. In *The Bachelorette* the format is reversed regarding gender dynamics. The same goes for *Bachelor in Paradise* where the format does not involve one suitor. Instead, various “rejects” from previous seasons of both *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* mingle and often form several connections throughout the course of the season.

A comprehensive history of *The Bachelor* does not exist, which is surprising considering its appeal to media coverage. While there are several articles that discuss the current tropes of the show, most seem to be concerned with the “characters” and inject a good amount of subjectivity into the conversation. Dostis (2016) wrote, for example, about the “winning and losing relationships throughout Bachelor history.” Ross (2009) wrote about *The Bachelor*’s “terrible track record: a history of failed romances.” Many

predicted the demise of *The Bachelor* only five years after its premiere. Even Mike Fleiss, show creator, said that the show was essentially cancelled around 2008 due to lack of excitement from the audience and producers alike. Producers eventually scrapped the need for a new storyline each season. Instead, they chose to import a previous contestant from a season of *The Bachelorette* into a later season of *The Bachelor* in hopes that “the audience would identify more strongly with someone it had seen before” (Steinberg, 2011). It worked, as ratings began to increase. This is a significant point in *Bachelor* history as this study’s sample time frame encapsulates this narrative decision. Every bachelor chosen for the seasons analyzed in this study were already well known amongst fans and media outlets.

As previously mentioned, *Bachelor* history would also be remiss in failing to discuss its contentious relationship with gender, heteronormativity (Dubrofsky, 2014), homophobia (Tropiano, 2009; Stevens, 2004), and race (Garber, 2017). All five bachelors featured in this study’s sample timeline are cisgender, heterosexual, gainfully employed, and conventionally attractive. All five bachelors are white, with one identifying as Latino. Four of the bachelors identified as religious. Ben Flajnik, who did not outright identify as religious, had the most sexualized narrative of the sample. When most bachelor’s are asked their view on love and marriage, most would say they trust the process of the show, indicating that they are ready to propose at the end. One bachelor from the study’s sample, Juan Pablo, did not propose and the network and fans lambasted him for straying from their tried and true narrative. Juan Pablo also received backlash against homophobic comments made after the show was done filming.

*Bachelor* history, in many ways, has communicated that change is not good. Though, racial diversity is a huge exception. The more recent *Bachelor* saga concerning Rachel Lindsay does not involve the specific sample timeline in this study, but the same contentious racial issues in this study's timeline subsequently informed it. Fans and even self-professed halfhearted viewers of *The Bachelor* (Underwood, 2017) showed intense support for Lindsay. On Twitter, one fan said "Can't wait for my girl @therachlindsay to get started with her new season" (Appendix 1) Another fan said "LOOK AT THIS GODDESS SLAYING EVERYONES ENTIRE EXISTENCE GOD BLESS YOU @TheRachLindsay" (Appendix 2). Another fan said, "Can't wait!!!!!! She deserves this so much" (Appendix 3). Social media specifically affords this sentiment, in that fans are directly able to communicate their support for Lindsay. The Bachelorette is not part of this sample, though these tweets are a convenience sample taken to showcase this new turn in the show's canon.

### Social Media

In order to discuss the relevance and history of reality TV and the undercurrent of social issues, it is necessary to delineate the impact of social media on reality TV, its pertinence to ratings, and its impact on the content. Most information on the show's history does not come from the media or scholarly sources. Instead, it comes from social networking sites like Reddit, Twitter, Instagram & Facebook. This information appears to nonfans as disjointed and scattered. To a fan, however, it all easily pieced together as a narrative if one has taken the time to "study" the subject.

The landscape of *The Bachelor* through the lens of various social media accounts can easily find similarities, though there is much variance in the amount of fans and the

modes of discussion. Twitter, for example, has half a million followers. Instagram has about the same. Facebook has 1.69 million. Thebachelor subreddit has a fraction of that, at 7,021 readers, “bachelorette” has a mere 711, and “bachelor nation,” (a very popular Twitter hashtag) has only 97 readers. However, the main difference between Reddit and the other sites listed in regards to fan communities is simply that Reddit is purely curated by fans, whereas the latter sites are used for promotional advantage by networks and companies. There are some social networking anomalies in the social networking sphere, mainly in the form of Snapchat. There is not an official bachelor account, but there are several highly followed accounts for individual contestants (Matthews, 2016). Therefore, fans have a way to connect with the show’s contestants, contestants have a way to feed back into this relationship, and all the while the show’s producers are filtering this content on their SNS accounts.

Nearly a decade ago, Andrejevic (2008) said that online fan sites were increasingly providing instant feedback to television writers and producers, who were starting to “pay more attention to the chatter of ‘the boards.’” This fan discussion became a marketing strategy for TV show that “takes advantage of interactivity to create fan communities and build viewer loyalty. His case study argued that this was a type of “value-enhancing labor” for producers in that they allowed fans to curate content while providing, in some cases, instantaneous feedback (p.24). Though this study utilizes the theoretical lens of networked framing, it also cannot ignore the political economy of the show, the fans and this genre of television in general. Social media has become so ubiquitous that producers of television programs are invested in understanding traditional TV audiences and those tapped into social media. Producers are also interested in



leveraging and tapping into the “profitable uses” of the various platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As Proulx & Shepatin (2012) discussed, in the early 1950s there were only just a few television networks and a handful of shows. Choosing what to watch was not a difficult or overwhelming endeavor. Now in 2016, we have over 500 channels with hundreds of shows airing each year, according to Ben Travers (2014). Because of this, it is important for producers of *The Bachelor* to tap into their niche fan base. With *The Bachelor’s* scripted/unscripted formula the show could continue for many more seasons. However, continued longevity will require fan interactivity.

Though rooted in a fairly consistent narrative, *The Bachelor* has changed throughout its tenure due in large part to social media. Lindley (2016) said, “Because it’s been on air long enough to be a freshman in high school, much like an actual freshman in high school, it’s undergone some changes since its inception.” Before social media, *The Bachelor’s* host, Chris Harrison, was not a ubiquitous presence, for example. He was present for staged cues throughout the program and not much would be heard from him otherwise. While his presence on the actual program remains detached, he writes a regular blog for the show, hosts after shows, and tweets constantly when a season is airing. The first three seasons of the show, the bachelor himself was chosen based solely on producer criteria such as occupation, looks, celebrity or non-celebrity status, and wealth; and audience input was little to none. When the creators introduced spin-off *The Bachelorette* to fans of *The Bachelor* only a few seasons after its inception, choosing who would be the bachelorette or bachelor was conveniently targeted to previous contestants with whom audiences were already comfortable. The chosen bachelor is typically a fan-favorite of a previous season of *The Bachelorette* or is popular conversation topic.

When producers were tasked with choosing a bachelorette for season 11 they found that social media was divided between “Britt” or “Kaitlyn”? (Both were contestants from season 19 of *The Bachelor*). The producers framed Britt as fun, gorgeous and dramatic. Kaitlyn was described as hilarious, beautiful and down-to-earth. They claimed that “Bachelor Nation” was divided. See sample tweets below (Appendix 1): Orange Punch said “If Kaitlyn isn’t #TheBachelorette I will be super disappointed. All of the other women are so bland #TheBachelor.” The Naughty Mommy said “Kaitlyn’s gonna be the next Bachelorette, eh? Wah. Britt would be more interesting. #TheBachelor #TheBachelorette.” Yoga Butterfly said “I definitely want to see Britt @brittkarolina as the next #TheBachelorette & I think she deserves it! Zara said “Kaitlyn is cute and would provide comedy, but definitely not a romantic lead. #TheBachelorette #Team Britt.” Yahya said “I’ll be shocked if ABC chose Britt to be the new bachelorette, Kaitlyn deserves it more #TheBachelor #TheBachelorette.” Maggie said “So who is the next #Bachelorette? #Britt #Kaitlyn #TheBachelor #TheBachelorette #BrittforBachelorette #KAITLYNFORBACHELORETTE.” Zube Tube said “Absolutely will not watch #thebachelorette if it is Britt. #teamkaitlyn #teamashleys #teamanyoneelsebutkelsey.”

In response, the producers left the decision to the upcoming season’s suitors. Therefore, in an unprecedented premiere, two women met all the suitors, and by the end of the night all of the contestants were required to give a rose to either Britt or Kaitlyn. Whoever had the most roses would become the official bachelorette and resume filming for the rest of the season. Though Kaitlyn eventually won the coveted title, Britt was given an accompanying storyline throughout the season, which is the only instance in any

season of *Bachelor* or *Bachelorette* where this occurred. Considering the thread of social media's impact, motives for fame were likely less intense.

Because it is a reality TV show, many of the contestants have signed up for their "15 minutes of fame." With social media, however, this fame can easily be extended. For example, audiences still receive updates on Season 17 bachelor Sean Lowe and wife Catherine Lowe though their season ended three years ago (Beard, 2016). In addition, there were few to no spoilers during the first few seasons. Fans speculated online in chat rooms or in personal conversations, but social media did not exist as a forum for fans to reveal information to a broad public. Because of this, *The Bachelor* remains relatively unfazed by the spoiler effect. Tsang and Yan (2009) said that this effect "denotes a phenomenon that a consumer's interest in consuming a particular narrative is reduced after exposure to a spoiler" (para. 1). They go on to say: "Spoiler exposure creates a satiation effect and an explanation effect that hinder favorable affective forecasting" (para. 2, as cited in Falls, 2014). But this does not necessarily cause fans to become disinterested with the work as a whole. Since 2009, Steve Carbone of RealitySteve.com has published spoilers from nearly 20 seasons of *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette* and *Bachelor in Paradise*, though ratings for the programs have remained steady. The spoilers appear to exist as a litmus test for fans in how it affects their viewing experience. Some fans will perceive spoilers as something that ruins their viewing experience, while others find alternative parts of the program to enjoy. For example, during the airing of season 11, bachelorette Kaitlyn Bristowe accidentally sent out a snapchat of her and her chosen suitor Shawn Booth in bed together. Instead of focusing on this, the producers edited the season finale to be less a question of "Who did Kaitlyn choose?" and more a

showcase of her confictions in choosing between Shawn and runner-up Nick Viall. Therefore, it should not be surprising that self-awareness for *The Bachelor* has also increased over time (Lindley, 2016).

In a summary of the most recent season's finale Scott (2016) said, "Chris Harrison, who is the host of *The Bachelor*, tells us this is the most dramatic finale ever. People in the audience laugh, which seems like a very self-aware moment for a show like this." At this point in *Bachelor* history, fans are expected to be self-aware. A clear perception of the editing tactics or manipulations play a key role in how fans express themselves and connect to others on Twitter.

#### Evolution of Twitter

It is important to understand the evolution of the markers that fans use to frame discussion, since this study is specifically examining them. Hashtags, @mentions, retweets and likes have attributed to the growth of Twitter as they enable community and connectivity. Bijker & Law (1992) said observing relevant groups and the way they employ various architecture allows us to understand the evolution of technologies (p.31). Twitter has an "in-built means of analysis, including retweets for significant tweets, hashtags for subject matter categorization, @ replies as well as followers-followees for network analysis..." (Bruns & Burgess, 2011, p.xxi). By 2011, hashtags and @mentions were being used as an organizing tool for social issues. By 2012, it was clear Twitter was a powerful form of communication between elites and nonelites, as evidenced by the Pope joining (Greenberg, 2016). By 2016, news outlets were using tweets as a predominant portion of their articles. Put simply, Twitter is used for a range of "communicative purposes" (Bruns & Burgess, 2011, p.15).

## Hashtags

Created in 2007, hashtags are perhaps the most recognizable component of Twitter architecture as they connect individuals and groups that are not intimately engaged in conversation. Bruns & Burgess (2011) said that this created new shared publics, or networked publics in the case of this thesis. Hashtags are powerful because they are generally not moderated, any user can use them, and they “connect tweets from users who have no preexisting follower/followee relationship” (p.6). In the last 10 years, Twitter has “rendered the ‘pound sign’ obsolete and made the ‘hashtag’ part of our vernacular” (Sichynsky, 2016). It has also slowly but surely created the addressivities used by fans. At least since 2012 (the start of this study’s sample), hashtags have been used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet, though Chapter 6 shows that hashtags can also be used for indications of sentiment not present in the overall tweet. This may be partially due to an evolution in the way hashtags are utilized (Hyatt, 2012). Ultimately, fandom did not enable hashtags to be utilized for sentiment. Hashtags have always been used to mark keywords, topics, and sentiment, in tweets. It can be used to make a grouping on anything, and that includes sentiment. However, there have also been changes in Twitter’s architecture that may have affected fan discussion.

## @mentions

The @mention or @reply, depending on how it was used, was created in 2006, not long after the site’s founding. The next year brought consistent breaking news coverage. Twitter was not built inherently for conversations (Riemer, Diedrich, Richter & Scifleet, 2011), but the @reply is “something users wanted and used” (p.33). By 2009,

Twitter made it mandatory that, by default, users would not see @mentions addressing those they did not follow. This created somewhat of a backlash as many people heralded Twitter as affording “serendipitous discovery of interesting ideas and people” (p.34). Many users skirted around this issue by placing a period in front of the @mention or simply placing it elsewhere in the tweet. As of March 2017, however, Twitter changed the @mention service so that users could see @mentions regardless of follow status (Ulanoff, 2016), which partially makes this study a reflection on the evolution of technology. This change of course prompts questions regarding the timeline of the study and how discussion has evolved amongst fans. Do addressivity markers always reflect conversation and/or interaction or is it dependent upon the type of user? Also, do people expect a response with these addressivities or is it just a way to voice what they are thinking? (D’heer & Verdegem, 2014).

Herring & Honeycutt (2009) found that the use of @ as an addressivity marker facilitated “conversationality.” For example, @mentions have been consistently used to reply directly to a friend or family member or to refer to a relevant person by name. These @mentions have always been clickable links, making this affordance consistent throughout the sample (Honeycutt & Herring, 2009).

### Retweeting

Though hashtags and @mentions have roots in other conversational models, retweeting is thought to be unique to Twitter. In response to the advent of retweeting, Bruns & Burgess (2011) said “each person’s view of Twitter was at once shaped by the group of other users to which they had subscribed, and by a separate list of users that had subscribed to their own tweets” (p.35). Suh, Hong, Pirolli & Chi (2010) said that

retweeting is the central mechanism for information dissemination. Much of Twitter's architecture has remained the same in this study's five-year sample, with the grand exception of retweeting. Boyd, Golder & Lotan (2010) similarly said that retweets invite an assembly of online exchange. Interestingly, retweets were left out of many "how to get started" articles for Twitter, though they were considered mainstream by 2009 (Seward, 2013).

Only a few years after Twitter's inception, the retweet marker now showed up in other user's streams and could be seen by followers. It was missing the familiar "RT" but also commentary from the person retweeting. This facet of retweets made it especially difficult to collect data for this sample, as the initial desire was to collect the discussion surrounding retweets from both sides. This change did not go unnoticed for users. While inserting a special retweet button instead of the manual inserting of "RT" might seem like a natural evolution or welcomed convenience, many users felt differently. Embedding RT into the tweet itself allowed users to "set context, to shape diffusion, and to preserve deleted tweets—in other words, it had provided for a wide range of behaviors and expectations that had been built up around the service" (Bruns & Burgess, 2011, p.36).

### Likes

As mentioned, the platform is opened to many different usage patterns, and this certainly applies to favoriting. Gorrell & Bontcheva (2014), as well as Greenfield (2013), found that this particular button is used to favorite something as an endorsement, to bookmark, and even to thank someone, among others. T Suh, Hong, Pirolli & Chi (2010) found that likes were often negatively correlated with status, meaning that a user does not need to be an elite in order to receive a lot of likes or favorites. Their study also found

that most users did not use this feature. Suh, Hong, Pirolli & Chi's (2010) argue, however, that this does not account for the architectural change from favorites (star symbol) to likes (heart symbol) in 2015.

Though they seem synonymous, Twitter changed it to make the user experience more streamlined, because "not everything can be your favorite" (Newton, 2015). As with most social and technological practices, users co-created the formation of the platform. Based on this brief evolution on Twitter architecture, it is clear that many of the changes preceded or succeeded the study's timeline of 2012-2016. Starting in chapter 6, this study begins to delve into the relationship between Twitter architecture and the discussion *Bachelor* fans engage with, create, and transform.

#### Twitter Architecture and Sentiment

These affordances build the "Bachelor Nation" because a community forms around the "senders of these messages...directly engaging with one another" (Highfield, Harrington & Bruns, 2013, p.5). Hashtags and mentions for *The Bachelor* vary but usually utilize one or more of the following: @TheBachelorABC, #TheBachelor, #Bachelor, #BachelorNation, and specifically regarding the bachelor himself, @BenHiggi or #BenHiggins for the most recent 20<sup>th</sup> season. The purpose behind these hashtags is often very obvious. It may be that a fan is praising the bachelor directly or it may be an attack on his character. It is also possible that hashtags or even simple addressivity markers are used in a vague way, not directly tied to an attitude.

Fans' relationship to social media is a unique, contemporary reality. While social media fandom has much in common with more seasoned mediums, the way fans identify on social media has its own idiosyncrasies. Though admiration from fans has long been a



way for producers to gauge what is popular and even revered, the changing cultural status of fans is best illustrated by the efforts of those in the public gaze “seeking to connect with consumers and voters by publicly emphasizing their fan credentials” (Gray, Sandvoss & Harrington, 2007, p.5). While fans have long been used as a marketing tool, they have never quite been so imbedded into the fabric of a show. For example, Chris Harrison constantly alludes to fans in after shows, specials, and in his blog posts as “Bachelor nation,” making clear that this kind of fan is everywhere across America and is valuable. Research has shown that often before a show even airs there is already a social media campaign targeted to fans. The “storytelling infrastructure” of platforms like Twitter “invites observers to tune into events they are physically removed from by imagining what these might feel like for people directly experiencing them” (Papacharissi, 2014, p.4). For most shows in their infancy, this kind of narrative advertising lures fans. After all, it may be difficult to imagine how a person could be a fan before a show has even aired (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012). This could be understood, however, through the general idea of *The Bachelor*. Because the show recycles contestants from previous seasons, fans stay interested in the familiar tropes and characters. The same goes for many other programs that recycle actors, producers, directors and even content. Social media simply would not be what it is without fan communities (Jenkins, 2013).

### Fandom

Gray, Sandvoss & Harrington (2007) make the obvious but telling point that most people are fans of something. Whether it is *The Bachelor*, a scripted television show, or even a movie or book, fans can relate to each other via a specific sense of community.

Fandom, like reality TV, has varying definitions depending on context and medium. The definition is difficult to agree upon (Larsen & Zubernis, 2011, p.9). Hill (2002) said that many things are ignored in order to construct a concise definition of what fandom means. Some scholars might ignore cult-like associations, and some may or may not distinguish between followers and fans when discussing social media. Duffett (2013) defines fandom as a “sociocultural phenomenon largely associated with modern capitalist societies, electronic media, mass culture and public performance,” with the term fan being derived from the word fanatic (p.2). Fandom originally derives from the Latin fanaticus, meaning insane, mad, or possessed by the gods. Henry Jenkins (2012), the foremost scholar on fan communities, said “fandom originates in response to specific historical conditions...and remains constantly in flux” (p.3). In this work, he also quotes Eco (1986) who said that in order for something to be transformed into a cult object, the work must be more than loved—it must provide a world that is akin to the fan’s “private sectarian world” (196-197). Fandom is as much about admiration as it is about being complementary to the fan’s world.

Many scholars have compounded the issue by attempting to distinguish one type of fan from another. For example, Matt Hill suggests that fans and cult fans are synonymous terms (Barton & Lampley, 2013, p.239). This study’s aim, however, is not to create a compendium of fandom. Instead, it is focused on a niche group of reality TV fans’ discourse and what that discourse can tell scholars.

The aforementioned definition of fandom (Duffett, 2013) closely relates to studies of *The Bachelor* as people are obsessively interested in the lives of the contestants in and out of the show. The show’s host, Chris Harrison, even refers to the show’s fans as

“Bachelor Nation,” or more generally “our family here on *The Bachelor*.” Though *The Bachelor* is not a completely scripted television show and purports to use “real-life” people instead of actors, there is still a mythology (or canon) that fans of the show reference to speculate, discuss, criticize, evaluate and even transform the show itself.

“The cultural studies work that has examined audiences and research into fandom or fan culture have built a strong case for the importance of audience interaction” (Baym, 2015, p.3). Larsen & Zubernis (2011) agree saying that programs like *The Bachelor* are a “testament to the immediacy of fandom in the age of the Internet” (p.3). Before Twitter was launched, LiveJournal hosted many *Bachelor* fan groups, and blogs were heavily read in order to obtain the latest gossip or simply share thoughts about the program:

Munchin said:

What a waste of 3 hours of my life! How anti-climactic was the end too?! Glad Kristy is gone, hated her and her name, loved her grandmother! Loved that Chris asked to see Sarah’s ring and the camera didn’t show it for the viewers to see.

Weird to see the guy pick the girl with a real job and someone willing to move, and she talked about it like she was in college or something. Sarah’s job had had to have seemed so much safer! Also love the inclusion of Jerry, in obvious hopes we’d stick through the entire thing to see “the famous one” or something!”

(Appendix 1).

Moskauengel said “Damnit. Why did he choose that bitch?” Ackles said “That was the longest, most boring 3 hours ever. I wish I could have that time back.” (Appendix 2).

This high level of fandom is indicative of a show with relatable characters (non-elites), intriguing plots (romantic dates in exotic cities), competition (eliminations every week) and the idealized promise of love and possibly marriage. In this study's observations so far, never so seamlessly has a reality TV program combined elements of the genre's various waves, which include documentary-style, competition-style, romance-style, social experiment-style, and confession-room style.

Scholars have discussed the significance this complex identity plays in "distribution of power" (Sandvoss, 2005; Hellekson and Busse, 2006; Hill, 2002). Emotional aspects of fandom have also become a priority in this specific genre of research (Lancaster, 2001 as cited in Larsen & Zubernis, 2011). In the case of *The Bachelor*, old and new media are colliding, and various interests from fans and producers are intersecting. This power struggle is theorized to sometimes result in unpredictable attitudes and frames (Jenkins, 2006 as cited in Larsen & Zubernis, 2011). A notable example of this on *The Bachelor* occurred when several fans of Caila Quinn (a half Filipino woman in season 20) campaigned for her to be the next Bachelorette. The option was turned down in favor of Jojo, a white woman. Many fans were angry considering that creator Mike Fleiss had specifically promised the next Bachelorette would be a choice towards diversity (Mendelson, 2016): Stephanie said that she was "ashamed and disappointed of @BachelorABC for not choosing @CailaQuinn for the #bachelorette." This was accompanied with a sad and angry-face emoji and the hashtag #BachelorSoWhite. Margaret said "I'ma let you finish, Chris Harrison, but Caila Quinn was ROBBED #TheBachelor." Sean Lowe, the bachelor from season 17, said "So was that whole filming Caila stuff just a rumor or a mean joke?" Catherine, Sean Lowe's wife

and the “winner” of season 17, Catherine Guidici, said “I guess I’m taking out @CailaQuinn for shots” (Appendix 3).

Fans differ widely in what kinds of participation they seek out and the spaces they choose (Larsen & Zubernis, 2011, p.9). Zoning in on *Bachelor* fans, therefore, will only allow for a deeper analysis of an already rich field of research. This discussion will be aided by a methodological deconstruction of a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative discourse analysis, complete with comparisons in research and an in-depth coding scheme.

### **Chapter III: Methods**

This chapter will begin by comparing the methodologies of content analysis and discourse analysis before laying out the sampling and data collection process. The chapter will then outline the coding process by each research question.

#### Methodologies Compared

This study employed a mixed-method approach of content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980) and discourse analysis (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Content analysis is a widespread and popular method used within social science research. The empirical support it provides is especially useful in regards to social media, because it is a descriptive and allows inferences over a period of time. Countless researchers rely on this method, as the simple objective of content analysis is to translate raw phenomena into data (Krippendorff, 1980, p.25). To best perform content analysis, Krippendorff (2004) provides a simple conceptual framework:

- “A body of text, the data that a content analyst has available to begin an analytical effort;
- A research question that the analyst seeks to answer by examining a body of text;
- A context of the analyst's choice within which to make sense of the body of text;
- An analytical construct that operationalizes what the analyst knows about the context;
- Inferences intended to answer the research question
- Validating evidence, which is the ultimate justification of the content analysis” (p.29-30).

Beyond this framework, Krippendorff says that content analysts must also be able to validate their study. Some of the possible justifications may be “to predict something, to inform decisions or to help conceptualize the realities of certain individuals or groups” (2004, p.25). In this study, the purpose was to help conceptualize the realities of *Bachelor* fans on Twitter.

Discourse analysis is “a particular way of talking about and understanding the social world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.7); and this social world is made of multiple discursive frames, or packages (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). Brown & Yule (1983) said a “discourse analyst should treat his or her data as the record (text) of a dynamic process in which language was used as an instrument of communication in a context by a speaker/writer to express meanings and achieve intentions (discourse)” (p.26). Intention is the operative word. The role of the researcher in conducting a discourse analysis was not to merely tally or look at frequency of codes. Instead, it is to describe regularities used by those who are tweeting to frame various discourses. In fact, Janks (1997) said discourse analysis:

Enables you to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositioning, their sequencing, their layout and so on. This is another way of saying that texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained (p.1).

The qualitative discourse analysis section is much more open-ended, with an inductive approach (Fairclough, 1999; Van Dijk, Kintschy & Van Dijk, 1983). Discourse analysis acted as a supplement to content analysis in order to provide richer analysis on key areas of sentiment and general fan discussion. Reality TV also has grounding in some

common discourses. Bondebjerg (2002) said reality TV “is an indicator of a new network society with changing relations between audience, reality, different media and media genres, between everyday life discourses and institutionalized discourses, and between popular discourses and elite discourses” (p.160). He further states that reality TV has transformed the public sphere from a well-defined community with “boundaries and rules, to a more complex public sphere with multiple groups and networks. In the process, the relationships between public and private...are changing” (p.160) Because of the changing nature of the public sphere, he suggests that the question of discourse in the genre of reality TV requires closer attention.

In this thesis, the discourse analysis took inspiration from the philosophical linguist lens—discourse is rooted in social constructionism—an “umbrella term for a range of new theories about culture and society” Jørgensen & Phillips (2002). This lens is a natural fit for reality TV study as scholarship has sought to circumscribe the phenomenon of the genre (Lorenzo-Dus & Blitvich, 2013). This approach was, however, an uncommon avenue for reality TV scholarship, as when scholars have referred to “‘language’ (Friedman, 2002; Kavka, 2008; Lei & Park, 2011; Reid, 2007), they have often done so from a macro-analytical perspective, rarely descending to the textual level” (Lorenzo-Dus & Blitvich, 2013, p.1). Though this study predominantly focused on (description) and processing (interpretation) analysis, discourse analysis affords a critical component.

The aim of discourse analysis is to lift the work beyond mere description and surface interpretation in order to dissect the critical dynamic in the discourse. The role of discourse analysis in this study is to rise above mere frequency. Though tweets are



assessed according to their prominent frame and sentiment types, the tweets also rise above prominence in meaning. Discourse analysis provides a deeper grounding for analysis and involves an element of power in regards to political economy and issues such as heteronormativity. The qualitative component of this study is concerned not only with the text itself (tweets in this case), but also in the “semantic relationships between constructed pairs of sentences and with their syntactic realisations” (p. viii). As in Gamson and Modigliani’s (1989), the method towards interpretive packages in framing (p.12) was used as a guide for examining the tweets for the analysis as a whole. In attempting to make clear the significance of this study, interpretive packages are a fitting avenue. Tweets are a social artifact in which text, emoticons, and visuals (all symbols) are grouped together to make sense of issues such as relationship insecurity, the desire for marriage as a social pressure, gendered judgment, and lack of diversity on television. Though fans are the curators of the texts, these tweets are read by fans, news outlets and often people outside the fandom. From this reading and interpretation, meaning emerges in relation to the frames (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). There has been a lot of dissatisfaction with *The Bachelor* for quite a long time in regards to various social issues. Therefore, it is imperative that this study has a critical component, in order to acknowledge what is going on in the current discourse. This study’s method was devised in order to fix the limitations of the sample.

Scholars have noted that content analysis and critical discourse analysis work well together. Neuendorf (2004) notes, “The range of substantive topics appropriate to DA is also generally appropriate to CA” (p. 34). Krippendorf (2004) situates texts as only having meaning “relative to particular contexts, discourses or purposes” (p.24), so the

dual-method approach is a natural match. The qualitative discourse analysis sought to “verify, expand, and illuminate the...findings of the content analysis” (Papacharissi, 2012, p.9), where focus will be directed to “thematic patterns, repetition, and redundancy in the observed trends” (p.9). Much like Meraz & Papacharissi’s (2013) use of a dual methodological approach to observe the efforts of grassroots political activism, this study aimed to “spotlight Twitter’s socio-technical flexibility in altering and spreading influence” (p.2). Combining the aspects of content analysis with discourse analysis allows for a deeper analysis and treatment of network frames as independent variables to better examine the influences of sentiment on individual or *Bachelor* frames.

### Sample

This study looked at RQ1: What substantive content frames emerge as publics engage in the networked framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter? RQ2: How do publics engage in the affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter? and RQ3: How does the architecture of Twitter support or sustain the networked frames that emerge from fan discussion of *The Bachelor*? The study period was contracted considerably for the study’s feasibility. Since Twitter was created in 2006 and did not gain popularity until around 2008, and @BachelorABC did not join Twitter until 2011, this study will focus on five seasons of *The Bachelor*, which spans from January 2, 2012 through March 14, 2016.

Season	Time frame	Bachelor
16	January 2-March 12, 2012	Ben Flajnik
17	January 7-March 11, 2013	Sean Lowe
18	January 6-March 10, 2014	Juan Pablo Galavis
19	January 5-March 9, 2015	Chris Soules
20	January 4-March 14, 2016	Ben Higgins

In order to go “back in time” with Twitter this study utilized the “advanced search” ([twitter.com/search-advanced](https://twitter.com/search-advanced)) which allows users to select any date or date range since the first public tweet in March 2006. The tweets produced are automatically a randomized sample. Since each season is only nine-10 weeks long, it was feasible to sample from every week of each season, resulting in an overall 50-week sample. At 20 tweets per week (the first 20 tweets of each stream output, with the exception of official tweets from @BachelorABC, were grabbed so that the researcher is not biasedly choosing), the sample comprised 1,000 tweets. Common hashtags and @ addressivities of #TheBachelor #Bachelornation @BachelorABC, and hashtags for the specific Bachelor’s name/account name were coded, among various sentiment markers that included both emoticons and words/phrases.

The sample also consisted of 200 tweets taken from the 1000 tweet sample for the discourse analysis portion. Four tweets were selected randomly from each week (a total of 50 weeks) to make up the 200-tweet sample. In order to randomly select, each tweet was given a code, and the Excel random number generator decided which tweets would be used for analysis.

## Coding

With content analysis, this study attempted to use a pre-determined coding scheme of the researcher's making while allowing for an inductive process in establishing coding categories. Overall, however, the majority of the coding scheme is pre-determined, which lends to a more positivistic approach. Krippendorff (1980) argued that a positivistic approach allows the study to be more replicable and generalizable.

Utilizing content analysis required the study to employ intercoder reliability measures in order to infer trustworthiness. This study used three coders; one principal coder was responsible for the entire sample, while the second and third coder were responsible for coding twenty percent of the sample each. The study aimed for an overall intercoder reliability of at least Cohen's Kappa=0.8, though it fell a bit short. Cohen's Kappa was at 0.736, and the overall agreement at 78.4%. Intercoder reliability was at least 0.8 for most variables. Those that did not meet this benchmark were for variable 5 (tone) at CK=0.785, variable 7C (emoticon intensity) at CK=0.71, variable 11B (mentions type) at CK=0.7, variable 12A (Hashtag type) at CK=0.549 (Appendix 4). Percent agreement varied when comparing the various coders. The study's trustworthiness is discussed in the limitations and future studies section of chapter seven. Tweets (fan behavior) were examined through the purported lens of affect/sentiment's role and how fans organize said attitudes on a specific social media platform through specific framing techniques. The analysis provided a mechanism through which to question commonly held assumptions about how fans communicate about events, issues, and people in general. Considering the theoretical framework, it is also important to note that the shift to a networked public sphere allows individuals to participate in creating

information and knowledge (Benkler, 2006). In this study, the facts and opinions presented in tweets are meaningful in the context of the larger issue of networked framing, fandom and affect/sentiment. Networked framing is a way to describe the power in communicating a text, so the first question needed to seek out the prominent and hidden (but significant) frames that allow this communication of power. This study was interested in the crowd endeavor of fans. Retweeting is present but simply could not be analyzed due to the study's collection method.

In order to answer *RQ1: What substantive content frames emerge as publics engage in the networked framing of The Bachelor on Twitter?* the researcher coded the various indicators of frames (variable 4 in codebook) looking at all tweets. Though prior studies have looked solely at retweets in order to analyze substantive content frames (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013; Bennett, Segerberg & Walker, 2014), this study took a different approach in focusing on all collected tweets regardless of retweet use. There was also a structural issue in how tweets were collected. Because they were obtained via a convenient Twitter search and specifically collected by individual screen shots, retweeting behavior between fans was not accessible. Using a coding scheme from Fairhurst and Sarr (1996), as well as new categories from an inductive analysis, the framing categories were: metaphor, stories, tradition, catchphrase, artifact, contrast, and spin, gossip, navel-gazing, N/A, promotional, and simple question. These frames were used as a gateway into sentiment for RQ2. They were treated as mutually exclusive, though this choice will be further discussed in the limitations section. Though it was possible that there could be elements of multiple categories in a tweet, the coders were asked to determine which framing technique was most present in the tweet. The

researcher added categories of gossip, navel-gazing, promotional, simple question and N/A after looking at a small sample, as there were tweets that did not comfortably match up with any of the categories. Indicators of each are detailed in the codebook.

RQ1 was also answered via a qualitative discourse analysis. Most frames were inductively gathered, though Bondebjerg (2002) was a large influence in the discussion of “everyday life” as a frame. The discourse of everyday life is especially significant as Bondebjerg (2002) argues that it is a result of the tension amongst populist, expert and ordinary citizen opinion. More specifically, “tendencies in media discourses of the network society connect with a larger shift from a formal and public language to conversational and everyday language” (p.163). Bondebjerg also noted discursive hybridization and aesthetics meta-hybridization, which were present in *Bachelor* fan tweets. Discursive hybridization refers to the existence of very different forms of discourse in the same genre. Reality TV, and *The Bachelor* specifically, fit this description. Aesthetic meta-hybridization refers to a staged reality (like *The Bachelor*) that the audience is aware of (Bondebjerg, 2002). These frameworks were used to discuss the various discourses in fan tweets.

Discourse strands were inductively categorized, though the codebook provides a list of indicators for common *Bachelor* discourse packages. Discourse types were coded as groups or packages. This allowed a qualitative look at how fans are framing their messages, while comparing it to the content analysis coding for sentiment and affect. As mentioned earlier in the networked framing section, Reese & Lewis’s definition of frames “as organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time” (2009, p.87) complemented the overall *Bachelor* narrative. While the researcher coded tweets by

specific seasons, this study was interested in providing a snapshot of fan discourse over time. It is an interesting facet of the study, as there was present tension from the consistent themes of the show and the evolving nature of fans and individuals in general. The qualitative discourse analysis also examined tweets for evidence of power (political economy), gender, race and general heteronormativity. The goal of this analysis was not to find the most prevalent frames (as in the content analysis) but to discuss tweets that are often buried, that may betray hidden elements of a public's agenda.

*RQ2 How do publics engage in the affective framing of The Bachelor on Twitter?* was answered via multiple coding categories for the variables of sentiment, tone and emoticons. As previously mentioned, an important part of information gathering behavior has always been to find out what people think (Pang & Lee, 2008), and sentiment is factored into this endeavor. Affect is a complimentary pathway to this sentiment (Hemmings, 2005). Networked framing is looking at the power amongst diverse publics, so it is expected that this sentiment could also be diverse. This research question, in particular, is an exploration of the relationship between the experiences of framing devices and the resultant sentiment.

Within the variable of tone, the researcher coded for one of four options: enthusiastic, facetious, sarcastic or anti-fan. Within the variable of sentiment, the researcher coded for one of nine options: happy, sad, angry, pride/admiration, anger/disgust, annoyance, anticipation, surprise, and neutral/no obvious sentiment. The presence of emoticons, as well as the type and intensity of emoticons, was also coded. The list of emoticons is detailed in the codebook. The researcher created these categories after observing a sample of tweets, though the general descriptors should not be

considered without being open to other interpretations. Though the researcher looked at many studies regarding emoticons (such as Wolf, 2000; Kouloumpis, Wilson, & Moore, 2011; Agarwal, Xie, Vovsha, Ranbow & Passonneau, 2011; and Hogenboom, Bal, Frasincar, Bal, de Jong & Kaymak, 2013), it was necessary to create new categories because the sample of tweets showed a more expansive use of emoticons. Categories used from previous studies will be detailed in the codebook. While other variables were coded via categories that are regarded as mutually exclusive, the response options for the emoticons were a simple tally, as these categories are not mutually exclusive.

The indicators of each variable category are detailed in the codebook. Tone and sentiment (variable 5 and 6, respectively, in codebook) categories came from prior research, as well as new categories inspired by prior research. The study attempted to replicate where possible. While there is plenty of work on sentiment analysis, most of the coding categories focus on simply collapsing emotion into positive or negative sentiment (Liu, 2012; Bermingham & Smeaton, 2011; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009), or they did not seem to be fully compatible with the study's research questions (Liu, 2012; Pak & Paroubek, 2010; Pang & Lee, 2008). This study did, however, draw inspiration from Glaser & Strauss' (1967) coding scheme. The coding scheme focuses on positive, negative or neutral sentiment that consumers feel towards brands. While *The Bachelor* technically is a brand, fandom takes on different frames than would a customer towards a brand. Therefore, it was necessary to be more expansive with the coding categories. The researcher compiled lists of emotion terms that could be collapsed into mutually exclusive categories. The researcher also used a Merriam Webster search to give the definitions a consistent grounding. The distinction between polarity and tone is



intentional. Many of the codes were eventually collapsed as the initial interceded sample showed little distinction.

