

TWEETING GOD, GUNS AND THE CONSTITUTION -
The online impression management and political branding of Sarah
Palin

Master's thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract Sosiaalisen median, kuten Twitterin käyttö on lisääntynyt huomattavasti viime vuosina ja muuttanut kielenkäyttöämme, sekä viestintätapojamme. Sosiaalinen media identiteetin ja vallan välineenä onkin jo ilmiö esimerkiksi amerikkalaisessa poliittisessä mediassa. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli selvittää, 1) miten konservatiivipoliitikko Sarah Palin representoi itseään ja politiikkaansa kielenkäyttönsä kautta mikroblogipalvelu Twitterissä. Tutkimuksessa on kiinnitetty erityisesti huomiota Palinin poliittiseen retoriikkaan ja twiittien sisältöön, joiden avulla selvitettiin, minkälaisia a) vaikutelmanhallintaluokkia (impression management) ja itsensä korostamisstrategioita (self-promotion) hänen twiiteissään esiintyy. Lisäksi tutkittiin, miten nämä strategiat yhdistyvät muodostamaan brändätyn imagon Sarah Palinista. Tutkimus on laadullista tapaustutkimusta ja se edustaa soveltavan kielitieteen tutkimusalaa. Tutkimusaineisto koostui 171 twiitistä, jotka kerättiin aikavälillä 1.syyskuuta 2011-1.syyskuuta 2012 Sarah Palin Twitter- käyttäjäprofiilista SarahPalinUSA. Aineiston analyysissä käytettiin sisältöanalyysia. Aineiston luokitteluun käytettiin Jonesin ja Pittmanin (1982) luomaa vaikutelmanhallintaluokitusta (impression management typology), sekä Jacksonin ja Lillekerin (2011) itsensäkorostamisstrategioita (self-promotion strategies). Tulokset osoittivat, että Palin representoi itseään ja politiikkaansa vahvasti konservatiivisten arvojen, kuten uskonnon ja isänmaallisuuden, kautta. Vaikutelmanhallintaluokista mielistely (ingratiation), uhkailu (intimidation) ja esimerkillisyys (exemplification) olivat korostuneita. Yhdistettynä Palinin poliittisesti latautuneeseen tapaan korostaa itseään voidaan päätellä, että Palinin Twitter- imago on tarkoin harkittu ja enemmänkin puoluepoliittinen, kuin henkilökohtainen. Saman tutkimusrakenteen käyttäminen useampiin twittaaviin poliitikoihin tuottaisi kuitenkin arvokasta lisätutkimusta. Tutkimuksen tulokset ovat hyödyllisiä kielen ja sosiaalisen median suhteen tutkimuksessa ja kriittisen lukutaidon kehittämisessä.	
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1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the study of language use has transformed, as new mediums for reading and production of texts and spoken word have emerged, largely due to the internet and most recently, also due to different mobile devices and applications designed for them. The digitalization of media has led to new foci on research; websites, blogs, chat forums and different social media platforms have become the subjects of new media research. In addition, these new media outlets are multimodal, in other words combining different texts with other forms of communication such as videos, pictures and other interactive tools. Furthermore, recent applications designed for mobile use, such as Instagram and SnapChat, have transformed multimodality to rely strongly on pictures and video, rather than written text. However, it can also be seen that new media still largely involve the use of the written word (Lee 2010:110). Despite the recent rise of the less verbal social media applications, the social media services that construct our world through language are still largely used. Thus, research on multimodal websites such as Facebook (see Lee 2010) and Twitter (see Mischaud 2007) has become increasingly popular.

The use of social media has increased dramatically during the last decade (Page et al. 2014). As more and more people join different social media platforms and spend lengthy periods of time active on the services, the language use in these services becomes a way of affecting one's readers and followers. Language is never unbiased, on the contrary, it is filled with underlying agendas, purposes and powers (Fairclough 2001; Wodak 1989). Particularly, media in its all forms, social media included, uses language to affect people in various ways.

Politicians have also jumped on the social media bandwagon. With constantly increasing opportunities to promote oneself through the use of social media, for instance Facebook pages, blogs and YouTube videos, a politician is more likely to be in control of the discourse produced in the new media compared to the traditional devices of media management. In addition, these newer, personally kept web-platforms have allowed for more personalization in politics (Vergeer et al. 2011:481). While before the campaigning or public presentation of a politician relied largely on on-site campaigning, or how one was represented in the newspapers or on television, now politicians are able to create their own spaces for political

networking and beyond. Whereas on-site campaigning has not lost its popularity, politicians are now able to share more than just scheduled events and public speeches with their audiences. According to Vergeer et al. (2011:481), a personal or even private perspective on what occupies politicians has become an even more significant feature of political language use in social media. With personalized politics and politicians sharing social media contents from topics concerning strictly politics to what they did on their holiday, I would argue that political discourse today can be increasingly defined by terms of marketing and branding alongside the more traditional terminology of representation and power (Fairclough 2001; Torfing 2009). Although marketing and branding techniques are nothing new in politics in general, it is the way politicians themselves have begun to take over their own public relations that needs to be looked at in further detail.

In fact, the marketization of contemporary politics has already led to politicians branding themselves as a package, with the intention of creating brand loyalty within the voters (see for instance DeLandtsheer 2001; Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Stanyer and Wring 2004; Warner 2013). Not only is this *self-branding* a useful tool for gaining and executing political power, it can also be argued that this phenomenon is a part of what Jamie Warner (2013:285) calls "the wholesale adoption of marketing techniques by the state and political actors". Social media, on its behalf, is a great medium for expressing this new, marketized, self-presentational branch of modern political discourse.

The objective of this study was to find out how a politician represents herself through social media, in particular Twitter. In addition, the techniques of branding and impression management were examined within this social media environment. Twitter, despite of its relative novelty in the field of computer mediated communication, has quickly become one of the world's most popular content sharing websites since its launching in 2006. Consequently, Twitter and its users have also been the focus of research in the fields of marketing, economics and political studies for instance. However, in previous studies there has been little focus on the linguistic aspects of Twitter use (see for instance Zappavigna 2011; 2012). Although Twitter is a tool clearly designed for such activities as marketing, Twitter and its language have also become a part of the current social media discourse. Moreover, as politicians have adopted Twitter as a part of their everyday means of communication, it is important to also look at the ways how the development of social media has also had an influence on the current political discourse.

For the purposes of this study I looked at the way the former Alaska governor Sarah Palin tweets about her life and politics. Palin is known for her active commentary on different political issues throughout the US media and she has also been a prominent figure in the American political debate arena, thus making her an interesting subject of research. In this qualitative case study, the data consisted of 171 tweets collected in the time period from the 1st of September 2011 to the 1st of September 2012 by scanning through Sarah Palin's Twitter account SarahPalinUSA. Through the analysis of these tweets, my purpose was to answer the following research questions:

1. How does Sarah Palin represent herself as a politician through her language use in Twitter? Moreover, looking at political rhetoric and the contents of the tweets in particular, what types of:

- a) impression management categories and
- b) self-promoting strategies can be found in her tweets?

2. How do these strategies combine to form a branded image of Sarah Palin?

Her tweets include a vast array of topics from domestic life to current political debates, which are analyzed through the means of content analysis and impression management typology. While content analysis is used in order to reliably analyze Palin's tweets as whole units of meaning, the typology consists of five different types of attributions that a person is likely to display in self-presentational attempts. According to Jones and Pittman (1982), these behaviors include *ingratiation*, (to appear likeable through flattery, compliments and self-deprecating anecdotes) *self-promotion*, (to refer to one's achievements and successes, both personal and professional) *exemplification*, (to appear morally worthy and exemplary) *supplication*, (to ask for help, to present a lack of abilities) and *intimidation* (to appear threatening or dangerous). Since this study focuses also on political language use and more specifically, how the language use in Twitter constructs personal political brands, I decided to also use Jackson & Lilleker's (2011) four categories for promotion of self and find out, if they appear in Palin's Twitter behavior. These categories include *details of personal life*, *identification of personal interests*, *displaying of humor and promotion of party*. Through this type of content analysis, my purpose was to find out, what types of categories for self-promoting emerge from the tweets and, furthermore, how the tweets combine to form a branded image of Sarah Palin.

Although social media studies have developed a great deal during the recent years, it is increasingly important to look at not only the different outlets of new media and their functions, but also the new discourses that emerge from them (see, for instance Thurlow and Mrozcek 2011). As no language is unbiased, political language use in social media has transformed from outsider perspectives to insider perspectives, at the same time also giving the politicians the power to shape their public image in similar ways to branding. Although political personalities and language use in politics have been studied extensively in the past in terms of traditional media, the studies on political language use on the internet and social media have just began to surface. Although at present, the studies in this field are increasing rapidly (see Bor 2013 and Vergeer et al. 2011, for example), more analysis are needed in order to study the specifics of the relations between political language use and social media. Previous studies on politicians' use of Twitter have showed that instead of partisan promotion, (i.e. supporting one's own party and its actions) politicians prefer to disclose personal and private things about themselves through the service (see Jackson and Lilleker 2011, Lawless 2012).

However, no research on the self-presentational strategies of individual politicians have been published as of yet. As Fox and Ramos (2012:18) point out, we have reached a point in the digital age where generalizations are no longer useful; we need to focus on specific formats such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, or blogs, if we are to assess accurately their possible effects on politics.

This study tries to accommodate that need. Since a research on the political language use and impression management of an individual politician in social media is relatively new despite of its specificity, this study offers a gateway to those specifics that ultimately form a branded online image of a person. As this type of strategic behavior undoubtedly exists within other social media platforms and among other users as well, the study answers to questions how these self-representational strategies come to be, and how they can be intertwined in order to form a certain representation, rather than presenting sweeping data on the relationship between all politics and social media. Furthermore, as my study is case- and more specifically, person-oriented, I will refrain from an overtly political approach for ethical reasons, and depict Palin's behavioral strategies in a descriptive manner. However, as critical awareness of the contents of social media websites in particular, is a today's phenomenon that needs to be paid attention to, I will nevertheless point out possible inconsistencies in Palin's impression management strategies. Through this multidisciplinary thesis, my objective is to provide

relevant material for the fields of sociolinguistics and language in digital communication, as well as to some extent personal branding and impression management. As sociolinguistics is concerned with the variation and change in language use, and during recent years political language use has also undergone a change with the development of social media (Androutsopoulos 2011), this study can also make a contribution to the field.

The study consists of six chapters. In chapter two I will take a closer look at my theoretical framework, moving from digital communication and Twitter use, to political language use in the social media. Furthermore, I will look into *branding* as a phenomenon and how it relates to my study. Drawing from traditional branding techniques, I will also examine *impression management* as a tool for self-branding in social media. Next, in chapter three, I will present the set-up of my study including my study questions. I will also explain the methodology of my study further and examine political tweets as data in more detail. In addition, I will contemplate the ethical issues surrounding Twitter research and present Sarah Palin as a political tweeter. In chapter four I will present a detailed analysis of my data using the impression management typology as a basis for interpretation. In chapters five and six I will discuss my findings, and also evaluate how the branding phenomenon links to political language use and reflect upon its importance in the construction of self-presentation in the social media and the construction of political power. My conclusion will also suggest topics for further study on the issue.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I will present the theoretical background of my study as well as evaluate and discuss the findings made by other scholars on the subjects of social media research, political language use and branding or impression management. At first, however, it is important to take a closer look on digital communication at large, in order to understand the phenomenon behind the recent uprising in the popularity of social networking.

2.1 DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In the last 20 years communication in general has undergone a dramatic change. The emergence of the internet has generated new forms of communication that began with early virtual communities and online identities, and has developed to the more recent forums of blogs, wikis and chat-rooms (see for instance Bolander 2013; Maj and Riha 2010). In other words, a great deal of our everyday communication has moved from the traditional face-to-face contacts to online communities and social networking platforms. These digitalization processes have introduced different mutations into traditional communication contents: hyper-textuality, multimodality, and interactivity, for instance, seem to be the basic features of this transformation. (Scolari 2009: 957). In fact, these new communication contents are a nowadays the key elements in looking at almost any form of digital communication. For instance, news websites do not include only text anymore, but are a hyper-textual entity, with links to other sources of information, previous news and even advertisements. Furthermore, several websites, such as YouTube and Flickr combine text with images, video or audio in order to create a single artifact, thus presenting multimodal qualities. Interactivity on its behalf has become a crucial part of today's internet use through websites that are specifically designed for communication with multiple people, content sharing and self-presentation, from blogs to social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter. As Scolari (2009:946) points out, digitalization – understood as the technological process that morphs the text to something that can be easily fragmented, handled, linked and distributed – is what allows networking, multimedia, collaborative and interactive communication.

Digital technology has also transformed the way communication is produced. If first generation hyper-texts transferred power from the author to the reader, current forms of digital communication (like web blogs) are definitely socializing the production and distribution of contents (Scolari 2009:958). These social networking sites often referred to with the generic term *web 2.0*, have started to appear as the focus of recent studies on digital communication (see for instance Groebel et al. 2006, Vickery and Wunch-Vincent, 2007).

With the development of digital communication, the constitution of a new scientific field has been inevitable. Today, the field of digital communication is of interest not only to computer sciences, but also to various other fields of research such as communication studies, sociology, psychology, linguistics and economics. Thus, in order to study phenomena related to digital communication, one must draw from different disciplines in order to understand the change in social interaction behind the mere development of technology. Furthermore, as web 2.0 applications have begun to connect people around the world in ways that were almost inconceivable some years ago, various different kinds of research is still needed to map and explain the change in people's everyday communication. This research will participate in studying this phenomenon by looking at how Twitter is used for more than only communication, but as a medium for political thought and personal branding.

2.1.1 MICROBLOGGING AND TWITTER

As already stated in the introduction, in recent years language use in the internet has become a popular field of study. As mobile phone and computer-mediated communication has constantly increased and is affecting the lives of millions of people every day, an increasing number of studies about language use in blogs, different chat forums and so on have also surfaced. For the purposes of this study, I am however; more interested in the fast growing social media platforms for micro-blogging.

'Conceptually, micro-blogging is a combination of some of the best features of email, text messaging (SMS), blogging, and instant messaging (IM). The result has the flexibility of email, the ubiquity of SMS and the immediacy of IM, whilst its content can be browsed, referenced or indexed like a traditional blog' (Harrison 2011).

Twitter is one of the most popular social software for microblogging. It was founded in 2006 and it has quickly become one of the most popular social networking and content sharing

websites in the world with over a 100 million active users. Because of its relative novelty in the field of social media platforms, however, the academic research in terms of Twitter has just begun to surface. The studies that exist are mainly about Twitter's user groups, their purposes and conversational analysis (see Honeycutt & Herring, 2009; Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2009; Mischaud, 2007).

Twitter functions on the principle that anyone can write a message of 140 characters or less and then share it with the world (McFedries, 2009). With the development of new technologies, such as 3G mobile phones which enable the users to have a constant access to the internet, Twitter has quickly gained a vast group of active users all over the world. As an Internet-based microblogging tool, Twitter prompts users to share their messages about their current activities either publicly or within a social network of friends and followers. (Presley 2010: 440). A user who is being followed by another user does not necessarily have to reciprocate by following them back, which makes the links of the Twitter social network directed (Huberman et al. 2009). This also enables instant messaging with a group of people a great deal larger, than one's own social circle. Thus, millions of people, companies and political groups have used these messages, called "tweets" to share their thoughts, advertise, and affect people around the world. According to VanDijck (2011), Twitter can thus be seen as a *mediated social practice*, with several functions such as information and news sharing, marketing and advertising, collaboration, conversation, and most importantly, self-expression and self-communication. In addition, Twitter has recently been the tool for major social and political upheavals in several countries.

In fact, the use of Twitter and other social media outlets has already affected political change in the Middle East and North Africa. For instance in the 2011 "Arab Spring" protests, social media networks played an important role in the rapid disintegration of at least two regimes, Tunisia and Egypt, while also contributing to sociopolitical mobilization in Bahrain and Syria (Stepanova 2011:1). Although some scholars have later claimed that social media, in particular Twitter, did not cause political revolutions, social media services have nevertheless been prominent in spreading information on the events of political turmoil. Moreover, through social media the citizens have been able to organize protests and be heard in countries with unstable situations.

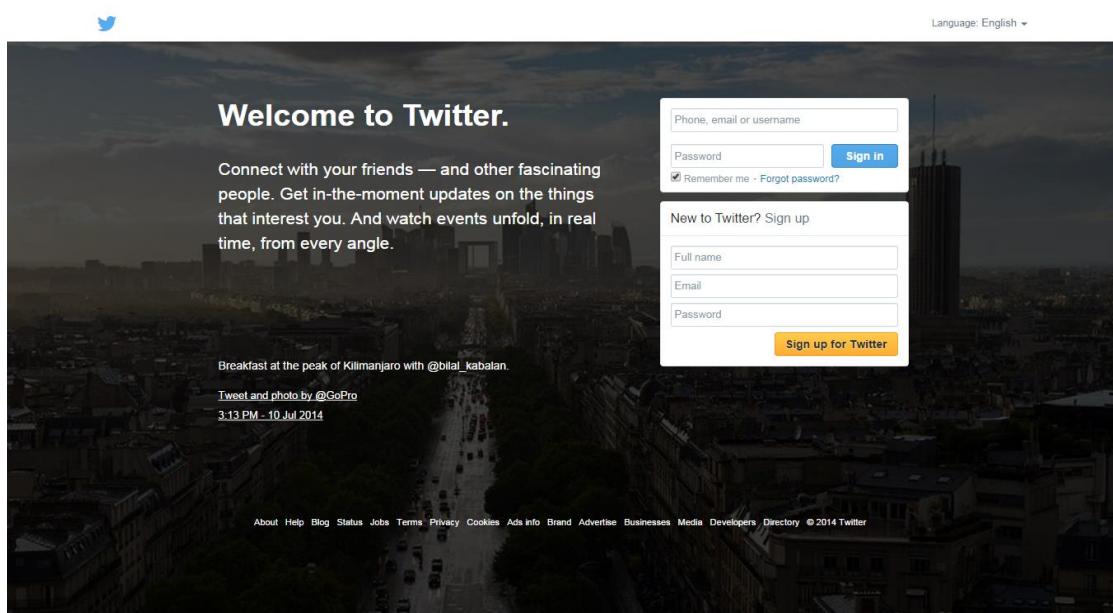
In addition, being active in social media outlets, such as Twitter has become a necessity to the people in the public domain, because of the vast opportunities to influence people in real time. Thousands of celebrities, athletes and politicians have taken Twitter as their primary means of distributing their thoughts, opinions and information about themselves. However, whether micro-blogging supports everyday small talk or whether it has broader social or cultural significance, has been under debate during recent years (VanDijck 2011:339). While it is true that a central part of 'tweeting' or 'twittering' is also disclosing every day, or even mundane facts about oneself, I would argue, however, that the use of Twitter and its popularity plays into the modernization of communicational culture, where the lightweight communication is presented alongside the more serious content in order to create a convincing representation of oneself.

In fact, the starting point of this study is to examine the ways in which social media, and Twitter in particular, is used to create and upkeep one's self-presentation. Since it is possible to gain millions of followers through Twitter, and thus influence a great deal of people, it is important to examine how Twitter works as a medium of self-presentation. In the next section I will thus take a closer look on the use of Twitter and its conventions.