RQ2 coded for present emoticons (variable 7 in codebook) and observed if the emoticons present are used to “intensify” the sentiment of the tweet, “negate” it, or are just part of the overall sentiment (Hogenboom, Bal, Frasincar, Bal, de Jong & Kaymak, 2013). For example, consider this tweet: “The Bachelor is so awful. It makes me so happy.” Does the word “happy” 1) intensify 2) negate or 3) balance the overall meaning of the tweet? In this case, the word “happy” negates the tone of the tweet because of sarcasm. Using this analysis is directly inspired by Entman’s focus on salience as placement and repetition (1993). Whether by the use of “culturally familiar symbols” (p.53) such as emoticons or clear sentiment, frames use these “bits of text” (p.53) in both like-minded and contrasting ways.

RQ3 aimed to answer: How does the architecture of Twitter support or sustain the networked frames that emerge from fan discussion of The Bachelor? This question was answered via the variables of retweets, comments, likes, mentions, and hashtags (8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 in codebook). The researcher coded for the existence of these markers in every tweet, as well as the iterative content of said tweets. Retweets, comments, likes were also coded by frequency / specific instances categories (1 instance, 2-11 instances, 12-50 instances, more than 50 instances, N/A). Retweets (variable 8) were also coded for their intensification or negation by the presence or absence of a comment. This is significant because if a tweet is heavily retweeted there may be some apparent relationship between a frame and a particular sentiment. Initially, the aim of this was to observe the actual content of the comments. This, however, was not possible and will be discussed further in

the limitations section of chapter 7. As previously mentioned, this study's theoretical lens is not aimed at the utilization of retweeting but instead at the prominence level for content analysis. The discourse analysis allows a deeper analysis where the content analysis cannot venture. Networked framing is based on the nature of the media system. In Twitter, the retweet mechanism enables one to see more clearly what is most prominent. However, a coding scheme that manually looks at all tweets to determine the most prominent is also useful. This study is doing the latter. The retweet is the most obvious architectural device to see prominence, but a content analysis of all tweets gets at everything needed. Despite this, the coding for retweets and comments sought to analyze how fans engage in affective framing, as a retweet count can be taken as a measure of user influence (Nip & Fu, 2016).

Categories for mentions included: bachelor, contestant/host, non-contestant, network or other. For hashtags, the categories followed a coding scheme from Davidov, Tsur & Rappoport (2010): strong sentiment, most likely sentiment, context-dependent sentiment, focused sentiment and no sentiment. Papacharissi (2013) said that the frames that emerge (in regards to RQ1) are usually connected to hashtags. "They are open to definition, redefinition and re-appropriation and serve as framing devices that allow crowds to be rendered" into networked publics and come together and/or disband around sentiment (p.2). Also included were categories concerning the use of said hashtags: for an attack, for humor, for an expression of admiration, for factual commenting, or other. These categories were constructed from observing a small sample of tweets prior to collecting data for the study. This theoretical lens of networked framing and affect is significant when considering the changing landscape of information consumption.

Twitter affordances have allowed more “affective attachments” (Dean, 2010, p.2) through the use of addressivities and hashtags, allowing for more crowd control in the messages they espouse. That being said, RQ3 was answered via a qualitative discourse analysis as well that aimed at analyzing this level of control and power. The attention given to language use in the qualitative process was particularly useful in answering RQ3. The discourse analysis was used to determine the overall type of content for retweeted, commented on, liked, mentioned, and hashtagged tweets. How a fan constructs their message influences the imbued attitude in each tweet. Because Twitter does not allow a tweet to be over 140 characters, therefore the affordances of the platform factored into this section of the analysis. The qualitative discourse analysis also examined the addressivities used in tweets for evidence of power (political economy). This power involved specific strands of heteronormativity, homophobia, and racial/cultural tension. Evidence of support for heteronormativity could involve discussing gender roles as ascribed to what makes a “man a man” and a “woman a woman.” We see this in each season final of *The Bachelor*, *Bachelorette*, and even *Bachelor in Paradise*, where the man is expected to be the one to propose, even when a woman is in the position of choosing the final suitor. Many fans and media outlets discussed including more diversity in race, cultural background, and sexual orientation on *The Bachelor* in order to allow for a more inclusive representation of exploring and finding love. In regards to sexual orientation, tweets both promote support and condemnation for homophobia when people are faced with the prospect of a gay bachelor. Though racial diversity is more broadly supported in *Bachelor* fandom, there is still tension below the surface when discussing black female contestants in particular, as well as the “blessing and curse” of finally

having a black bachelorette (Booker, 2017). Of course, these tweets and the network response all feed into the economic production model and the argument between fair representation and good business on television. This will be explored further in chapter 7.

#### Data Collection Process

The process for obtaining and categorizing tweets was be “by hand” with an excel sheet. The coding scheme for this study cannot be easily or elegantly compared to other coding schemes in the same vein of research. Therefore, it is difficult to describe how to assure strong reliability.

This study used a manual method for counting word and phrase frequency for the discourse analysis. While there are online word counters available, the text would have required extraction from the tweet screenshots. Therefore, it felt more beneficial to do it manually as the frequency of certain words and phrases, or lack thereof, felt more immediate. The research “made note of the most frequently occurring words and the context in which they occurred” (Lucchesi, 2016, p.157). Notes were taken in regards to the pre-determined coding scheme, language use, tone, and overall discourse strands. In doing so the researcher looked for patterns in the fandom’s communication. Observed were the ways in which this fandom is constructed of those who genuinely watch the show, those who report on it for promotional purposes, and those who “hate watch” or “hate comment.” Also considered was the relationship between producers and fans and content creation. Discourse analysis also stresses the need to assess the cultural climate and any varying experiences. Notes were organized and analyzed with regard to the themes in the resulting chapters. The next chapter explicates the results for RQ1.

## Chapter IV: Research Question 1 Results

The first research question asked which substantive content frames emerged as publics engage in the networked framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. The question sought to understand a particular aspect of how fans talk about *The Bachelor* on Twitter, both in how they visually and textually frame their messages. The question also sought to answer the frequency and variance of these frames, as well as how they can be mapped out across the five-year sample timeline for this study. The goal of this question was to identify significant frames, which is not something fans immediately perceive but that fans and consumers of this information are persuaded and influenced by.

The next sections each describe the frames that emerged from tweets. The frames are presented in descending order of importance/prominence. Though, an overall snapshot of the sample by frame is available (Appendix 5). In each frame section, the content and discourse analysis are discussed collectively. Any shared similarities amongst these frames, and what this suggests, are addressed at the end of each respective section and the overall conclusion.

The results for research question 1 showed a prominence of frames not uncommon to other fandoms (tropes pertaining to the specific text), as well as frames seemingly unique to the Bachelor fandom (extreme judgment towards women).

### Value Judgment in Tweets

Value judgment, which included both positive and negative assessments of the show, comprised 35.4% of the overall sample. The frame had a steady increase from 2012 to 2016, with a major dip in 2015 (Appendix 6). Despite this, it remained the most prominent throughout the sample. This type of tweet was used most often to denigrate or

praise a specific character on the show. As an example of positive spin, one fan said “Crying because @SeanLowe09 is so perfect. #thebachelor” (Appendix 7). In the 2015 season, one fan said “Finally caught up on #TheBachelor and Chris Soules is one beautiful man” (Appendix 8). As an example of negative spin, one fan said, “I don’t like Courtney, she just rubs me the wrong way, I just have bad feelings about that girl! #TheBachelor” (Appendix 9). In the 2014 season, one fan said “The girl from #OKC on #TheBachelor... Seriously... She sucks. #suckitupbuttercup” (Appendix 10).

The discourse analysis showed similar results. 60% of the sample used an element of character judgment. A large component, almost an induction, of being a *Bachelor* fan is the willingness to *judge* the show, often with an unabashed harshness. This also includes *idolization*, an extreme form of showing enthusiasm for the show or specifically a character.

With *Bachelor* discourse, remarking upon a woman’s physical attractiveness is rare, while commenting on her personality is a common part of the discourse. All of the women on the show are good-looking if not beautiful and many are successful in their careers, so what remains for judgment is how they interact with the bachelor and the other women, and also how they are perceived as a *character* on television. Is she likeable? Is she annoying? Does she seem like she would make a good mother? In some ways, fans have mirrored the same concept of being “catty” or “talking crap” that the contestants use to get under each other’s skin in order to possibly progress further in the show. In an example of this judgment towards the bachelor and a contestant, one fan said “#TheBachelor watching season finale. I am so grossed out by Juan Pablo!! Claire becomes a baby with his smooth talk. I don’t like him. Yuck!” (Appendix 11). Often the

judgment is aimed at the female contestants such as “No Chris, Caitlin is NOT goofy and down to earth she is inappropriate and boisterous!!! #TheBachelor” or “You’re annoying Courtney! (Appendix 12).

While this discourse strand of character judgment did not seem to immediately relate to specific events/issues in the respective seasons via the discourse analysis, it is a reaction to the overarching cultural issue/debate of women judging other women.

Ashcraft and Pacanowsky (1996) noted in their study that women commonly participate in the devaluation of other women. While many fans seem to not give it much thought (to them they’re just judging contestants, male or female) many are bothered by female fans’ obvious judgment of their fellow women’s sexuality. This is the central debate of *Bachelor* judgment when focused in on the contestants. Should a female contestant be celebrated for her sexuality, if she uses it to “get ahead,” or is this without merit? Should sexuality be granted as a valuable tool? One fan said “Courtney is at it again, taking her clothes off on #thebachelor #bachelor” (Appendix 13). It also included a photo of Courtney looking like she’s about to take off an article of clothing, with a smirk on her face.

In order to be a fan, one need not have an obsession or hysterical disposition towards the characters. Lewis (1992), however, posited that there is a tendency to define fans as, at least potentially, obsessed and/or hysterical fanatics. “Fans, when insistently characterized as ‘them,’ can be distinguished from ‘people like us’” (p.9) because of a certain fandom’s adoration of characters, story arc or the franchise as a whole. This idolization is needed as a healthy contrast to the heavy judgment that runs throughout *Bachelor* fan discourse. One fan said “I’m watching #TheBachelor re-run (again) it has to

be bc of Juan Pablo lol he's freaking HOT!!" (Appendix 14). Another said "Just marry me already?! #hottie #sean #thebachelor" (Appendix 15). Some may not even idolize the character, but instead a feeling or experience they represent. For example, one fan said "I know I'm a little late but Catherine's response to Sean...I cried...in every cry she like lost her breath #TheBachelor" (Appendix 16).

The results show that value judgment was the most prominent frame of the sample and remained pervasive throughout the sample (Appendix 6).

#### Everyday Life & Navel-gazing in Tweets

Navel-gazing, which referred to a focus on the fan's life, comprised 18.9% of the overall sample. "Navel-gazing" as a frame was usually in the form of mundane details, such as the actual act of watching the show, drinking wine with friends, or exclaiming how exhausted they feel. As an example of this, one fan said, "Roommate is currently entering into his quarter life crisis because there is no cocktail party TheBachelor" (Appendix 17). Another said "My mom just texted me and asked if we could watch the bachelor. My response was yes yes yes. 🤔 #TheBachelor" (Appendix 18).

While navel-gazing may seem like an inherently self-absorbed framing technique Bondebjerg (2012) argues that it is on par with the "deep mediation of everyday life in a network society which creates a strong need for audiences to mirror and play with identities and the uncertainties of everyday life, thus intensifying our innate social curiosity" (p.162). The discourse analysis sample showed 45% of the sample engaging with the "everyday life" frame. *Bachelor* fans often frame their tweets to talk about their own lives while discussing the show. Within this frame, clear subgroups emerged in describing the act of living, watching the show, tweeting about it, or even thinking



(Appendix 19). This might include declarations that they are watching the show like “Finally watching SeanTellAll! @SeanLowe09 #TheBachelor” (Appendix 20) or “Catching up with #TheBachelor #Dvr” (Appendix 21). Or it might be related to an “everyday” activity such as “Lady @ my dentist office said I looked like a girl from #TheBachelor. I know it’s vain that would make my day but...it made me feel pretty!” (Appendix 22). This also involves celebrity or “elite” tweets. A former fan-favorite Bachelor contestant tweeted “Girls night in with @Jaded2404, catching up on this weeks episode of #TheBachelor” (Appendix 23). Though this was the second most prominent framing technique overall, it had an overall decrease in instances from 2012 to 2016. While navel-gazing went down, value judgment went up (Appendix 5). This could suggest a decrease in narcissistic tendencies—as has been explored in online studies—or an increased interest in program content. This is in contrast, however, in comparing the ratings for the 2012 season to 2016. Regardless, it is still a prominent frame. Franklin (2006) said that in using the Internet people prioritize writing about their everyday lives and “muse on their (mutual) hopes and fears in what are spontaneous, negotiated sorts of intercultural and intracultural exchange” (p. 3). Eleven years later, we are seeing this frame of everyday life persist in the social media landscape.

#### Language Devices Used to Frame Tweets

In constructing this discourse, specific language devices assisted fans in using frames of value judgment and everyday life. Though hyperbole was not an initial coding option, it became a distinct framing device when conducting the discourse analysis. For example, using the word “psycho” is common. One fan said “Courtney on #Thebachelor is psycho. Ben needs to just pick Casey B. and be done with it!” (Appendix 24) while

another said “Kelsey Poe from #TheBachelor is a psycho” (Appendix 25). The first example comes from the 2012 sample while the second comes from the 2015 sample. This suggests that language strands persisted throughout the sample and were not ascribed to a temporary trend. Language emerged as a key framing in how fans used the more prominent frames of everyday life and value judgment. Assessed individually some of these language devices would not be considered prominent. Taken together as a language device category, it constituted 27.5% of the sample.

“Catchphrase,” which referred to tweets that used a well-known phrase within or outside *Bachelor* canon, was utilized in 14% of the overall sample. As an example of catchphrase, one fan said “thanksnothanks #TheBachelor.” Thanks no thanks is a typical catchphrase for Millennials and online/texting language in general (Appendix 26). With catchphrase, often fans are *Bachelor*-specific, such as “Will you assept dis rose?” Yes Juan Pablo I will assept anything from you. #thebachelor” (Appendix 27).

“Metaphor,” which referred to tweets that made a specific comparison between ideas, comprised 7.7% of the sample. As an example of this frame, one fan said that “My coworkers and I would like #TheBachelor to turn into a #HungerGames style competition. Would you watch? #Newsroom” (Appendix 28). In this example the fan is using a metaphor to convey the humor of pitting the women against each other to compete for a romantic “prize.” There is a common occurrence of language related to “survival” of dates. Therefore, this figurative language is fitting. In another example a fan made use of an aphorism by stating “Good things don’t end unless they end badly #TheBachelor” (Appendix 29).

“Stories,” which referred to tweets that presented or implied some kind of narrative comprised 2.5% of the overall sample. As an example of stories, a fan asked “Is Ben Higgins Peter Bradys son? #TheBachelor” (Appendix 30). In another example, a fan told a story through a texting conversation with her mother. She said “My mother y’all: Ben! ☺ I know he’s great. That was Olivia talking. Haha. Haha ew” (Appendix 31).

“Social artifact,” which referred to utilizing a visual in lieu of a textual message, was utilized in 1.9% of the sample. This frame took various forms, such as personal fan photographs, illustrations, and online memes. As an example, one fan said “This week on the bachelor...#TheBachelor” with a meme of Patrick Stewart raising his hand and saying “Ummm, yes I have a question. WTF?” (Appendix 32). Another fan said “This one’s for @JuanPaGalavis! #TheBachelor #GoldenGirls #ValentinesDay” and included an illustration of Betty White (Appendix 33). 19 of 1000 (or 1.9%) tweets were coded as social artifact. This coding option had an overall increase throughout the sample, ending with 4.5% of the sample in 2016.

“Contrast,” which referred to constructing a message in terms of what something was not, was utilized in 1.4% of the sample. Instead of focusing on comparing elements of the show or the fan’s life, fans focused on what was lacking when using contrast. As an example of this, one fan said “The girls on #thebachelor will not be impressed once they date him w/o the show. McDonald’s and a movie, not paradise and a private jet” (Appendix 34). Another fan said “Oh, Jade, he didn’t “take charge” and dance with you. The producers took charge and recreated a scene from Cinderella. #TheBachelor” (Appendix 35).

Most of the language devices had an overall decrease in influence over time. There was not a consistent pattern of peaking whether in the beginning, middle, or end of the sample (Appendix 36). This may suggest a lessening influence of specific language devices (typically defined by literature) in online conversation. Because Twitter limits the format of this discussion, it would likely impact and interfere with language choice. The results for language framing also indicate that there are distinct ways fans utilize language. Some are much more straightforward while others need these devices to relay their message. For many fans, these messages concern their insular world.

#### *Bachelor* Canon in Tweets

While fans do focus on themselves, another key, albeit less prominent, component of this discourse are themes specific to *The Bachelor*. In discussing fandom, frames emerged that could be collapsed into the frame of “Bachelor canon.” These frames concerned themes that are thought of as integral to the narrative, including romance, competition, relationships, character sightings and the format of the show. Analyzed as part of the content analysis, these frames comprised only 5.4% of the sample. In the discourse analysis, the frame comprised 75% of the sample as they were analyzed for presence, not mutually exclusive prominence over other frames. The discourse analysis showed clear groupings of *Bachelor* canon, which included narrative themes that would only be familiar to fans of the show, phrases related to relationships, the theme of competition, and references to the specific format of the show (Appendix 37). These categories all work to comprise what fans consider being a part of the “official” *Bachelor* world.

“Gossip,” which referred to information sharing related to the intricacies of the show, comprised 3% of the sample. Ultimately, there was a decrease from 2012 to 2016. This type of tweet was used most often to relay gossip that was not immediately present in the narrative of the show. As an example of this, one fan said “Came across @CarrieRoslyn in this week’s Zoo! Good stuff #TheBachelor” (Appendix 37). Another fan said “@melissakonitzer hey! Did ya know that @bigandrich is gonna be on #TheBachelor next week?” (Appendix 38).

“Tradition,” which referred to tweets that commented on the proscribed aspects of the show, comprised 2.4% of the sample. In an example of this a fan said “Call me crazy, but if the #TheBachelor is a Latin hottie, why not cast hottie Latinas from every possible ethnic corner as prospects?” (Appendix 39). Another fan commented the tradition of competition by saying “And so the competition to find love for Juan Pablo begins! #thebachelor” (Appendix 40).

The *Bachelor* canon options of gossip and tradition decreased and increased throughout the sample without a distinct pattern (Appendix 41), which may suggest a fixation on program content and contestants in particular seasons. Looking at the graph, gossip was at its highest in 2012 when *The Bachelor* had its arguably most notorious villain, Courtney. This is analogous with results from RQ3 showing that Courtney is the only contestant to have more mentions in the sample than the bachelor himself. Tradition was its highest in 2014 during Juan Pablo Galavis’ season, who was arguably the most controversial bachelor. He was the “first” of many kinds: a Latino, a former professional athlete, and, according to the opinion many fans, a homophobic and sexist. Throughout the sample these labels were not given to any other bachelor. Many fans used the frame

of tradition to speak to the need for changing mindsets of these issue or in support of Juan Pablo's right to speak his mind despite notions of tradition.

The discourse analysis showed an emerging frame of competition, which fits into a long-standing element of *Bachelor* canon. It comprised 25% of the sample. Many *Bachelor* fans have even created ranking competitions much like what sports fans do for fantasy football leagues. One fan said "It's just a big comparison game of sad stories" - Ashley I...other than love that's what it's all about #TheBachelor" (Appendix 42). Another fan said "Someone, just get the rose at the end of the #GOPDebate and let's get this thing over with (Appendix 43).

"Shipping" also emerged from the discourse analysis as a somewhat prominent frame. It comprised 20% of the sample. A "ship" refers to a relationship, usually romantic, between two or more characters, usually in fan fiction (Bothe, 2014). Ships may closely adhere to the established canon of the narrative (the bachelor seasons in this case), or they may bring in outside characters, often not even human, for comedic effect. Though shipping and shippers are usually reserved for discussion surrounding online fan fiction, Mitell (2009) defined shipping as "relationships, either real or suggested, that fans enjoy and would love to see consummated. The desire for love to blossom...between several pairs of characters, to varying degrees of commitment and affection is explored further in fan fiction" (p.5). Therefore, it is not completely unfounded that *Bachelor* fans would include this kind of discourse. Because there is a competitive element to *The Bachelor*, fans often claim Teams for contestants to show who they are shipping. Others have a direct ship with the bachelor and one of the contestants, while some decide to ship humorously with an animal or inanimate object (Appendix 44). As an example of a direct

ship and “team” one fan said “Makes me wanna eat Filipino food. YUMMY! #TheBachelor #BenandCaila #teamCaila (Appendix 45). As an example of indirect shipping, one fan said “Caila is boring as fuck. #JusticeForOlivia #JusticeForVirginBecca #TheBachelor” (Appendix 46). Another fan said “Ben and Courtney deserve each other #TheBachelor” (Appendix 47).

Overall, the emergence of frames concerning *Bachelor* canon is rooted in how fans, regardless of content, talk to each other. In order to find common ground, this focus on a general narrative/format is needed. Booth (2013) suggests this is indicative of fans that have an immense emotional connection to a text. He also argues that fandom of media has become a norm of viewership. So much so that in order to prove one is a fan, this devotion to canon is something that may separate out the “true fans.”

#### Other Frames

The need for a kinship to commonly shared thoughts and identities that have been explored in the previous frames is in line with another discourse that will be called opinion mining. This frame emerged from the discourse analysis. There is not any immediate research on this type of discourse where fans seek out opinions from other fans, likely in a quest to feel closer to the fandom. Though, it is an obvious element of how fans talk to each other. One fan said “@cheekychicago’s Bachelor recap. What are guys thinking this season? #TheBachelor cheekychicago.com/the-bachelor-j...” (Appendix 48). Another fan said “catching up on this week’s #TheBachelor. Holy tight white shorts @BenFlajnik! Changed out of those pretty quickly. Thoughts @possessionista?” (Appendix 49) Coding option “simple question” or “statement of fact” was mostly used for opinion mining. As an example of this, one fan said “Which girl

deserves the rose?!? #valentinesday #thebachelor @cadyglaser  
instagr.am/p/VvRHWGMOqm/” (Appendix 50).

Another frame was “information providing.” This includes code “secondary suggestion” which referred to relaying information or opinion from a source other than the fan. This does not include promotional content from media sources. As an example of this, one fan said “According to my mother “Courtney is such a sleeze ball” #TheBachelor #WordsOfWisdom” (Appendix 51). It also included a code for “promotional,” which referred to a tweet aiming at promoting some kind of venture, whether a product, blog, or something similar. Some lean more towards fan service, others towards promotion for personal purposes, and many promote outside sources. As an example of the first, one fan said “Fanvideo #10 for @benhiggi and @laurenbushnell3” “Heartbeat” by Mackenzie Bourg #TheBachelor” (Appendix 52). As an example of the second, one fan said, “What do you think of our loubots? #loubotins #TheBachelor #bachelornation instagram.com/p/yc9\_9SHaTp/” (Appendix 53). As an example of the third, one fan said “If you’ve ever watched The Bachelor you need to watch Burning Love on E. Literally, the best thing ever. #TheBachelor #BurningLove” (Appendix 54).

Altogether, the remaining codes of “promotion,” “simple question/statement,” and “secondary suggestion” all collectively comprised only 12% of the sample, which suggests low influence as frame types.

The content analysis portion of the study focused on prominence of content frames. While the discourse analysis also discussed prominence, some frames were connected to discourse strands that were more under the surface. This included



racial/cultural background tension, homophobia, heteronormativity, genderism, and control/power. Though these discourse strands ran throughout each season, some were more prevalent in respective seasons.

### Genderism in Discourse Strands

Every season dealt with genderism, both in support of and against perceptions of heteronormativity. Fan tweets from Flajnik's 2012 season were heavily geared towards sexuality (regarding Courtney, as previously discussed), mostly in attempting to label someone as trashy. Though, tweets showed that this genderism also concerns attraction and discussion of sex in general. One fan said "I prefer watching #TeenMom to #theBachelor. At least on Teen Mom, the girls have their age as an excuse for being that way" (Appendix 55). One fan wrote "Whats up with these 2 lesbians girls on #TheBachelor?! #dontunderstand @kcwennerholm do you watch this show?!" (Appendix 56). Another fan said "'they probably all have herpes on this show' Mom you always go to the extreme" (Appendix 57).

This heteronormative discourse was also shown in tweets used to disparage the bachelor in the differentiation between masculinity and femininity, with occasional commentary on their sexuality. One fan said, "Francine from Arthur and Ben Flajnik are twins!" (Appendix 58). While most would assume that any bachelor would receive overwhelming praise from fans, this was not the case. Sean Lowe and Ben Higgins (of the 2013 and 2016 seasons, respectively) received almost universal praise from fans. This may be partially explained by their genetic makeup and religious background. They differ in looks but still fall into two general categories of conventional attractiveness: Tall, dark and handsome; tall, blonde, and fit. Both are over six feet tall, and are muscular but slim.

Fans more predominantly used the word “hot” to describe Lowe and Higgins more than the other bachelors. Fans also praised Juan Pablo Galavis and Chris Soules (2014 and 2015 seasons, respectively) for their looks while generally rejecting 2012’s Ben Flajnik. This is just one way in which masculinity and femininity of Bachelor characters are connected to their level of attraction and seeming level of respect. Sean Lowe made similar ill-advised decisions with Tierra, the villain of his season, though he received far less negativity from fans compared with Ben Flajnik. Their religious background might also be a small factor in the heteronormative discourse. Sean Lowe and Ben Higgins were both very open about their Christian faith.

Lastly, heteronormativity in *Bachelor* discourse is perhaps the most jarring when looking at career goals or general identifiers. While the producers of *The Bachelor* list the bachelor’s occupation whether winery owner, insurance salesman, soccer player, farmer or software salesman, the show has a different process for the female contestants. Some have their occupations listed, while others receive an amusing identifier (such as “twin” or “chicken enthusiast”). The possibilities for agency “opens up and closes down” (Oullette & Hay, 2008, p.4) throughout various veins of television, and this is no exception with reality TV. Though producers are giving contestants an opportunity for exposure, they are also categorizing based on stereotypes and often ignoring collective fan opinion in order to emanate a proscribed view of courtship, love and marriage. Foucault said an “individual’s freedom and agency are technical achievements that involve working on, watching over, and applying oneself in particular ways. The paradox he describes is in one’s reliance upon various techniques for exercising freedom and agency” (p.5) as agency is not the opposite of control.

It spills over in how fans discuss these roles. While a few fan tweets make fun of what it would be like to live on Chris Soules' farm, not one tweet criticizes the occupations of Ben Higgins or Sean Lowe (both standard salesmen). However, occupations, motivations, and personalities of female contestants are thoroughly dissected by mostly female fans. As an example, one tweet lumps contestants together as all being "making artists" or "pharmaceutical reps" out for exposure (Appendix 59). However, fans also exert agency in critiquing these stereotypical roles in various seasons, which supports the paradoxical nature Foucault was describing. In a series of *Bachelor* tweets regarding the show's penchant for heteronormative storylines, one fan said "I'm catching up on #thebachelor I like they are willing to include a girl with one arm but they will never include an overweight girl #Sean" (Appendix 60). Another fan said, "Nothing says "true love" like kissing and being with 25 girls until you find the one you can stand the most" (Appendix 61). Another fan said from Higgins season said "Why do women love #TheBachleor when it's a show about a guy dating a bunch of women at once. I thought that was frowned down on" (Appendix 62).

### Homophobia Discourse Strands

Though many scholars have sought to delineate the difference between heteronormativity and homophobia (Ngo, 2003; Yep, 2002), Macintosh (2007) and Schilt & Westbrook (2009) see homophobia as a significant branch of the overall heteronormative discourse. A discussion regarding homophobia is heteronormative and gendered in the sense that people often ascribe characteristics for whom the bachelor should be and how he should act. If a collective of fans necessitates certain characteristics of the bachelor, as a catchall term for a desirable man, the mere suggestion of a gay

bachelor or bachelorette would likely disrupt this perception of who deserves to seek out and find love.

This specifically played out in Juan Pablo's 2014 season. In an interview with TV Page, he was asked whether or not the franchise should consider a gay or bisexual bachelor. He responded in part by saying that he could not because it is not a "good example for kids to watch that on TV" as gays are "more pervert in a sense" (Duke, 2014). He later defended these comments by blaming his limited English vocabulary. Homophobic tweets were not present in other seasons, but they were widespread in response to Juan Pablo. In light of his homophobic comments, most fans were critical. One fan said "And it's not that I think @JuanPagalavis' statement is homophobic, it's ignorance steeped in hypocrisy #TheBachelor #LGBT" (Appendix 63). Another fan said "Oh boy...Juan Pablo at it again. I've never turned in a who so quickly" (Appendix 64). Another fan said "I just broke up with #TheBachelor; my DVR is too full. I'm sorry Juan, but I can not offer you this rose..." (Appendix 65). Another fan said "#TheBachelor star makes 'homophobic' comments, now maybe people will FINALLY stop watching that junk" (appendix 66). Another fan said, "@JuanPaGalavis offers fauxpology for 'pervert' comment" (Appendix 67). One fan responded with support saying "Pablo, no apologies needed. You're entitled to your opinion #freespeech #nohate" (Appendix 68).

Discussion for the dissention to and support of homophobic comments will, compared to genderism, similarly look at the debate between fair representation and a good business model for television.

## Race Discourse

Frames of value judgment also showed racial discourse strands, mostly as a critique against the lack of representation on the show. This discourse showed up in most seasons with the exception of 2012 and 2013. At first, the reasoning was not clear. It was speculated that perhaps Courtney from the 2012 season was such a polarizing, dynamic character that it left little room for racial discourse. Similarly, bachelor Sean Lowe from the 2013 season is arguably one of the most popular in the franchise, which could have lead to diminished criticism. However, upon further research of Bachelor history, it becomes clear that there is a lack of racial discourse due to the contestant pool. Though full racial and cultural background for the contestants cannot be determined by the cast photos or even the confessionals (many of them are eliminated early before learning any relevant information), Fitzpatrick (2016) stated there were no black contestants for four seasons in a row, from 2009-2012. This could have been a production choice, a request on the bachelor's part, or a combination. It would be an interesting avenue for racial discourse studies to look at this specific sample time frame in comparison to others. Just after season 12 and before season 13, a lawsuit citing racial discrimination was filed against the show. Not surprisingly, the 2013 season's contestant pool included three black women. It does seem odd that fans would not jump on this surge in diversity, but perhaps their criticisms were temporarily quelled.

Starting in the 2014 season, however, many fan tweets showed both manifest and latent content in regards to racial and cultural discourse. In Juan Pablo's 2014 season, one fan said "This bachelor tho that's my type of guy a Spanish dude with an accent that looks like a white boy" (Appendix 69). Another fan said "why does the one high-profile

latino guy have to be such a ginormous stereotype? Juan-pablo, be better, dude”

(Appendix 70). Another said “Call me crazy, but if the #TheBachelor is a Latin hottie, why not cast Latinas from every possible ethnic corner as prospects?” In Soules’ 2015 season, one fan said “the amount of white girls on this season of the bachelor is really unsettling. #thebachelor #wheremyminoritiesat” (Appendix 71). Another fan said “I KNOW this was unintentional but Chris just told the ONLY black girl that “he didn’t see her”...HAHAHA #TheBachelor” (Appendix 72). Another fan said “Yes fellow sisters and brothers @ABCNetwork show #TheBachelor is racist they are all skinheads” (Appendix 73). Another fan said but when it’s a white man on #TheBachelor it’s only white women how does that make sense” (Appendix 74). Another fan said “In other news, it may be harder to get a black man as #TheBachelor than into The White House” (Appendix 75). While there were not any obvious tweets that disparaged a contestant’s race, one fan wrote “Called fleshlight to c if I could a device designed to simulate Jubilee’s mouth. The CEO and I are grabbing drinks next week!! #TheBachelor (Appendix 76). This tweet will be discussed more in chapter 7.

As previously discussed, Caila, a Filipino woman from the 2016 season, was thought to be the succeeding bachelorette but the job eventually went to Jojo, a white woman. During the season, Caila received much support for her cultural background. One fan said “Just found out @CailaQuinn is half Filipino! Welp, now you know who I’m rooting for #TheBachelor#filipinas #RepresentationMatters (Appendix 77). However many tweets used her background as a joke or an invitation for criticism. One fan said “Makes me wanna eat Filipino food. YUMMY #benandcaila #teamCaila” (Appendix 78). Another fan said “Caila’s dad seems like one of those weird white guys with an asian

fetish” (Appendix 79). The implications of this strand, as well as future studies, will be discussed further in chapter 7.

### Conclusion

Flajnik’s season (2012), Lowe’s season (2013), Soules’ season (2015), and Higgins’ season (2016) utilized “value judgment” and “navel-gazing” the most, while Galavis’ season (2014) used “value judgment” and “language devices” the most. Higgins’ season used more “judgment” than others, but the difference was not vast (Appendix 80). Overall, the results showed that throughout the five-year sample, using a value judgment was the most common framing technique. It also had a significant increase in instances from 2012 to 2016 (Appendix 6). Without survey and interviews, it is difficult to say which factors influenced this increase. It is a fair assumption that as the fandom grew in size for *The Bachelor*, they become more confident in sharing a distinct value judgment. This is mirrored by a study on Reddit (Massanari, 2015), which detailed the progression of a social networking site that began with a particular intended purpose and unintentionally transformed into a hybrid of sub communities known for their polemic value judgments. Though, the value judgment injected in a tweet should be analyzed with their specific affordances in mind, considering Reddit allows long-form posts, and tweets are 140 characters.

Catchphrase was also a popular framing device, which is also not surprising considering “language is replete with clichés and commonplaces” (Haiman, 1998, p.3). Becker (1971) also said, “The world of human aspirations is...a symbolic-behaviorial world removed from the boundedness of the present moment, from the immediate stimuli which enslave all lower organisms” (p.139).

Many of the frames did not have a significant showing in the sample overall. This is especially surprising for “social artifact” given that visual messages, such as memes, have experienced a surge of usage in the last few years (Guadagno, Rempala, Murphy, & Okdie, 2013). However, though social artifact did not have high instances for the sample overall, there was a significant increase from 2012 to 2016 (Appendix 6), most likely due to the popularity of memes and the ease of photo sharing online.

Value judgment in discourse analysis showed strands of racial tension, heteronormativity, and homophobia. When linking the discourse strands together, it is apparent that there is a concerted effort of multiple discourses working together at once. As mentioned previously, discursive hybridization refers to the existence of very different forms of discourse in the same genre. Provenzano (2011) defined hybridization as the “discoursal process by which specialized concepts from the source culture... are made accessible by means of discourse strategies” (p.42). Wagner-Pacifici (1994) argued that social actors combine elements of different types of discourse for various purposes. This study’s introduction and literature review explicated the notion that *The Bachelor* was more than just a part of the reality TV genre. It was and still is a blurred amalgamation of reality TV’s various waves/ subgenres. Therefore, it is only fitting that fan discourse would follow suit. Within *Bachelor* fan discourse, it is seemingly evident that there is an evenly distributed mix of genuine commentary, sarcasm and anti-fan sentiment. It could be argued that this normalizes discursive hybridization for other fandoms simply because *The Bachelor* is a successful social networking model. While it may seem counterintuitive, simply because there is not one single unified discourse strand, this keeps *The Bachelor* franchise churning by pinning these fans against each other. The



fandom does not denote a like-minded closeness. They dubbed them Bachelor Nation, which denotes a unified, but nonetheless varied, group.

Ultimately, observations mined from the discourse analysis mirrored what was found in the quantitative analysis for RQ1. Though, the discourse analysis played a role in unearthing discourse strands that had not been explored in the content analysis. Value judgment was an extremely common tool for fans in discussing *The Bachelor*. This may not be a particularly surprising finding considering that online conversation has been shown to afford more direct, often harsh language/attitudes. When it is positive value judgment, the same holds true. While a person may not exclaim their love for someone in real life, celebrity or not, online there is a feeling of protection (Moyer, 2012). Of course, it has been proven that the messages one sends online may affect future prospects. That, however, does not deter many fans from being uninhibited in their display of emotion, attitude, judgment, and desire.

In addition to this key element of the fandom, the discourse and content analysis for RQ1 showed that like any fandom or online community where fans are given a voice, they often use it to talk about themselves. While *The Bachelor* is always mentioned, it is not always the focus of the tweet. Many studies (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008; Davenport et al, 2014) in the past few years have become fascinated by the relationship between narcissism and the Internet, for good reason. *The Bachelor* is filled with enough drama to keep fans occupied; yet many of them cannot help but tweet about their exhausting day or what kind of food they like. Of course, this is a comforting element of any fandom: the ability to talk into space about anything hoping that someone out there will understand and may even chuckle at said tweet.

Reality TV fandom viewed through the lens of networked framing shows how there is a push and pull between the Bachelor network and fans. While producers and network executives have a clear say in the content of the show, fans influence and arguably curate the network's response. The fact that tweets exist that are critical of the proscribed heteronormativity of the show, homophobic tendencies from one of their very own, and consistent pressure for more representation shows that there is an evident power struggle in fan discussion. Of course, the overwhelming penchant for the everyday life discourse seems to have distracted fans from many underlying issues. Though fans were incensed enough about the lack of racial diversity on the show—which led to a lawsuit (Gardner, 2012)—they acted counter intuitively by not including race in their overall discourse. If networked framing is fundamentally about power, this speaks volume to the producers of the show who look to audiences for narrative cohesion and also when it might be ok to take a risk. Without this discussion, it communicates that the time for more diversity is not the present. This is explored further in chapter 7 for discussion.