2.1.2 TWITTER CONVENTIONS

In this section I will briefly describe how Twitter works, the basic features the service offers to users, and how people use Twitter in order to communicate with each other. Furthermore, I will look into the general format of the tweets included in this study.

Before even logging in, the front page of Twitter urges the user to "Connect with your friends – and other fascinating people. Get in-the-moment updates on the things that interest you. And watch events unfold, in real time, from every angle." This short introduction to Twitter tries to cover all the functions of Twitter use as well as represent all the users of the service. In fact, Twitter can be used by everyone from individuals commenting on issues from political to personal, to organizations reporting on news and world events, for instance. In addition, the picture on the front page changes every couple of seconds and often displays a photograph a user of the service has taken. In other words, Twitter's multiple functions as a social media tool through which one can stay in touch with the world as well be heard and seen, are represented already on the front page.



Screenshot of Twitter's front-page at twitter.com

When entering the service, Twitter combines a time-line, or a stream, of short messages the users have produced, thus making it possible for multiple people and organizations to follow each other's tweets in real time, as well as view older messages posted in the service. Twitter can be used from laptops, via SMS and through smart-phones, which makes the service increasingly accessible to a large number of people. Particularly the users of smart-phones have adopted Twitter as a means of communication, since it is also possible to share photos and videos through the service. In addition, the users can create a "front page" for their timeline, in which they can present their picture alongside various other information such as photos and videos, links to other internet sources and the numbers of people they are following and vice versa.

One of the key features of Twitter is that the users are constrained to expressing themselves in 140 characters. The shortness of the messages has thus led to several meaning- adding functions in the service. For instance the @-sign is used in front of the user-name when a message is targeted to a specific person or user (e.g., @sarahpalin). As Honeycutt & Herring (2009) point out, the @-sign is used to gain the target person's attention or initiate conversation. A hash-tag (#) is used in front of a keyword in order to label or "tag" a certain topic. These topics vary from public events to specific people and a user can also search for messages regarding other users by inserting the hash-tag in front of the user-name. Re-

tweeting, i.e., quoting someone else's tweet is also popular among Twitter users to target different audiences. According to boyd et al. (2010:3), the conventions of re-tweeting are hugely inconsistent. For instance, there is no consistent syntax to indicate a re-tweet, attribution is inconsistent, the 140-character limitation and other factors prompt users to alter the original message, and adding commentary is prevalent.

Another practice of Twitter use, and also in the focus of this study, is linking outside contents to the original Twitter message. Because of the 140-character limit, people have started to use the Uniform Source Locator (i.e., internet address) in their tweets in order to add more content. Since the URL is generally rather long, Twitter users shorten the URLs of different web pages they wish to link to the tweet, to fit them into the character limit. This can be done through different services that automatically shorten the internet address, while also popular websites such as Facebook have generated their own URL shortening services. The practice is central in Twitter use, since it provides the otherwise short message a context, in which the message is to be understood. In fact, a study made on the sociology of using hyperlinks in South Korea (Hsu and Park, 2010) shows that the use of hyperlinks on Twitter and other Web 2.0. applications have also sociological meanings beyond simply linking one web page to another. Hsu and Park (2010: 364) point out that hyperlinks form an emerging channel of communication between politicians, their parties and also with the general public. Thus, also the URLs must be taken into account when analyzing tweets as discourse practices. My subject of research, Sarah Palin, also uses a great deal of hyperlinks in her tweets and ignoring them in my analysis would lead to the absence of essential units of meaning.

The underlying purpose of tweeting, however, is to present oneself and one's thoughts to the world in order to maintain a group of followers. In other words, Twitter can be used as an interactive medium for self-presentation to unknown audiences. Self-presentation on Twitter takes place through ongoing 'tweets' and conversations with others, rather than static profiles (Marwick and boyd 2010:116) which makes it possible for users to appeal to different types of audiences by covering a vast array of topics and preferences. According to Marwick and boyd (2010:121) Twitter is used this way by many people – including marketers, technologists, and individuals seeking wide attention – to establish a presence online. Likewise, by embracing social media to engage directly with their audience, many traditional celebrities and public officials embrace the techniques of self-branding. Since Twitter offers a short and simple way of making oneself seen and heard online, it has quickly been adopted as a popular means of

communication also in political rhetoric. I will discuss the role of the new media and its functions in modern political language use further in the following chapters.

2.2 POLITICAL LANGUAGE USE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Since my study concentrates on micro-blogging and Twitter, where the texts are very short, it becomes increasingly important which phrases, words and references are used in order to convey a certain message to the public. Politicians, in particular, have been known to select their statements even more carefully. According to Adrian Beard (2000:18), in analyzing political text, it is important to look at the way in which the language reflects the ideological position of those who have created it, and how the ideological position of the readers will affect their response as well. This is particularly interesting when studying political language use in social media, since the language is often generated by the users or their staff, instead of journalists for example. Also the new features of social media services such as Twitter enable the readers of the content to reply and respond in real time, with short delay or even within longer intervals of time, thus offering greater variety for the users to participate in the discussion. Moreover, it renders the process of political language affecting political thought more transparent.

However, this does not mean that all language use in social media environments is transparent and objective. Politicians, among others, have learned to navigate the social media outlets to their advantage and not all the readers and private users of social media are unbiased either. This is why a detailed analysis on the new technologies of political language use is needed. In addition, not all of the readers of Sarah Palin's Twitter account, for instance, reply to, or retweet her updates thus making it difficult to know what the audience's response is. Thus it is important to look at how political language use has developed, particularly in the context of new media and what types of challenges and opportunities have come to pass with these recent developments. In other words, in order to understand the processes of ideology and power behind social media texts, we must investigate how they came to be. In order to study the political language use in social media, however, we first need a closer look at the field of study.

2.2.1. THE STUDY OF POLITICAL LANGUAGE USE

The field of political language use is quite vast despite its relative novelty. The first works in the field are considered to be the 'political linguistics' of Klemperer (1947) and Sternberger (1957) in which they studied the National Socialist language use of the 1940s Germany. Also George Orwell, with his novel *1984* (1949) was considered one of the pioneers of political language studies, despite the fact that most often fiction is seen separate from research literature. In his work, Orwell uses a fictitious country of Oceania, ruled by the dictatorial Party which limits the language use of the people to demonstrate the power of political language use on political thought. Since the 1950s the field of political language use research has naturally moved away from the post 2nd World War perspective, to current issues in political language use such as politics and ideology, language of discrimination and modern politics.

Heavily ideological language use in politics is by no means a new phenomenon either, but it has become a prominent feature particularly in American politics. This, populist rhetoric can be traced back to the American Revolution and the early days of the Republic, where the leaders of the country invoked the will of "the people" as a primary tool for American political debate. Since then, American politicians have relied heavily on portraying themselves as the leaders of ordinary American people (Formisano 2010). According to Formisano (2010:238), a populist strategy aims to align candidates with ordinary people who lack power or are being oppressed by undemocratic elites who wield excessive power. The essence of populist language is to set up an "us" who claim to speak "for the people" against a "they" of elites or a powerful few who have taken over or corrupted the political system and rigged it to benefit themselves. This rhetoric can also be seen often in Sarah Palin's language use, as well as in her tweets, and I will return to these issues later in my analysis.

Moreover, the populist tradition of political language use in the US has led to a wide interest in how American politics use language as a means of establishing power and different ideologies. In fact, great deals of studies on the language use of different high profile American politicians have surfaced during recent years. For instance the current president Barack Obama has been the focus of research in several studies ranging from his rhetoric (see

Frank 2009, Jones 2011) to his viral campaigning (Vernallis 2011). Also former conservative president George W. Bush's propagandist and religious rhetoric during the "War on Terror" has been a subject of several studies (see for instance Chang and Mehan 2006; Nikolaev and Porpora 2006). While earlier research on American politicians' language use and discourse has focused largely on their speeches and rhetoric, as well as the visual strategies of their campaigning, my study focuses more on the online representation and language use of a politician. Being active in social media does not require a political machine to produce speeches or other forms of campaign material, thus enabling a modern, free and straightforward way of communicating with the public. As political debate online has become a permanent part of our society, this study proves its relevance also in the field of political language research.

As already stated, over the past couple of decades, a modernization of politics has taken place, partly due to the development of new media tools such as the internet. Researchers in the field of political communication, DeLandtsheer, DeVries and Vertessen (2008), among others, have called this phenomenon politics turning into "perception politics". They explain that "perception politics" must be understood as a trend toward the commercialization, globalization and a visual culture where mass media and new media play a particular role (2008:219). In other words, politics has also moved from its traditional forums of for instance newspapers, to the internet and social media, where the policies of a politician can only be conveyed through methods that have not been associated with traditional political behavior. According to Crispin Thurlow (2013:228) these meta-discursive processes see new media being doubly technologized. Although they are managed and regulated for commercial gain, but they are also deployed in the stylization of self and other. So, in order to exercise political power in the social media environment, politicians have turned to targeted communication strategies for their audiences that reinforce the ideologies of "us" and "them". In fact, the new-found ability to take their messages directly to the people enables candidates and their supporters to highlight their opponents' comments and gaffes that might not have traditionally garnered attention (Lawless 2012: 210).

Furthermore, according to DeLandtsheer et al. (2008:220), perception politics encourages voters to form intuitive impressions of political candidates based on certain cues such as language style, appearance characteristics, and nonverbal behavior instead of well-considered opinions based on arguments. This is particularly true in current American politics. According

to Kari Mokko (in Seppälä 2011:63) the polarization of the American media environment and the demands of new media such as fast pace and the need to increase advertisement income and circulation have guaranteed that a major part of politicians' time is spent on continuous polarizing commentary and shooting down the opposition. This has become increasingly easier with the development of different social media platforms. Social media has become a place where politicians can continue the discussion started in the traditional media and without the fear of being censored or taken out of context. According to Thurlow (2013:228), one of the most common examples of this is the use of social media like Twitter or Facebook by politicians and celebrities for the purposes of styling themselves as interactive – available to, and in communication with, their publics. I will discuss political language use in social media in further detail in the next chapter.