In the next chapter for results RQ2, this analysis assesses specific ways fans have framed their discussion and how they have engaged with these aforementioned frames in utilizing tone and sentiment (including emoticons).

## Chapter V: Research Question 2 Results

The second research question asked how publics engaged in the affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. The question sought to understand a particular aspect of how fans talk about *The Bachelor* on Twitter, specifically in how they engage in affective framing through utilizing tone and sentiment. The question also sought to answer the frequency and variance of these variables, as well as how they can be mapped out across the five-year sample timeline for this study.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis was used to identify and examine these variables found in the 1000 tweets sampled, as well as the 200 tweets (taken from the existing 1000 tweet sample) analyzed for the discourse analysis. In order to answer this study's second research question, variables 5, 6 and 7 (tone, sentiment, and emoticons) were analyzed.

The first section describes the use of tone in *Bachelor* tweets. The second section describes the use of sentiment in fan tweets, as well as detailing the most prominent types of sentiment. The third section describes the use of emoticons in fan tweets. This section is an offshoot of the sentiment section, as emoticons are a type of sentiment. This study is using a grounded up approach to analyze tone sentiment. Most scholarship on tone involved a focus on positive, negative and neutral options (Love et al, 2013; Tang et al, 2014). This study, however, sought to provide more descriptive tone categories that are not simply positive, negative and neutral. Given this, my goal was to give a fine-grained analysis of tone and sentiment. The results within each section are presented in descending order of importance/prominence. In each frame section, the content and discourse analysis are discussed collectively. Any shared similarities amongst these

frames, and what this suggests, are addressed at the end of each respective section and the overall conclusion.

### Tone and Fandom in Tweets

Bachelor fans were diverse in their use of tone (Appendix 81), but there were prominent tone types that emerged. Fans overall utilized an enthusiastic/genuine tone when discussing *The Bachelor*. This should not necessarily be conflated with positive tone. While the majority of these tweets were positive in nature, enthusiastic/genuine more accurately represented discussion that was not hateful, joking or sarcastic. The language of enthusiastic/genuine signaled a fan that was sincere in their communication. This coding option comprised 52.3% of tweets. As an example of this coding option, one fan said “Finally catching up with #TheBachelor! Sean Lowe is such a babe #wholepackage #loveyew #perfect” (Appendix 82). One fan said “Now I’m finally watching #TheBachelor and I’m already loving it @BachelorABC” (Appendix 83). Another fan said, “I just picked my Fantasy Bachelor Team! Who do you think will score the most with Ben? #TheBachelor apps.facebook.com/fantasy-bachel...” (Appendix 84). As an example of a genuine tweet that is not inherently positive or negative, one fan said “It’s concerning to hear that Lace doesn’t say that’s not her but rather not something she wanted @benhiggi to see! #TheBachelor” (Appendix 85).

Bachelor tweets also showed a playful tone. The “facetious” code comprised 36% of the overall sample. As an example of this, one fan said “Spoiler alert: Juan Pablo gives final rose to himself. #TheBachelor #JuanPablo” (Appendix 86). One said “It’s painful to watch all the people trying to make first impressions on #TheBachelor” (Appendix 87). One said “I’m still laughing at #TheBachelor. Yes to cringe-worthy TV!” (Appendix 88).

Another said “Ewww he sounds like a proud teaching handing out a certificate” (Appendix 89).

It was surprising to find that sarcasm was not prominent in the sample, considering its prevalence in online discussion as a contrast between positive and negative sentiment on Twitter (Riloff et al, 2013). Maynard & Greenwood (2014) noted that sarcasm occurs frequently in microposts such as tweets, so this reflection is not unfounded. Sarcasm comprised only 5.6% of the sample. Even the “anti-fan” option, which represented tweets from hate-watching fans, surpassed sarcasm with 6.1% of the sample. It may be that sarcasm’s role in U.S. culture does not hold weight, especially in online culture.

Maynard & Greenwood (2014) delves into sarcasm’s influence on British culture but makes no mention of the same of U.S. culture. The undistinguished use of anti-fan tone in this study may be understood partly through McCoy & Scarborough’s (2014) research, which purported that many viewers who label certain shows as stupid or trashy, for example, often experience a “normative contradiction.” This means the viewer has embraced a symbolic boundary between good and bad television, then transgressing that boundary by consuming and sometimes enjoying the shows that they condemn (p. 41).

The results show that throughout the five-season sample, genuine/enthusiastic was the most common each season and increased in influence by 2016 (Appendix 90). Contrastingly, facetious decreased in influence from the start to end of the sample. The prominence of genuine/enthusiastic and facetious tweets suggest that *The Bachelor* fandom has collectively sought a more effective form of online communication (Rovai, 2007). The use of genuine tone is closely linked to the concept of online authenticity. It

is difficult to discuss in this context, however, as most research regarding online authenticity is related to organizations and their consumers. Though one can draw some connections, namely with the role of friendship in developing an authentic dialogue. Whether it is positive or negative sentiment, genuine tone, versus facetious or sarcastic tone, provides an easier channel to connections and even friendship online (Henderson & Bowley, 2010). Maynard & Greenwood (2014) similarly noted that sarcasm and playful tone is inherently difficult to analyze for people, not just computer-generated analysis. It may be that the prominence of genuine tone is partially influenced by the need to counteract this kind of confusion. After all, Twitter fandoms do not have the luxury of Reddit or other long-form platforms to make clear their intentions and meaning.

It is perhaps easier to relate to others in the fandom when sincere or using a lighter tone such as facetious. However, though the enthusiastic/genuine tone type comprised more than half the sample, the others comprise a chunk that speaks to an overall polarized crowd and one that is centered on a brand cluster (Smith et al, 2014). Well-known brands such as *The Bachelor* often have isolates participating in a conversation cluster that is largely fragmented. In other words, these fans are tweeting about the same thing but are not necessarily connected by similar opinions.

#### Sentiment and Fandom in Tweets

Like in most online discussion, the role of sentiment in *Bachelor* tweets is meaningful. It is separated from other online discussion in their prominent types of sentiment and the way it is used. The discourse analysis found that sentiment comprised 62.5% of the sample, while information seeking and information providing comprised only 32% of the sample (Appendix 91). This prevalence is perhaps more impressive

considering that coding was not mutually exclusive. A tweet could have used sentiment, information providing and seeking, if applicable. However, information seeking was rarely used as a framing technique, which speaks to fans' desire to express attitude and provide, not seek, information when concerning *The Bachelor*. Not once was there an "information seeking" tweet that utilized "sentiment." There is a polarity dynamic to sentiment versus information seeking, which is why tweets were one or the other. Tweets that were coded as information seeking mostly utilized "simple question" as a framing technique, while those coded as "sentiment" used a variety of framing techniques. Tweets that utilized "information seeking" were less concerned with providing the fandom with their own opinions. Instead, they would ask others in the fandom what they were thinking or if they had watched the Bachelor content. "Information providing" and "sentiment" can go hand in hand because there is still autonomy at play. "Information seeking," however, communicates that the individual wants to follow and not lead. This coding category being in the minority is significant because it shows that the Bachelor fandom primarily wants to have their voice heard.

Overwhelmingly, sentiment was used as a way to engage in the affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. Though, there were types of sentiment that were much more prominent than others (Appendix 92). This is supported by research that showed that "important events" are associated with an increase in sentiment strength (Thelwall et al, 2011). Of course, what constitutes an important event varies. Considering a majority of the sample utilized a genuine tone, it can be assumed that the fandom predominantly associates bachelor episodes, especially the finales, as important events.

“Annoyance/judgment,” “amusement,” and “pride/ admiration” were the most common sentiment types, which signify a fandom that coexists with very different engagement techniques.

Annoyance/judgment sentiment was the most prominent type of sentiment in the sample at 26% of the sample. As an example, one fan said “Nothing says “true love” like kissing and being with 25 girls until you find the one you can stand the most.

#TheBachelor” (Appendix 93). One fan said “How you gonna act blindsided by a break up when Ben seemed to have more chemistry with the clerk at @McDonalds than with you? #TheBachelor” (Appendix 94). One fan said “The girl from #OKC on #TheBachelor... Seriously... She sucks. #suckitupbuttercup” (Appendix 95). Another fan said “At least Kelly can kinda sing? Still don’t like her yet...#TheBachelor” (Appendix 96).

Contrastingly, amusement was also used as a prominent type of sentiment in 22.7% of the sample. One fan said “50 shades of grey just turned into 50 shades of drunk. #TheBachelor [Laughing/crying emoticon]” (Appendix 97). One fan said “I guess Jenna wanted to set the record for how quick it took to hit (in the word of @NegativeNatalie) wack-a-doodle state. #TheBachelor” (Appendix 98). Another fan said “I’m still laughing at #TheBachelor. Yes to cringe-worthy TV!” (Appendix 99).

While annoyance was the most prominent sentiment type, praise/admiration was also visible at 19.2% of the sample. Some fans used praise/admiration for the bachelor and some for the contestants. As an example, of contestant praise, one fan said “Becca is ridiculously wow #TheBachelor” (Appendix 100). Another said “Becca is campaigning HARD for that #thebachelorette title and I am 100% behind her #TheBachelor”



(Appendix 101). As an example of praise for the bachelor, one fan said “Seriously don’t understand why I didn’t audition for #thebachelor Ugh. He’s fucking gorgeous and a farmer...” (Appendix 102). Another said “That moment when you realize that Sean Lowe may be perhaps the most beautiful man you’ve ever laid eyes on #sogorgeous #thebachelor” (Appendix 103).

The general happy sentiment also comprised 10% of the sample. As an example, one fan said “Now I’m finally watching #TheBachelor and I’m already loving it @BachelorABC” (Appendix 104). Another fan said “#fatkidfriday with homemade pizza and #TheBachelor yup this is what dreams are made of” (Appendix 105).

Though the specific sentiment type of annoyance/judgment was most prominent throughout the sample, when combining amusement, praise/admiration and happy together, fans utilized positive sentiment 51.9% of the sample. In Jansen et al (2009), they also found that 52% of their individual tweet sample was expressions of positive sentiment. Though their sample was significantly larger and concerning various brand tweets (therefore not as focused as this study’s research design), this may suggest that when looking at basic categories of sentiment, the bachelor fandom is not dissimilar from other collectives on Twitter. This push and pull between positive and negative sentiment also showed up in the discourse analysis where specific language markers for character judgment (Appendix 106) and overall hyperbole (Appendix 107) were assessed by positive, negative and neutral sentiment. Though there was slightly more negative sentiment used for character judgment and hyperbole, both negative and positive were prevalent. Thelwall et al (2011) similarly found that there was a prominence of negative sentiment even when “many of the contexts are ostensibly positive” (p.413). In their

research, they observed comments against the show such as “hate that show” and towards a specific character such as “Jake is an idiot!” In this sense, the results compare with prior research.

Neutral had a negligible influence on the sample, both in the content (7.5%) and discourse analysis (15%). For the bachelors and the show’s female contestants, negative sentiment was more common than positive sentiment though there was more positive sentiment for the bachelors (Appendix 108).

While this study is not gender-focused, this category breakdown for character judgment shows more positive sentiment for character descriptions for the male bachelors compared to the female contestants. One must keep in mind, of course, that there are many mitigating factors such as the bachelor’s role as a “viable man/partner” symbol, and how the women are pitted against each other in competition from the start of the season. Where there is competition, sides are drawn.

This suggests that *Bachelor* fans cannot readily be categorized into “mean” fans or “supportive” fans, or other derivative labeling. However, one can derive that *Bachelor* fans are not diplomatic in their discussion.

The remaining sentiment types of anticipation, surprise, sad, angry, resigned, dubious, relieved, and pondering comprised 14.6% of the sample. This suggests that when considering judgment, a prominent sentiment type, more mild versions such as annoyance were used in comparison to the intense versions of sad and angry. There is currently not any research available on the use of annoyance as a form of sentiment online, with the exception of users annoyed with online advertising. The low influence of sentiment types resigned, dubious, relieved, and pondering suggest that fans tend to be

more direct with their use of sentiment. This pairs with the findings for tone as well. It is somewhat unexpected that sentiment types surprise and anticipation were not more prevalent in the sample considering that *The Bachelor* narrative is constructed around looking forward to next week's episode or being shocked by a new plot twist. It is difficult to say why this is not clearly represented in the sample. It may be that fans are more interested in discussing their opinions of specific characters. It could be that the nature of the short form lends itself to more commonplace emotive states than those that require deeper specificity. With the affordances and restrictions of the 140-character tweet, it may be more difficult to be specific in such a short space as it takes wit, not something most everyone possesses. Throughout the sample, annoyance/judgment was the most common, though not unanimously per season. Amusement was nearly as common. Other sentiment types such as happy and angry showed a decrease from the start to end of the sample. Contrastingly, admiration and neutral showed an increase in influence. Surprised, resigned, dubious, relieved, and pondering remained similar throughout the sample (Appendix 109).

#### Emoticons and Fandom in Tweets

Overall, use of emoticons comprised only 15.1% of the sample, while emoticons were not present in 84.9% of the sample (Appendix 110). This could be generally compared with the research available on emoticons in 2007 versus 2017, for example. Derks et al (2007) looked at the importance of social context when using or interpreting emoticons, while Hsieh & Tseng (2017) studied the influence of emoticons on social interaction. The former topic suggests a confusion regarding emoticons while the latter study suggests a deeper understanding of its affordances. In this study's sample, emoticon

influence increased markedly from 2012 to 2016 (Appendix 111). This should not be surprising as once a public learns how to do something, it becomes routine, and the confusion lessens, popularity will likely follow. No one emoticon had a substantial influence, though hearts/smiley face with hearts for eyes, smiley face, assortment of emoticons, laughing crying face, and sad face were most prominent (Appendix 112). Hearts/smiley face with hearts for eyes comprised 2.9% of the sample, smiley face 2.7%, assortment 2.2%, laughing crying 2.2%, and sad face 1.5%. The remaining emoticon types of flower/rose, praise hands, shocked face, mouth/kissing, angry face, dubious/eye roll, animal, human, fire, and other comprise only 3.5% of the sample. Many of the codes were inductively added but proved to not be very influential.

Though emoticons were not utilized as much as some online studies would suggest regarding online conversation, it is pertinent to look at how they were used. Specifically, emoticons were most used to intensify the sentiment of the tweet, compared to negating sentiment and keeping it at neutral (Appendix 113). As an example of “intensify,” one fan used a laughing/crying, smiley face, heart, and rose emoticon to show that they “love” *The Bachelor* (Appendix 114). This option comprised 9.5% of the sample. As an example of neutral, one fan used an animal emoticon and said, “Let’s be serious...what guy wants to date an avid game hunter? #makeitstop #TheBachelor” (Appendix 115). This option comprised 3.9% of the sample. As an example of negation, one fan used a winky face and said “@BenFlajnik...See u next week for the most dramatic finale ever ;) dramatic bc everyone is going to hate ur decision? Lol” (Appendix 116). This comprised 1.5% of the sample.

Throughout the sample, there was not a consistent pattern for the influence of emoticon types. Some peaked earlier in the sample and some did so later (Appendix 117). The sample overwhelmingly showed that despite the continued popularity of emoticons in texting (Park, Kim & Lee, 2014) and online communication (Hudson et al, 2015), fans do not rely on emoticons to express tone and/or sentiment for *The Bachelor*. Results did show, however, that the use of emoticons to intensify the sentiment of a tweet increased in influence over time (Appendix 118). This signifies that emoticons are not paired well with indirect language, as negating usually seems to be in line with sarcasm. When fans use emoticons, it is not used sparingly (as assortment was common) with mostly positive markers that signify joy (smiley face), love (hearts) or laughter (laughing crying face). Based on these results, it appears that the relationship between emoticon usage and the actual tweet is confirmation.

### Conclusion

In general, the results showed a prominence of both positive and negative sentiment, genuine tone, and using emoticons to intensify said sentiment. The most popular emoticons were “smiley face” and “hearts” though this does not indicate that positive sentiment was more popular throughout the sample, it does suggest fans utilize emoticons when faced with positive sentiment. The use of sarcasm was sparse, and emoticons seldom aided this tone category.

The discourse analysis showed that the sample overwhelming used sentiment instead of information seeking or information providing in order to frame their message. It was rare for a tweet’s focus to be outside the content of the show. When it was, it was most often for self-promotion.

Overall, the discourse analysis findings supported the content analysis findings. Most tweets sampled for the discourse analysis showed fans that were genuinely enveloped in the canon of *The Bachelor*. It also showed a clear discourse strand of character/judgment and idolization, which supports the popular occurrence of annoyance/judgment and pride/admiration in the content analysis coding.

The language analysis provided an additional element by which to discuss fan dynamics. Throughout the sample, fans consistently used language specific to *Bachelor* canon. They do not explain inside jokes, references or names. This is standard for fandoms, as constraints are part of community expectations when joining their discussion (Stein & Busse, 2009). When it comes to judgment and idolization of characters, the common use of hyperbole shows that *Bachelor* fans do not shy away from their proclamations. They do not use common Millennial phrases such as “sorry not sorry” to preface their character judgments. The grammar component also matches the tweets definitive nature. Most of the discourse sample showed a routine use of periods, commas and even proper capitalization. Spelling mistakes, however, were common. Interestingly, the mistakes were mostly related to character names and judgment.

The third chapter for results will analyze further how fans discuss *The Bachelor* by looking at the popular affordances of Twitter’s hashtag and addressivity markers, the language category of character names related to this architecture, and the themes found in tweets that utilized likes, comments and retweets.

## Chapter VI: Research Question 3 Results

The third research question asked how the architecture of Twitter, specifically hashtags and addressivity markers (included likes, comments, retweets and mentions), supports or sustains the networked frames that emerge from publics in their discussion of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. The question sought to understand a particular aspect of how fans talk about *The Bachelor* on Twitter. The goal of this question was to identify the frequency and attitude of these markers in order to analyze how they support the results from the previous results chapters.

A qualitative content and discourses analysis was used to identify and examine the hashtags and addressivity markers found in the 1000 tweets sampled. The sample also consisted of 200 tweets taken from the 1000 tweet sample for the discourse analysis portion.

The first section describes the frequency of retweets, comments, and likes in *Bachelor* tweets. It also aims to give an understanding of this content including mentioned people, hashtag topics/themes, and the types of retweeted, liked and commented on tweets. This will be discussed collectively in order to compare and contrast the prominence of these at once similar and dissimilar Twitter affordances. The second section describes the use of addressivity markers, specifically mentions. The third section describes the use and attitude of hashtags. Each section will conclude with summarizing thoughts, and the overall results chapter will attempt to discuss these affordances in transition to the study's section on implications.

Like the rest of the study, there was an inductive approach for some categories. While the results will not make a case for a significant relationship between these

affordances and framing techniques, tone, and sentiment, it is a starting point in understanding how fans use these markers.

This study is using a grounded up approach to analyze attitude in hashtags. Much of the scholarship surrounding sentiment attempts to pigeonhole this attitude into neat categories of happy, sad, angry etc. And many have interesting but vague categories, which makes it difficult to code. Considering this, hashtags are assessed using a pre-determined coding scheme paired with an inductive approach for tone. At this point, the connections between the architecture of Twitter and the use of tone/sentiment may become more apparent. Much of what is discussed in this chapter will be a response to what was discussed in the results chapters for RQ1 and RQ2. The results within each section are presented in descending order of importance/prominence. In each section, the content and discourse analysis are discussed collectively. Any shared similarities amongst these variables, and what this suggests, are addressed at the end of each respective section and the overall conclusion.

#### Analogous Indicators and Fandom in Tweets

Retweets were present in only 17% of the overall sample (Appendix 119). Throughout the sample, however, there was a marked increase in the occurrence of retweets (Appendix 120). When retweets were used, it was in low amounts. One to two instances of retweets in a fan tweet comprised 12.5% of the sample, while over 11 instances comprised only .4% of tweets (Appendix 121). Looking at the trend lines one can see that higher frequency of retweets decreased throughout the sample (Appendix 122). This suggests retweets did not have a strong influence on fan discussion regarding *The Bachelor*. Because of their small character and low numeric total it is difficult to



elucidate the function they served in the affective framing of *The Bachelor*, as many of the characteristics of retweeted tweets were similar in themes to tweets that utilized comments and likes. However, a discourse analysis of these retweeted tweets showed that retweeting supports the common frames discussed in the chapter for RQ1.

Of the tweets that were retweeted, 61.76% used the everyday life theme, the most popular type of content. This theme was fairly consistent at around 60-70% throughout each season (Appendix 123), though the theme was less prominent in the 2014 season. The lower occurrence might suggest fans were more invested in the controversial nature of the 2014 season (which included themes of homophobia, fear of commitment, misogyny, and going against typical bachelor canon). Fans were keen on discussing their lives, no matter the attitudes towards the bachelor or specific contestants.

Retweeted tweets were also consistent in using the themes of praise, character judgment, bachelor canon, shipping, and specifically referencing character names. The theme of everyday life in retweeted tweets divulged more specifics of the fan's life, versus the vague declarations of "watching show" that showed up more in "liked" tweets, for example. The 2012 and 2014 seasons showed the highest prominence of character judgment, while 2013 and 2016 showed the highest prominence of praise. This could be partly explained by the general *Bachelor* narrative. The bachelors from the 2012 and 2014 seasons were not as well liked as the bachelors from the 2013 and 2016 seasons because of their treatment of *Bachelor* tradition. The 2012 bachelor chose the purported villain of the season, and the 2014 bachelor did not propose to anyone, whereas the 2013 and 2016 bachelor both proposed and remain in those relationships as of this writing.

There was also a preoccupation with the “shipping” frame in the 2012 and 2013 sample of retweeted tweets that was not as prominent in the other seasons. In the latter seasons, shipping did not show up in retweeted tweets (with the exception of two instances in the 2016 season) until the final two episodes. This may be due to the fact that the remaining women were not deemed controversial, at least in comparison to Courtney in 2012. However, coupling Ben and Courtney in the 2012 season (who was the ultimate winner) was usually paired with negative sentiment directed at both the bachelor and the contestant. The 2013 season was similar, though the negative sentiment towards the final couples (Nikki /Juan Pablo & Clare/Juan Pablo) as a possibility was mostly directed towards Juan Pablo as a bad example of a bachelor. This negative sentiment essentially rubbed off on Nikki and Clare, as fans questioned their motives, character and desire to be with a man like Juan Pablo.

Comments were present in 12.5% of the sample (Appendix 124). Commented tweets refer to tweets that included a remark from someone else. Throughout the sample, it is clear this frequency did not change much throughout the sample (Appendix 125). Like retweets, comments were used in low amounts with one instance comprising 11.9% of the sample and 12-50 instances comprising only .2% of the sample (Appendix 126). Looking at the trend lines, there was only a slight increase in frequency of comments throughout the sample (Appendix 127). Like retweets, this suggests comments did not have a strong influence on fan discussion regarding *The Bachelor*. Because of this study’s data collection method, it is not possible to provide the nature of the comments themselves, as grabbed tweets do not automatically show provided comments. However, it is possible to look at the nature of tweets that elicited comments from other fans. Like

the analysis for retweeted tweets, the aforementioned themes of praise, character judgment, and bachelor canon showed up in commented tweets. There was not a clear indication that the nature of these commented tweets varied much from season to season.

Commented tweets used @ mentions for friends more than tweets that were liked or retweeted. 90% of commented tweets used @ mentions, while this comprised 51% of retweeted tweets and 60% of liked tweets. Though it is not possible to see who commented, it could be assumed that many of these comments were from friends of the account holder, possibly those who were mentioned in the tweet. The nature of commenting on twitter fandom seems to relate very closely to the previously discussed themes of everyday life and navel-gazing.

Likes were present in 50.1% of the sample (Appendix 128). Like retweets and comments, the most popular frequency was one instance of a like, comprising 25.4% of the sample. There was also a high frequency of use for 2-11 instances of likes (Appendix 129). Throughout the sample there was a marked increase for the use of likes from year to year (Appendix 130). This suggests likes had a contrasting influence on fan tweets compared to retweets and comments. Not only did they comprise a majority of the sample, their influence increased over time as users became more familiar with the tool.

Similar to the tweets that utilized retweets and comments, audience members liked tweets that included a variety of themes including praise, character judgment, navel-gazing, hyperbole, and everyday life. One distinctive addition to this list, that was not as present in commented and retweeted tweets, was the specific theme of drinking alcohol as a component of everyday life. Though not as prominent a theme as others, this content ranged from directly using the word drinking, to describing a hangover, to providing a

wine glass emoticon (Appendix 131). The most common form involved a fan describing their evening, which included drinking, watching *The Bachelor*, and often camaraderie.

As previously mentioned, it was somewhat rare for a tweet to receive more than one like. For those that did receive a like, the content varied. Many liked tweets referred to simply watching the show, some utilized humor, some referenced a specific catchphrase, some utilized character judgment, and some used gossip. Even tweets that did receive comparatively more likes than others varied in content. One example from the 2013 season had five likes and included a catchphrase, humor, a character mention/bachelor canon, and praise (Appendix 132). Another example with nine likes contrastingly included navel-gazing and the element of fantasy (Appendix 133). This also applied to the other seasons.

Despite this, a distinctive feature of liked tweets was the style of language and the use of hyperbole/sentiment. While exclamation points were not rare in the sample for retweeted and commented tweets, they comprised 45% of liked tweets. This applied to both positive and negative sentiment. Exclamation points were used to emphatically indicate hate towards a character (such as Courtney from the 2012 season), as well as support or praise for a character (such as the beloved bachelor Sean Lowe from the 2013 season). Emoticons were also much more prevalent in liked tweets versus retweeted and commented tweets. While emoticons were utilized in 10% of the retweeted and commented tweets sample, they comprised 57% of the liked tweets sample. They were especially prominent in the 2016 sample which coincides with the increase in emoticon usage overall in the sample (previously discussed in the chapter for RQ2).

Though each of these tools (commenting, retweets, and likes) were introduced at varying times throughout Twitter's existence, they were all in popular use by the start of this study's sample suggesting that each had a fair opportunity of becoming part of the Twitter zeitgeist. Of course, comments require more time because it encourages typing out a message rather than clicking a button. This is not so for likes and retweets. Therefore, it begs the question of why the use of likes is more popular than the use of retweets in *Bachelor* tweets when they have this same ease of use. This discrepancy may have less to do with ease of use and more to do with what each of these tools represent. Retweets represent a distinct analogous thought process or agreement between or amongst fans, while likes may only signify encouragement or an indication amongst friends that they viewed this remark. Unlike Facebook, likes are not compiled by a scroll-down list of users. It is simply a number placed next to a heart symbol. The notification shows up for the account holder of the liked tweet, but it is not viewable by the public, unlike retweets and comments. This difference in privacy expectations may not have obvious sway, but it could be, at the very least, a small factor in the decision to like instead of retweet.

#### Mentions, Credibility, and Navel-gazing in Tweets

The main purpose behind the use of mentions appeared to be less about analogous indicators, as in the sections regarding comments, retweets and likes, and more about the presence of credibility. Mentions, which refers to using @followed by a name/account, were present in 23.2% of the overall sample (Appendix 135). Throughout the sample, the frequency of mentions increased in instances from 2012 to 2016 (Appendix 136).

Though one would likely assume that discussion regarding a show called *The Bachelor* would prominently involve the title character, the bachelor, this was not the case. Of the options (bachelor, contestant/host, non-contestant, network, and other), mentions were most commonly referring to non-contestants at 10.1% of the sample, with the bachelor and contestants/host comprising a combined 7.7% of the sample (Appendix 137). As an example of a bachelor addressivity, one fan said “Watched the first episode of #thebachelor & already having withdrawal. Can’t wait until Monday! @SeanLowe09 you’re such a cutie!” (Appendix 138). As an example of a contestant addressivity, one fan said “such hardcore fans we chased down @CailaQuinn on newbury. So sweet and even more stunning in person #TheBachelor” (Appendix 139). As an example of non-contestant, one fan said “Hey look @andrew\_forrest. You’re not alone re #thebachelor FunnyOrDie.com/m/9f7i (although you would give it zero out of 5 onions)” (Appendix 140). As an example of a network hashtag, one fan said “@TheBachelorAU so many sequins and blush!! #TheBachelor” (Appendix 141).

There was an increase in addressing the bachelor and contestants/host from 2012 compared to 2016 (Appendix 142). While bachelor mentions comprised a significant portion of the sample for the 2016 season, it was negligible for the 2015 season (Appendix 143). It is unclear, however, if this is due to more familiarity with the tool. This increase might also suggest a higher popularity and visibility with the bachelor and contestants. When looking at instances of character praise/admiration in the results chapter for RQ2, the majority of mentions were collectively directed at contestants in the 2016 seasons, namely Becca, Jojo, and Lauren B. Courtney from the 2012 season was featured more prominently in tweets but not as part of addressivity markers. However,

she did not have an account during the show's airdate, whereas contestants Becca, Jojo, and Lauren B did. This is in line with the social media prowess of many current reality TV stars, as it allows fans to communicate with the contestants and bachelors in a direct and public way. It accomplishes two things: it lets the contestant or bachelor know of the fan's admiration or criticism, and it lends more promotion to the contestant or bachelor's account.

Ultimately, though, these mentions did not focus predominantly on the characters but instead on non-contestants, namely friends and family of fans. For tweets with mentions, family/friends comprised 72.6% of the sample. This prominence was consistent from season to season (Appendix 144). This supports the frame of navel-gazing/every day life from the chapter on results for RQ1, which is in line with referencing people outside of the show's narrative. This is contrast to use of hashtags, which focused less on everyday life and more on general sentiment towards the show and character judgment.

#### Hashtags and Fandom in Tweets

Because a hashtag was a pre-determined requirement for the sample, results were consistent from season to season at 100% presence. Because of this, hashtags had a more fine-grained analysis. Regarding the attitude of hashtags, "no sentiment" was most prominent at 83.9% of the sample. Strong and mild sentiment comprised less than 10% of the sample. Context-dependent and focused sentiment collectively comprised 7% of the sample (Appendix 145). Throughout the sample, these instances did not show a consistent pattern (Appendix 146). As an example of strong sentiment, one fan said "If Carly is the next bachelorette, I can pretty much guarantee I won't be watching #psycho

#thebachelor” (Appendix 147). As an example of mostly sentiment, one fan said “Just found out @CailaQuinn is half Filipino! Welp, now you know who I’m rooting for #TheBachelor #filipinas #RepresentationMatters” (Appendix 148). As an example of a focused hashtag, one fan said “Staking out #SeanandCatherine’s wedding! #TheBachelor #SB #firstlook” (Appendix 149). As an example of a context-dependent hashtag, one fan said “Sean from #thebachelor today said he thinks Tierra is important this season and then said they already filmed the finale...#wellnowweknow” (Appendix 150).

The hashtags used (this is excluding tweets only using “no sentiment” / #thebachelor) matched the themes discussed in the chapter for RQ1, namely character judgment, specific character names, bachelor canon, praise, hyperbole, and everyday life. The most common type of hashtag utilized character judgment, most prevalent in the 2012 and 2014 seasons. Some examples from 2012 included #dumbgirl, #duckface, #crazy, #liarliar, #courtneystillcray, #bensatool, and #awful. Some examples in the 2014 season included #suckitupbuttercup, #trainwreck, #JuanPabloisgross, #idiots, and #goaway. For the 2013, 2015 and 2016 seasons, the character judgment present in hashtags was mostly directed at the villains or disliked characters of the seasons. Character judgment was directed at both the bachelor and these contestants for season 2012 and 2014. For the latter seasons, the character judgment was also not as harsh when present. Some examples in the 2015 season include #forgettable, #sorrykelsey, and #imactuallyreallysmart (a reference to something a polarizing character, Ashley, said during one of her confessionals).

Contrastingly, tweets from the 2013 and 2016 seasons prominently utilized praise as a theme in hashtags, usually directed at the bachelors themselves. Some examples



include #wholepackage, #loveyew, #perfect, #sogorgeous, #hottie, #hottiemchothot (2013), #benisperfect (2016). Though there was a contrast in the use of praise and character judgment season to season, many of the same hashtags persisted throughout the sample (Appendix 151). These included #idiot, #goaway #OMFG #haha, and #team. Sean Lowe (2013 bachelor) showed up in many hashtags outside his own season, which speaks to the popularity of his character. This may connect to fan loyalty towards tradition, as Sean Lowe followed ideal *Bachelor* canon by marrying “winner” Catherine and having a child.

Unlike mentions, which were used to connect with other fans, hashtags were consistently used throughout the sample to create a narrative of loyalty and/or contempt. The hashtags used represent a fairly common rhythm for the show as a whole. Even the anomalies of the sample further demonstrate fans’ loyalty towards *Bachelor* canon as they had the most character judgment directed at them. The hashtags used showed praise and character judgment for the bachelors, contestants and even the purported villains. However, there was consistently more praise aimed at the bachelors than the contestants. This is a common trope for fan viewing and discussion, as the audience simply spends more time with the contestants than the bachelor. Though the show is titled *The Bachelor*, the narratives are constructed around the various contestants, and how they coexist. The hashtags used for character judgment seem to be a reaction to the show’s set up of competition against other women. This suggests that while some fans genuinely are invested in the relationships, many are more concerned with the narrative structure of the show. For many fans, Courtney winning her season sullied this carefully constructed narrative.

Character names were commonly used in the discourse analysis (50% of the time) as part of a hashtag or addressivity, making it directly linked to the affordances of twitter, specifically in regards to its architecture. While tweets are inherently searchable, hashtags and addressivities provide further filtering for fans. Looking at this table (Appendix 152), if a fan wanted to search for tweets concerning the 2012 season villain of *The Bachelor*, one would simply need to type #Courtney, and possibly “TheBachelor” in conjunction for even better results. While every bachelor’s name was mentioned at least a few times in the discourse sample, only a select number of contestants were given the same treatment. Considering the season starts out with 20-25 women, the contestants who do show up in fan tweets, even a couple times, should be considered “popular.” The analysis also shows that fans give equal weight to the “villains” and “good girls” of the season. However, one exception is Courtney (from the 2012 season) who surpassed even the bachelor, Ben Flajnik, in character name mentions. It would be a significant and entertaining undertaking for communication scholars to analyze the role of the villain in reality TV.

Another aspect of hashtag use is how it relates to the general sentiment of the overall tweet. This can be compared to how emoticons were analyzed via intensity, negation and neutral. Of the options (factual commenting/asking a question, humor, harsh judgment, expression of admiration, promotion, and other) expression of admiration was most prominent at 32.3% of the sample (Appendix 153). As an example of admiration, one fan said “#FF @saramask 1. Cause she likes #thebachelor and makes me feel less lame 2. Cause she puts up with @ol\_drrty’s tweets 3. Cause she’s cute!” (Appendix 154). Judgment was not far behind with 26.3% of the sample (Appendix 155). As an example,

one fan said “the amount of white girls on this season of the bachelor is really unsettling #thebachelor #wheremyminoritiesat” (Appendix 156). There was a general decrease for judgment and an increase for admiration, respectively, throughout the sample (Appendix 157). These results connect to those from RQ2, which showed a prominence of judgment and idolization in affectively framing discussions of *The Bachelor*. Like emoticons, hashtags did not serve to negate the overall message of the tweet. Instead, it was used to add credibility or to intensify the judgment or admiration of the show.

The prominent use of no sentiment for hashtags could be applied to the data collection method. In order to grab tweets that would accurately apply to the show, #thebachelor was used as a search term. This ensured that every tweet would include this hashtag, which inherently is not imbued with sentiment. It did not impede the inclusion of other #hashtags in the tweet such as character names. Therefore, the prominence of no sentiment in hashtags is still suggestive of a fandom that imbues sentiment in the main body of their tweet and in emoticons, but not in hashtags and certainly not in addressivity markers.

Chapter 4 discussed findings of the discourse analysis, which showed fans grappling with various issues of power. In one sense, there was a power struggle between groupings of bachelor fans in their framing of heteronormativity and those who sought to criticize it. For the most part, fans were exerting their power over producers of the show in seeking out more representation on the show and a more expansive view of what it means to be a woman. These strands, however, were not as present in hashtags. Some examples used for racial/cultural and heteronormative discourse were #wheremyminoritiesat #LGBT #filipinas #RepresentationMatters #freespeech and

#nohate. One tweet used #freespeech #nohate as support for homophobic statements. The majority of these tweets used #thebachelor. In one example, “ana” a blonde white woman said “the amount of white girls on this season of the bachelor is really unsettling. #wheremyminoritiesat” (Appendix 158). It did not use any other addressivity markers, there were no comments, retweets or likes present. In another example, “Kriselle,” a fellow Filipina woman, said “just found out @CailaQuinn is half Filipino! Welp, now you know who I’m rooting for #TheBachelor #filipinas #RepresentationMatters” (Appendix 159). She used an @mention in addition to hashtags as addressivity markers. There was one comment and one like. In an example in Juan Pablo’s 2014 season, “Jill” said “Pablo, no apologies needed. You’re entitled to your opinion. #free speech #nohate” (Appendix 160). It did not use other addressivity markers. The tweet received two likes.

In the first and third sample tweet, the hashtags were supportive of the overall tweet content. In the second sample tweet regarding Caila Quinn, it added context. For the most part, tweets grouped by these specific discourse strands did not utilize @mention addressivities. This in line with the overall results for tweets that utilize @mentions, as they are characterized as being used for light communication between friends.

### Conclusion

As previously mentioned, one of the major frames was character judgment. This was supported by the use of both hashtags and addressivity markers in using character names. Much of character judgment that was detected for RQ1 and RQ2 came from adjectives and hyperbolic statements written in the form of hashtags, such as #stupid, #hottie or #slut. Hashtags were also used in conjunction with the common frame of

everyday life. When not being used to judge or idolize a *Bachelor* character, it was used to spotlight the mundane details of a fan's day. One example is #drinkingwine. Another would be #watchingnow.