2.2.2. POLITICAL LANGUAGE USE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Since politics and political language use have also become digitalized, politicians have plugged themselves into our lives through the use of social media. For instance Barack Obama's presidential election win of 2009 has been credited as partly due to his online campaigning strategy. While it seems that social media services, such as Twitter and Facebook have been used extensively by politicians in order to provide information and stimulate political engagement, the real effect on politics and policy making is always under scholarly debate.

As new media and its phenomena attract more and more researchers on the fields of political studies, communication studies and linguistics, a number of studies on this subject have surfaced during recent years. For instance Jennifer L. Lawrence's 2012 research on US Congress Members and their communication strategies in Facebook and Twitter gives insight to current political language use in social media. In her study, Lawrence collected every tweet and Facebook update the Members of Congress produced in a period of eight weeks in 2009. After a demographic and content analysis of the tweets and Facebook updates, she concluded that there is a significant party gap in the use social media, but Twitter and Facebook are mainly used to reinforce politics' personal traits and achievements, rather than affect congressional communication or governing. Whereas Lawrence's study, although detailed, consisted of tweets and Facebook updates from all the Congress Members, my study consists of tweets

collected from a politician outside of the Congress, thus producing a new viewpoint on current political issues. In fact, I could argue that while reinforcing a politician's personal traits is also a crucial part of one's presence online, affecting congressional governing can be more important to a politician outside the Congress. Moreover, studying political language use in social media outside of the Congress can be crucial in discovering strategies of changing the political climate.

Also Vergeer et al. (2011) studied political campaigning through Twitter in the Dutch European Parliament elections of 2009 and came to the conclusion that there might be a new, emerging style of political campaigning through the social media called *personal campaigning*. According to Vergeer et al. (2011:481) the candidate-centered campaigning seems to be intensified, and online the campaigning goes even beyond conveying political messages, to what occupies politicians from a personal or even private perspective. In other words, politicians use these personal messages, for instance what they had for breakfast or what they watch on TV at night, in order to create a stronger bond with their followers. Social media, therefore, offers politicians an opportunity to shape public perceptions through direct and regular contact. Furthermore, through social media platforms, such as Twitter, politicians are able to affect their audience and possible voters with more than just political issues; they are able to selectively present an all-encompassing, pleasing version of themselves.

Although my study focuses on political language use in social media and how language use in new media might constitute political power, in order to be able to investigate the subject further, we must look into how this type of language is produced. As stated in the previous chapter, today's politicians have employed a new tactic of sharing parts of their lives through social media in order to create a stronger bond with their public. With millions of people choosing what and whom to follow in the social media outlets, politicians have also had to turn to different linguistic behavior in order to attract more followers in the competitive social media environment. In other words, presenting oneself as a certain type of politician is not enough anymore; a politician too needs to be able to present oneself as an interesting, entertaining and reliable package. This, in turn, has led to political rhetoric in the new media mimicking the language used in traditional branding literature. In fact, according to Karlsen (2009), political parties have begun to use political campaigning strategies and increasingly approach voters as consumers searching for a product and not as loyal partisans. Therefore, in

order to approach the change in political language use, we must look into branding and how it has affected the modern political discourse.

2.3 SELF-BRANDING

Generally, the term brand has been understood as a distinct marketing practice, where products and services are marketed to specific audiences through culturally meaningful imagery and narratives. In other words, a brand is built through a series of practices which tempt the consumers in a way that generates brand loyalty. According to Mitsikopoulou (2008: 355), with specific reference to corporate branding, a brand should firstly reflect a corporation's strengths, commitments and values and create a set of associations in the consumers' minds. Second, a brand is a corporation's promise to the customers; it is also a way of behaving inside a corporation as well, giving a sense of direction and purpose to an organization's staff. Finally, a brand is not only a product; a brand adds an emotional dimension to the products with which people can identify. In fact, it is this emotional dimension which differentiates branding from other marketing techniques (*ibid.*).

Although branding has originally been seen as a distinct practice for the fields of economics and marketing, other fields of scientific study have also shown interest towards the vast possibilities of marketing a product in an emotional way to the consumer. However, in recent years the products that are marketed through branding are more commonly people and ideas, than commodities. Moore (2003) argues that the attempt to replace value with symbolic meaning has grown out of a sense that production has been transformed, or replaced, by signification. He maintains that brands and branding constitute a particular entity in which a branded product is partly a thing and partly language. Thus, branding has also become a vehicle of advertising not only material things, but for instance politicians, musicians, athletes and other public figures, in order to increase their value in the eyes of the public.

As a highly emotional and thus effective marketing technique, branding has also made its way into peoples' everyday lives. With the development of celebrity culture, reality television and social media, branding also people has become a popular way of getting and maintaining attention both in people's working and private lives. In fact, 'branding of the self' is not a new phenomenon. Already in the 1890s, John Locke envisioned the self as a commodity subjected

to market exchange (Hearn 2008: 199). Later, scholars such as Anthony Giddens (1991) and the gurus of self-branding literature, Tom Peters (1997), Graham Steadman (2002) and Peter Montoya (2002) among others, have written about seeing the self as a promotional vehicle that is packaged and distributed like a product with the sole intention to sell. Alison Hearn (2008: 198), in turn, sees self-branding as the self-conscious construction of a meta-narrative and meta-image of self through the use of cultural meanings and images drawn from the narrative and visual codes of the mainstream culture industries. In other words, self-branding, or personal branding, involves not only packaging oneself in an attractive way, but also designing a complete narrative and lifestyle around one's brand. As Hearn (2008: 206) puts it: "Ultimately your personal brand is not only a pretty veneer; it is intended to be a rhetorically persuasive version of yourself."

There is a great deal of self-branding literature in terms of the historical perspective and development of the phenomenon. In addition, among others the above-mentioned authors have provided a comprehensive array of how-to literature concerning personal branding. However, little research has been conducted on whom the people are doing the actual self-branding and what they are trying to accomplish by doing so. Hearn (2006, 2008, 2011) has studied how images of the self are constructed in reality television and on party- advertising websites and how, in turn, they actively produce people as profitable market commodities. In other words, in recent research self-branding has mainly been looked at from the point of view of the market forces that produce the images on television and on websites for profit. While this is an important and valid area on research, I am, however, more interested in how self-branding materializes in the social media environment, where the producer of the self is also among the people who reap the possible profit.

In addition, I am interested in how self-branding has become a part of several politicians' everyday life. With more and more politicians representing themselves not only in political functions, but in the entertainment and social media, packaging oneself as a product with attractive qualities, such as presenting personal details, has become crucial in order to maintain and gain political power. In his 2013 research on the transformation of political governing through the rise of a class of specialized political professionals, Jamie Warner goes as far as to suggest that "governing is about accruing and keeping power by selling the American people a coherently and often expensively branded political product" (2013: 291). He also refers to the "sales-oriented politician" who, according to Warner, maintains political

power through permanent campaign strategies designed to "sell" a policy to the public. Bearing this in mind, I will look into self-branding within the social media environment in more detail.

2.3.1 SELF-BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, social media users have begun to take into account the image of the self they are projecting in the world of internet. One might even argue that social media services play a crucial part in the current culture of self-branding. Moreover, Alice E. Marwick and danah boyd (2011) have studied the relationship between Twitter users and their imagined audiences and point out that the strategic use of Twitter to maintain followers, or to create and market a 'personal brand', is part of a larger social phenomenon of using social media instrumentally for self-conscious commodification (2011:119). In other words, Marwick's and boyd's study examines how different Twitter users perceive their possible audience and comes to the conclusion that while Twitter users value authenticity and privacy in their tweets, they also actively build a certain image of themselves. While Marwick and boyd call this phenomenon *micro-celebrity*, it can also be argued that the phenomenon resembles classic self-branding, only in a social media environment.

In fact, instead of the term *branding of the self*, studies concerning phenomenon in the social media, have more than often used the terms *self-presentation* or *impression management*. For instance, Hope Schau and Mary Gilly (2003) have studied the strategies behind constructing a digital self through personal web sites. In their study Schau and Gilly use the conceptual framework of self-presentation, originally credited to Erving Goffman, in order to examine why people create web sites and what they want to communicate through them. Although personal websites have experienced a radical decrease in popularity, largely due to social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and so on, the strategy of self-presentation used in Schau and Gilly's study can be applicable to this study as well. In my study, I will similarly draw upon the literature of self-presentation and impression management while also comparing it with the conventional branding literature in order to examine how personal political brands are formed through certain self-presentation, or impression management strategies.

2.4 SELF-PRESENTATION AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Alongside self-branding, a term which has its origins in the area of marketing and economics, a similar term, *self-presentation*, has been introduced in the fields of sociology and psychology. In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) Erving Goffman describes self-presentation as a way of managing one's behavior consciously in order to maintain one's place in the social order. In other words, in everyday interaction, people will constantly try to control or guide their manners and appearance for social acceptance. Since Goffman concentrated on the phenomenon in terms of its sociological point of view, he was one of the first scholars to point out the importance of self-presentation in modern society. Also psychologists became interested in the presentation of the self thus producing relevant research on the matter on their own field (see Jones 1964; Jones et al. 1962 and Jones et al. 1981). Jones, in particular, has provided a great deal of research material and literature covering self-presentation. Later, he also developed a conceptual analysis of impression management (Jones and Pittman 1982) which I will also use in my analysis.