Overall, the results showed that the frames discussed in the previous chapters appear in tweets with retweet, comments, likes, mentions and hashtags. It is not clear if certain themes influence more likes, retweets and comments, as the content varied for the most popular tweets. However, some language structures and specific character judgment were more prominent season to season. The role of retweets, comments and likes in the affective framing seems to be a collective effort. Mentions and hashtags play a very specific role in garnering attention from friends and making character judgments, respectively.

The content analysis showed that throughout the sample, the use of commenting, likes and retweeting became more common a way to communicate amongst the fan base. However, there is not an obviously significant relationship between the occurrence of these uses and the way fans communicate in their sentiment and tone regarding *The Bachelor*. Though there was a higher prominence of the enthusiastic tone and the occurrence of retweets, comments, likes, and mentions, it was not enough to suggest there was a strong relationship in comparison to the other code options. Most of the sample remained not applicable for retweets, comments, and mentions. The occurrence of "likes," however, was responsible for half the sample. Considering the genuine/enthusiastic code was the most common, this might suggest some kind of relationship between "liking" tweets and tone. While this chapter attempted to describe the types of content in retweeted, commented, liked, mentioned and hashtagged tweets,

many of the same themes persisted throughout. Therefore, the relationship between various addressivity markers and sentiment was not clear.

The next section will discuss the implications of this research as a whole, while specifically addressing the most prominent frames that emerged.

## Chapter VII: Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze fan tweets of *The Bachelor* in order to answer the overarching question of how fans discuss the show on Twitter. Of course, this involved separate questions that aimed to get at the nuances of frames, tone, sentiment and social media behavior specific to Twitter. The content analysis identified many different frames and types of tone, sentiment and behavior that worked hand in hand in constructing a cohesive message. The discourse analysis found frames and themes in tweets to be consistent with the content analysis findings. The first half of this chapter will provide the analysis and implications for each of the three guiding research questions. The second half will provide a conclusion outlining the overall significance of the thesis, as well as the limitations and challenges that were faced while conducting the study and a discussion of future research recommendations.

This study supports the assertion that reality TV is both extremely commodifiable and also a reflection on identity. This identity could not be discussed without delineating the relationship between fans, the genre, producers and social media. Networked framing shows the process in which fans frame their discussion and how. Discourse strands, however, are fed from both the producers and fans in creation, transformation and discussion of content in a cyclical process. Nonetheless, these strands of power in communicating issues of race, genderism and homophobia show that there are material consequences for this study.

This study's examination of *Bachelor* fan tweets was guided by networked framing as an approach to analyzing publics as agents of their discussion online. In the first results chapter for RQ1, the themes of judgment and everyday life / navel-gazing

were the most prominent. This next section will discuss the implications of online gendered judgment and egocentric attitude.

The first research question sought to answer what frames emerged in the affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. These varying categories served to unify subgroups within the fandom in the themes of judgment, everyday life, and prominent use of catchphrases. Judgment and everyday life were both such prominent frames that this chapter is tasked with delineating the implications of the individual frames but also their joint efforts in online Twitter communication and fandom. The fact that both of these frames were so prominent says something significant in and of itself about the nature of online community. Andrejevic (2008) said the combination of enthusiasm and criticism that infuses many online discussion sites is “part a function of the fact that there are two, not entirely distinct, types of forums: those populated by serious fans who admire the show and those devoted to viewers who love to mock the show being discussed” (p.31). Therefore, the *Bachelor* fandom’s goal cannot be understood not as “uncritical fannishness but rather for viewers to use the site as a springboard for entertaining one another” (p.31). This polarity of egocentrism and character judgment is indicative of a normal distribution of heated discussion. For the fandom, the show is merely an addition to the more immediate and collaborative entertainment of tweeting. Sakamoto (2012) said people tend to and have a strong motivation to undertake others’ decisions (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004; Deutsch & Gerard, 1995; Gureckis & Goldstone, 2006) because of an inherent desire to make “correct responses” under uncertainty and, of course, the desire to be like others (Asch, 1951; 1956). This may begin to elucidate the prominence of two very different frames.



## Discourse and Power

The frame of value judgment that emerged from research question 1 differs greatly from the frame of everyday life in that the comparison of its online versus offline behavior is quite dissimilar. There is countless research that supports the assertion that people act differently offline versus online, especially in regards to value judgment against other people (Yee et al, 2009; Seepersad, 2004; Ogan et al, 2008). Though fans may have their full name, a photo, bio, and other information linked to their offline identity, the barrier of the screen affords a certain frankness or lack of inhibition online.

## Heteronormativity

In discussing *Bachelor* fandom, this value judgment is especially gendered. While the sample was not coded for gender, men posted only a small handful of the 1000-tweet sample. Mavin (2006) posits “women view other women as their natural allies, regardless of hierarchical differences” (p.264), as in the theory of solidarity behavior. In this study, however, this does not seem to be the case. This may be because of the specific nature of the Internet, *The Bachelor*, reality TV, celebrity, or all of the above. While some value judgment used was positive in nature, the frame was predominantly used for negative character judgment against the female contestants by a sample comprised mostly of women. This may not be surprising considering that research indicates that envy, a common component of value judgment, is normally experienced in response to others of the same gender (Gastorf & Suls, 1978; Hill & Buss, 2006; Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Tesser, 1988; van Dijk, Ouwerkerk, Goslinga, & Nieweg, 2005, as cited in Hill et al, 2011).

While envy was not a component of the coding in this study, past research has shown that value judgment against a celebrity—even lower-tier celebrities—is common and comes from a place of both resentment and appreciating their everyday lives. Therefore, it can even draw parallels to the other prominent theme of everyday life. As Hill et al (2011) put it: there is simply something captivating about people who are living the fantasy we see on our screen. In a sense, this is the first distinction of power that we see fans exert over their reality TV counterparts.

Unlike other kinds of emotions, envy does not immediately or obviously elicit a distinctive affective state (Sabini & Silver, 2005). What makes it so difficult to study via content and discourse analysis is the fact that envy is often “intentionally concealed from others” (Salovey, 1991; Salovey & Rodin, 1984; Silver & Sabini, 1978; Smith, 1991; Smith & Insko, 1987; Smith & Kim, 2007; Smith, Kim, & Parrott, 1988 as cited in Hill et al, 2011, p.653).

Ultimately, the implications of online value judgment are both beneficial and detrimental in nature. Studies have shown that envy may increase attention to and memory for information about others (especially same-sex targets), which is certainly a cognitive benefit (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000; Griskevicius, Cialdini, & Kenrick, 2006; Griskevicius et al., 2009; Maner, Gailliot, Rouby, & Miller, 2007; Hill et al, 2011). This shows that in addition to having an affective nature, envy also has an “adaptively tuned cognitive dimension” (Hill et al, 2011, p. 656). However, envy is often “sex differentiated.” In this study, “although women became increasingly envious of targets as they became more physically attractive, this pattern was not exhibited among men” (DelPriore et al., 2011; Hill & Buss, 2006; Salovey & Rodin, 1991, Hill et al, 2011, p.

663). Though most contestants of *The Bachelor* would be considered very conventionally attractive, any special treatment from the bachelor himself may have led to increased envy for some of the more polarizing contestants. Ben Flajnik of the 2012 season, for example, stated of Courtney upon meeting her: “Now that’s one pretty girl.” While he likely found many of the girls attractive, she was the only one he singled out that first night in such a direct manner.

Fan judgment also has implications for curating and changing content. Andrejevic (2008) noted that a fan of *American Idol* who did not post using his real name, criticized the producers of the show for misleading the way in which they reported audience votes, and they changed the format soon after (p. 27). However, the same article argued that with this power, many fans were wary of online discussion becoming yet another marketing tool. A decade later, this is the reality of online discussion. In some ways, a television show is not a show unless it exists somewhere in the social media landscape.

This thesis has already explored the ways in which *The Bachelor* struggles with the topic of sexuality, though it also does not quite confront its heteronormativity in its views of dating, marriage and homosexuality. Many fans, throughout the sample seasons, have pointed out the irony of a show whose premise is one man dating multiple women in competition with each other while still espousing traditional views of courtship, sexuality and the values of those deserving of engagement. While vocal minorities have pressured *The Bachelor* for more racial representation, it was not brought into the forefront until a polarizing comment from Juan Pablo of the 2014 season. In responding to a question asking whether ABC should have a gay or bisexual bachelor on the show he said:

No. Just 'cause I respect them but, honestly, I don't think it's a good example for kids to watch that on TV...obviously, people have their husband and wife and have kids, and that's how we are brought up. Now there's fathers having kids and all that, and it's hard for me to understand that, too, in the sense of a household having...two parents sleeping in the same bed and the kid going into bed. It's confusing in a sense, but I respect them because they want to have kids, they want to be parents...there's this thing about gay people. It seems to me...but they're more pervert in a sense. To me, the show would be too strong, too hard to watch on TV” (Staff, 2014).

JuanPablo attempted to apologize but he responded very defensively. In this response, he mentioned a gay best friend, repeated that English is his second language, and said he “could never insult anyone.” Scher & Darley (1997) argue that apologies are, for the most part, an “illocutionary act, which serves to show that the speaker is aware of the social requirement to apologize in certain situations” (p.129). In this case, fans were very aware of this likely illocutionary act, and they swiftly responded with criticism. Therefore, fans exerted the discourse of power when they felt the show was not treating certain issues with care and respect.

### Racism

Many academics have confronted Twitter as a problematic tool in its support of hate speech (Gagliardone et al, 2015; Waseem & Hovy, 2016). Often discourse permeates fandom without common language that constitutes hate speech. Often, it can be more insidious, such as when a fan likened a black woman’s lips to a sex toy in the 2016 season. The fan account, which is titled “TheSavageRose” (likely meant to be an

overall inappropriate spin on *Bachelor* canon) wrote “Called fleshlight to c if I could a device designed to simulate Jubilee’s mouth. The CEO and I are grabbing drinks next week!! #TheBachelor (Appendix 145). Carney (2016) argued that the discourse of race on Twitter represents a struggle over discourse on race and racism. This seems like an obvious point, but it is necessary to show that fans of the show mirrored this struggle over discourse on race. Most fans were so critical of the lack of representation on *The Bachelor* over the last few seasons (as shown in the results chapter for RQ1), but this criticism has been present throughout much of the show’s tenure. While producers eventually chose Rachel Lindsay for the 2016 season, fans, media and even non-fans alike predominantly felt that a non-white suitor was long overdue. Goldman (2009) said that during her era of reality TV, many African American-centric reality shows were lampooned for stereotyping and even representations of bullying and violence. That the *Bachelor* was choosing a confident, educated, beautiful and multi-faceted black woman was not lost on viewers instead of propagating the idea of “the angry African-American Woman” (Collins, 2005; Pozner, 2010) or those who were given limited air time. Though many fans were excited for her season (Appendix 1, 2 & 3), the new bachelorette was overcome with charges of skin lightening, not being attractive enough for the role, and focusing too much on race representation (Underwood, 2017). However, the cast pool was much more diverse than subsequent seasons, which was promising for fans. However, the show quickly devolved into racial feuding between Lee, a southern white man and Kenny, a black wrestler with a young daughter. Most of the household sided with Kenny, but Lindsay was confused by the contrasting perceptions of Lee. When with Lindsay he was polite and warm, but accounts from the contestant pool said otherwise. In

true Bachelor and Bachelorette fashion, producers decided to set up Kenny and Lee on a two-on-one date, metaphorically pinning good against evil, acceptance against racism. Garber (2017) argued that this season of *The Bachelorette* revealed itself “for what it is”: a show with “exploitative plotlines that treat racism as entertainment.” Bradley (2017) agreed that the “race-focused feud was both disappointing and unsurprising.” This episode, though obviously manipulative, was so significant for fans because the “decision would carry symbolic weight: what would it mean if she chose what the viewers know to be a white, racist liar over a sincere, black man?” (Bradley 2017). Boylorn (2008) argued that studies of reality television often overlook the implications that representations of race have on individuals.

This is in line with other forms of reality TV, such as the influential *The Real World*. Pozner (2010) said the “show originally featured diverse casts and explored issues...with something resembling care. Discussions addressing these identities and issues often illuminated rather than reinforced prejudice. During the 2000s, the series used [sensationalism]...as the main viewership draws” (p.12). Therefore, what once an exchange of ideas eventually devolved into casting formula.

While these discourse strands might seem in direct contrast to the second most prominent frame, everyday life/navel-gazing, it is simply emblematic of typical fandom communication.

#### Navel-gazing / Everyday Life

The use of the everyday life theme in online communication seems to be automatically indicative of fandom communication simply because now cultural commodity and a fan’s life go hand in hand. In other words, the behaviors of *Bachelor*

characters are mirrored more or less directly to the everyday lives of the fans, which make the prominent use of value judgment all the more interesting.

In many ways, the integral nature of fandom always remains the same. There is a collective organized around the ideology of excess (Grossberg, 1992). However, fandom has evolved. Twenty-five years ago, Fiske (1992) described fandom media as more reverent in nature, but now it is more playful according to Booth (2010). It is not only individualized for productive, convenient purposes, but it is also made “pleasurable to use” (p.1). The implications of the use of the everyday life frame also includes the domestication or taming of the Twitter platform by fans through the consistent use of these mundane forms of communication (Garcia et al, 2016).

As Thelwall et al (2011) argued, this suggests that an event (in this case, an episode of *The Bachelor*) “may be perceived by some Twitter users as affording an opportunity to satisfy unrelated goals, such as to create humour, show analytical skill or declare a moral perspective. Hence, while an emotional event might seem likely to elicit intuitive reactions, such as declarations of pleasure or disgust, this is not inevitable” as fans “do not passively consume media but actively select and exploit it for their own goal” (p.408).

#### Polarizing Sentiment & Direct Communication

This study’s findings for RQ2 showed that genuine tone comprised more than half of the sample. The language of genuine tone signaled that a fan was sincere in their communication. Wall et al (2016) argued that the use of direct, genuine, enthusiastic tone might have implications for judgment accuracy for those reading the content of said *Bachelor* tweets. According to the study, tweets with an enthusiastic tone had a more

accurate first impression. While this might seem very obvious, as lack of ambiguity usually does aid in more accurate judgments, Wall et al (2016) argued that this relates closely to personal self-presentation. Individuals high in self-presentation tend to alter their behavior to present themselves in a favorable light, while those low in self-presentation present their identity in the same manner regardless of context (p.71). The prominence of genuine tone in *Bachelor* fan tweets might imply that they aim for sincere self-presentation, whether using positive or negative sentiment, in order to reduce ambiguity in their impressions with other fans. The results for *Bachelor* tweets further showed that genuine tone was the most common each season and only increased in influence by 2016. Therefore, the results for tone should not be discussed via the context of a specific season/bachelor but looked at holistically for the fan base.

Emoticons and “likes” also play into this. The sample overall did not prominently use emoticons in fan tweets, though they were most commonly used to intensify the meaning of the tweet. Emoticons are thought to be the equivalent of facial expressions that helps to circumvent any ambiguity in posts. This could be why there was such a low reportage of sarcasm in the sample versus the prominent use of genuine tone. Emoticons were much more prevalent in “liked” tweets versus retweeted and commented tweets, which may further indicate that fans aim for agreeableness. Though *Bachelor* fandom tweets are a microcosm of online communication, this desire for agreeableness and less ambiguity draws parallels to social implications in online dating and online job recruitment where judgment accuracy is paramount (Wall et al., 2016, p.77).

It is difficult to assess the implications of genuine tone, albeit tone in general, when there is simply is not any research available that discusses genuine tone. Most



research also seems to conflate tone and specific sentiment likely because both are used as synonyms for “attitude” in both popular and academic research. While semantic arguments often do not hold much weight, it is problematic when searching for research support. While tone and sentiment are certainly housed under an adjoining umbrella, this study treated tone as an overarching feeling evoked from the content and sentiment as a specific attitude used towards a situation or event.

This study makes a solid methodological contribution towards the measurement of sentiment. This study provides a useful framework for future scholars in that it utilizes predetermined coding schemes, as well as new inductive categories. The value of the work is in the iteration and replication. Like tone, the role of sentiment in online discussion is significant. This study sought to fill out the spectrum of how sentiment is operationalized. As previously mentioned, many studies conflate tone and sentiment. This study, however, sought to provide more descriptive sentiment categories that aimed to capture both surface-level (such as excited) and subtler attitudes (such as resigned or dubious). The results showed that annoyance, amusement, and praise/admiration were the most common. This matches up with the spectrum of positive, negative and neutral sentiment. While amusement should not be viewed as inherently neutral, it does provide a balancing point for the two more contrasting sentiment types. It is difficult to say what kind of roles these sentiment types play in fandom. At first glance they seem to be a healthy representation of a typical fandom: a spectrum of positive to negative sentiment just like in offline discussion. For example, Felschow (2010) describes *Supernatural* (a scripted show very unlike *The Bachelor* but with a dedicated online fan base) fans’ response to a specific episode in the canon as polarizing. Some viewed it as playful and

inclusive while others deemed it harsh and demeaning. The same applied to Sherlock fans. When an interview with Sherlock actor Benedict Cumberbatch came out, some fans found his remarks to be insensitive, while others joked about the group in which his remarks were directed towards. Therefore, some directed negative sentiment towards the show's lead actor, while some treated the news playfully (Petersen, 2017). However, the fact that annoyance is the most prominent does raise some questions as to the psychological implications of consistently tweeting this type of content. Negative Twitter content has associations with depressive symptoms (Nesi & Prinstein, 2015) and even heart disease (Eichstaedt et al, 2015), for example. Of course, this study is not primarily concerned with health communication. However, in teasing out the implications of this study's findings, there is simply not a breadth of research in online fan discussion concerning a spectrum of sentiment.

These psychological implications seem to have great benefits for business, however. For example, the producers of *The Bachelor* need this spectrum of content to get a sense of the underlying pulse of liked, disliked, and neutral content. In order for *The Bachelor* brand to function, fans need to have a sense of autonomy in their camaraderie and derision. Twitter has enabled this sense of fan autonomy and producer connection by allowing a space for “relatively unmediated, communal discussion of television programs. Users are able to offer their own commentary on the event broadcast as it unfolds...and perhaps even to see those comments become part of the television broadcast itself” (Highfield, Harrington & Bruns, 2013, p.3).

## The Making of an Online Community

This study has shown that online community is representation of human complexity. On the surface, there are ruminations on everyday life and common projections of sentiments such as envy and idolization. However, under the surface there are also discourse strands that support heteronormative roles, racism and homophobia, as well as opposition. Mirroring offline behavior, there is evidence to support that fans are invested in more diverse cultural commodity. Reality TV is perhaps more commerce-driven than other television forms, despite its low production costs. Just as casts of popular scripted TV shows are asked to sit side by side and play nice during an on-air interview in order to project the idea of a family dynamic, the same can be said of online reality TV fandom. When a show has a vocal online fandom, this means more article mentions, more opportunities for cross promotion, and more ad dollars. This paper has shown that political economy is heavily promoted throughout the fandom via particular Twitter affordances. The third research question asked how the architecture of Twitter supported or sustained the networked frames that emerged from publics in their discussion of *The Bachelor*. The prominent frames of value judgment and everyday life/navel-gazing characterize the audience as one with strong opinions and self-possession, but when analyzed in conjunction with the results from RQ3, the implications become more complex.

Like Burnap et al (2016), many studies have sought to use group tweets to predict the course of events or trends. While *Bachelor* fandom cannot be easily mined for any close connection to substantial issues of the day/week/year, it would be possible to track trends in everyday life and *The Bachelor* narrative by looking at the uses of Twitter

architecture. Hashtags, mentions, and likes were prominent or significant in the sample, while retweets and comments were not. When comments did appear they were used in low frequencies. This could suggest two things. First, the low influence of retweets and comments points towards a desire for a particular kind of online relationship. One where you can get the attention of someone you know, like, and maybe even love through the use of an @ mention, a hashtag and/or clicking a “like” button without ever having to type out a personalized, private message to said person. In this sense, communication is not private at all but something to be consumed and interpreted by the masses.

Unlike mentions which were used to primarily connect with other fans, friends and family, hashtags were used throughout the sample to represent a common rhythm for the show. This rhythm involved a steady balance of praise and value judgment, as well as use of hyperbolic language such as “HAHA,” “WTF,” or “OMFG.” Though, character names and no imbued sentiment (for example, #thebachelor) were the most common hashtag types. Like emoticons, hashtags did not serve to negate the overall message of the tweet. Instead, it was used to add credibility or to intensify the judgment or admiration of the show.

Assessed alone, hashtags are merely a word or phrase, but assessed as a whole they are rife with nuance and complexity. In fact, Bonilla & Rosa (2015) posits whether hashtags are merely indicative of fleeting engagement or if hashtag ethnography is “the next logical step in an anthropology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one that has become increasingly concerned with the ontological implications of digital practices” (p.5) Ultimately, this ethnography will look very different for *Bachelor* fandom versus other online collectives. In the case of political Twitter communication, hashtags play a very significant role in the

collective action of groups. For *Bachelor* fandom, fans are merely acting in connective action (Papacharissi, 2015), using hashtags to organize their egocentric thoughts of the day or to specifically aim a value judgment towards a character on a show. When compared to the use of hashtags in the context of Ferguson (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015; Freelon, McIlwain & Clark, 2016) or the Arab Spring (Bruns, Highfield & Burgess, 2013; Acemoglu, Hassan & Tahoun, 2014), the affordances almost seem puerile. However, this contrast naturally compares to other mediums of communication. Radio, Internet, TV, phone communication, etc. have all been co-opted for entertainment and everyday life uses, as well as for political communication. In this study, much of the language used in hashtags seemed to be directly inspired by much of the language already used on the show. Many of the show's phrases such as #finalrose #afterthefinalrose #herefortherightreasons or the monolithic #bachelornation consistently showed up in fan hashtags. In other words, hashtags were used as an online signal for significant milestones in the show, as well as signaling a fan was part of a collective. As Deery (2015) said, certain "catchphrases are heard day after day on screens around the world. Many would recognize them as the voices of reality TV" (p.1). Networks have an investment in their terms, symbols and catchphrases becoming part of fan lexicon. This study is not making the claim for the fact that these hashtags appear in offline culture. However, the term "bachelor nation," for example did not emanate from fans, but instead the show's network/producers. Soon after, fans included these terms in their hashtags. These particular results support that this venture is successful.

Likes were also prominent in the sample, though the content varied. The prominent themes were consistent with other addressivity features in terms of prominent

frame types. Meier et al (2014) argued that the feature of “liking” content had been overly “repurposed, because there are things that users cannot do in any other way” and some users are consciously using it for more than one purpose. The implication, therefore, is that perhaps additional functionality is required in order to support all of the motivations for using favouriting features, as opposed to re-sharing features” (p. 354). This might begin to explain why there was not a largely distinct nature in tweet content in regards to retweets, commented tweets, and liked tweets.

There were some specific usages of liked tweets such as specific language devices and references to drinking, especially in relation to watching the show. Contestants are frequently shown drinking alcohol on the show (as they are banned from other activities such as reading, watching TV and using their phones), so this tweet content is not surprising. Why it shows up in liked tweets more prominently could connect back to the analogous and convenient nature of “liking.” While retweets and commenting usually require a short supplement to the shared content and are broadcast to the individual’s followers, likes are a quick communication of an analogous relationship that is visible to those that tweeted said “liked” content. Therefore, through liking, fans are able to tell other fans that they too like to drink while watching *The Bachelor*, or perhaps they’re also amused by the tweeted wine pun, without notifying other followers. Likes were also distinguished by their style of language and the use of hyperbole/sentiment with the prominent occurrence of emoticons and acronyms such as OMFG, WTF, and HAHA. Liked tweets were, therefore, heavily hashtagged tweets. Exclamation points were common throughout the entire sample as a language device, but they were most prominent in liked tweets, and applied to both positive and negative sentiment.

Emoticons were much more present in liked tweets versus those with other addressivity markers. Garcia et al (2017) noted that features such as unconventional spellings, acronyms, initialisms (such as LOL for laughing out loud) and homophones (2 for to) that are often seen in Internet discussion have been taken as evidence of a decline in language and literacy standards (Carr, 2010). A common argument against this is defining the Internet as a distinct platform “from the offline world and its rules and norms...in terms of what is seen as appropriate language use” (p.475). As previously mentioned, Twitter’s platform of short-form microblogging may be the primary influence in this abbreviated language use. However, texting does not have a character cap and this type of language use persists. Smith et al (2003) argued that language is derived from “pressures acting on language during its cultural transmission” (p. 371). If fandom is attempting to mirror offline behavior, then it would only follow that texting language would spill over into tweet language (not to mention the opportunity to link phone and Internet accounts, allowing tweets to be texted and texts to be tweeted).

Ultimately the feature of liking seems to have a significant role in *Bachelor* fandom, but based on the confinements of this analysis, any further discussion would be best served in future studies.

### Conclusion

The strength of this study is that it examined a body of people and social artifacts that have steadily molded the way television transforms content and interacts with fans. This thesis was concerned with the credence of online fandom specifically related to a powerful reality TV franchise. Communication research as a whole has yet to consider the levity of the affective networked framing that resides in the particular *Bachelor*

fandom. In being the first to analyze this content, both quantitatively and qualitatively, a small sample was collected so the fandom's tweets and profiles could be examined.

Sentiment proved to be an extremely vital tool for fans in their affective framing of *The Bachelor* on Twitter. Fans of *The Bachelor* discussed the show in contrasting terms, by prominently using both positive and negative sentiment and frames directed towards characters and at themselves. The discourse of political economy was evident in Bachelor tweets in their criticism of the show's proscribed norms of racism as entertainment and problematic heteronormativity. The architecture of Twitter held varying influence over the affective framing of the show, with hashtags, mentions and likes as the most prominent. While hashtags and likes supported the use of both the everyday life and value judgment frame, mentions almost exclusively supported the use of everyday life.

### Limitations

A limitation of this study was how the sample was collected before it was determined that certain elements of the coding scheme would not be feasible. In addition, although there were ample measures of text and emoticons, a much higher sample size of at least 5000 tweets would have likely yielded more tweets that utilized images, memes, illustrations, etc.

The inductive, emergent method used for the study proved complex and troublesome at times because of the unpredictability of online research. A significant limitation in the data collection was not being able to grab comment content for the tweets. In order to measure what was intended, one would need to follow the tweet to its source, which would have proved difficult and time-consuming for data collection. It also



may have ended in a roadblock if some pages were semi- or fully private. This could be remedied, however, by a study with multiple researchers/data collectors.

There are some nuances in this study that may have affected results. For example, the “like” button was a new addition in 2015. This became known after the data collection process, as it was not immediately apparent that there was a difference, in this regard, between pre-2015 tweets and post-2015 tweets. However, the findings showed that there was an influx of “likes” post-2015. Also, in utilizing networked framing and affect as the theoretical lens, it was assumed that retweets and comments would be analyzed differently. Though retweets are often used as a marker for the existence of networked framing in crowd endeavors, it was not possible in the study due to the data collection method. As previously mentioned, this study’s theoretical lens was not aimed at the utilization of retweeting but instead at the prominence level for content analysis. Though the retweet mechanism enables us to see more clearly what is most prominent and is the most obvious architectural device used for this, this study used a coding scheme that manually looks at all tweets to determine the most prominent.

Another limitation was the decision to utilize various pre-determined coding schemes based on the literature review (Bondebjerg, 2002; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hogenboom, Bal, Frasinca, Bal, de Jong & Kaymak, 2013). While this is usually seen as a necessity, it often hindered measuring and observing tweets that varied and could be combined in very specific ways. While the method section of this study did make it clear that there would ultimately be an inductive approach in coding for many of the variables, it may have been that some tweets were situated in a specific code because of the convenience of a pre-determined coding scheme and not because it was

necessarily the best category and/or definition. This directly applied to the distinction between elites and non-elites.

Though this characterization is dependent on context and overall subjectivity, this study considered the elites of Twitter as those who were verified users with a blue check mark, often bestowed to celebrities and well-known authors or commentators. The study did initially code for this but found the sample to be very low in elites (N=60 or 6% of the sample). Looking at the themes within the tweets that utilized hashtags, addressivity markers, retweets, comments and likes—often in combination—it was apparent that celebrity tweets held an influence over fan discussion regardless of the theme. Often the themes used by celebrities were similar to non-elite tweets, but the number of likes, comments, and retweets were much higher. Of course, this is likely due to having more followers, and thus having a higher likelihood of these analogous indicators. Celebrities also used addressivity markers (mentions) in a similar way to non-elites meaning they simply mentioned people they knew. However, promotion was more common a theme in celebrity tweets. This use of promotion amongst celebrity and non-elite tweets likely has varying intention, which is a rich area to explore further for future studies. Deller (2011) said Twitter may appear to be “an open, democratic environment where everyone can speak,” but offering the same access to celebrities and non-elites does not indicate “all users share the same level of influence and power within the environment” (p.217). While there is research on how celebrities communicate with fans (Stever & Lawson, 2013), there is not any readily available research regarding celebrities acting as fans within a group, where there is a cohabitating of elites and non-elites.

Because the theoretical lens of networked framing describes publics working in tandem to frame discussion, elite or non-elite, this study made no direct distinction between them, with the exception of some remarks in future studies. Though this study aimed to be inductive in creating categories for coding, this could have led to some error. Though categories were collapsed, many of the coding categories were newly designed because of the lack of similar prior studies. Therefore, this study is trial and error. For subsequent studies, the coding scheme must be refined greatly.

Overall, this research proved more complex than originally anticipated because of the unpredictability of observing online tweets. In order to closely analyze the tweets the data collection and coding was done manually. Though it was the plan to do a subsequent coding using QDA software, it was not the best fit for this particular study. QDA software is a valuable tool, but it does not allow for extraction of affective data, which is the focus of this research. Of course, this issue is less to do with the limitations of research software and the fact that online social interactions are time-sensitive as a snapshot but also are part of an overall picture. Software cannot code affect due to the nuance and sentiment embedded, which is best read instead by manual processes and by humans. This is something rather difficult to study without given the time and resources to collect enough data.

Lastly, a significant limitation lies in the trustworthiness of this study. Though Cohen's Kappa was nearly at an acceptable level ( $\kappa=0.80$ ) for each variable, intercoder reliability fell a bit short. This could be addressed in future studies by conducting multiple coding sessions with secondary coders in order to refine the coding scheme and increase reliability.

## Future Studies

While the study excels in the attempt to be a rich analysis of qualitative content and discourse analysis, it would ultimately be made that much stronger with interviews. In this thesis, much has been discussed regarding the significance of fandom to producers and the overall content of reality TV, but without interviews this discussion can only go so far. Interviews would also be helpful in assessing comparisons and contrasts between Bachelor fans' online behavior versus their offline behavior.

Future studies would benefit from a comparative analysis of prominent forms of online and offline groups for *Bachelor* fandom. One could conduct an analysis of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, and Reddit to get a sense of how fan discussion varies depending on the platform. It would also be valuable to compare a content analysis of older forms of online fandom such as livejournal blogging. Early analysis of Livejournal posts (some were included in the literature review) showed a similarity to the type of discussion seen on Reddit, but the comparisons are much too general. If kept as a study that observes tweets as social artifacts, another interesting direction would be a comparison amongst top reality TV franchises. More specifically, if focused just on *The Bachelor* franchise, there would be a bevy of themes to explore: implications of race, whitewashing TV, gender dynamics in Bachelor vs. Bachelorette vs. Bachelor in Paradise, fan influence on content, spoilers, the "thin ideal," etc.

Though this study did not include the 2017 season, or any seasons of *The Bachelorette*, in the sample timeline, the current saga of the show's racial implications relate to this study's findings. As discussed, fans and writers were not pleased with the lack of diversity on television, which led to Rachel Lindsay being chosen as the first

black bachelorette. While this theoretically should have increased ratings for the show, *The Bachelorette* premiered with 5.7 million viewers, down from the previous season by about a million viewers (Nielsen, 2017). This current saga is a clear and obvious extension of what the franchise has always done with race. The first few seasons of the show communicated tokenism for minority characters. Many of the seasons included a fully white cast. When fans and media began to incite the franchise, they responded by including a few more black contestants. However, all of them were eliminated within the first few weeks and many of their plotlines were exploited for racial comedy. For example, a black contestant asked bachelor Sean Lowe from the 2012 season if he would like some chocolate. After showing him the piece of candy in her palm, she coyly asked him which piece of chocolate he would like to nibble first.

The discourse analysis in this study showed that when faced with homophobic remarks and subtler forms of racism, fans were mostly combative. However, two seasons in this study's sample (2012 and 2013) did not include any racial discourse. This may be due to a small sample size. However, fans overwhelmingly used the frame of everyday life in their tweets, which shows that diversity is important but not quite as important as self-performance, at least as part of this specific kind of discussion on Twitter. Future studies would benefit from analyzing further how fans discuss these underlying issues in parallel with frames of everyday life.

Looking at the themes within the tweets that utilized hashtags, addressivity markers, retweets, comments and likes—often in combination—it was apparent that celebrity tweets held an influence over fan discussion regardless of the theme. Often the themes used by celebrities were similar to non-elite tweets, but the number of likes,

comments, and retweets were much higher. Of course, this is likely due to having more followers, and thus having a higher likelihood of these analogous indicators. Celebrities also used addressivity markers (mentions) in a similar way to non-elites meaning they simply mentioned people they knew. However, promotion was more common a theme in celebrity tweets. This use of promotion amongst celebrity and non-elite tweets likely has varying intention, which is a rich area to explore further for future studies. Deller (2011) said Twitter may appear to be “an open, democratic environment where everyone can speak,” but offering the same access to celebrities and non-elites does not indicate “all users share the same level of influence and power within the environment” (p.217). While there is research on how celebrities communicate with fans (Stever & Lawson, 2013), there is not any readily available research regarding celebrities acting as fans within a group, where there is a cohabitating of elites and non-elites.

### Final Remarks

Fiske (1992) said, “Fandom is peculiar mix of cultural determinations. On the one hand it is an intensification of popular culture which is formed outside and often against official culture, on the other it expropriates and reworks certain values and characteristics of that official culture to which it is opposed” (p.34). The etymology of the word “fandom” implies an inherent but distant connection, considering that “dom” comes from “domain” and more specifically “kingdom.” Like in kingdoms, fan groups have a far-reaching sense of unity amongst otherwise dissimilar people. Because this study is wholly qualitative in nature, it produced a lot of competing narratives in the assessment of *Bachelor* fan framing. Therefore, the findings and discussion of this thesis ultimately provided a lot of inconclusive thoughts in working through these narratives. However,

what can be said about *Bachelor* Twitter fandom is expansive. The fans use very clear frames of everyday life, navel-gazing, and value judgment in their tweets. These frames are affectively supported by the prominent use of both positive and negative sentiment markers (which includes the textual and emoticons). The Twitter platform itself supports these frames mostly through liking, mentions and hashtags. Interestingly, commenting and retweeting (which would, in most cases, require more extensive communication between fans and their followers) had the least amount of influence on the affective framing of *The Bachelor*. With *Bachelor* fans, communication is usually reserved for friends and family. These small groups do not connect with the wider fan base outside of using similar hashtags and being part of the same collective. Unlike Reddit where strangers will commonly reply an individual's post, *Bachelor* fandom seems to consist of many small fan groups with a larger fan group.

Though promoting individual voices is a priority with *Bachelor* Twitter fandom through the use of everyday life/navel-gazing frames, this nonetheless melds each fan's individuality into a "part of the cultural fabric" (Booth, 2013, p.61). In other words, it is ironic that fans are so concerned with espousing the minutiae of their lives when it ultimately cannot be distinguished from the rest of the fray. Though, this collective nature does ultimately foster stronger relationships. The prominent use of mentions and hashtags in communicating with friends and family supports this notion. Booth & Kelly (2013) posited that fandom as an identity necessarily entails duality: "One is oneself, but also one is part of a larger group. That group today may be augmented by digital technology, but it has not been supplanted by it. Far from limiting relationships, technology today seems to help strengthen and build them—as fans have always done" (p.69).

Papacharissi (2015) argues that a community's narrative, rather than the utilized technology, establishes a connection to affective attachments. There is a clear parallel to *The Bachelor* in that producers and host Chris Harrison consistently refer to the fan community as a family. This family, however, is of course not a family at all; but this further produces feelings of connection. Fans are a microcosm of necessary changes in digital media studies. In fact, the "study of fans can become emblematic of studies in contemporary media" (Booth, 2010, p.1). While that might seem an ambitious statement, this study's observations say something valuable about the powerful role of sentiment in fandom, as well as debunking the notion that all fan groups are harmonious based on similar interest. This specific fandom is a spectacle of drama and mundanity all at once—just like life. Specifically, the themes found in fan discussion regarding *The Bachelor* support the argument for significance at the beginning of this thesis. Among the many points stated, this discussion supports that *Bachelor* fandom caters to a specific, idiosyncratic interest while providing a way for people to communicate in a language that is at once relatable and also disparaging.

Markham (1998) described through her ethnographic practices that people have an extreme attachment to a virtual life. As one participant stated "It's easy to get sucked into it, because I feel physically connected to something outside myself." This thesis, hopefully, has elucidated this understanding further by putting a spotlight on a specific fandom.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1



**Orange Punch** @orangepunch1981 · 3 Mar 2015  
If Kaitlyn isn't [#TheBachelorette](#) I will be super disappointed. All of the other women are so bland [#TheBachelor](#)



**The Naughty Mommy** @linzlehigh · 3 Mar 2015  
Kaitlyn's gonna be the next Bachelorette, eh? Wah. Britt would be more interesting. [#TheBachelor](#) [#TheBachelorette](#)

← ↻ ❤️ 2 ⋮



**Yoga Butterfly** @YogaButterfly\_ · 3 Mar 2015  
[#TheBachelor](#) I definitely want to see Britt @brittkarolina as the next [#TheBachelorette](#) & I think she deserves it!