Subsequent research has, however, come to the consensus around the definition of *impression management* as the term capturing the multifaceted nature of presenting the self. Leary and Kowalski (1990), among others, have studied the terminology and literature of self-presentation and impression management and come to the conclusion that although many scholars (see for instance Schenkler 1980; Schneider 1981) have distinguished between the two terms, impression management is generally considered a broader and more encompassing term. However, because most research has dealt with how people control the impressions others form of them (for which both terms are appropriate), Leary and Kowalski use the terms interchangeably (1990:34). Since my study also focuses on how people, in this case Sarah Palin herself controls the impressions people form of her through social media, I use these terms interchangeably as well.

2.4.1 POLITICAL IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT AND TWITTER USE

In the earlier chapters I have examined the terminology and previous studies of both branding and impression management. Similarly to studies made on branding in social media, impression management and social media behavior have been the focus of research as well. Since my study also focuses on political language use in social media and political branding, I will concentrate on studies made in the field of political communication, although studies on impression management in social media in other academic fields also exist (see for instance Krämer and Winter 2008; Schniederjans et al. 2013).

Nigel Jackson and Darren Lilleker (2011) have studied the British Members of Parliament and their use of Twitter from the point of view of impression management. In their study the term is used to refer to the strategy of self-promotion that the MP's use in order to publicize their achievements and promote their constituency service. Jackson and Lilleker also point out that impression management strategies no longer have to rely upon media coverage, but can be an ongoing communication process controlled by the sender, thus changing normative views of the process of impression management (2011:90). In other words, politicians, for instance, do not have to wait for a media source to come to them for a professional opinion or for promotion of their own party, but they can consciously affect their own public image, or brand, by choosing themselves what to promote in social media.

This shift in the normative views of impression management is not only an interesting phenomenon in terms of a public figure being able to control the media in a certain way, it is also very characteristic of today's media behavior and the enhancement of the self in it. In fact, Jackson and Lilleker's study comes to the conclusion that the use of Twitter seems to be largely about the MPs promoting themselves and thus building an impression of them as professionals or individuals, rather than promoting their constituency service (2011:98). This coincides with the fact that the political image of politicians can, in part, be created and managed through selective disclosures about their private lives (Stanyer and Wring 2004). As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.2.2, politicians have used the Internet as a means of providing a hinterland that shows them as likeable human beings, so representing a second strand of impression management. This might include providing details of their personal interests in

music, sport or films, showing a sense of humor or displaying any other of a myriad of personal traits they wish to disclose (Jackson and Lilleker 2011:89-90). Furthermore, Gulati (2004), in assessing the use of their websites by members of Congress, found that they sought to promote different images: either as a 'Washington insider' or an 'outsider'. Whether it is facts about their personal lives, or their stands within the US political system, it can be argued that all of the behaviors of impression management mentioned above link to more traditional forms of branding as well. In fact, as De Landstheer puts it, these specific aspects of political impression management can be perceived as political marketing techniques in a politician's quest for political power (2004:221). In political marketing theory, the political candidate is understood as a political brand that needs to be repositioned when it is no longer working. Following the laws and regulations of business marketing, unsatisfied consumers switch brands or try new products. In politics, the voter (consumer) lends his or her vote to a political party or specific politician, and when predictions and aspirations are not met voters withdraw (ibid).

While this impression management and its importance is undoubtedly present in politicians' Twitter behavior, the issue of how these self-presentations come to be, needs to be looked at in more detail. Besides the fact that politicians want to build a professional and favorable image of themselves, the strategies they use in order to achieve the desired presentation of the self, include different categories that all contribute to the so called end product. In other words, in my study I will be concentrating not only on how Sarah Palin presents herself on Twitter, but also on how she combines different strategies of impression management in order to create a branded image of herself. In the next chapter I will present the set-up of my study, my study questions and also elaborate on impression management typology as a tool for social media analysis. I will also introduce Sarah Palin as a political tweeter.

3 SET-UP OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In this section of the study I will present the set-up of the research. First, I will present the aims and research questions, as well as introduce Sarah Palin as a subject of this study. Second, I will move on to the methods of this study, namely content analysis and impression management typology. I will also look at tweets as data, the selection of the tweets and political tweets as data for content analysis in particular, before addressing the possible ethical issues concerning Twitter research.

3.1 AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to find out how a branded image of a politician is constructed through social media, in particular Twitter. As already stated in the introduction of this study, this type of qualitative case study is needed in order to understand the phenomenon of self-presentation in its real context. In order to find out how ideological impression management is formed in today's social media environment, one need to look at individual users and their techniques of self-branding first. In other words, casing makes it possible for researchers to deal with the inherent complexity, specificity, uniqueness, and contextuality of social phenomena – to conduct social science despite all the obvious obstacles (Byrne and Ragin 2009: 526). When discussing a rather new phenomenon such as social media and its use, these types of case studies become increasingly important.

As already stated earlier in this study, tweeting has long been a part of celebrities' and public personalities' everyday communications with their fans and several politicians have also started tweeting as a part of their campaigning. In fact, tweeting for political purposes is by no means a new phenomenon. For instance, the American presidential candidates Barack Obama and John Edwards integrated Twitter in their campaigns already in 2008. Both used the platform to keep their 'followers' abreast of their whereabouts and upcoming appearances (Diaz, 2007). What interests me, however, is how modern social media platforms such as Twitter are nowadays used for more than simply offering information on politicians' whereabouts. Along with other social media services, Twitter has become a medium for

constructing a person as "a rhetorically pleasing version of oneself "(Hearn 2008:201). This phenomenon in social media is connected to the general change in political culture. In this process, strategically appealing to followers becomes a carefully calculated way to market oneself as a commodity in response to employment uncertainty (Hearn, 2008; Lair et al., 2005). While it is obvious that celebrities use this type of branding to promote themselves and their actions as commodities, I intend to examine if politicians use this type of self-conscious branding as means to gain political power.

For the purposes of this study, I will examine the tweets of the former governor of Alaska, Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. The data, 171 tweets, was collected during a period of one year, from September 1st 2011 to September 1st 2012, by scanning through Palin's Twitter homepage SarahPalinUSA. Sarah Palin is known for her active commentary on the social media websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, and therefore proves to be a great subject of this research. In fact, as Shushannah Walshe points out in her article for The Daily Beast (2010), "no other major candidate has the social-media presence of Sarah Palin and she's been doing it mostly alone on her ever-present BlackBerry since her spokeswoman departed in February". Although she decided not to run for the Republican candidate in the US presidential elections of 2012, Palin has also been active in touring the country in terms of her two books *Going Rogue* and *America by Heart*, as well as in the functions of the Republican Tea-Party movement. The Tea-Party movement is known for its highly conservative values and politics, among others strong military, gun ownership, government downsizing and cutting the government spending (Tea Party Inc. 2014). Sarah Palin is one of the movement's key figures. Recently, she has devoted her time to supporting her fellow Republicans running for offices across the US and thus, founded a federally registered political action committee (PAC), SarahPAC, dedicated to building America's future by supporting fresh ideas and candidates who share the vision for reform and innovation (www.SarahPAC.com 8th Jan, 2012). In addition, she is one of the leading forces in the American political debate arena. Palin has, for instance, worked as an analyst on the Fox News Channel.

As the American political media grows more polarized, the more ideological and exaggerated one's statements are, the more they gain media coverage (Seppälä, 2011). According to Seppälä (2011:63), the exaggeration and even hate speech in the American media is connected to the strengthening of the so-called emotional politics, in which ideological quips, coded

words and silent messages are used to target voters and fellow politicians. For instance, president Obama has been targeted as a communist, and an anti-American, mostly by conservative media stars, such as Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Sean Hannity, while also Sarah Palin has been under attack from liberal media through several unflattering impersonations and photo modifications. As Niskakangas points out (in Seppälä 2001:63), American politics are glaring, American politicians are particularly gifted in twisting each other's words and separating things from context. Also biased newspapers, magazines and TV shows do this a lot. Although this can be seen as one of the defining features of American political culture in general, using this type of emotional politics stems from individual politicians. This is another reason why Sarah Palin's social media behavior is worth looking at. Because of her active and often polarizing commentary throughout the American media, I would argue that Sarah Palin can be seen as a great example of the current American political atmosphere, and her tweets thus offer an insight to the underlying structures of political power in the US.

Sarah Palin has been a topic of research before, but mainly in studies on gender and political rhetoric (Carlin & Winfrey 2009; Gibson and Heyse 2010; Harp et al.2010). For instance Gibson and Heyse (2010), Harp et al. (2010) and Krol (2009) have studied Palin's femininity and masculinity and how it is portrayed in the American media. Also, Harp et al. (2010) and Gibson and Heyse (2010) have examined Palin's speeches on the internet and found out that while she takes part in traditional feminine discourse by referring to her maternal values and domestic examples, she also joins the celebration of hegemonic masculinity by endorsing traditional masculine values, thus making her persona *faux maternal*. In their study, Gibson and Heyse (2010) explain this by referring to Palin's vice presidential acceptance speech at the 2008 Republican National Convention (RNC), where she first represented the traditional feminine values of motherhood, nurturing and caring, but later in the speech enthusiastically endorsed traditional gender scripts by praising the hegemonic masculinity of John McCain and his stance as the number one man of the country. Although Palin also presented herself as a tough woman, by comparing hockey-moms to pit-bulls for instance, at the same time she positioned herself as the traditional weaker sex, by pointing to McCain's military credentials and his masculinity as being the best qualities for running the country. As these, masculine values do not traditionally support strong femininity; Palin's speech became rather contradictory. Thus, despite using rather masculine rhetoric usually seen in feminist discourse,

she did so through the degradation of the feminine and, in the end, undermining of her own maternal persona (Gibson and Heyse 2010:251).

Furthermore, Brian Krol's (2009) research points out that also the American newsprint media has framed Palin as a masculine candidate during the 2008 vice presidential campaign. Although Sarah Palin clearly interests researchers among the field of gender studies and political rhetoric, there is very little academic research on Palin's own political language use or branding. In her essay, Ouellette (2012), examines Palin and her career from politics to entertainment and comes to the conclusion that despite the mockery she has faced throughout her political career, she has managed to establish herself as a brand, as well as an entertainment and social media mogul. While Ouellette's essay certainly frames the same topic as this study does, a more detailed study of the ways she establishes this brand is needed. As Palin's use of social media has been noted, particularly in the American press, and since she is nevertheless active on different social media sites, and writes for her political supporters and opponents in a polarizing way, her tweets offer an interesting gateway to modern political language use and how it is used in order to portray a certain public image.

With this in mind, and considering the methodology of this study, my research questions were formed around the subjects of Palin's political branding, impression management and promotion of self. Thus, my research questions are the following:

1. How does Sarah Palin represent herself as a politician through her language use in Twitter? Moreover, looking at political rhetoric and the contents of the tweets in particular, what types of:

1.a) impression management categories and

1.b) self-promoting strategies can be found in her tweets?

2. How do these strategies combine to form a branded image of Sarah Palin?

3.2 METHODS OF ANALYSIS

In the following chapter I will present the methods of my study, namely content analysis and impression management typology. Since this study is predominantly qualitative, both methods

were used in order to collect and analyze the data in a reliable manner. The possible methodological challenges are further discussed at the end of this thesis.

3.2.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS

For the purposes of collecting and analyzing my data I used content analysis. Content analysis is commonly used in the studies of media and communication, since it measures human behavior in a systematic and reliable way (for instance Berelson 1952, Holsti 1969, Krippendorff, 2004, Titscher et al. 2000). In other words, content analysis helps to categorize actual products of language, such as newspaper articles, comics, contents of television programs and even tweets, through systematic classification and description. There are several approaches to content analysis:

In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data. With a directed approach, analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes. A summative content analysis involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context (Hsien & Shannon 2005:1277).

In addition, as Kim and Kuljis (2010: 283) point out, content analysis, when performed particularly to web-based content, can be useful for discovering and gaining insights into users' preferences and behaviors as well as into complex social and communicational trends and patterns generated by users.

Although content analysis can also be determined as quantitative research, in my analysis, however, I used a more qualitative approach. Instead of forming statistics about Sarah Palin's Twitter behavior based on, for instance, the recurrence of certain words or expressions, I looked into the semantic meaning of the tweets as texts. In other words, I was interested in the contents and meanings of the texts and their intertextuality, thus forming a qualitative content analysis on Palin's tweets. Since my method of study was also based on the categorizations of impression management techniques, this study can be seen as a directed content analysis.

As already stated, a tool for the analysis of the tweets and the basis of categorization was Jones' and Pittman's (1982) *typology on impression management*, which contains five behaviors that an actor who seeks to influence the perception of others will display. With this

method of analysis, I intended to investigate the strategies with which Sarah Palin brands herself as a politician. By coding her tweets into different categories I found out which of them were most predominant and if they followed the patterns of self-presentation. I will describe my methodologies further in the next chapter. I will also look into evidence of self-presentation in more detail.

3.2.2 IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT TYPOLOGY

E.E. Jones and T.S. Pittman's (1982) typology for impression management has been used as a method of distinguishing self-presentational behavior also in several previous studies. For instance Astrid Schütz (1997) has used the method in her study of German TV personalities' and politicians' self-presentations in German talk shows and how they differ from each other. Also Jackson and Lilleker (2011) presented in chapter 2.4.1., have made use of impression management typology in their study. The typology itself contains five categories; *ingratiation*, *self-promotion*, *supplication*, *exemplification* and *intimidation*. The categories are described further below:

Ingratiation: to present oneself as likeable and attractive. Also referring to oneself as "just a normal person" or disclosing pleasing facts about oneself.

Self-promotion: to appear successful and professional. Referring to one's titles, abilities and positions held, for instance.

Supplication: to appear helpless or present a lack of knowledge on a subject. Also to solicit help by inducing guilt or moral responsibility

Exemplification: to present oneself as morally worthy, adhering to moral values, truthfulness and integrity.

Intimidation: to appear dangerous or threatening, also threaten with action.

Table 1: Impression Management Typology

Behavior	Characteristics	Indicators
Ingratiation	To appear likeable	Agreeing with other tweeters, mentioning helping people and organizations, self-deprecating anecdotes
Self-Promotion	To appear competent and professional	Referring to abilities, personal achievements, qualifications or positions held
Supplication	To be viewed as helpless, soliciting help	Soliciting help, presenting a lack of knowledge
Exemplification	To appear exemplary and morally worthy	Claiming worthy attributes and moral values
Intimidation	To appear threatening	Expressions of power, suggesting punitive actions

Source: Adapted from Jones and Pittman's (1982) Impression Management Typology and Jackson and Lilleker's (2011) table of behaviors

It should be noted, however, that these behaviors are not mutually exclusive. According to Jones and Pittman (1982), the same act can serve different functions for different audiences and thus some overlapping of the behaviors is inevitable. For instance, while there is certain incompatibility between ingratiation and intimidation, self-promotion can go together with either. Similarly, an exemplifier can be intimidating, or a supplicant ingratiating (Jones and Pittman 1982: 250). Thus, the most important thing for the correct interpretation of the categories is not so much the personality types or behavior episodes, than the observation of the strategic self (ibid.).

As stated already in chapter 2.4.1. the impression management typology can be used as a tool for studying social media content, since it brings out the behaviors the producer of the text wants to put forward, instead of another party, for instance reporters. In addition, the predominant behaviors arising from the data also bring out the branded image of the self. As my study concentrates on political language use and political branding in particular, I found also that the categories put forward by Jackson and Lilleker (2011) in their study of the UK MPs and their constituency service, prove their relevance in my study as well. In their study, Jackson and Lilleker formed their own table of categories on the basis of the MPs' presentation of self in order to find out whether or not their self-presentation is more

important to them than their constituency role. Although my study does not focus on comparing the politicians personal self-presentation and their constituency service, it does, however focus largely on the evidence of the presentation of self. Thus also Jackson and Lilleker's categories of promotion of self, offer valid categories for coding the data of this study.

Table 2: Evidence of Promotion of Self

Category	Measurement
Details of personal life (family and everyday activities of a non-political nature)	Evident/Non-evident
Identifies personal interests, such as sports, music, film or leisure	Evident/Non-evident
Displays sense of humor	Evident/Non-evident
Promotion of party	Evident/Non-evident

Source: Adapted from Jackson and Lilleker's (2011) table of categories of Promotion of Self

3.3 POLITICAL TWEETS AS DATA

Although Twitter use among politicians has been a subject of studies before, political tweets as data have not been under research concerning single politicians. Therefore the data collected for the purposes of this research varied extensively in terms of topics and contents. In addition, the tweets proved to be rather multimodal in their nature, since the websites connected to the tweets with hyperlinks often contained photographs, videos and pictures alongside the actual texts. Moreover, as adding content to a tweet is not only customary in Twitter use, but also an efficient way of offering the reader a context for the tweet, and thus several of the hyperlink contents needed to be explained in more detail. Furthermore, in political social media use, the expression of political opinion could at times not be seen until the actual hyperlink, where Palin elaborated on the subject on her personal Facebook page, for example. All of these factors had to be taken into account when analyzing the data, resulting often in overlapping, both in categories and themes. However, this type of analysis proves its relevance in case studies, where the use of the whole data material is justified, in order to get a deeper understanding of the subject of study.

3.3.1 SELECTION OF TWEETS

For the purposes of this study I collected 171 tweets from Sarah Palin's Twitter page SarahPalinUSA, in the time period of one year. The tweets were collected by scanning through Sarah Palin's Twitter feed on her homepage and collecting all the tweets from the 1st of September 2011 the 1st of September 2012. However, tweets posted by other people on Palin's homepage were excluded since they were not tweeted by Sarah Palin herself and thus could not be included in the analysis of Palin's own presentation of self. All the tweets Palin sent out during the year, however, were considered as relevant data, since my study concentrates on the general self-presentation of Palin, not merely her political career. The time period of collecting the tweets was selected on the basis of the progress of this study, as well as the fact that in conducting a qualitative analysis, the data sample needed to be small enough to be analyzed with qualitative methods of looking at the tweets as texts. Also, by following her tweets through the course of one year, I was able to collect a sufficient amount of tweets in order to produce a more reliable analysis on Palin's Twitter behavior. In addition, collecting the tweets during a longer period of time gave a more clear insight to the conventions and reoccurring themes that Sarah Palin used, in order to reveal more clearly the self-promotion strategies she employs in her tweets. In addition, the time period before the US presidential election of 2012, with also the Conservative Party primary elections in progress, Palin's Twitter behavior offered more contexts into the political atmosphere in the US.

I have previously studied the US presidential election of 2008 candidates Barack Obama and John McCain and how they were represented in two American newspapers (Räsänen and Valkonen 2009). Since I have already studied the American political media, the political use of social media began to interest me with the rise of social media services such as Twitter. In addition I have also followed Sarah Palin and her political career since the 2008 election, when she was McCain's vice presidential nominee. Later, Palin's way of creating political debate with her polarizing commentary and the way she has presented herself through social media began to interest me. Although other high profile politicians such as Barack Obama are heavily represented in social media today, what makes Palin interesting, is her overtly all-inclusive style of mixing political content with other topics, such as her personal life.

When processing the data I decided to group the hyperlinks together with the tweets so that one meaningful unit is one tweet, including the hyperlink. This was done because, as stated earlier in chapter 2.1.2 the hyperlinks constitute essential units of meaning in today's Twitter use. The hyperlinks can be seen as exchanging information, acknowledging others, promoting oneself and supporting communities similarly to the tweets themselves, so leaving the hyperlinks out of the analysis would have led to ambiguities and even misinformation on the actual meanings of the tweets. Furthermore, including the hyperlinks in the analysis provided much needed background information on some of the tweets, thus making it easier to analyze the data reliably. Since my study concentrates on a single person using Twitter instead of multiple users, and to analyze the tweets in their respective context, it is also important to look at Sarah Palin as a user of social media in more detail. I will focus on this in the following chapter.