← ↻ ❤️ 1 ⋮



**Zara Sadowsky** @ZaraSadowsky · 3 Mar 2015  
Kaitlyn is cute and would provide comedy; but definitely not a romantic lead. [#TheBachelorette](#) [#TeamBritt](#)

← ↻ ❤️ 3 ⋮

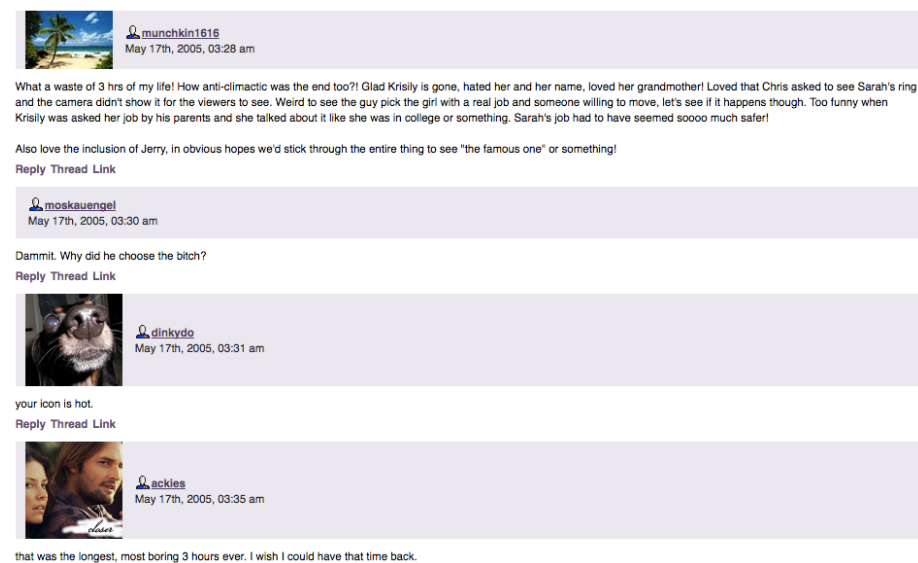


**YAHYA Z** @YAHYA137 · 3 Mar 2015  
I'll be shocked if ABC chose Britt to be the new bachelorette, Kaitlin deserve it more. [#TheBachelor](#) [#TheBachelorette](#)

← ↻ ❤️ ⋮



Appendix 2





### Appendix 3



**Stephanie**  
@Stephlepuuff

Follow

Ashamed and disappointed of @BachelorABC for not choosing @CailaQuinn for the #bachelorette 😞😡 #BachelorSoWhite

9:38 PM - 14 Mar 2016

🔁 4 ❤️ 15



**Margaret H. Willison**  
@MrsFridayNext

Follow

Ima let you finish, Chris Harrison, but Caila Quinn was ROBBED. #TheBachelor

9:28 PM - 14 Mar 2016

🔁 11 ❤️ 59



**Sean Lowe** ✓  
@SeanLowe09

Follow

So was that whole filming Caila stuff just rumor or a mean joke?

9:31 PM - 14 Mar 2016

🔁 659 ❤️ 4,538



**CatherineGiudiciLowe** ✓  
@clmgjudici

Follow

I guess I'm taking out @CailaQuinn for shots.

9:33 PM - 14 Mar 2016

🔁 272 ❤️ 3,412

## Appendix 4

### Variable 5

#### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average	Pairwise pct.	Pairwise pct.	Pairwise pct.
pairwise percent	agr.	agr.	agr.
agr.	cols 1 & 3	cols 1 & 2	cols 2 & 3
88.605%	86.735%	86.735%	92.347%

#### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss'	Observed	Expected
Kappa	Agreement	Agreement
0.785	0.886	0.471

#### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average	Pairwise	Pairwise	Pairwise
pairwise CK	CK	CK	CK
	cols 1 & 3	cols 1 & 2	cols 2 & 3
0.785	0.757	0.745	0.854

#### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.785	588	521	162108

\*\*\*These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

## Variable 6

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
93.878%	94.388%	92.347%	94.898%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.931	0.939	0.106

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.932	0.937	0.914	0.943

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.932	588	552	36166

## Variable 7A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

# Variable 7B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

## Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
94.048%	96.939%	92.857%	92.347%

## Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.801	0.94	0.701

## Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.801	0.898	0.759	0.745

## Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.801	588	553	241860

# Variable 7C

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

## Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
91.837%	90.816%	92.347%	92.347%

## Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.71	0.918	0.719

## Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.71	0.674	0.725	0.73

## Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.71	588	540	247994

## Variable 8A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

Variable 8B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334



## Variable 9A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

# Variable 9B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

## Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

## Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

## Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

## Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

## Variable 10A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

Variable 10B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

## Variable 11A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
100%	100%	100%	100%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
1	1	0.72

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
1	1	1	1

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
1	588	588	248334

Variable 11B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
87.415%	85.204%	94.388%	82.653%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.697	0.874	0.584

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.7	0.654	0.863	0.584

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.698	588	514	201316

## Variable 12A

### Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
92.177%	91.327%	91.837%	93.367%

### Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.555	0.922	0.824

### Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.549	0.471	0.516	0.66

### Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma_o o_{cc}^{***}$	$\Sigma_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.556	588	542	284396

Variable 12B

N coders: 3

N cases: 196

N decisions: 588

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3
93.707%	92.347%	92.347%	96.429%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.918	0.937	0.231

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa

Average pairwise CK	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 3	Pairwise CK cols 1 & 2	Pairwise CK cols 2 & 3
0.918	0.901	0.901	0.953

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\Sigma c_{oc}^{***}$	$\Sigma n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.918	588	551	79400

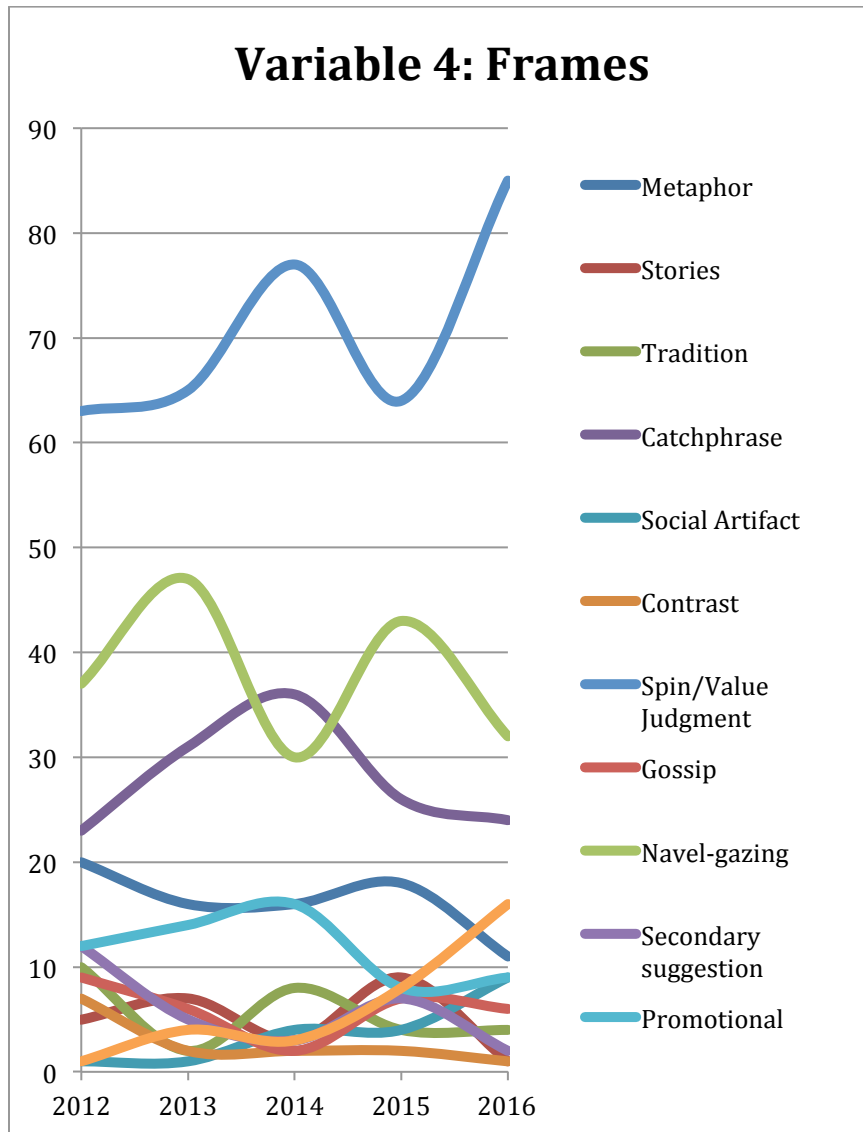


## Appendix 5

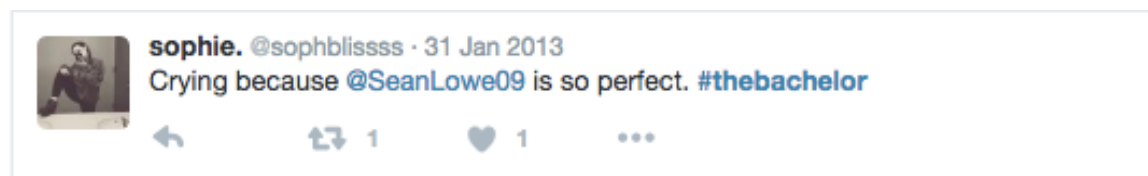
Frame Type	Instances	Instances	Instances	Instances	Instances	Instances
	Overall	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015
Metaphor	81/1000 (8.1%)	20/200 (10%)	16/200 (8%)	16/200 (8%)	18/200 (9%)	11/200 (5.5%)
Stories	25/1000 (2.5%)	5/200 (2.5%)	7/200 (3.5%)	3/200 (1.5%)	9/200 (4.5%)	1/200 (.5%)
Tradition	28/1000 (2.8%)	10/200 (5%)	2/200 (1%)	8/200 (4%)	4/200 (2%)	4/200 (2%)
Catch- Phrase	140/1000 (14%)	23/200 (11.5%)	31/200 (15.5%)	36/200 (18%)	26/200 (13%)	24/200 (12%)
Social Artifact	19/1000 (1.9%)	1/200 (.5%)	1/200 (.5%)	4/200 (2%)	4/200 (2%)	9/200 (4.5%)
Contrast	14/1000 (1.4%)	7/200 (3.5%)	2/200 (1%)	2/200 (1%)	2/200 (1%)	1/200 (.5%)
Spin/ Value Judgment	354/1000 (35.4%)	63/200 (31.5%)	65/200 (32.5%)	77/200 (38.5%)	64/200 (32%)	85/200 (42.5%)
Gossip	30/1000 (3%)	9/200 (4.5%)	6/200 (3%)	2/200 (1%)	7/200 (3.5%)	6/200 (3%)
Navel- gazing	189/1000 (18.9%)	37/200 (18.5%)	47/200 (23.5%)	30/200 (15%)	43/200 (21.5%)	32/200 (16%)

Secondary	29/1000	12/200	5/200	3/200	7/200	2/200
Suggestion	(2.9%)	(6%)	(2.5%)	(1.5%)	(3.5%)	(1%)
Promotional	59/1000	12/200	14/200	16/200	8/200	9/200
	(5.9%)	(6%)	(7%)	(8%)	(4%)	(4.5%)
Simple	32/1000	1/200	4/200	3/200	8/200	16/200
question/ Statement of fact	(3.2%)	(.5%)	(2%)	(1.5%)	(4%)	(8%)

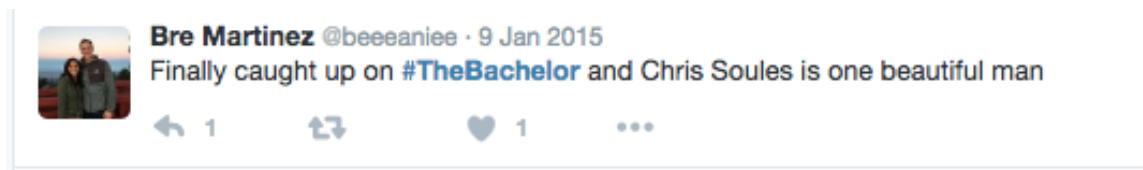
## Appendix 6



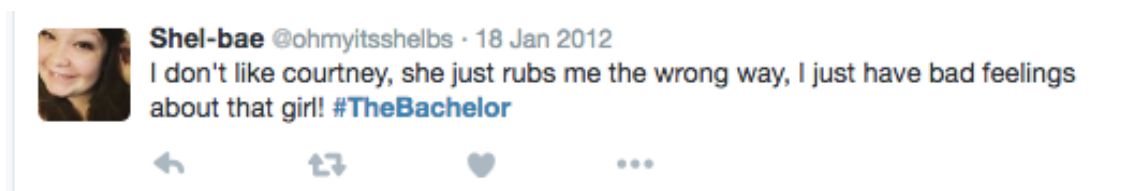
## Appendix 7



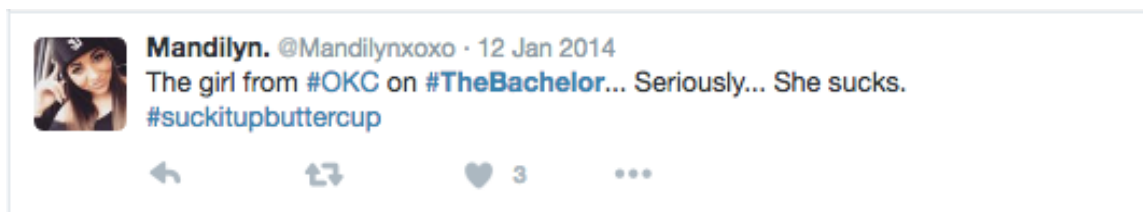
## Appendix 8



## Appendix 9



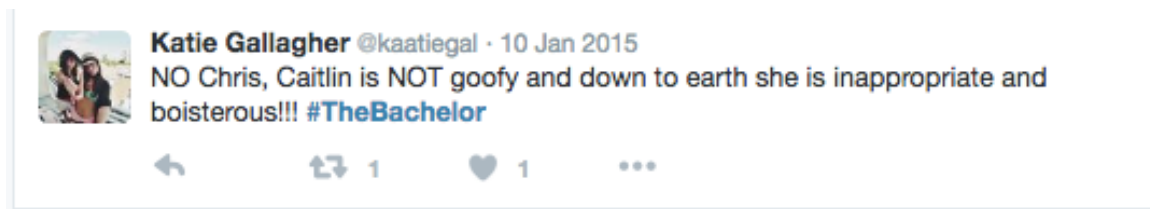
## Appendix 10



## Appendix 11

Missing--Get tweet about “[#TheBachelor](#) watching season finale. I am so grossed out by Juan Pablo!! Claire becomes a baby with his smooth talk. I don’t like him. Yuck!”

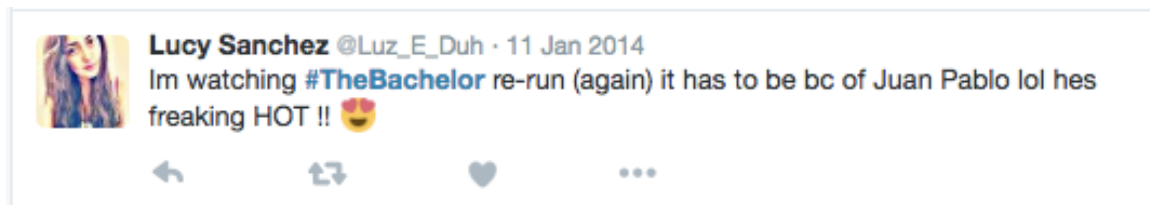
## Appendix 12



## Appendix 13



## Appendix 14



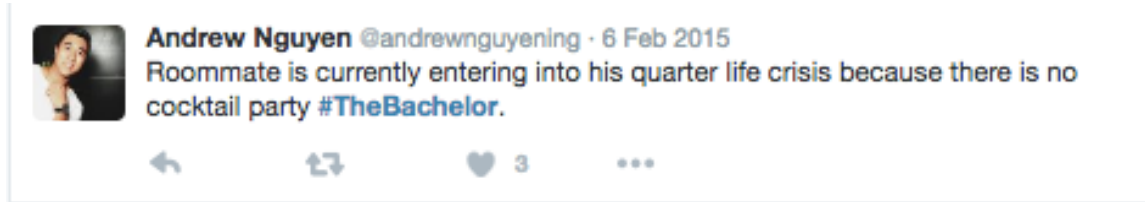
## Appendix 15



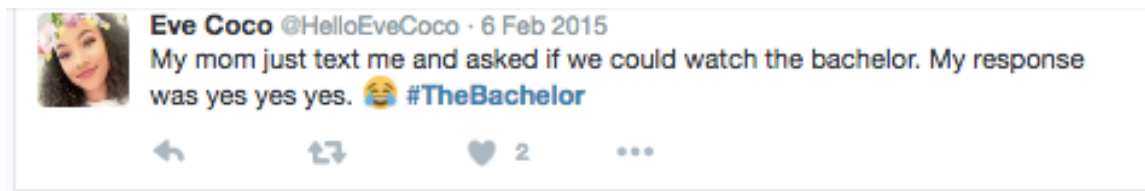
## Appendix 16



## Appendix 17



## Appendix 18



## Appendix 19

Act of Watching	Tweeting	General Mundane
• Worth watching	• Live tweeting /	• Thinking
• Happened to catch	Tweeting about it	• I can picture that
• Catching up	• Read tweets	• On a Monday
• Yelling at TV	• BEST recap	• Thursday night
• Bachelor subtext	• For your pleasure...	• Been there, done that
• Watching reruns / Finally watching / still watching / watching an episode / done watching / stop watching / so	• Only following for Bachelor tweets	• Back to school
		• Brings back memories
		• Texted to tell me
		• Day is made
		• Curled my hair



excited to

watch /

watching

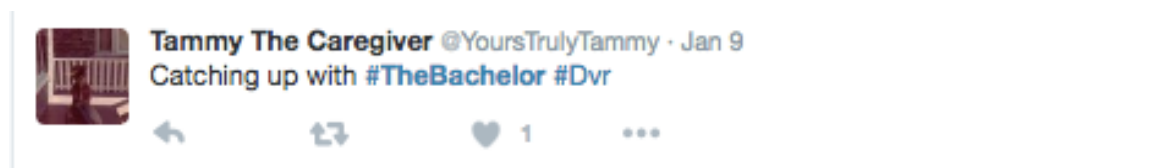
finale

- Best episode
- Great season
- / next season
- So ready for
- tonight!

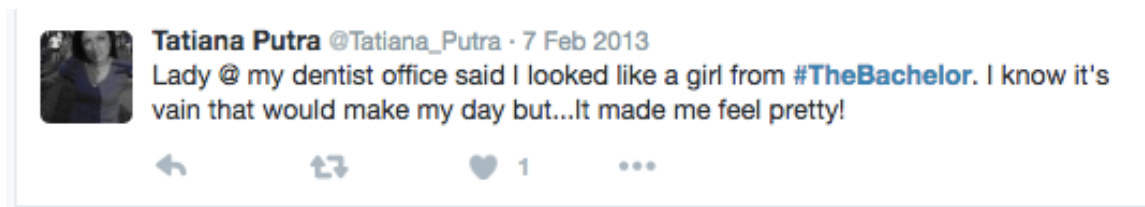
#### Appendix 20



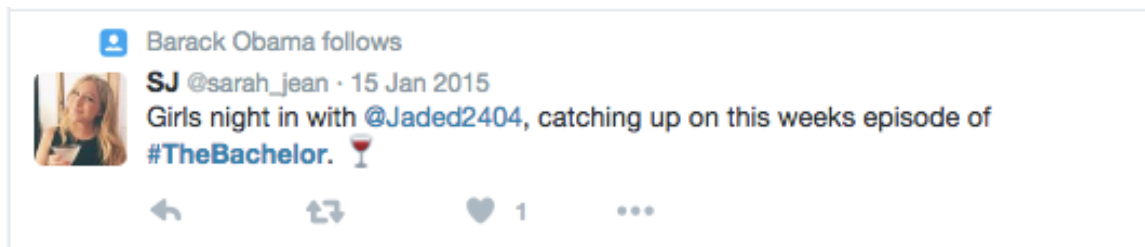
#### Appendix 21



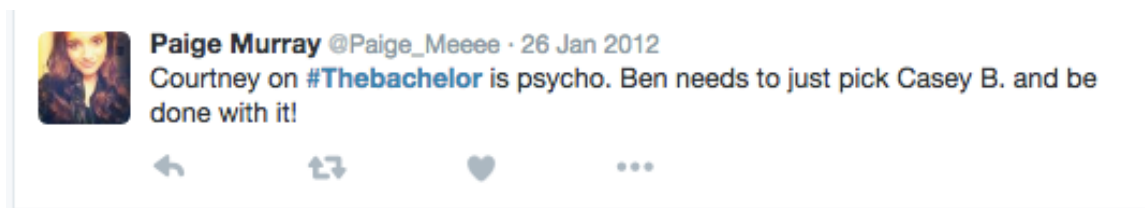
## Appendix 22



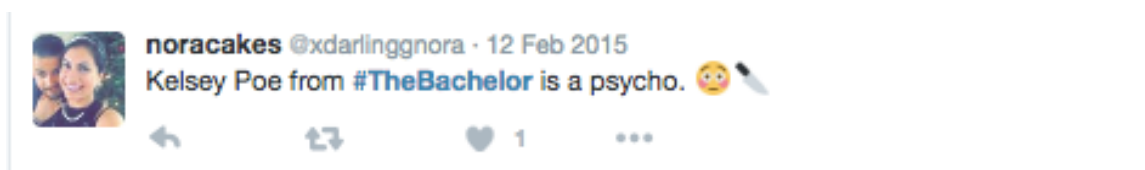
## Appendix 23



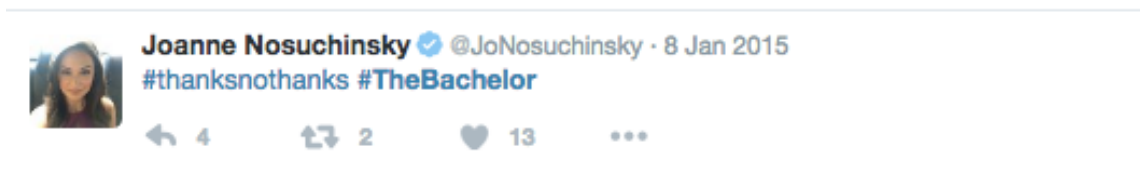
## Appendix 24



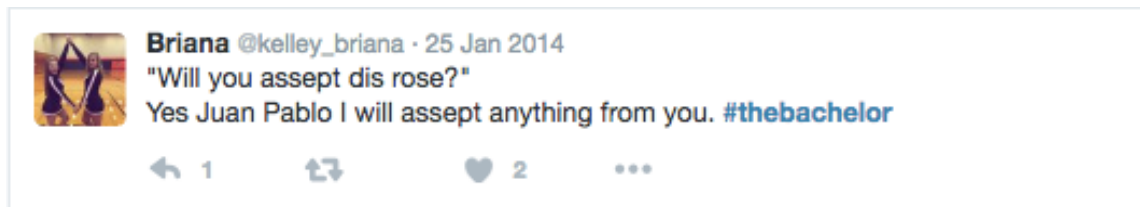
## Appendix 25



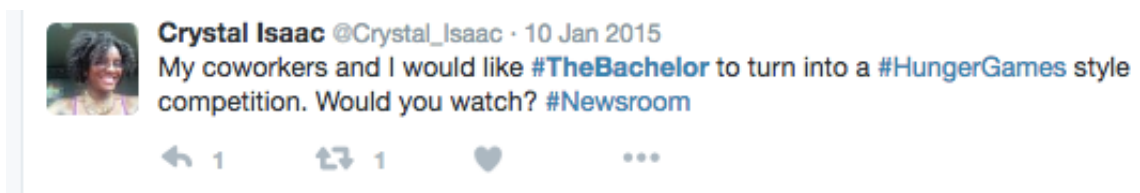
## Appendix 26



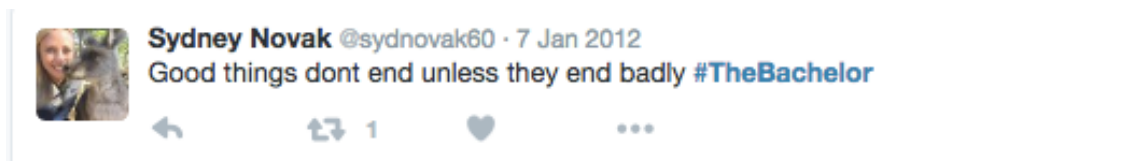
## Appendix 27



## Appendix 28



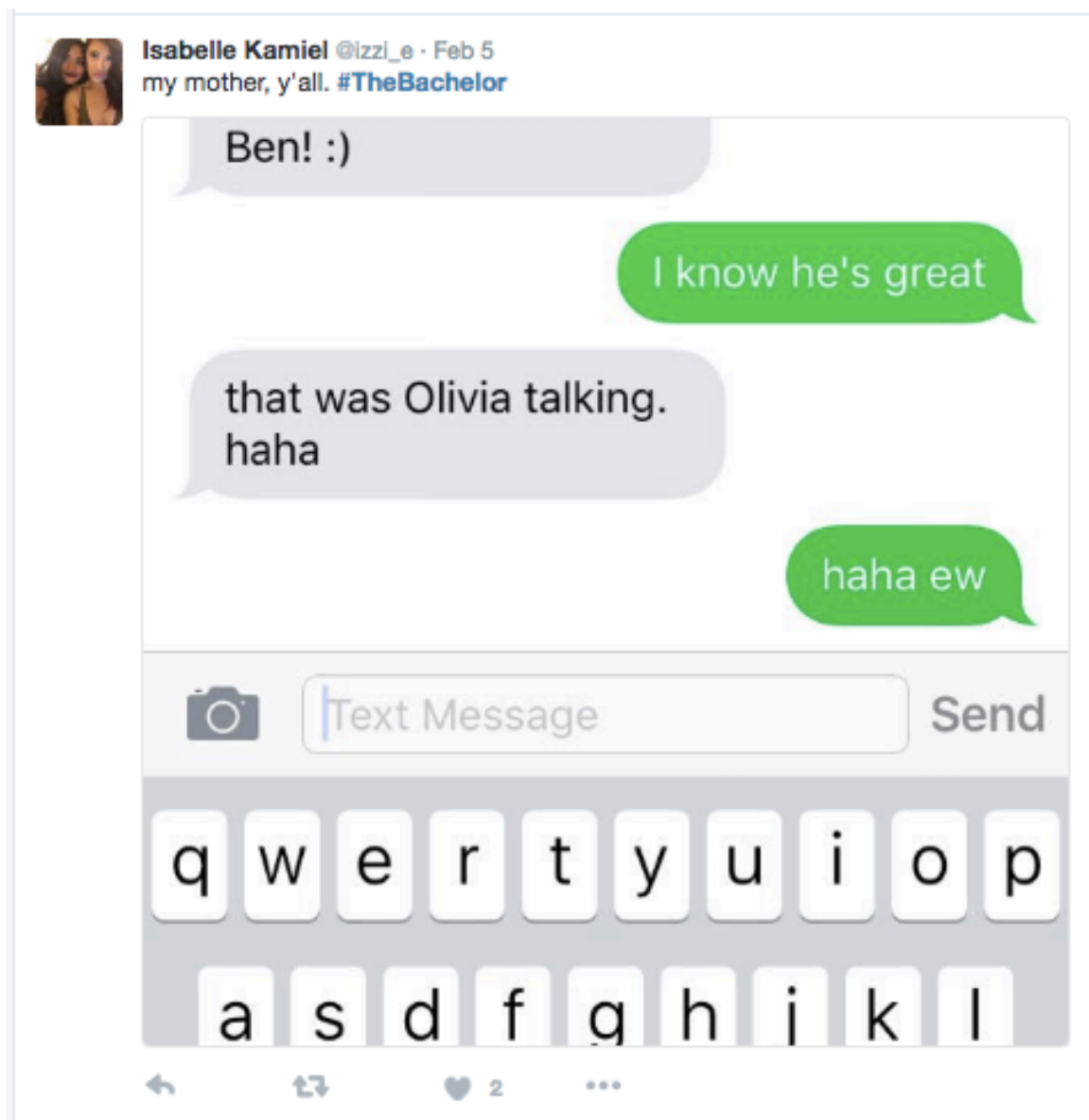
## Appendix 29

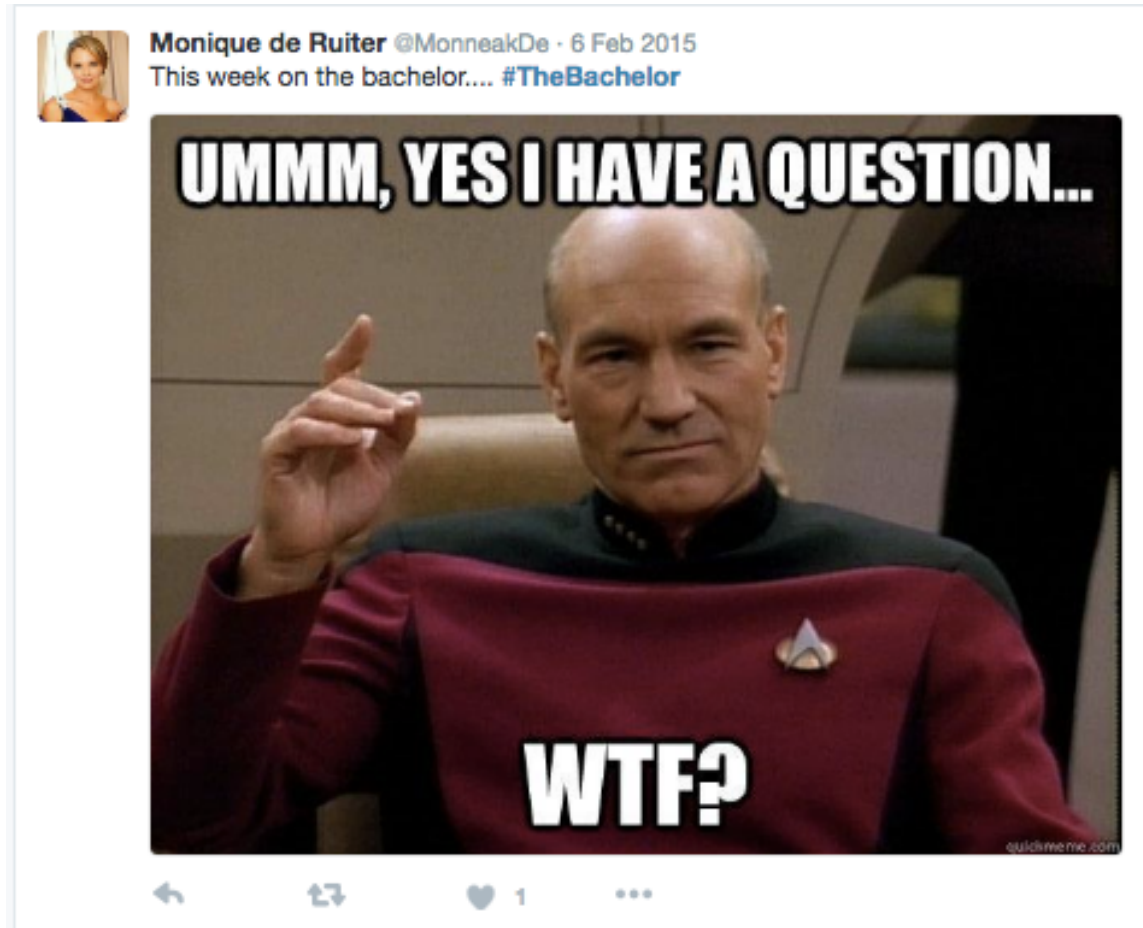


## Appendix 30



Appendix 31

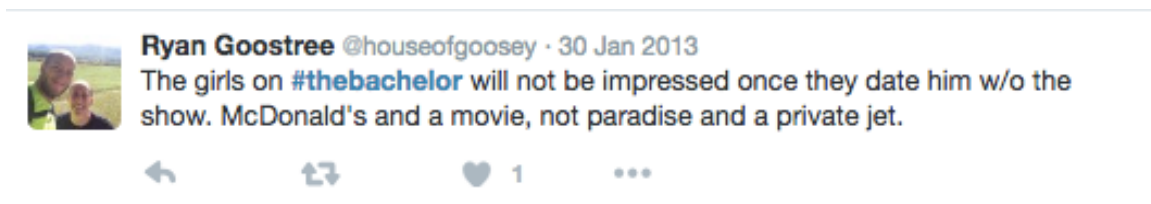




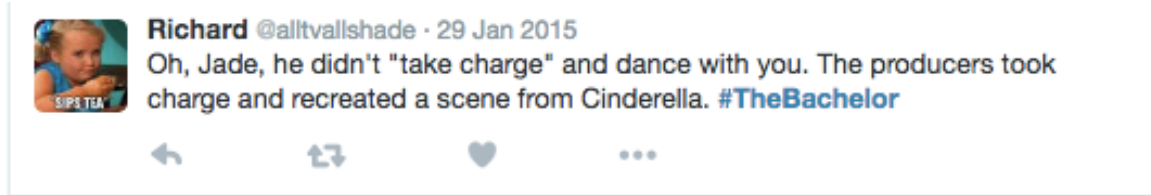
Appendix 33



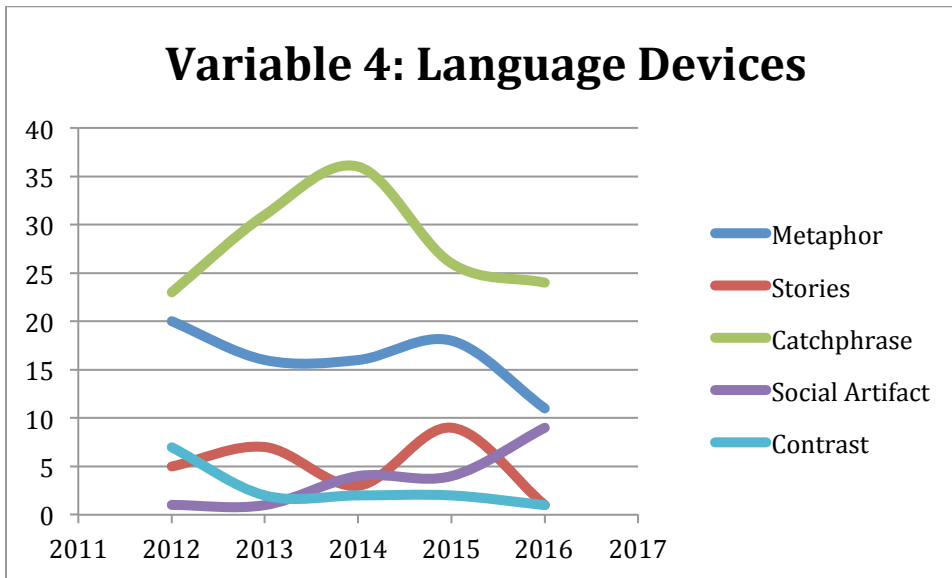
Appendix 34



## Appendix 35



## Appendix 36



## Appendix 37

### Narrative Themes

- That's like Shawntel
- Skinny dipping scene
- Fall downstairs
- Taking clothes off
- Facial expressions
- Twins
- "Hard" Decisions
- Second guessing
- Trashy reality TV
- Entertainment
- Lost its viewers
- Premise of the bachelor
- Wine
- Crying\*
- Apologies
- Sad stories
- Spoiler alerts
- Jealousy
- Talking Crap

### Relationships

- Chemistry
- Respect
- Blindsided
- Relationships
- Marry / marriage\*
- Break up
- Rejection
- Needing someone
- Being blindsided
- Saying sorry
- Deal breakers\*
- Why still single?
- What we "deserve"
- The only rules
- Will they get engaged?
- While it lasted
- Love / Believing in love / Looking for love / Falling in love / "I love my story" / Can he find love?



- Bachelor history
- Bachelor mansion
- Reality on Reality TV
- Drinking game
- Unexplainable emotions
- Here for the right reasons
- Relationship goals

#### Competition Amongst Contestants

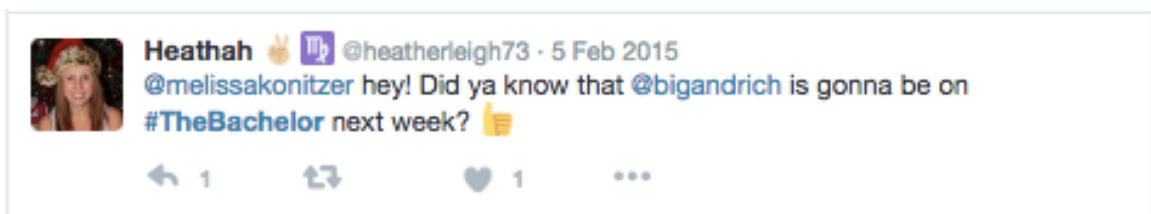
#### Format of Show

- Pick her
- Testing out women
- Finally found her
- No kissing because of daughter
- Kissing 10 other girls
- How many girls are left / many girls
- On her level
- Tough competition
- Win!
- Rose / Accept this rose / Rose Ceremony\*
- New Bachelorette
- 2 on 1 dates
- Hometown dates
- Surviving a date
- Sent home
- The finale!