3.3.2 SARAH PALIN AS A POLITICAL TWEETER

After joining Twitter in November 2009, Sarah Palin has been active in her commentary on current issues, US domestic policy, her own upcoming appearances and GOP activities. As I mentioned in chapter 3.1., a great deal of politicians, including Barack Obama, have adopted Twitter as a part of their everyday campaigning and information distributing. In several cases, however, this results in the politicians not actually tweeting themselves, but letting their staff inform their followers on current issues, campaigning and appearances. Sarah Palin, on the other hand, seems to use Twitter herself (see DATA). This can be deduced from the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'my', as well as the fact that the tweets contain several references to Palin's family members, personal values and so forth. This makes her tweets more personal and thus reflects the policies and politics she wants to be associated with. Naturally sometimes politicians do not tweet themselves, but have staff that is responsible for social media connections. However, in these cases it is often common to use an abbreviation for when the politician is actually tweeting on her/his own. For instance Barack Obama uses *-BO* for his own tweets. This does not appear in Palin's tweets which could also refer to Palin tweeting herself. Even if Palin's tweets were not written by her personally, it is, however, more important that Sarah Palin gives the perception of tweeting herself. According to Jackson & Lilleker (2011:90) the inherent logic in at least appearing to be tweeting oneself, is that

through self-promotion, politicians encourage voters to develop an empathy with the politician as an ordinary human being and that tools such as Twitter offer an easy, convenient and controllable way of communicating such personal information. The perception of Palin tweeting herself also makes for an excellent medium for self-branding. Since she seems to be in control of what she tweets, Palin can consciously use Twitter as a platform to obtain and maintain attention, by targeting tweets towards their perceived audience's interest and balancing different topic areas (Marwick and boyd, 2010:122).

This is exactly what Palin does in her tweets. The chain of tweets consists of various topics ranging from sharp political critique to free-time activities and family, thus covering all the bases for successful self-branding. As mentioned above, most of her tweets include hyperlinks to other sources of information, typically her own Facebook profile, where she keeps "a journal" of articles. Also featured in the hyperlinks are political blogs, news articles, YouTube-videos, web-stores and media websites. Since the hyperlinks and what they represent to the viewer of the tweets are clearly a large part of what Palin is trying to convey through her social media behavior, and because of the increased use of hyperlinks in Twitter generally, my analysis will move from presenting and discussing the tweets in their respective categories, to also covering the contents of the hyperlinks simultaneously thus producing a more thorough analysis on the tweets in their entirety.

3.3.3. ETHICAL ISSUES ON TWITTER RESEARCH

The Internet is increasingly perceived as an excellent source of data, not only for collecting interview and survey responses, but for examining online discourse itself (Sharf 1999: 244). With Sharf's notion, however, arises the problematic issue of ethical considerations within online research. This chapter examines these issues in the context of social media and Twitter research as well as establishes my position as a researcher within this mode of study.

Since the emergence of social networking services and their adaptation by millions of people, the issues on privacy and the right to collect data from different social media websites have been in the focus of critical attention (see Bassett and O'Riordan 2002; Markham and Buchanan 2012). Alongside the development of digital communication from web 2.0.

applications such as blogs and chat-rooms where the user can be protected through the use of avatars or nicknames to social networking and microblogging websites such as Facebook and Twitter, where some people present themselves under their own names; it has become increasingly complex to recognize the copyright and intellectual property rules that might be applicable to these media. Furthermore, the concept of human subjects under research is always a delicate issue and to be taken into account while conducting a research on a human entity, whether online or in the physical world. According to Markham and Buchanan (2012), the ethical issues concerning research conducted within the Internet are case-sensitive as well as process-oriented. In other words one needs to look at specific ethical concerns as they arise within each study (*ibid.*).

With this in mind, and after a closer look on Twitter's privacy policy, I have concluded that the collecting of the data described in the earlier chapter applies with both the ethical etiquette concerning social media research as well as the Twitter privacy policy. In contrast to some other modes of communication on the Internet such as private chat rooms, messages and e-mails (see for instance Brownlow and O'Dell 2002) , Twitter is not a private space for discussion, but in fact a social media service where the user's purpose is to share their thoughts with the world, the examining of the data is justified. Furthermore, Sarah Palin has a public user profile which means that her tweets are accessible to anyone, even without a Twitter account of their own. Thus the data is continuously available for further examination and possible corrections. In addition, as the purpose of this study is to present Palin's tweets in a neutrally descriptive way, without making any claims of the truthfulness or untruthfulness of her messages, but rather to look at them as a representation of the modern political language use, no harm should be caused to Palin or her people.

4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will present my findings and the categories found on the basis of *impression management* typology. In addition, I will examine the behaviors of *self-presentation* that emerge from the texts. Once I have presented all the categories and behaviors found in Palin's tweets, I will look at what categories are prominent and what are the strategies Palin uses to form a branded image of herself. In the following chapter, I will move on to discussing my findings, as well as suggesting alternative routes for this study.

Firstly, all of the behaviors mentioned in Jones and Pittman's *impression management* typology could be found in Sarah Palin's tweets, which I found surprising, since previous studies (see Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Schütz 1997) have stated otherwise. I will return to the behaviors in question in their respective chapters by defining them and linking them to Palin's tweets through examples. Secondly, also all the categories of Jackson and Lilleker's table of *presentation of self* were present in Palin's tweets. Not only were they present, but they formed a majority of the tweets (33 tweets, 19,3%), over any other category of the *impression management* typology. I will also discuss these categories and their importance further in this analysis.

The dataset consisted of all the tweets collected from the time period of one year from 1st of September 2011 to 1st of September 2012. The tweets amounted to 171 and they are numbered under their respective categories of *impression management* and *presentation of self* (see APPENDIX). This was done for clarity, because the contents of the tweets varied thematically between dates. However, the publication date of the tweet can be found after all the examples. Since all of the tweets from the time period were included, tweets that could not be coded into any of the categories were also found. These tweets were coded as uncategorizable and they will be presented in subsection 4.7.

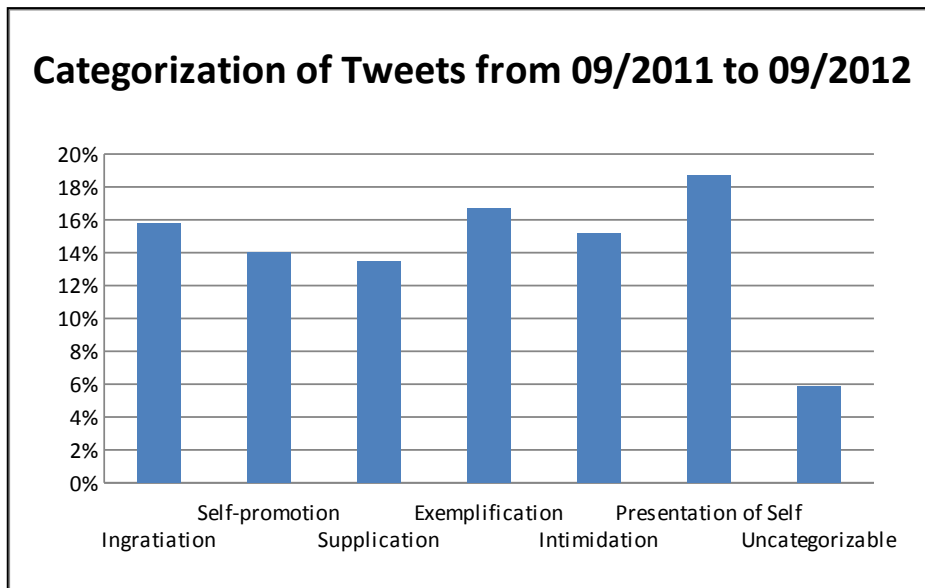


Figure 1: Categorization of Sarah Palin's tweets

4.1 INGRATIATION

There were 27 tweets (15,8%), that could be included into the behavior of *ingratiatio*n. The types of *ingratiatio*n varied from Palin complimenting her fellow conservatives and supporters, to thanking the people who have supported her in the Conservative and Tea Party events. Such tweets included among others;

(1) *Thank you, Storm Lake, Iowa. You put on a great event & we loved meeting some great folks in your beautiful town today!*
(4 Sep, 2011) and

(28) *Had a great time today in Gilbert, Arizona, at a rally for Kirk Adams. It's very important to pay attention to...* <http://fb.me/IK7ZdA8S>
(28 Aug, 2012)

with the hyperlink leading to fellow conservative Michelle Malkin's website. Besides presenting herself as a good conservative, by thanking the audiences at her rallies and fellow politicians in the field, Palin also presents herself as likeable and down to earth. This type of behavior is common in politicians (see Schütz 1997) and can be seen as classical behavior of *ingratiatio*n. Furthermore, by linking Michelle Malkin's website to her own tweet, Palin shows herself as a supporter of fellow conservatives, as well as presenting herself as a voice for the conservative agenda. In this particular tweet the hyperlink website contains an article

on GOP opposition to the RNC ruling that supposedly decreases the chances of the grassroots conservatives to elect their fellow members as delegates. Similar tweets appeared 8 times (29,6% of *ingratiatio*n) in the data, often with a link to a political speech, a blog post or an article on the conservative issues at hand. Furthermore, in several of the tweets Palin mentions herself as taking part in the activities or being of assistance, thus also presenting typical behavior seen as *ingratiatio*n.