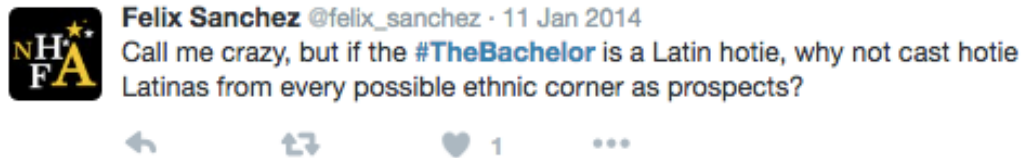
Appendix 38



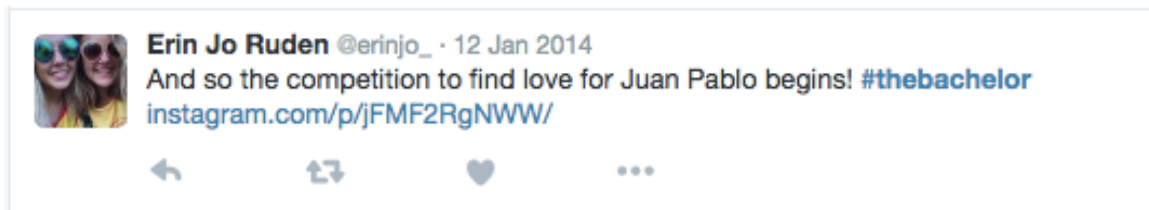
Appendix 38



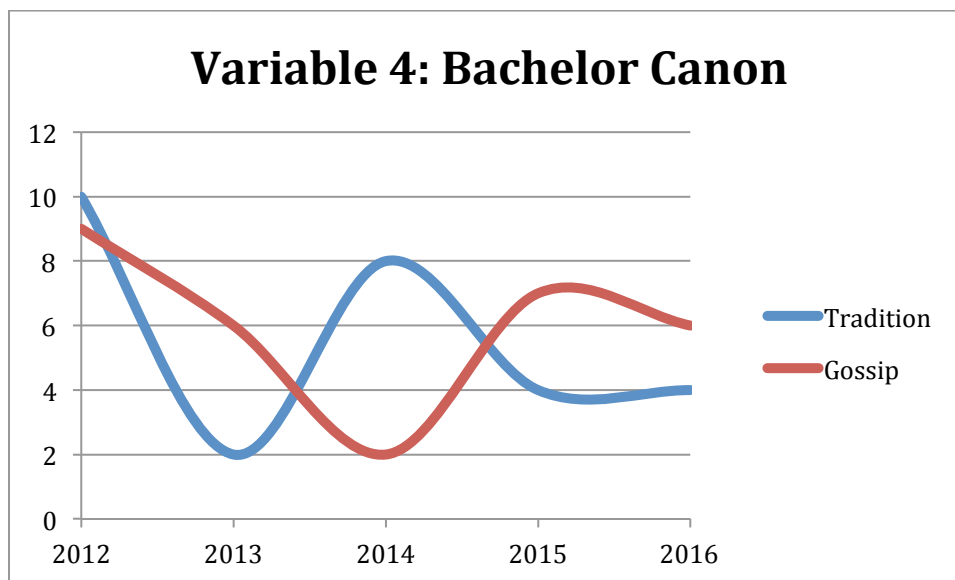
#### Appendix 39



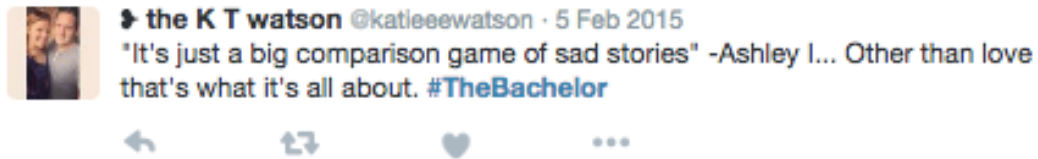
#### Appendix 40



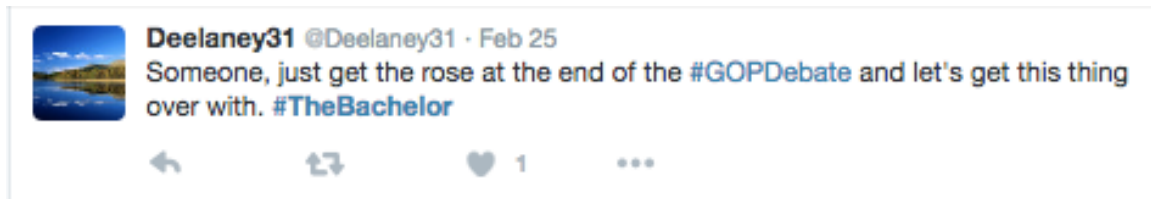
#### Appendix 41



## Appendix 42



## Appendix 43



## Appendix 44

### Direct “Ships”

- Ben and Kacie B\*
- Ben and Courtney\*
- Janner
- I Love Caila for Ben
- Chris & Kaitlyn

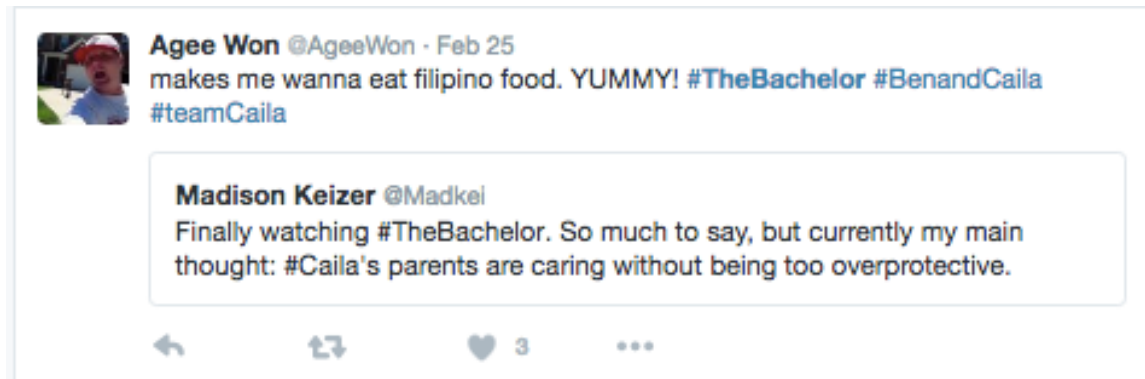
### “Teams”

- Team Kacie B!\*
- Team Caila\*\*
- Team Britt
- #Justice for Olivia
- 

### Non-human

- Chris & Huey
- Ashley & Onion
- Tiara & Sheila

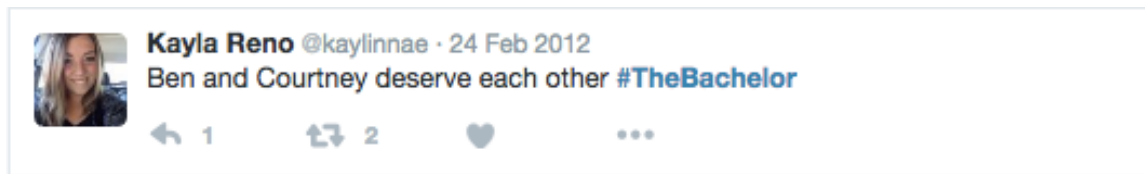
Appendix 45



Appendix 46



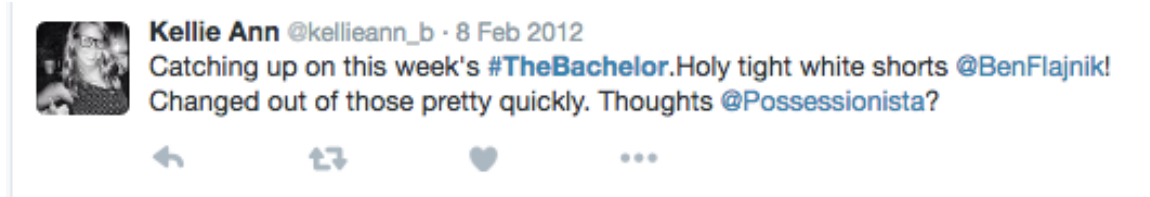
Appendix 47



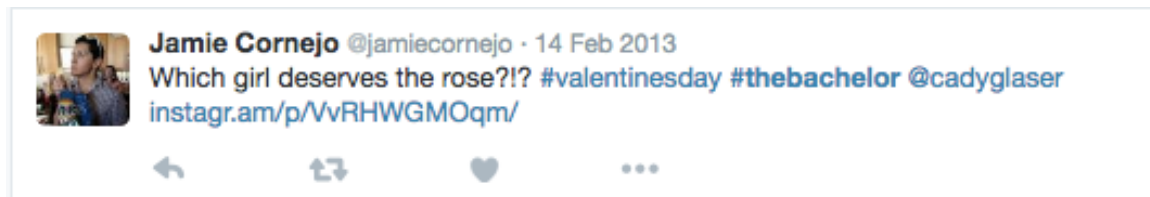
Appendix 48



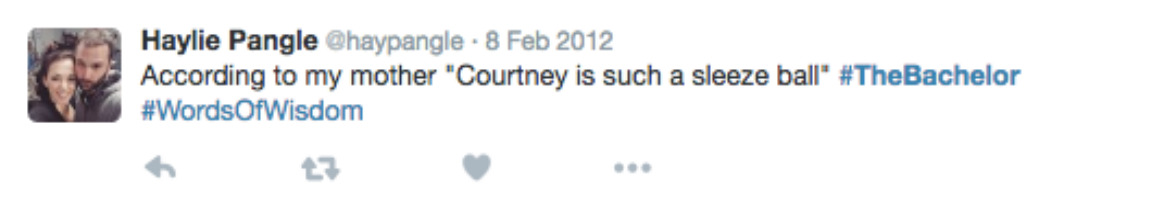
## Appendix 49



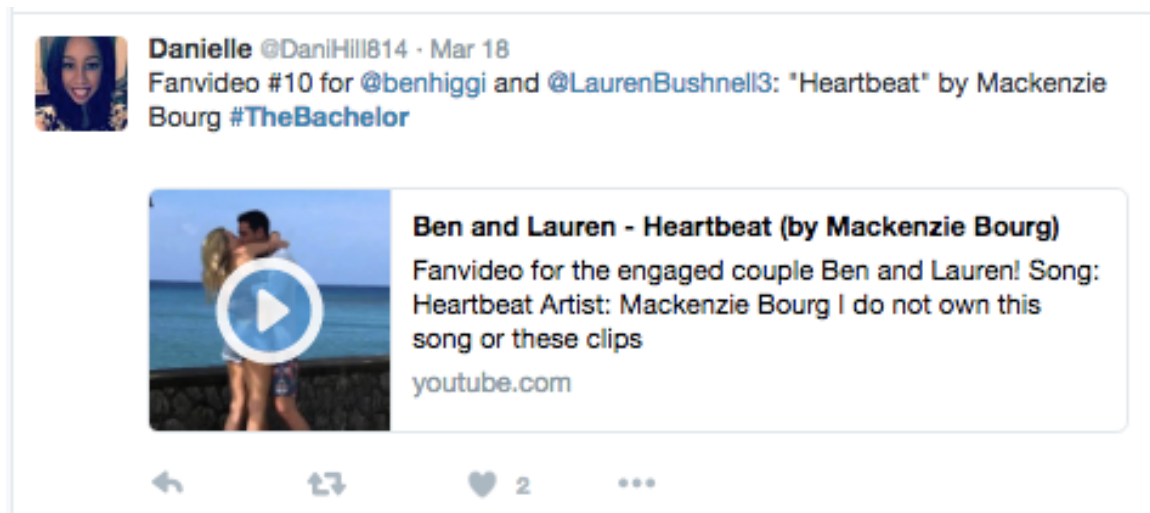
## Appendix 50



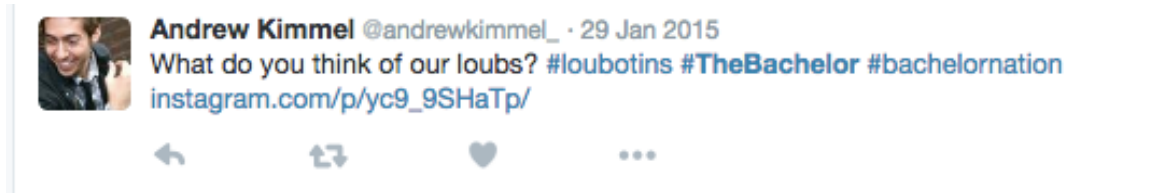
## Appendix 51



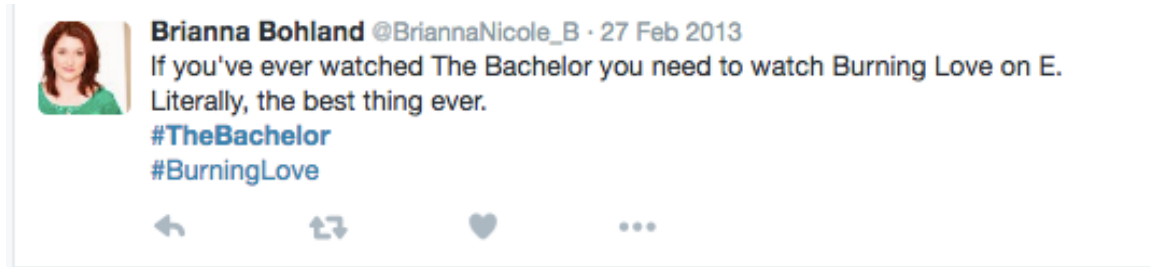
## Appendix 52



## Appendix 53



## Appendix 54



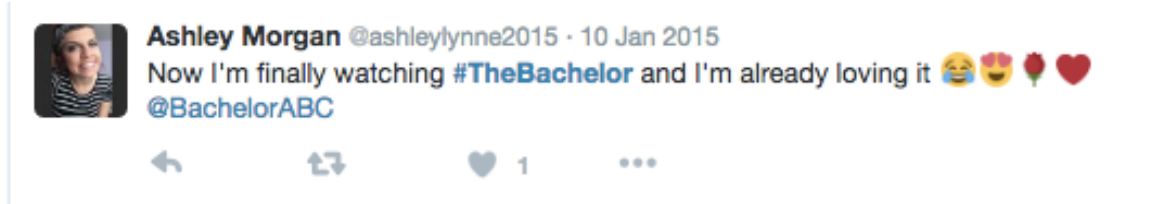
## Appendix 55

	Enthusiastic	Sarcastic	Facetious	Anti-fan	Promotional
2012	92	17	72	17	1
2013	103	11	74	11	0
2014	92	5	85	17	0
2015	107	9	75	7	0
2016	124	13	52	7	0

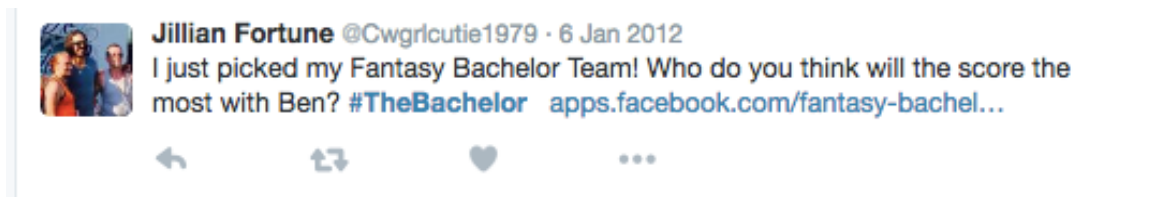
## Appendix 56



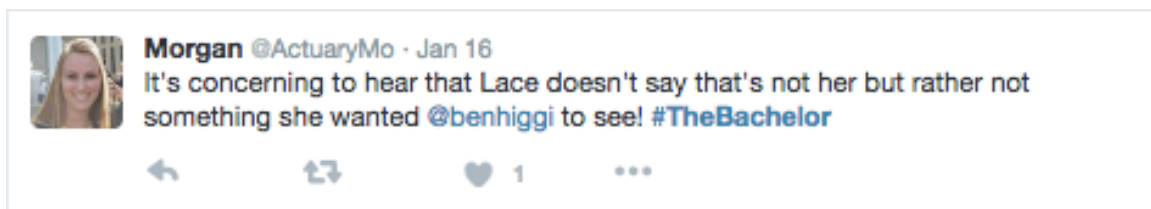
## Appendix 57



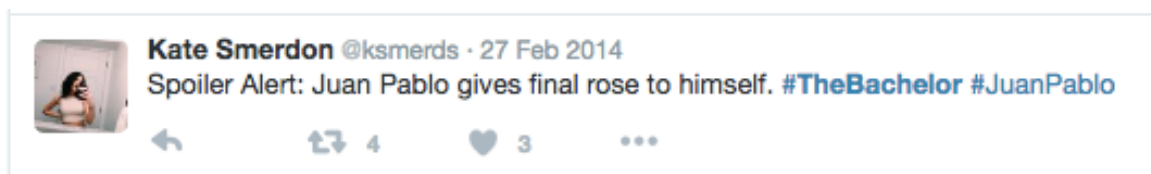
## Appendix 58



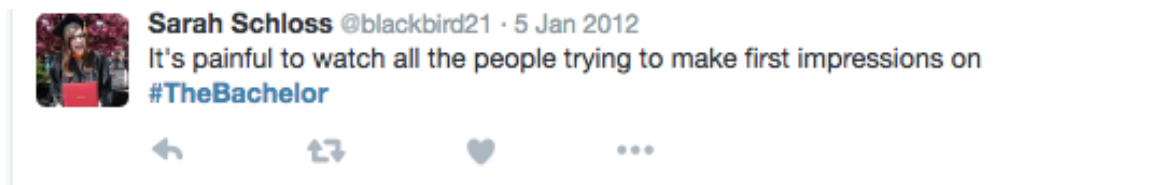
## Appendix 59



## Appendix 60

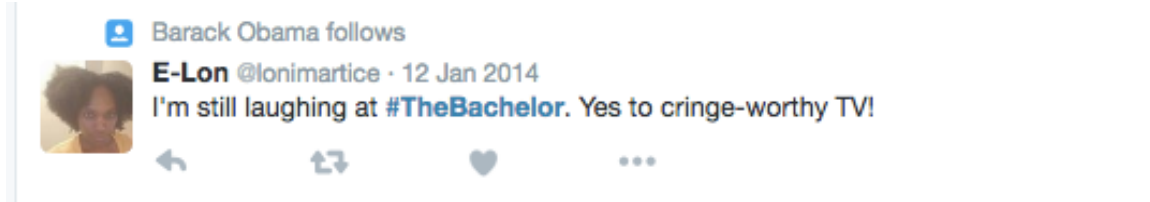


## Appendix 61

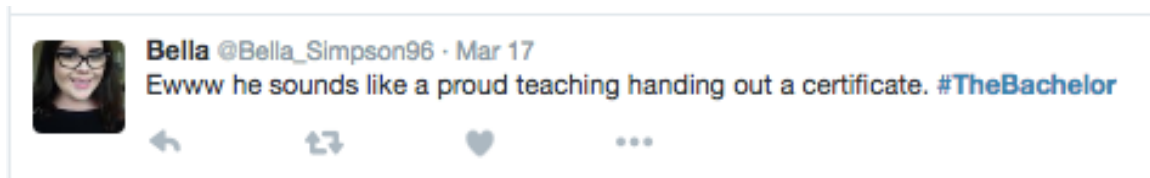




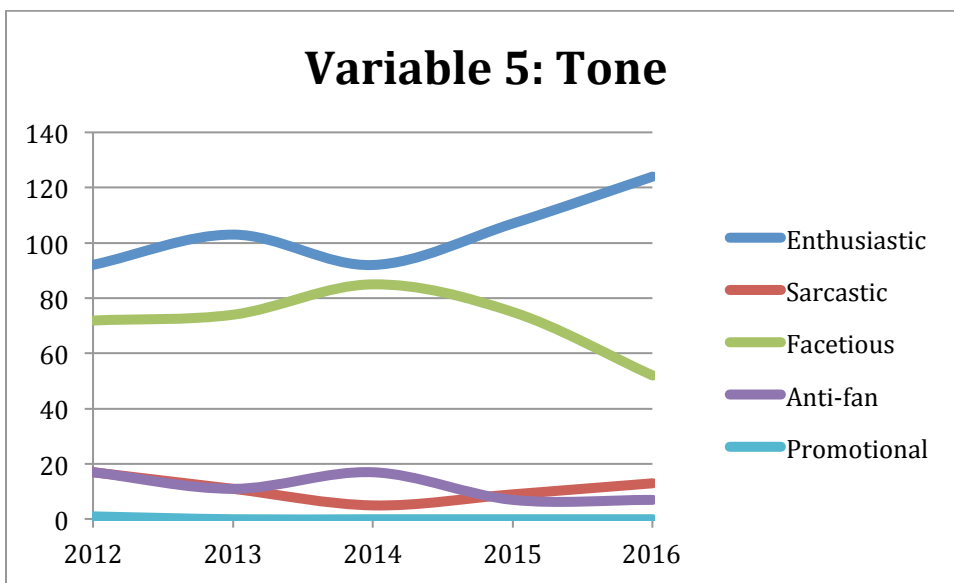
## Appendix 62



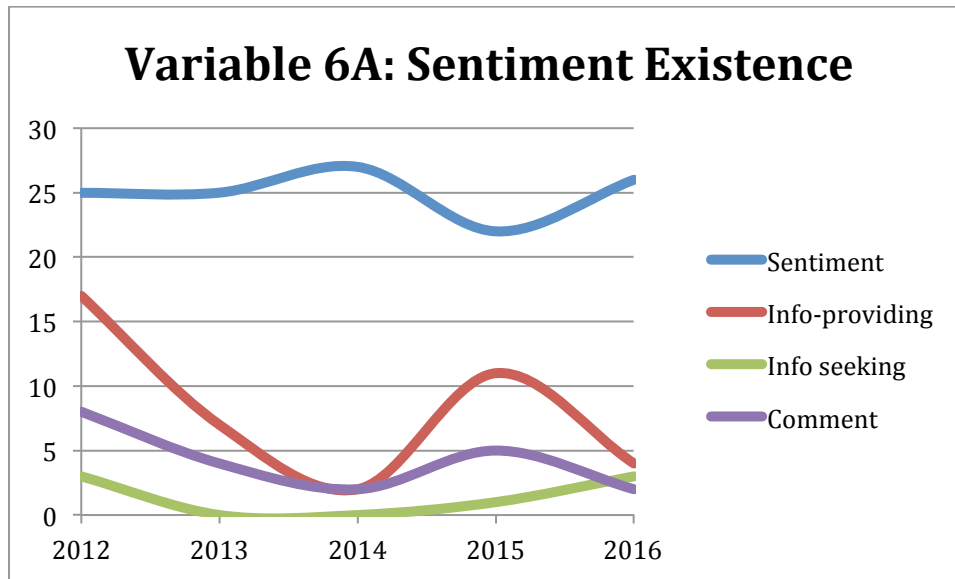
## Appendix 63



## Appendix 64



## Appendix 65

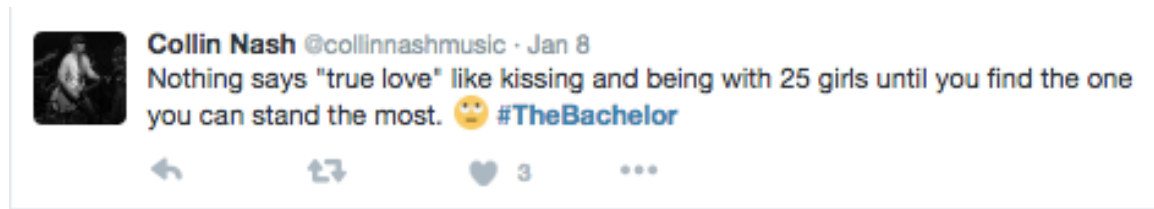


Season/year	Sentiment	Info Providing	Info Seeking	Comment
2012	25/200 (12.5%)	17/200 (8.5%)	3/200 (1.5%)	8/200 (4%)
2013	25/200 (12.5%)	7/200 (3.5%)	0/200 (0%)	4/200 (0%)
2014	27/200 (13.5%)	2/200 (1%)	0/200 (0%)	2/200 (1%)
2015	22/200 (11%)	11/200 (5.5%)	1/200 (.5%)	5/200 (2.5%)
2016	26/200 (13%)	4/200 (2%)	3/200 (1.5%)	2/200 (1%)

## Appendix 66

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Happy	27	32	14	16	11
Anticipation	15	10	7	10	9
Surprise	2	2	1	1	0
Amusement	43	49	34	55	46
Pride/Admiration	25	29	48	38	50
Sad	1	7	2	6	12
Angry	13	4	8	1	2
Annoyance/Judgment	51	49	65	51	44
Neutral	3	9	14	16	16
Resigned	3	6	5	1	4
Dubious	0	1	0	1	0
Relieved	0	1	1	0	0
Pondering	0	0	1	2	2

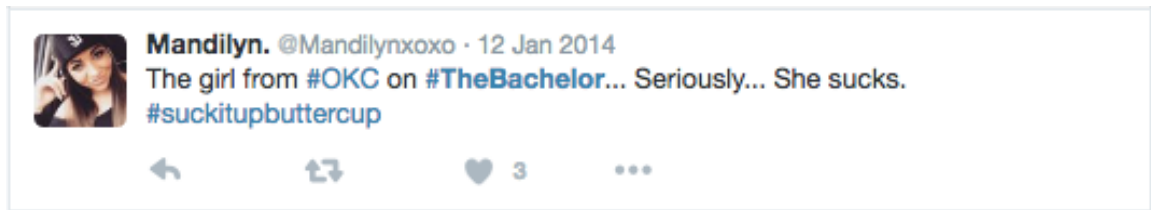
## Appendix 67



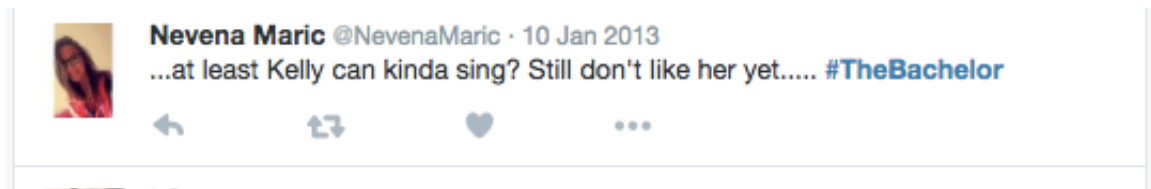
## Appendix 68



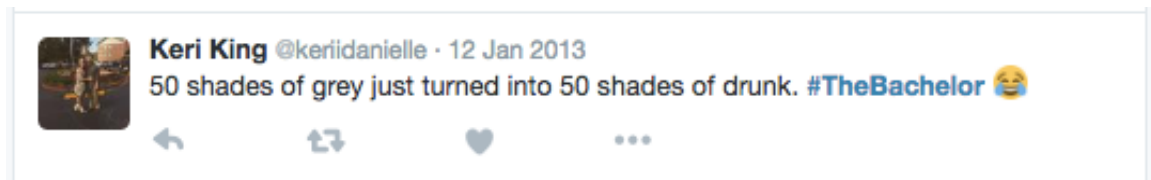
## Appendix 69



## Appendix 70



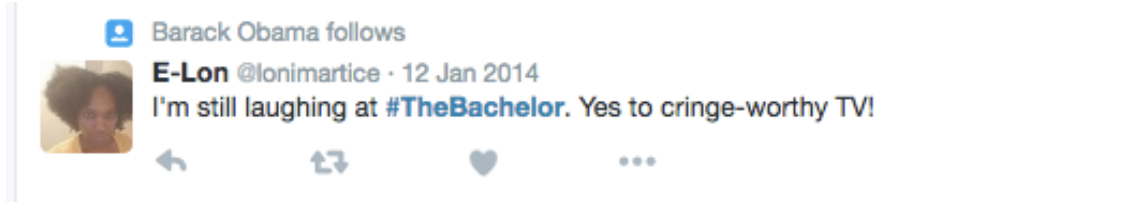
## Appendix 71



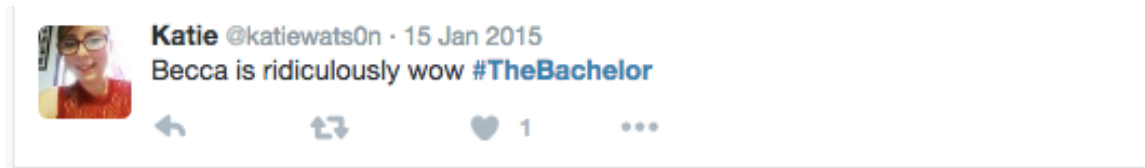
## Appendix 72



#### Appendix 73



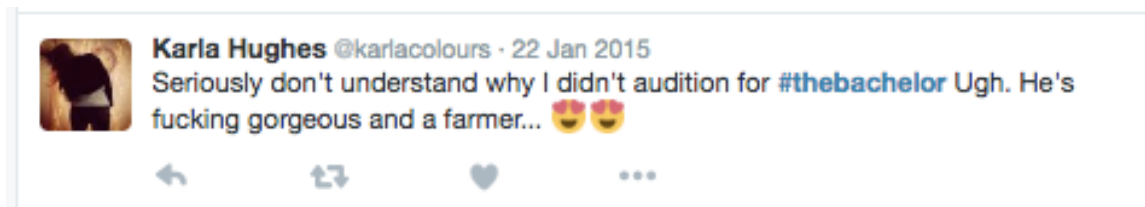
#### Appendix 74



#### Appendix 75



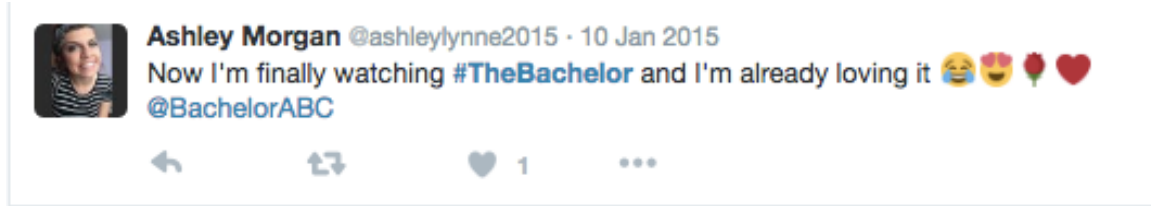
#### Appendix 76



#### Appendix 77



## Appendix 78



## Appendix 79



## Appendix 80

Positive	Negative	Neutral
• Loved!*	• I'm done	• Can't believe
• Spilt a tear	• Gonna throw up	this!
• Hurts so good	• Um Yeah	• WOW*
• HAHA*	• I can't handle	• OMG / OMFG
• Lawl	this	• God
• Looks insane!	• Ahhh!	• FEEL
• LOL	• Kill me	
• Drama up in	• Say NO	
hurr / So much	• Dammit!	
drama!	• The fuck!	
• Peed my pants	• This is	
• Best Thing	awkward!	
Ever!	• WTF!*	
• Holy!	• ARG!	
• Right?!	• Dear lord	
•	• Really?!	
	• WHY?!	
	• Woe is me	
	• Oh, shit!	

## Appendix 81

	Positive Sentiment	Negative Sentiment
The bachelor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hottie / HOT / He's so hot / So hot</li> <li>• Goofy</li> <li>• Down to earth</li> <li>• Pure Gold</li> <li>• Cute / The cutest</li> <li>• My precious boy</li> <li>• Looking good today</li> <li>• Astonishing</li> <li>• such a babe</li> <li>• perfect Ben / perfect</li> <li>• Yummy!</li> <li>• Sweet and kind</li> <li>• Actually like him</li> <li>• Anything for you</li> <li>• GREAT</li> <li>• So handsome and kind</li> <li>• whole package</li> <li>• a knock out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yuck</li> <li>• Don't like him*</li> <li>• Ugh*</li> <li>• Grossed out / Gross</li> <li>• Something's off</li> <li>• Creeped out</li> <li>• Less lame</li> <li>• So weird</li> <li>• Lied!</li> <li>• Man card removed</li> <li>• Ben is a bore</li> <li>• Get him a personality and a brain</li> <li>• Douche / douchebag</li> <li>• You know you're a geek</li> <li>• Dickless</li> <li>• Jerk</li> <li>• No one cares</li> </ul>



- Lackluster personality
- Ewww
- He sounds like a proud teacher
- His wiener is the volcano!

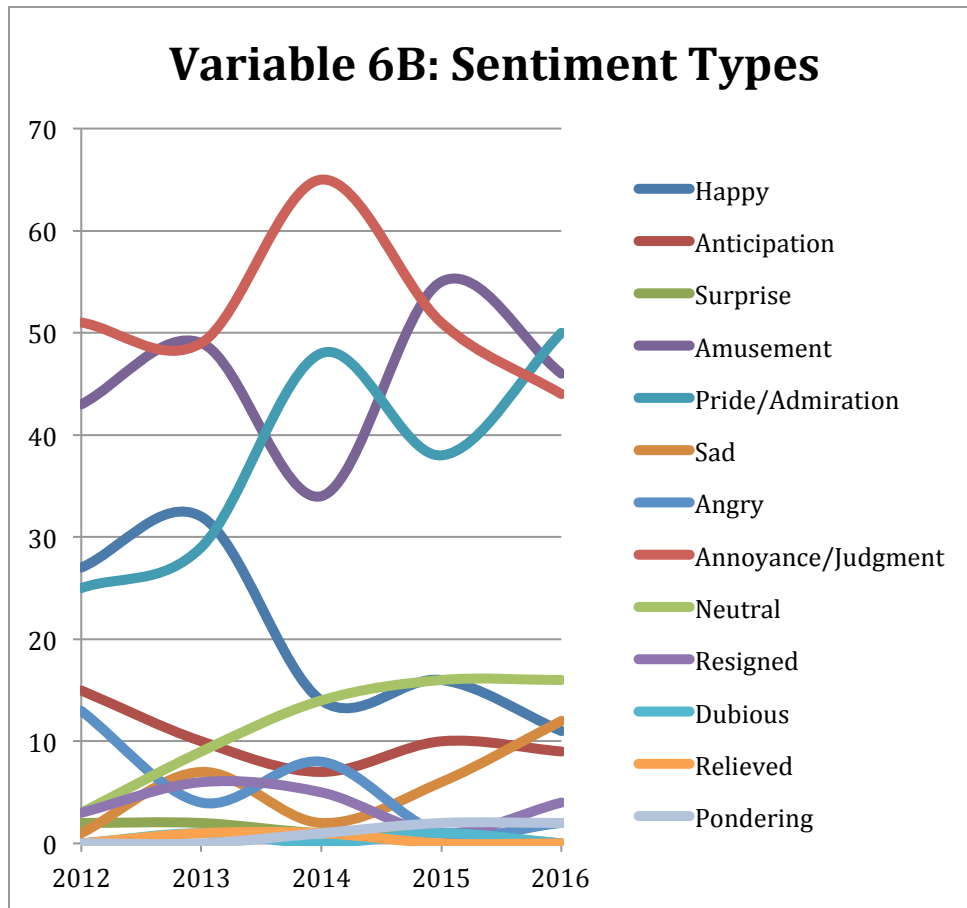
#### Contestants

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • She is my favorite                | • Fakely                          |
| • Aww                               | • Stupid                          |
| • Gracious                          | • Manipulative                    |
| • 100% better                       | • Skank                           |
| • I like her                        | • Annoying / Most Annoying Person |
| • Going to miss her                 |                                   |
| • I LOVE / I love it / I love Andi! | • Fake / Fake Concussion          |
| • She's more mature                 | • Risqué                          |
| • She's amazing                     | • Catty                           |
|                                     | • Idiot                           |
|                                     | • Inappropriate                   |
|                                     | • Boisterous                      |

- Psycho\*
- Are you serious?
- Ashamed
- Punch her\*
- NOT
- Stripper
- Go away\*
- Can't stand her
- Get over yourself
- Deplorable
- I hate them /  
Everyone hates her /  
Haters
- This bitch
- She's a dog
- Bullie
- 50 shades of drunk
- shut up already
- beat the shit out of  
her
- they're like sister  
wives

- wiggling out
- never dance, ever

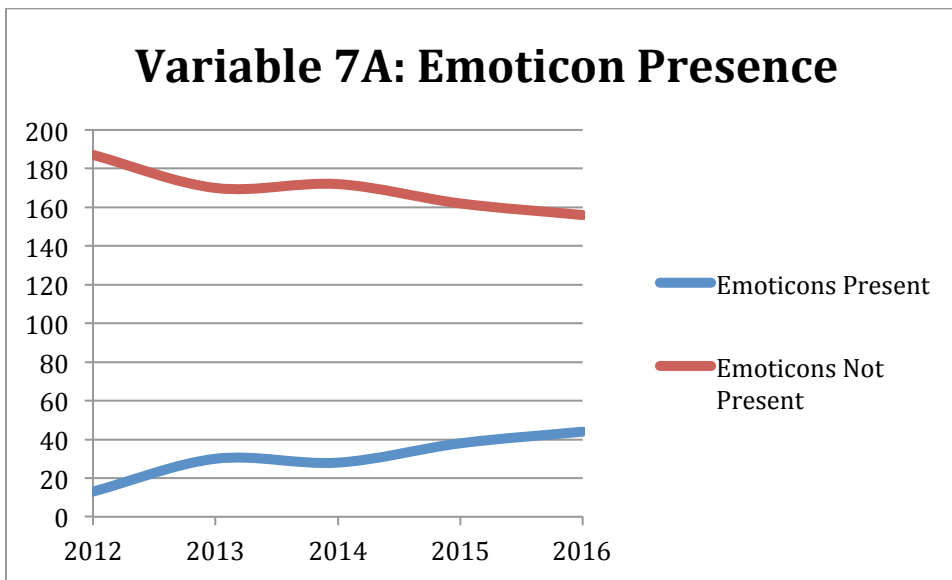
## Appendix 82



## Appendix 83

	Emoticons Present	Emoticons Not Present
2012	13	187
2013	30	170
2014	28	172
2015	38	162
2016	44	156

## Appendix 84



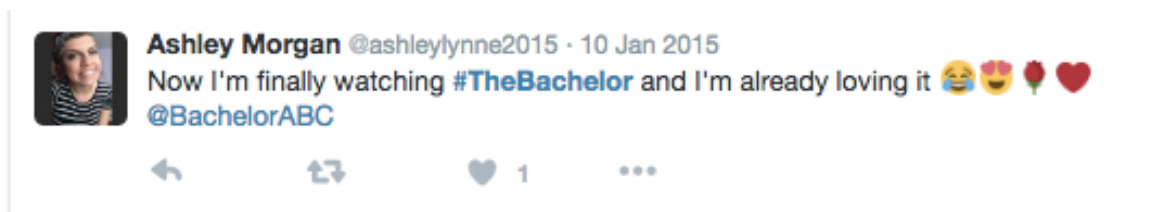
## Appendix 85

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Smiley Face	3	9	4	4	7
Hearts	1	5	10	5	8
Rose/Flower	0	0	1	1	3
Praise Hands	0	0	1	2	3
Angry Face	0	1	1	0	0
Sad Face	4	3	2	3	3
Shocked Face	1	0	1	1	1
Laughing	1	5	3	12	2
Crying Face					
Animal	0	0	0	0	3
N/A	187	170	172	162	156
Assortment	1	4	4	6	6
Eye	0	1	0	1	4
Roll/Dubious					
Mouth/Kissing	0	1	0	0	0
Human	0	1	0	1	0
Fire	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	2	3

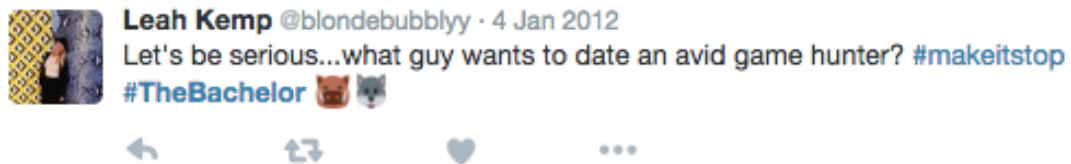
## Appendix 86

	Intensify	Negate	Neutral	Not Applicable
2012	4	2	7	187
2013	21	4	5	170
2014	20	2	6	172
2015	20	6	11	162
2016	30	2	10	156

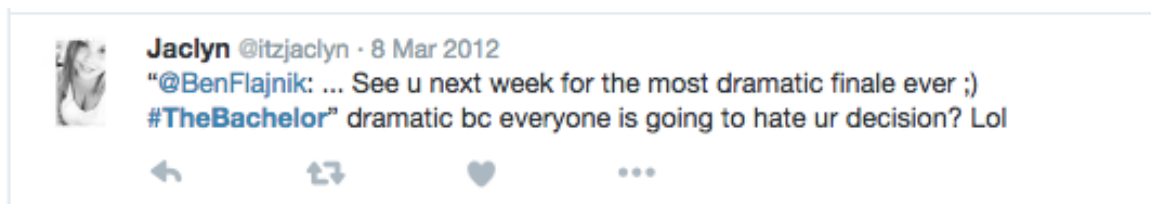
## Appendix 87



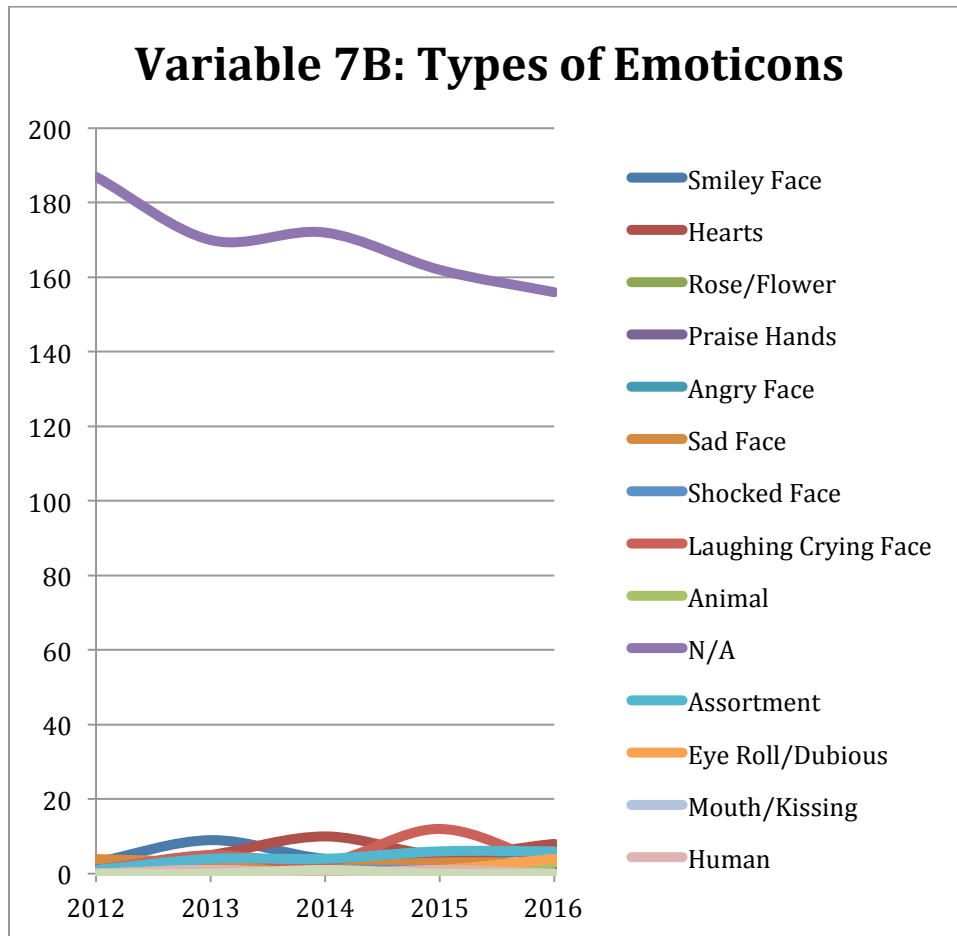
## Appendix 88



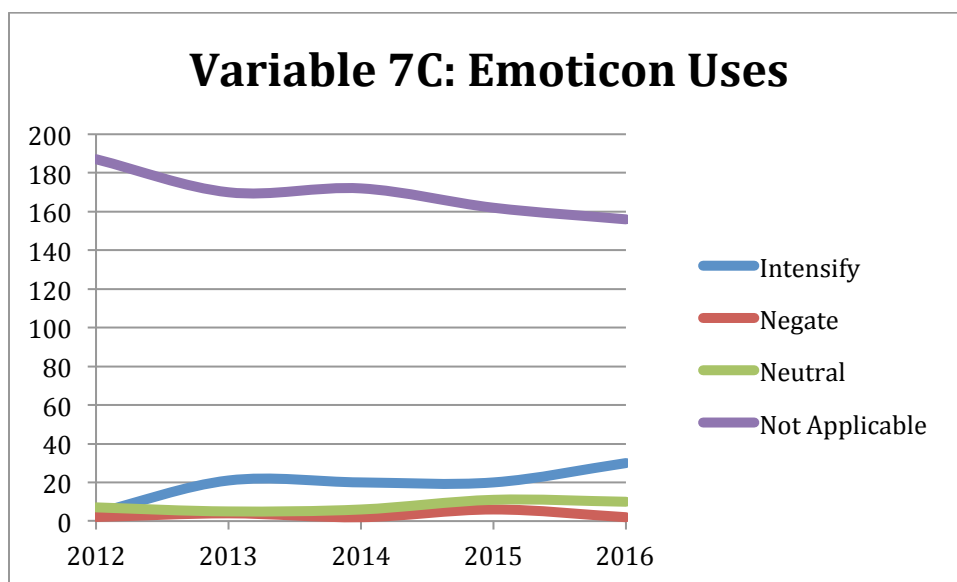
## Appendix 89



## Appendix 90



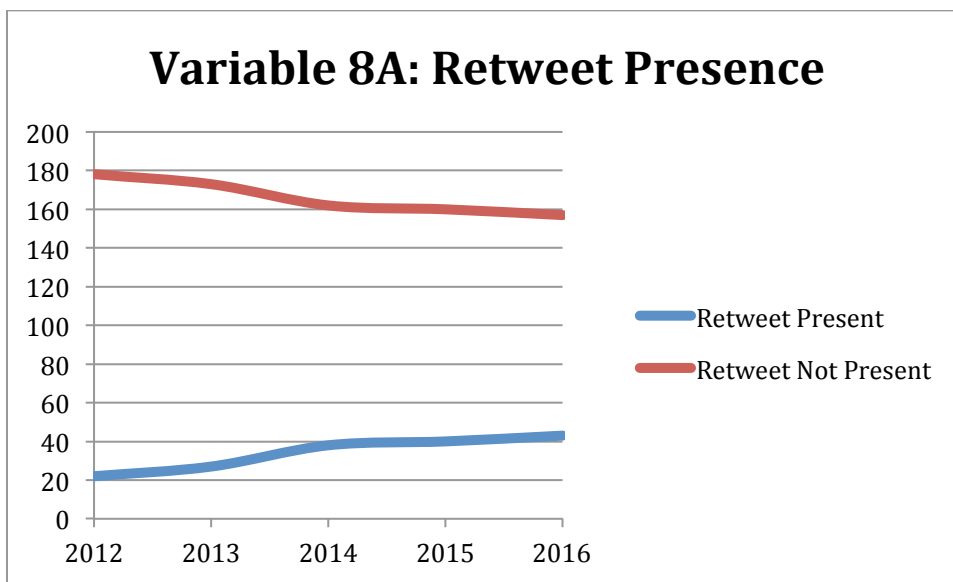
## Appendix 91



## Appendix 92

	Retweets Present	Retweets Not Present
2012	22	178
2013	27	173
2014	38	162
2015	40	160
2016	43	157

## Appendix 93

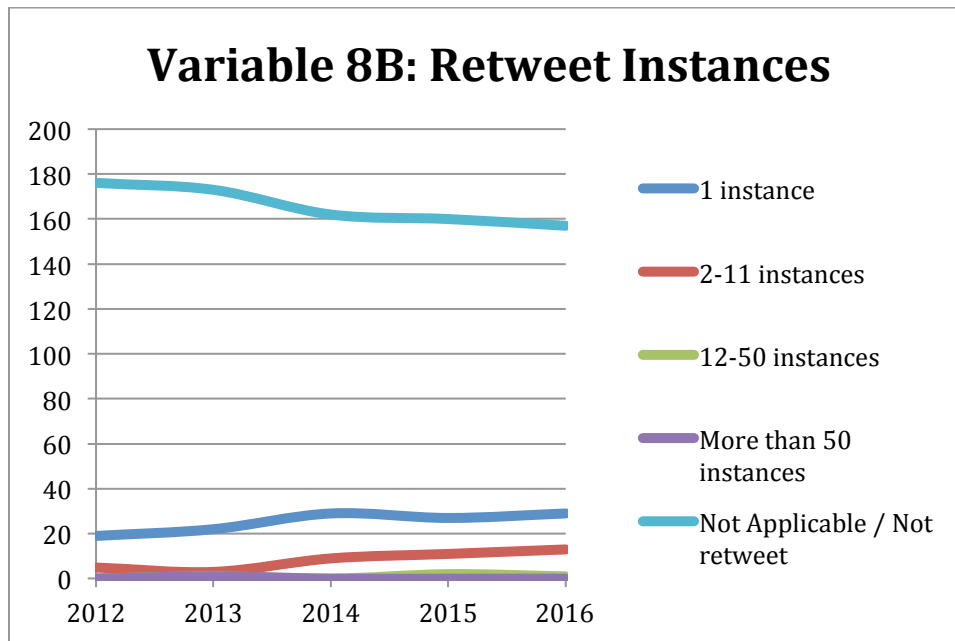




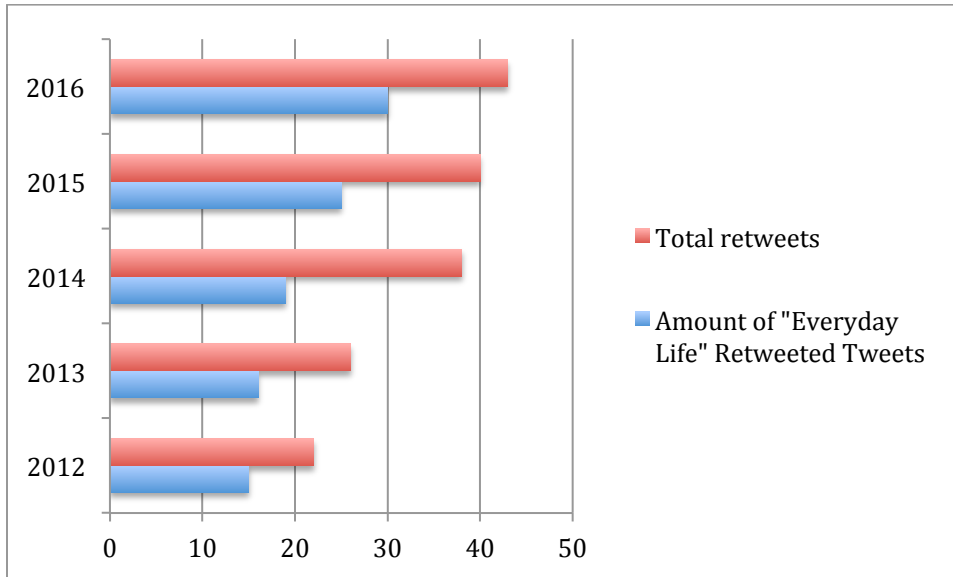
## Appendix 94

	1 instance	2-11 instances	12-50 instances	More than 50 instances	Not Applicable / Not retweet
2012	19	5	0	0	176
2013	22	3	1	1	173
2014	29	9	0	0	162
2015	27	11	2	0	160
2016	29	13	1	0	157

## Appendix 95



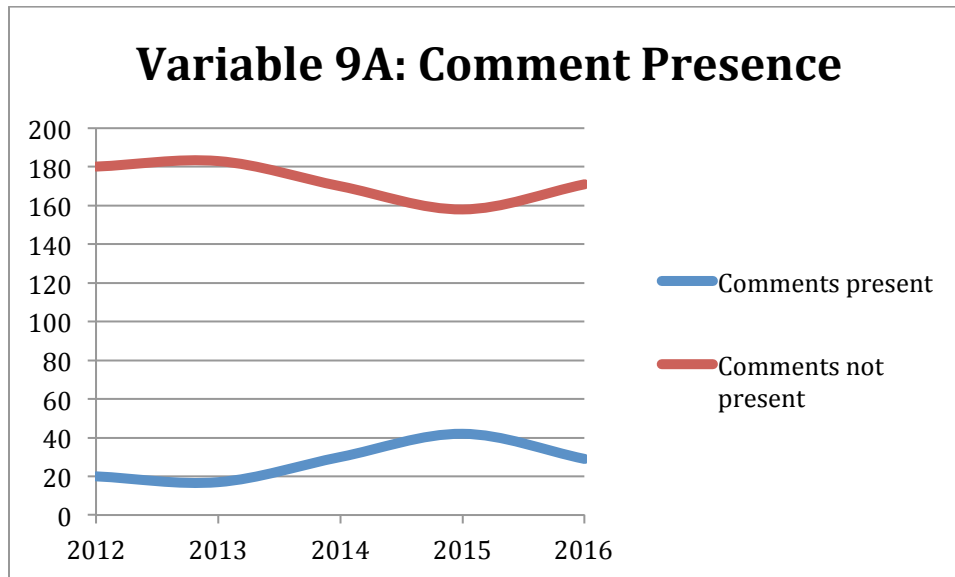
## Appendix 96



## Appendix 97

	Comments present	Comments not present
2012	20	180
2013	17	183
2014	30	170
2015	42	158
2016	29	171

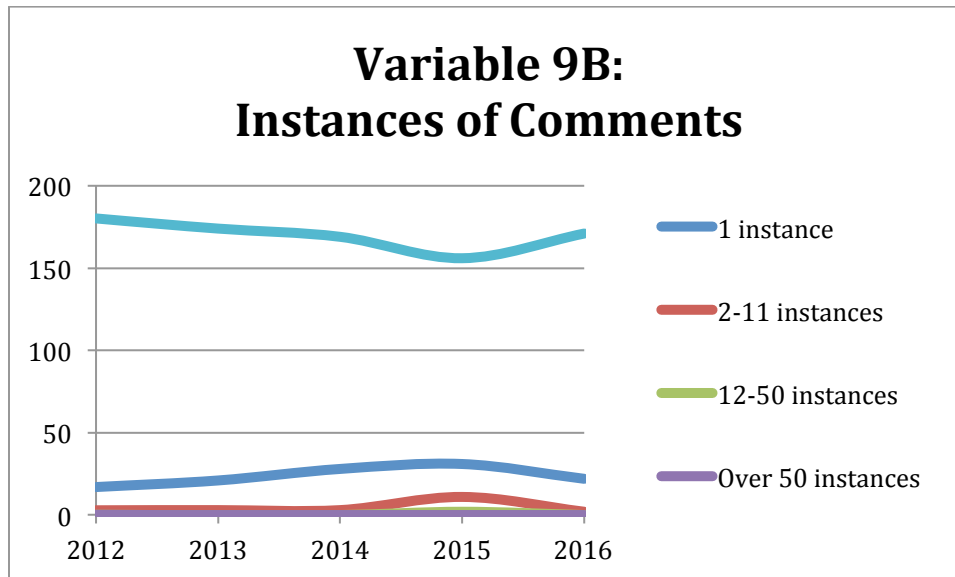
## Appendix 98



## Appendix 99

	1 instance	2-11 instances	12-50 instances	Over 50 instances	Nor applicable/ No comment present
2012	17	3	0	0	180
2013	21	3	0	0	174
2014	28	3	0	0	169
2015	31	11	2	0	156
2016	22	2	0	0	171

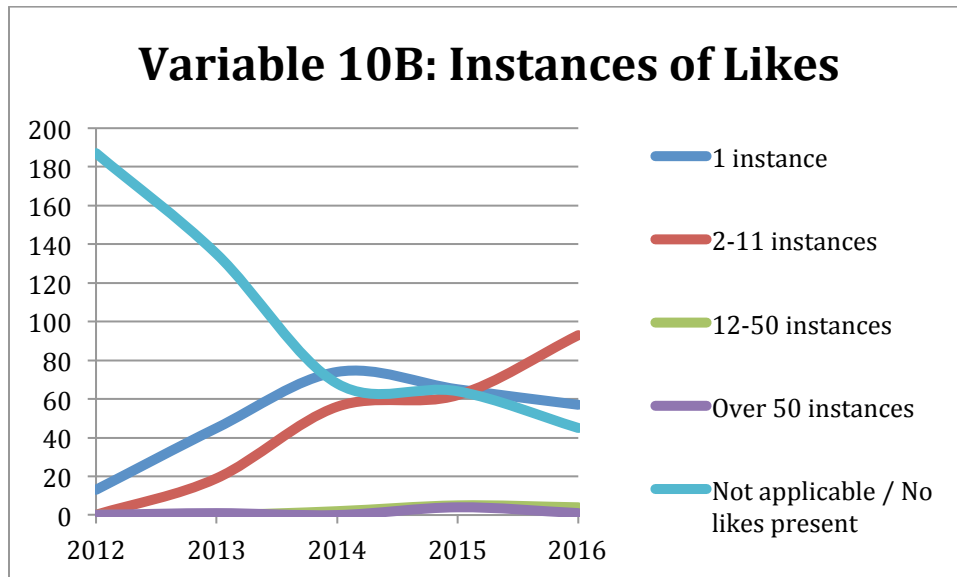
## Appendix 100



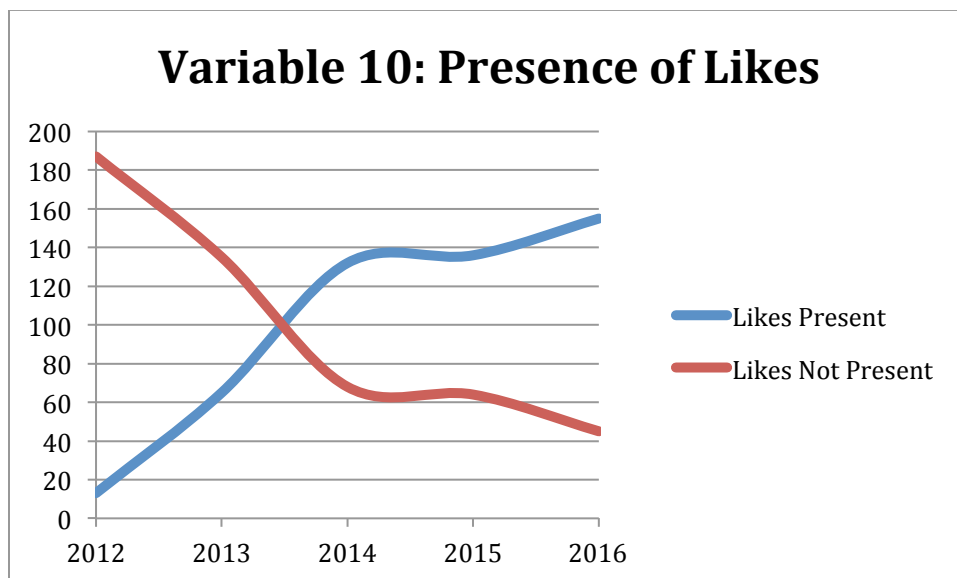
## Appendix 101

	Likes Present	Likes Not Present
2012	13	187
2013	65	135
2014	132	68
2015	136	64
2016	155	45

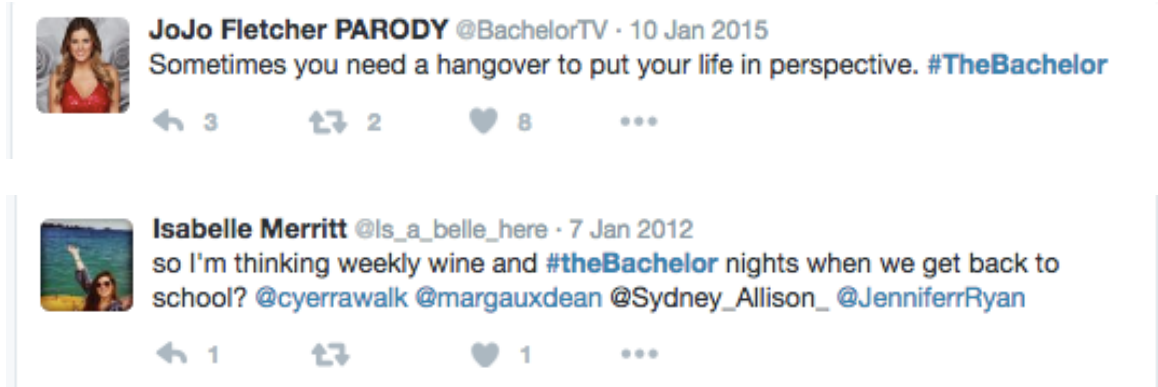
## Appendix 102



## Appendix 103



## Appendix 104



## Appendix 105



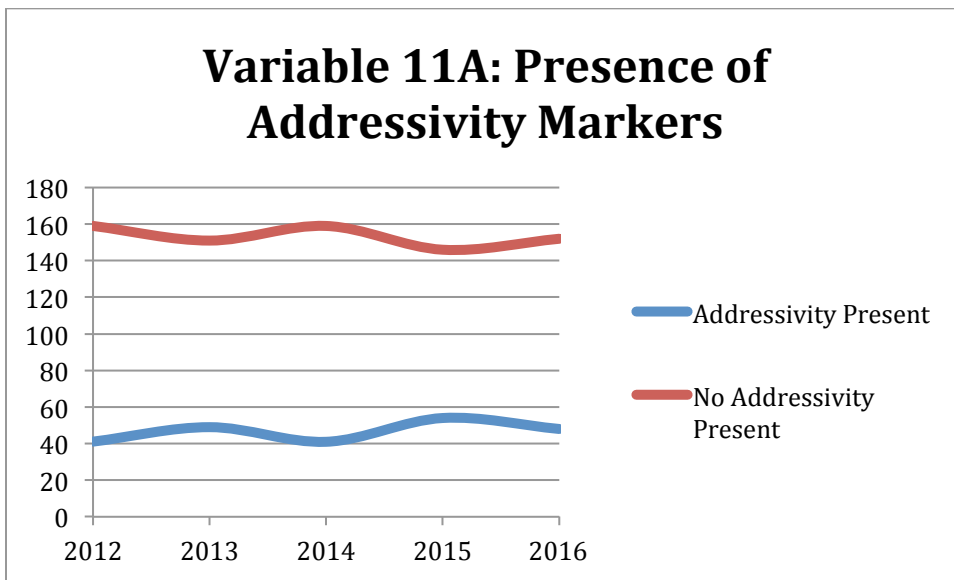
Appendix 106



## Appendix 107

	Mentions Present	No Mentions Present
2012	41	159
2013	49	151
2014	41	159
2015	54	146
2016	48	152

## Appendix 108

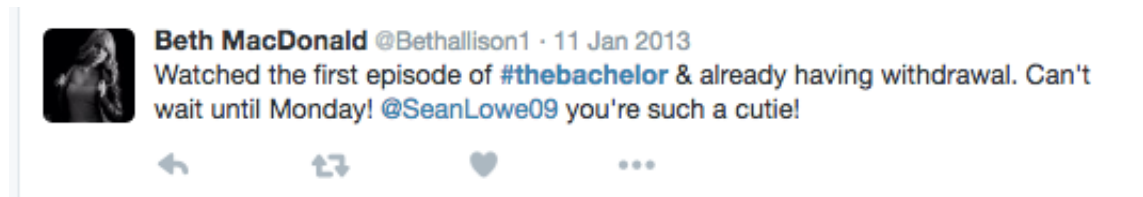




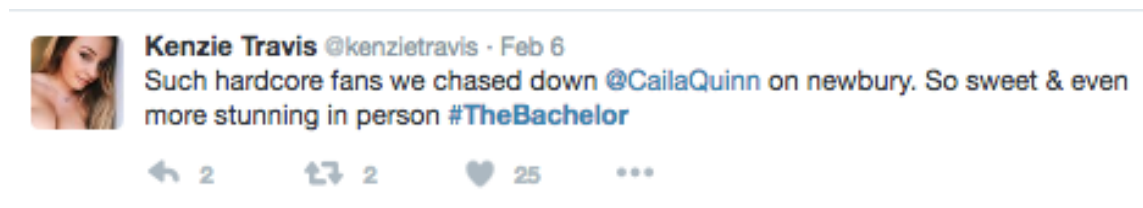
## Appendix 109

	The bachelor	Contestant / host	Non- contestant	Other	Not Applicable	Network
2012	6	5	25	3	159	3
2013	16	3	20	8	150	1
2014	11	5	16	7	158	2
2015	5	5	25	8	144	11
2016	10	11	15	5	149	6

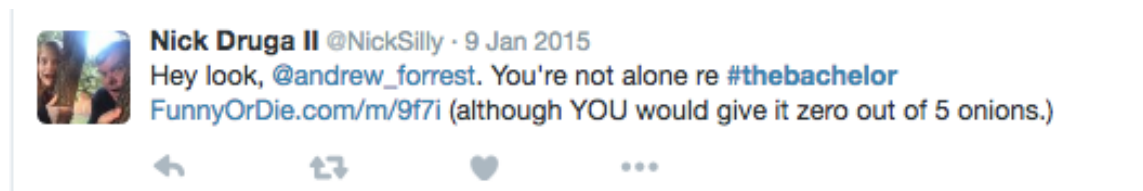
## Appendix 110



## Appendix 111



## Appendix 112



## Appendix 113



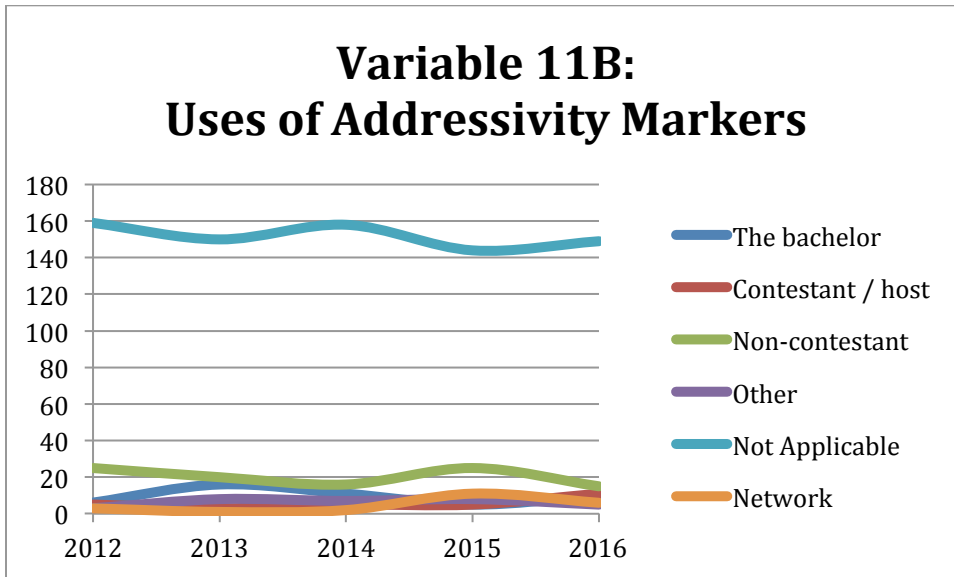
**A Hore** @alicebgtusthis · 16 Jan 2015  
 @TheBachelorAU so many sequins and blush!! #TheBachelor



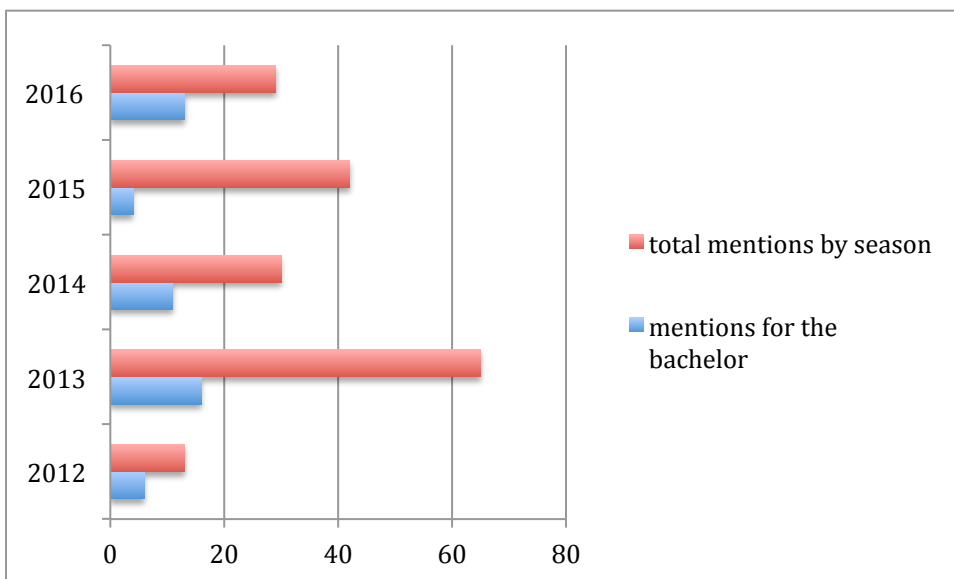
1



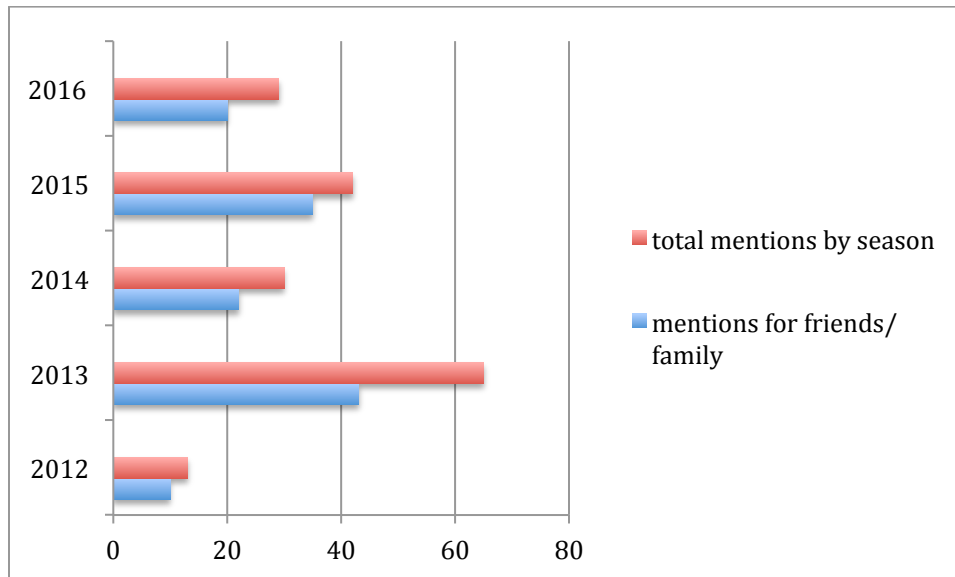
## Appendix 114



## Appendix 115



## Appendix 116

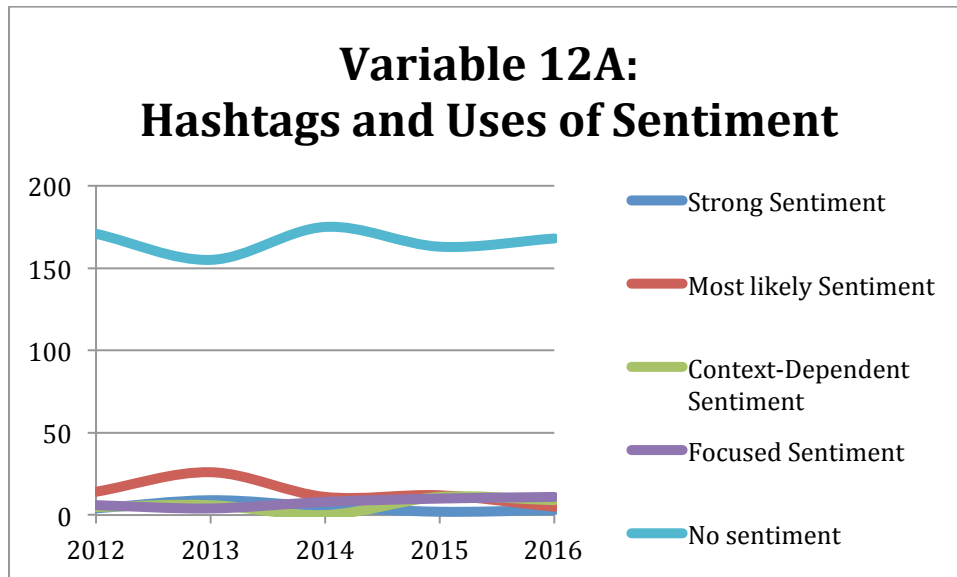


## Appendix 117

### Variable 12A

	Strong Sentiment	Most likely Sentiment	Context- Dependent Sentiment	Focused Sentiment	No sentiment
2012	4	14	5	6	171
2013	9	26	6	4	155
2014	5	11	0	8	175
2015	2	12	11	10	163
2016	3	5	9	11	168

## Appendix 118



## Appendix 119



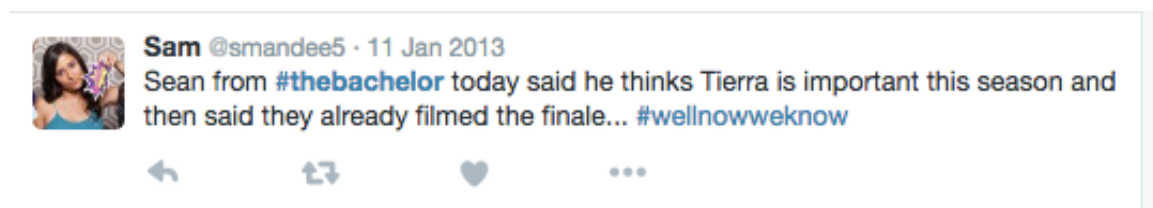
## Appendix 120



Appendix 121



Appendix 122



## Appendix 123

Season	General Sentiment Towards Show	Character judgment / praise	Hyperbole
2012	#Soexcited	#Idiot	#WTF
	#Crazy	#Sheneedstobebachelorette	#OMFG
	#Don'tunderstand	#TherealCourtney	
	#QualityTV	#Courtneystillcray	
	#MyWeakness	#stopcrying	
	#WorstBreakupTextEver	#mancardremoved	
	#LolWeird	#thingsiveneverhadtosay	
	#Awful	#undercoverprincess	
	#Entertainment	#dumbgirl	
	#Heartbreaking	#duckface	
	#Wishfulthinking	#teamKacieB	
	#GoodTV		
	#Thingsthebachelortoughtme		
	#Dreamsdocometrue		
2013	#dramaupinhurr	#wholepackage	#dearlord
	#soaddicting	#sogorgeous	#LOL
	#pickme	#shirtlessean	#LOLZ
	#awkward	#hottie	#WTH
	#barf	#evil	

#bringit	#favgirls
#perfectnight	#shesactuallynice
#boo	#gohome
#favoriteseason	#hottiemchothot
#crushed	#favoritecouple
#drama	#teamcatherine
#rookiemistake	#Sean
#thatsajoke	#manlihoodgone
	#teamlindsay

2014	#seanandcatherine	#suckitupbuttercup
	#mynightmare	#trainwreck
	#noshame	#gross
	#esssok	#idiots
	#romantic	#Andiforbachelorette
	#strange	#goandi
		#worstbachelorever
		#bullies
		#haters
		#JuanPabloisgross
		#Iloveyou
		#goaway

		#Juanlove	
		#teamclare	
		#JuanPablo	
2015	#whatislove	#shestherealwinner	#WhatTHE
	#toomuchtohandle	#SeanLowe	#GIGGLE
	#fatkidfriday	#poorguy	#Sigh
	#haha	#farmhunk	
	#SeanLoweatMOA	#flawless	
	#relationshipgoals	#shesleepswithmakeupon	
	#unrealexpectations	#sorrykelsey	
	#yesallwomen	#psycho	
	#lovinit	#princefarming	
	#forgettable	#stillprettytho	
	#ilovemystory		
2016	#soexcited	#BenBenBen	#OMFG
	#hahaha	#HotBen	#WOW
	#favoriteshow	#Hottie	#COMEON
		#Sohotandkind	
		#lovehim	
		#sogorgeous	
		#perfect	



#goaway

#idiot

#lovehim

## Appendix 124

### Bachelor Names / Host

- Ben Higgins\*
- Sean Lowe\*
- Ben Flajnik\*
- Prince Farming
- Juan Pablo\*
- Chris Harrison

### Contestants

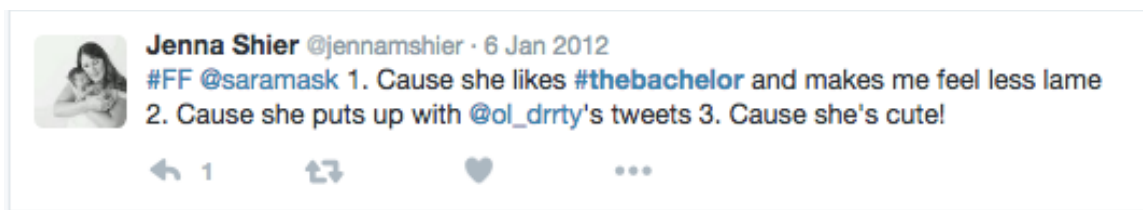
- Courtney\*
- Catherine
- Lace
- Jubilee
- Olivia\*
- Caila\*
- Lauren B
- Becca Tilley
- Ashley I
- Ashley S
- Kacie B\*
- Kylie
- Blakely
- Sharleen
- Renee
- Nikki

- Desiree
- Kardashley
- Emily

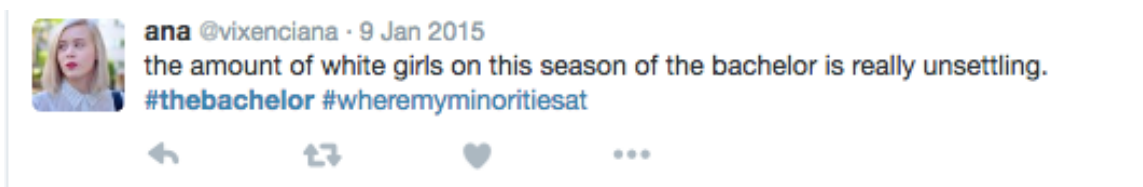
## Appendix 125

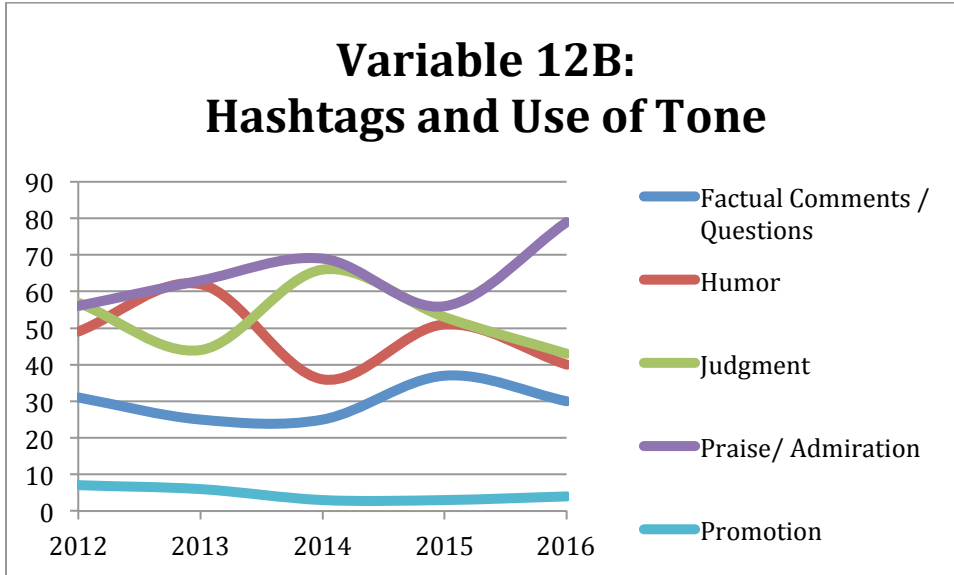
	Factual Comments / Questions	Humor	Judgment	Praise/ Admiration	Promotion
2012	31	49	57	56	7
2013	25	62	44	63	6
2014	25	36	66	69	3
2015	37	51	53	56	3
2016	30	40	43	79	4

## Appendix 126



## Appendix 127





## Appendix 129



## Appendix 130



## Codebook

**Unit of analysis:** Tweets will be coded individually and also assessed as a whole.

Variable 1: Type of Fan

RESPONSE OPTIONS: (0-1)

- 0. Celebrity
- 1. Non-celebrity

Variable 2: Season ID

RESPONSE OPTIONS: (0-4)

- 0. Season 16, January 2-March 12, 2012 with Ben Flajnik
- 1. Season 17, January 7-March 11, 2013 with Sean Lowe
- 2. Season 18, January 6-March 10, 2014 with Juan Pablo Galavis
- 3. Season 19, January 5-March 9, 2015 with Chris Soules
- 4. Season 20, January 4-March 14, 2016 with Ben Higgins

Variable 3: Episode ID

RESPONSE OPTIONS: (0-9)

- 0. Episode 1
- 1. Episode 2

2. Episode 3
  3. Episode 4
  4. Episode 5
  5. Episode 6
  6. Episode 7
  7. Episode 8
  8. Episode 9
  9. Episode 10
- 

#### Operationalization of Variables within Research Questions

**RQ1:** What substantive content frames emerge as publics engage in the networked framing of The Bachelor on Twitter?

#### Variable 4 Framing

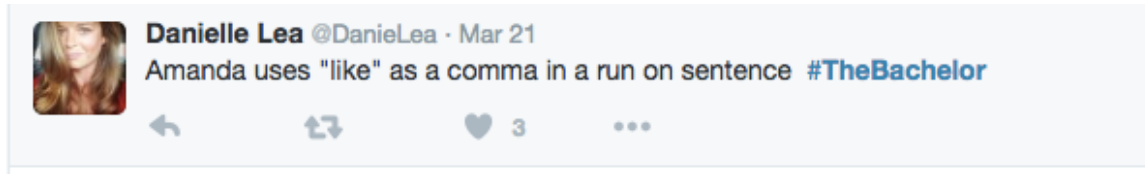
CODING OPTIONS (0-9):

-What primary frame technique is used?

The following frames of metaphor, stories, tradition, catchphrase, artifact, contrast, and spin are taken from Fairhurst and Sarr (2016) and referenced directly on [masscommtheory.com](http://masscommtheory.com).

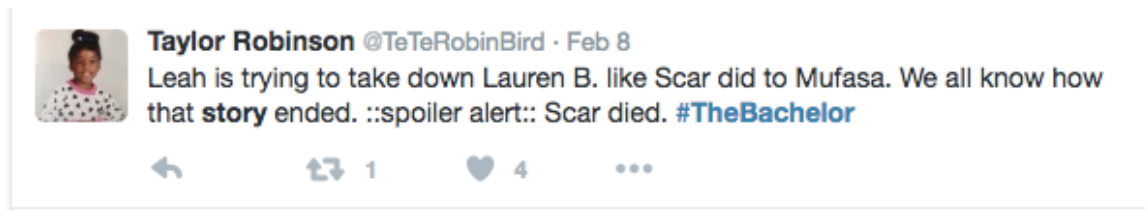
0. Metaphor: “To frame a conceptual idea through comparison to something else”

Example:



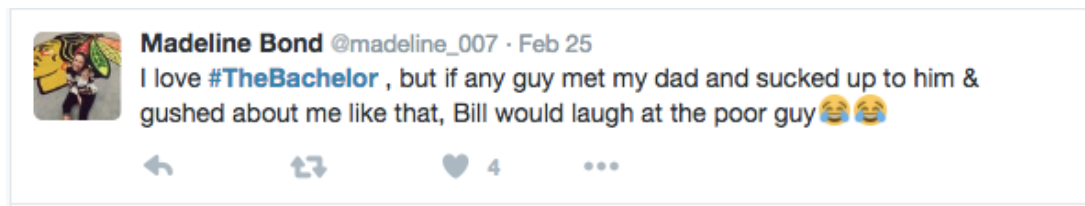
1. Stories (myths, legends): “To frame a topic via narrative in a vivid and memorable way.

Example:



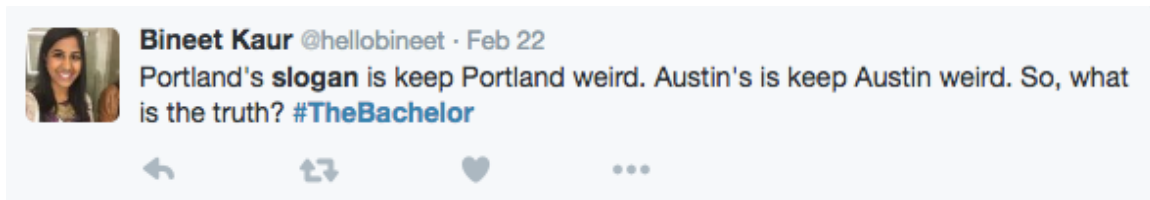
2. Tradition (rituals, ceremonies; social mores): Cultural mores that imbue significance in the mundane, closely tied to artifacts.

Example:



3. Slogan, jargon, and catchphrase: To frame an object with a catchy phrase to make it more memorable and relatable.

Example:



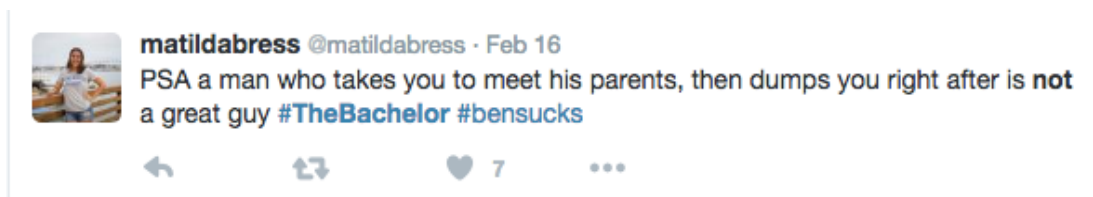
4. Artifact: Objects with intrinsic symbolic value – a visual/cultural phenomenon that holds more meaning than the object it self.

Example: (the tweeter did not need to mention the specific scene or episode as fans understood what he meant via the visual)



5. Contrast: To describe something in terms of what it is not.

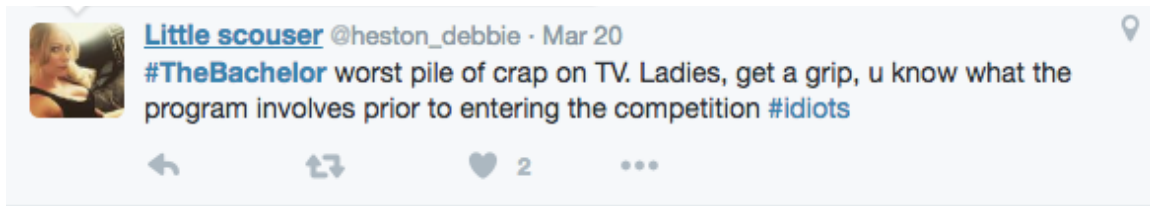
Example:





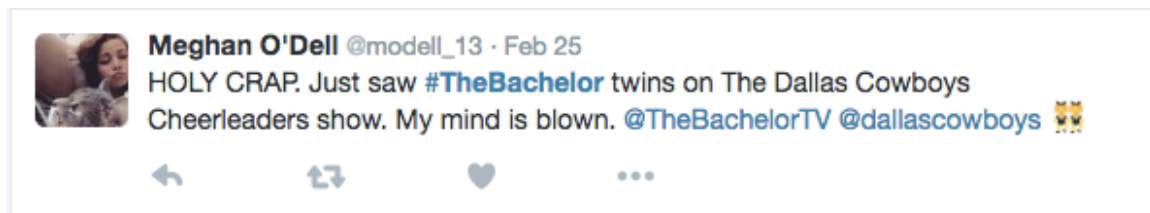
6. Spin: to present a concept in such a ways as to convey a value judgment (positive or negative) that may or may not be immediately apparent; to create an inherent bias by definition

Example:



7. Gossip: to spread seemingly insignificant news that may or may not have been otherwise known

Example:



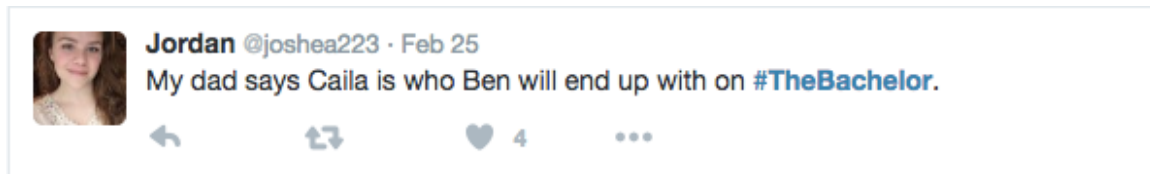
8. Navel-gazing: the definition is commonly used to refer to “self-indulgence or excessive contemplation of oneself or a single issue, at the expense of a wider view” (Google definition—academic searches did not yield a solid definition from a scholarly article). However, in this study it will simply refer to a tweet that refers to contemplation on oneself.

Example:

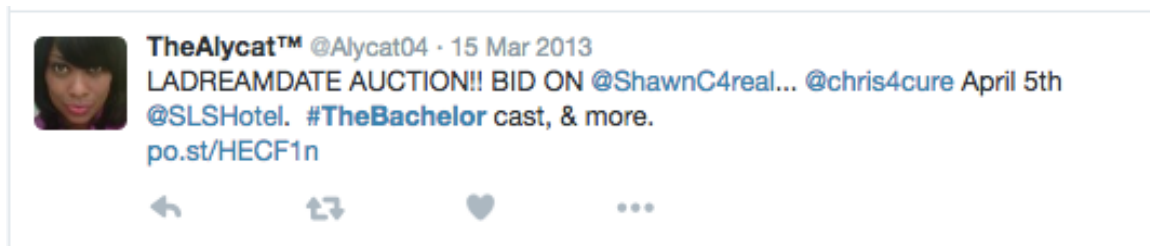


9. Secondary Suggestion: This refers to tweets that include an opinion that is coming from a secondary source, not the person who actually tweeted. The person may be referring to a celebrity, their family, friends or significant others.

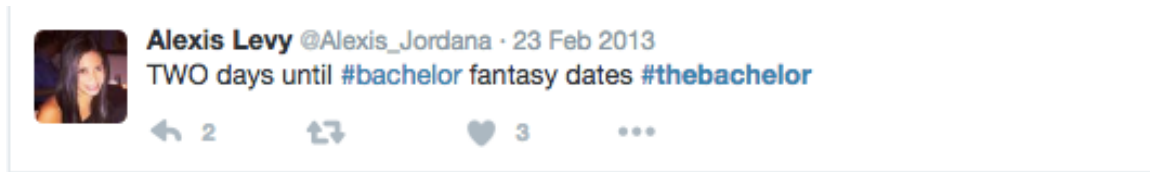
Example:



10. Promotional



11. Simple Question or Statement of fact



RQ2: How do publics engage in the affective framing of The Bachelor on Twitter?

Variable 5: Tone

CODING OPTIONS: (0 – 3)

What is the general tone of the tweet? Will be coded based on the overall impression of the tweet.

- 0. Enthusiastic/Genuine
- 1. Sarcastic
- 2. Facetious
- 3. Anti-fan

0: With the enthusiastic/genuine tone the fan doesn't give any indication that they think the show is inauthentic/ they seem excited by the show/content. If they do not sound necessarily enthusiastic, there does not seem to be a detection of sarcasm.

Example:



1: With the sarcasm tone the fan is making fun of the program's content without a direct joke or insult. This would be interpreted humor.

Example:



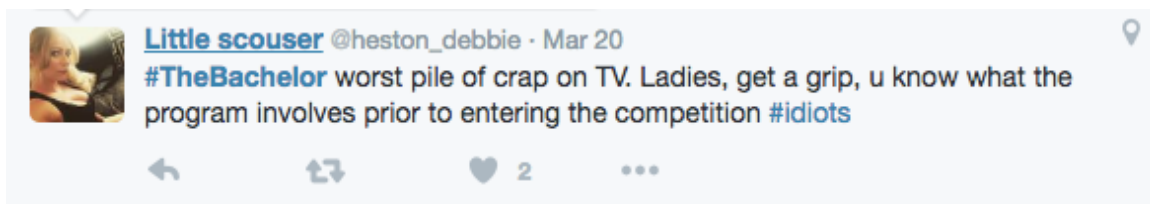
2: With the joking tone the fan is directly making fun of the program's content.

Example:



3: With the anti-fan the fan is aggressively/harshly judging an element of the show.

Example:



Variable 6: Sentiment

CODING OPTIONS: (0-8)

-What is the general sentiment used in this tweet?

0. Happy/joyful

1. Anticipation

2. Surprise
3. Amusement
4. Pride/admiration
5. Sad
6. Angry/disgust
7. Annoyance
8. Neutral/no imbued sentiment
9. Resigned
10. Dubious
11. Relieved
12. Pondering

0: With the “Happy/joyful” the tweet will express a pleasure in some aspect of the overall show, episode or contestant. This is distinguished from anticipation and surprise (which could in some ways be related to joy) by more generally stating a like or love of something related to the show. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



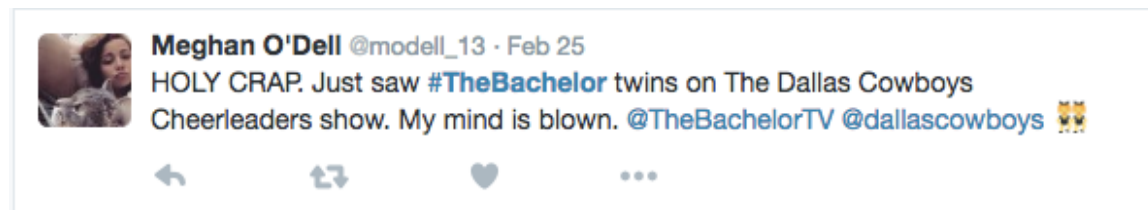
1: With the “anticipation” sentiment, the tweet will express an expectancy to be excited or provoked by some element of the show. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



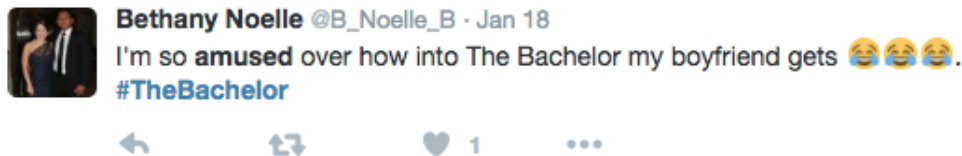
2: With the “surprise” sentiment, the tweet will express a revelation regarding some aspect of the show. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



3: With “amused” sentiment, the tweet will express that some of element of the show is funny. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



4: With the “proud” sentiment the tweet will express something similar to joy; it will be distinguished in that pride will be associated with a deep feeling of pleasure or satisfaction with something the show did or said or for one or more of the contestant’s values or achievements. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



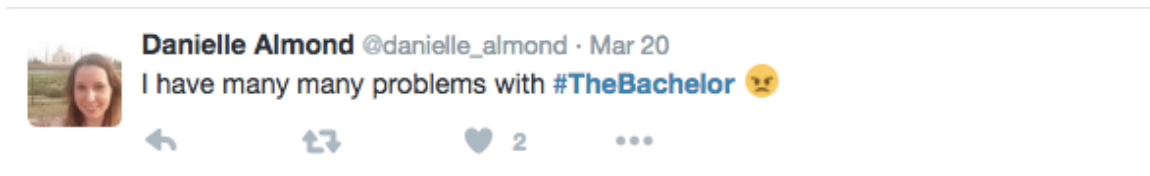
5: With the “sad” sentiment the tweet will express feeling dejected or “down” when faced with some aspect of the overall show, episode or contestant. This is distinguished from other associated emotions that would find some aspect of the show deplorable. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



6: With the “angry/disgust” sentiment the tweet will express a clear frustration with some element of the show. It may also be that the individual feels “wronged” by something that was done or said. This is usually a very personal reaction. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.

Example:



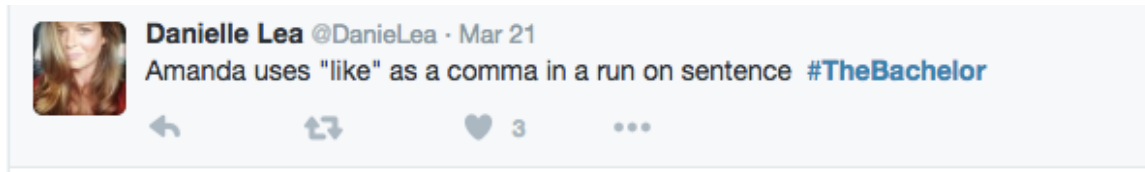
7: With the “annoyance” sentiment the tweet will express annoyance or irritation with some element of the show. This may seem similar to the previous coding category. However, it is a much “lighter” reaction/sentiment. This may be expressed in the form of words, phrases, emoticons, or a combination of the three.



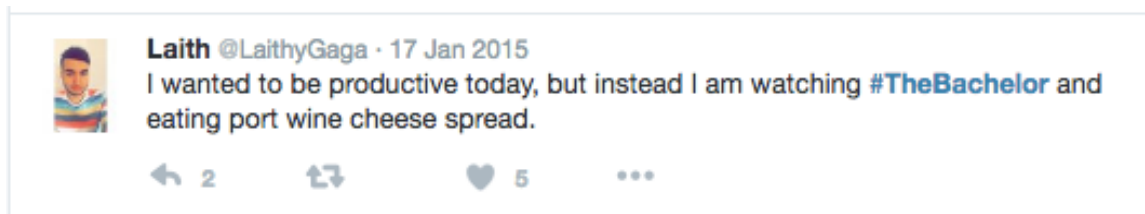


8: With “Neutral,” there is not obvious sentiment. It is statement of fact or opinion/not imbued with emotion. This means that there are no strongly marked characteristics that lean towards positive or negative.

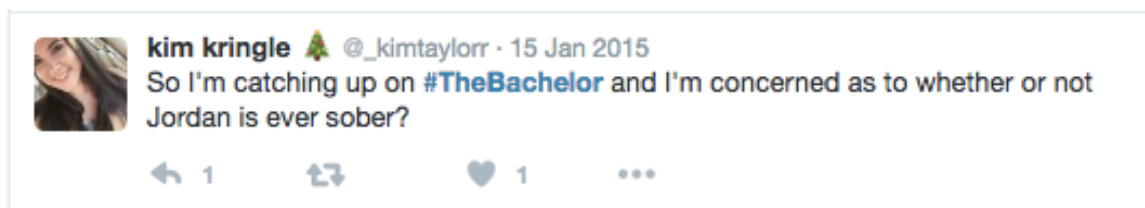
Example:



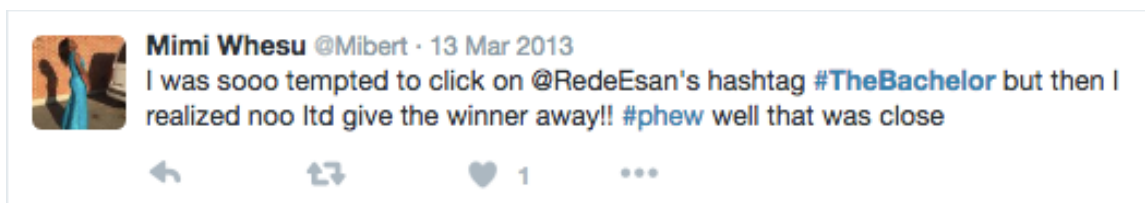
9: Resigned refers to accepting some unwanted part of the day or the show



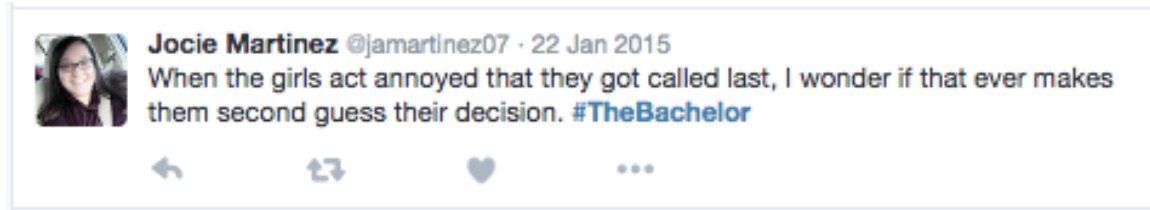
10: Dubious refers to doubting or being suspect to someone or something.



11: Relieved refers to feeling reassured or less anxious about something



12: Pondering refers to wondering about something in life or on the show specifically



Variable 7A

CODING OPTIONS (strictly for emoticons) 0-1:

-Is an emoticon used in the tweet?

0. Yes

1. No

Variable 7B

CODING OPTION 3 (strictly for emoticons) 0-8:

-Which emoticons are used?

0. Smiley Face 😊 (Commonly used to convey a happy sentiment, though occasional can be used for sarcasm)

1. Hearts or Smiley Face with Hearts for Eyes 💕😍 (Commonly used to convey a happy or loving sentiment) \*

2. Flower or Rose (Popular emoticon-the show involves “rose ceremonies.” Not typically used to convey direct sentiment, but can be used to convey “pride” or “happiness”) 🌹 \*

3. Praise Hands 🙌 (Commonly used to directly praise something a contestant said that the tweeter agrees with) \*

4. Angry Face 😡😡 (Commonly used when a contestant is angry or annoyed with an element of the show) \*

5. Sad Face 😞😞 (used when a contestant is sad )

6. Shocked Face 😱😱 (Commonly used when there is a plot twist) \*

7. Crying Face 😭😭 (Commonly used for both genuine statements and sarcasm. Could be denoted to mean “sad” or a “laughing cry”) \*

8. Animal 🐻 (Commonly used when there is direct reference to an animal in an episode) \*

9. N/A

Using the variables of “tone,” “sentiment,” and the use or non-use of emoticons, the researcher will attempt to discuss, in general, how “fans talk about *The Bachelor*” on Twitter.

Variable 7C

CODING OPTION (strictly for emoticons) 0-2:

-Is the emoticon used to “intensify” the sentiment of the tweet, “negate” it, or just as part of the overall sentiment?

\* An indicator of intensification would be “I really love The Bachelor 😊”

\* An indicator of negation would be “This episode was really bad 😊”

\* An indicator of only sentiment is “I’m watching the Bachelor 😊”

0. Intensify

1. Negation
2. Only sentiment
3. N/A

**RQ3:** How does the architecture of Twitter support or sustain the networked frames that emerge from fan discussion of The Bachelor?

Variable 8A Retweeting

CODING OPTIONS (0-1):

-Was the tweet retweeted?

0. Yes
1. No

Variable 8B

CODING OPTIONS (0-3):

-How many times was it retweeted?

0. 1
1. 2-10
2. 11-50
3. More than 50

Variable 9A Commenting

CODING OPTIONS (0-1):

-Did the tweet include a comment?

2. Yes

3. No

Variable 9B

CODING OPTIONS (0-3):

-How many times was it commented on?

4. 1

5. 2-10

6. 11-50

7. More than 50

Variable 10A Likes

CODING OPTIONS (0-1):

-Was the tweet liked?

4. Yes

5. No

Variable 10B

CODING OPTIONS (0-3):

-How many times was it liked?

8. 1

9. 2-10

10. 11-50

11. More than 50

Variable 11A

CODING OPTIONS (0-1):

-Addressivity (@) included?

0. Yes

1. No

Variable 11B

CODING OPTIONS (0-3):

-Who is mentioned in the addressivity?

0. The bachelor

1. Contestant

2. Non-contestant

3. Other

4. N/A

Variable 12A Hashtags

CODING OPTIONS (0-4):

-What is the attitude of the hashtag?

0. Strong sentiment

-Example: #thissucks

1. Most likely sentiment

-Example: #notcute)

2. Context-dependent sentiment

-Example: #fantasy-suitepopcorn)

3. Focused sentiment

-Example: #benhigginssucks where the target of the sentiment is part of the hashtag

4. No sentiment

-Example #bachelor

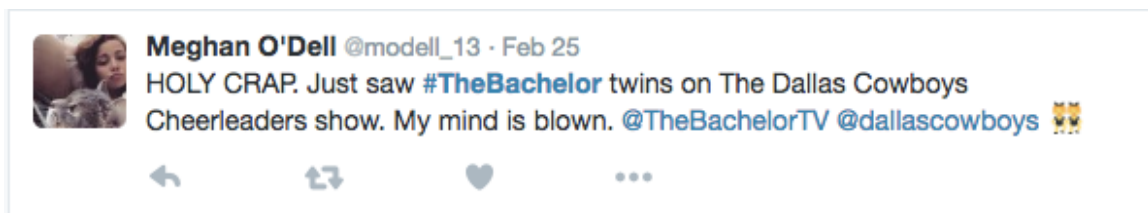
Variable 12B

CODING OPTIONS (0-4):

-How is this hashtag used?

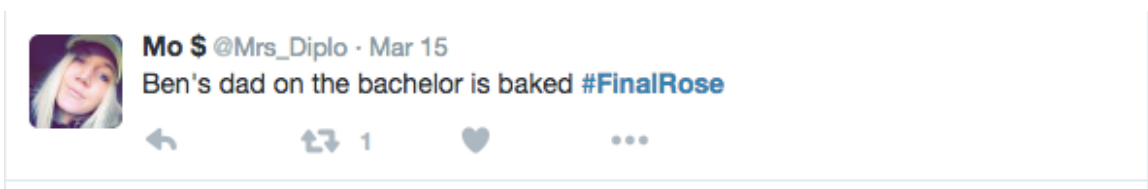
0. For factual commenting

Example:



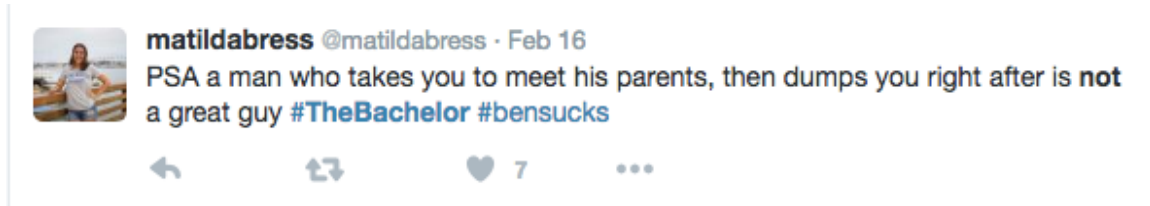
1. For humor

Example:



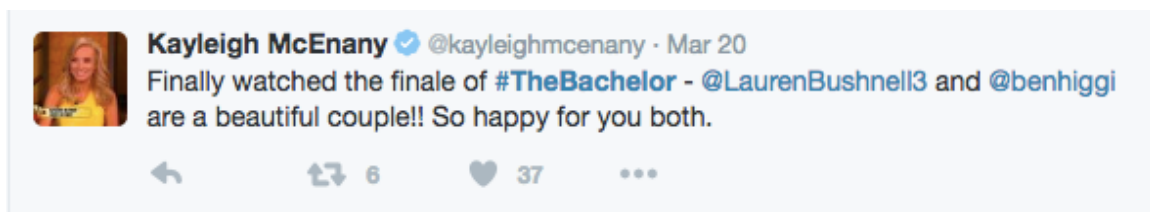
2. For an attack

Example:



3. For expression of admiration

Example:



4. Other

---

## Discourse Analysis

Though discourse analysis is more open in interpretation, the process involves many steps in order to achieve this big picture. Steps will be outlined below and taken from Schneider (2013) and Glaser & Strauss (1967).

The first step will involve establishing the context, which will include noting what the



social and historical context is of each tweet, what place it is from, who wrote it, when it was written and also when the researcher obtained these tweets. The researcher will also note if the tweets are in response to a major event, if they were tied into a broader debate not related to the intricacies of the show, and how this debate was received if so.

The second step will involve an exploration of the production process. If possible, the researcher will note the author's background. This may include any information that is public on their twitter profile. In order to delve further into the overall medium of Twitter, notes will be taken on comments, links and other multi-media content. These factors will frame the meaning of the actual text. Because the researcher is only looking at tweets, the unit of analysis is established. It nonetheless will be part of the overall analysis.

The third step will involve actual coding. The difference between the coding in the two methods is that discourse analysis will not have a pre-established coding scheme. The coding needs to remain open because some discourse strands may not be readily apparent until analyzing the selected tweets in conjunction. This study, however, will utilize Glaser & Strauss' (1967) coding scheme for discourse so that there is grounding for the qualitative analysis.

- Sentiment: the expression of opinion. The sentiment could be either positive or negative.
- Information Seeking: the expression of a desire to address some gap in data, information, or knowledge
- Information Providing: providing data, information, or knowledge
- Comment: the use of the brand (*The Bachelor*) in a tweet where the brand was not

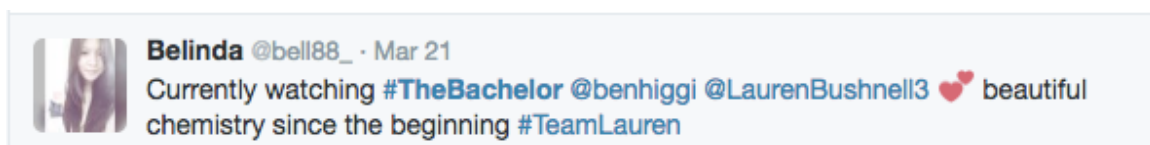
the primary focus (Jansen et al, 2007).

This coding scheme was ultimately used to partially answer RQ2. A tweet could be coded into more than one category, as these are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, these categories should be understood as hierarchical (Jansen, 2009). This means that every tweet in the sample will be measured by the frequency and the strength of each of these categories. First, does the tweet use sentiment, seek information, provide information and/or use comment? From there, what is the relationship amongst these categories in each individual tweet? Then, as a set, how do the tweets in the qualitative sample identify themselves? This will also be a vital piece in answering the overall question of “How do fans discuss *The Bachelor*?”

The fourth step will involve looking at the structural elements of the tweets once the tweets have been generally coded for discourse strands. It will be noted if there are tweets that include one discourse in particular or if there are ways in which different discourses strand overlap (Schneider, 2013). The researcher will note any references to other sources within the tweets.

The fifth step will involve coding for level of language. The researcher will note any words groups that are consistent with other tweets. This step will also note common grammar usage, any figures that are mentioned, whether real or literary, direct and indirect speech, and any modalities.

The researcher outlined these steps with one example tweet below:



### Step 1: Context

The social and historical context of this tweet is rooted in recent memory, as it is from March 2016 (while the 20<sup>th</sup> season of *The Bachelor* was airing. It was written by @bell88\_, a young woman known as Belinda. She is from Indonesia, so her perspective of the show may be different from someone living in the U.S. Her tweets are a combination of English and another language. The observed tweet is written in clear English. Based on this tweet and her feed, her enjoyment of *The Bachelor* is genuine and not rooted in irony or hate watching. Based on her Twitter feed she commonly retweets celebrities, including those from *Bachelor* contestants.

The researcher obtained this tweet during July 2016. The tweet was not in response to a major event or tied into a broader debate. It is, however, tied to the general question of the show: “Will *The Bachelor* and his chosen fiancé last?”

### Step 2:

#### Background

@bell88\_'s background is vague. While her Twitter profile provides she is from Indonesia, she does not list an occupation or interests. Her profile does indicate an inclination towards celebrities and building her social media presence as her profile states “followed by @TheAvaCapra @Michelle092968 @CourtneyAllegra snapchat:@kristbelinda ig(instagram):@belinda88\_”. This may include any information that is public on their twitter profile. She does not tweet much original content. Instead, most of her feed is retweets.

### Step 3: Coding

- Sentiment: @bell88\_ is expressing positive sentiment for the relationship between the bachelor, Ben Higgins, and frontrunner Lauren Bushnell. She states that they have “beautiful chemistry,” that she is “#TeamLauren,” and uses a hearts emoticon.
- Information Seeking: This tweet is not seeking information.
- Information Providing: This tweet is not providing information.
- Comment: The brand and its characters were the primary focus.

@bell88\_'s tweet uses the discourse of:

Step 4: Discourse Strands

-*hashtags* (#TeamLauren)

-*Love* (uses the word “chemistry” and uses the heart emoticons)

-*Competition* (using the hashtag #TeamLauren denotes a competitive leaning)

Sub strand-*frontrunners* (she notes chemistry “from the beginning.” *Bachelor* fans always choose frontrunners and those that they believe will not make it far in the season)

These discourse strands were observed in this particular fan tweet.

This step can only be done in conjunction with other tweets. The researcher will note any references to other sources within the tweets.

Step 5: Language

This step is also only possible in conjunction with other tweets. The language of this tweet is straightforward in that it states an opinion and gives reasoning. It is imbued

with positive sentiment. Some might interpret it to be overly sentimental as @bell88\_ uses the word “beautiful” and uses a heart emoticon. However, this interpretation may change when comparing it to other tweets. Grammar usage is adequate. Words that will be used to compare to other tweets will be:

- *Currently* (Similar words may be “presently,” “now,” “today”)  
     -*Denotes a time proximity to the show*
- *Watching* (similar words may be “viewing,” or “seeing.”)  
     -*Denotes a connection to the second-screen phenomenon. Some watch and then tweet later, while others tweet as they watch.*
- *Beautiful* (similar words may be “lovely,” “stunning,” “amazing”)  
     -*Denotes a certain kind of descriptor when expressing positive sentiment.*  
     Is there a pattern in using certain words when it is positive sentiment?  
     When it is a woman? Is there a pattern in relation to age? (If that information is available)
- *Chemistry* (similar phrases may be “love,” “connection,” “attraction,” etc.)  
     -*Denotes a common noun used in relation to The Bachelor, also known as a buzzword.*
- *Since the beginning* (similar phrases may be “since they first saw each other,” “from the beginning of the their relationship,” etc.)  
     -*Denotes a fan that has presumably watched the entire season, instead of commenting on a specific episode.*
- *Team* (similar words/phrases could be “squad” or “I’m with \_\_\_\_”)

-Denotes a fan who is in tune with the competition element of the show

Again, these discourse strands came from this specific fan tweet.

## VITA

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