The most often reoccurring behaviors of *ingratiatio*n were, however, different holiday and Memorial Day greetings at 16%, 59% and 2%. Most of the greetings were seasonal and rather uncontroversial in their nature, such as

(13) *Happy Easter!* <http://fb.me/RFE2aL9v>
(9 Apr, 2012)

where the hyperlink linked the tweet to a Facebook photograph of the Palin family Easter egg hunt. With this type of *ingratiatio*n Palin clearly wanted to present herself not only likeable and down to earth, but also as a good Christian, whose life is in sync with the traditional Christian holidays. This could be further argued with the fact that other Christian holidays such as Christmas (7), deserved their own tweet as well. What I found surprising was that among the seasonal greetings associated with Christianity, Palin also sent tweets to the Jewish community on their religious holidays. For instance,

(3) *L'shanah tovah! Happy New Year!* <http://fb.me/yDq2EYTk>
(29 Sep, 2011)

included a link to Palin's Facebook page, where she wishes a happy new year to all her Jewish friends and to the whole of Israel, a country that is an ally to the US. By reaching out to the Jewish community, Palin clearly tries to brand herself not only a person of cultural awareness, but also a supporter of Israel, thus taking a political stand as well. Furthermore, I did not find any evidence in the data of Palin reaching out to other minority religions, such as Muslims or Hindus, for instance, but the Jewish community was referred to twice in the data (see also tweet (6)). Thus, it seems that the Jewish community in particular, is important to Palin. In her Facebook update, Palin also refers to America's Judeo-Christian foundations. In fact, Palin has been seen in public wearing the Star of David, a commonly known symbol of the Jewish faith, in order to promote her pro-Israel beliefs. As the volatile situation between Israel and

Palestine continues to be a pressing political issue, Palin presents herself as not only a friend of the Jewish community, but an active supporter of the State of Israel as well.

Seen as a devoted right wing Tea Party politician, Sarah Palin also grasped onto several of the military holidays in the US. As the Tea Party supports both a strong military and gun ownership, the military holidays seem to be a good way for Palin to show her support of the US Army. These tweets offered a more precise pattern of *ingratiation* in the sense that by congratulating and complimenting the troops, Palin is presenting herself as a patriot and an American, the characteristics that tend to have support amongst several Americans, conservative Tea Party members in particular. Furthermore, by tweeting a greeting such as

(14) *Happy Armed Forces Day to all our brave men and women in uniform!*
<http://fb.me/1w3l30AqB>
 (19 May, 2012)

with the link showing an US Armed Forces promotional poster, where the men and women of the army are shown working in different military jobs, Palin links herself to the American people by suggesting that the military forces are everyone's men and women. By also referring to the military workers as brave, Palin not only appears as a likeable ordinary citizen, but uses flattery in order to achieve the presentation of likeability. According to Jones and Pittman (1982:236) high status persons with a low status target are more likely to use flattery to gain attraction. In an another military related example,

(15) *Memorial Day and Rolling Thunder* <http://fb.me/C5N6jBNz>
 (26 May, 2012)

the hyperlink attached in the tweet shows a photograph of Palin with her husband Todd on the Memorial Day Rolling Thunder parade, and the text accompanying the picture thanks all the veterans particularly Vietnam veterans, who have fought for the US. While also using flattery to appear likeable, Palin also writes that she wants to highlight the POW/MIA ("prisoner of war"/"missing in action")-issues. This seems that she wants to reach out not only to the military, but the veteran community as well. Greetings to the military amounted at 4 times (14,8%) within the category of *ingratiation*. While naturally connecting herself to traditional right wing conservatism through the appraisal of the US armed forces, Palin also enforces this imagery through acknowledging other American memorial days, such as the birthdays of former American presidents. In:

(10) *Happy Presidents' Day* <http://fb.me/Pfaz7t9Y>
(20 Feb, 2012) and

(9) *Happy Birthday, President Lincoln* <http://fb.me/1DrbouC9s>
(12 Feb, 2012)

Palin honors the American presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln by appraising their abilities to serve their country as soldiers and statesmen as well as thanking them for America's freedom. Similarly, in

(8) *Happy Birthday, President Reagan* <http://fb.me/1yZlPt3Xe>
(6 Feb, 2012)

Palin praises Ronald Reagan, his work and conservative values. These links to former US presidents seem to be an indirect way of flattering her readers. As all the presidents in question are deceased, but supported conservative values as presidents, Palin uses the flattery of conservative values to make her seem likeable to her supporters.

Other tweets classified as *ingratiation* were isolated tweets that were a mixture of greetings to her family and different readers, as well as local businesses and labor unions. Altogether 6 tweets (22, 2%) could be included into this subcategory. The common factor in the miscellaneous tweets was, however, that they were all targeted to people and groups in order to present oneself as a pleasant person through flattery. For instance, in

(20) *Stopped by Chick-fil-A in The Woodlands to support a great business.*
<http://fb.me/KM9ogGda>
(28 Jul, 2012)

Palin praises the local chicken restaurant in Texas. The hyperlink of the tweet leads to her Facebook page, where she and Todd are presented in a photograph of them in the restaurant in question. Also, Palin's tweets on Mother's and Father's Days represent an act of *ingratiation* through flattery:

(13) *Happy Mother's Day to all the Mama Grizzlies out there! I include my own Mom in that list. I love and thank you,...* <http://fb.me/1VS62uujT>
(13 May, 2012)

(18) *Happy Father's Day, Dad. Thank you for everything. Happy Father's Day, Todd. You are my rock. And Happy first...* <http://fb.me/1PA4XLPGR>
(17 Jun, 2012)

While the actual tweets praise Palin's own immediate family and to some extent other mothers and fathers of the world as well, the hyperlink still reveal a hidden agenda in Palin's *ingratiation*. In the first tweet, the link leads the reader to Sarah Palin's daughter Bristol's blog, where she writes about a mother's unconditional love. The second tweet reveals an article on Fox News' website, where the issue of men sending their sons to war during the 2nd World War was dealt with.

All in all, the tweets coded as *ingratiation* were Sarah Palin appearing to be likeable through different types of behaviors that centered around conservative values. Not only did Palin present herself as a likeable conservative by actively supporting her fellow politicians, she also praised the conservative citizens that gathered in GOP events. In addition she addressed a number of American and worldwide holidays in a manner that links her to favorable American values. Moreover, Palin referred to the military on several occasions, to present herself as a patriotic person, or to promote her political beliefs. What seemed like a political decision and, was in fact, one of the most interesting features of Sarah Palin's behavior of *ingratiation*, was the support for the Jewish community, and the state of Israel, even though Palin herself is an evangelical Christian.

4.2 SELF-PROMOTION

Tweets considered as *self-promotion* amounted at 24 (14,0%). In these tweets concerning her professional life, Palin referred to her own abilities and personal achievements 5 times (20,8%), which is rather a little for a politician, to whom competence is often a key feature when forming a *presentation of the self*. In fact, as Lawless (2010) points out, most of politicians' tweets centered on presenting a favorable personal and *professional* image of themselves. Three of the tweets representing Palin's professional capabilities were in form of an article or an interview, where Palin was able to show her knowledge on current issues.

(37) Palin: Congress, it's time to stop lining your pockets <http://fb.me/1g9dh0Pu1>
(13 Dec,2011)

This particular tweet includes a link to newspaper USA Today's website where Palin, or possibly her assistant, has written an article blaming the US Congress for accumulating wealth in unethical ways, for instance through insider trading. In this particular case, Palin

expresses her professional abilities through linking content to the tweet that she has written herself for a national newspaper and thus presents herself as a competent and trustworthy politician. What is also noteworthy however, is that at the end of the article, Palin is credited as the *former governor of Alaska and Republican vice presidential nominee in 2008*, thus also referring to her political achievements and held positions. Other tweets categorized as *self-promotion* in a traditional sense were tweets that presented Palin in her work as a Fox political analyst and giving interviews on current political issues. In

(44) *I got to talk with Sean Hannity tonight about the 2012 race thus far and about Obama's shameful judicial bullying...* <http://fb.me/1BztIpndZ>
(4 Apr, 2012)

Palin performs as a political contributor in Fox News Channel's broadcast on the republican primary election of 2012. In the three -part video, Palin presents her competence through talking about the republican primary election and Mitt Romney's likely win, as well as Barack Obama's presidency and how he has not been able to fulfill his promises during his presidential term. In addition, Palin's credentials and personal attributes are praised multiple times during the show by the host, Sean Hannity as well as other Fox news experts, former White House Press Secretary Dana Perino, and journalist Stuart Varney. Firstly, Palin is continuously referred to as *governor* by Sean Hannity. Secondly, she is regularly praised for her work experience and her dealing with the media. Her professional abilities are even further reaffirmed by Hannity who calls her *one of the strongest conservative voices in the country*, and Varney, who refers to Palin as *a natural, who communicates with her audiences*. Similarly, in

(48) *Here's an interview I did with Breitbart News about our energy policies. Eric Bolling and I are hosting a special...* <http://fb.me/1x8oxPvto>
(13 Apr, 2012)

Palin invites the reader to see what can be found behind the hyperlink. Although the tweet can also be seen as an advertisement of Palin's appearances in television, through the link, the reader is able to see the actual interview which can, through its appraisal of Palin, be seen as *self-presentation*. In the interview done by Breitbart News, a conservative news and opinion website, Palin answers questions about American energy policies. What is surprising in the contents of this interview is how the self-promotion of Sarah Palin comes from not only from the professional answers that she gives to the interviewer, but how the interviewer also frames

Palin as a professional by referring to her as *governor of Alaska, no stranger to holding big oil companies accountable* and *a military mom* as if to verify Palin's credentials as a politician as well as a trustworthy person. In fact, as Jones and Pittman (1982:245) point out, the superior strategy for a self-promoter is to arrange for others to make claims of competence in one's behalf, rather than explicitly doing so oneself.

Although Sarah Palin's self-promoting behavior was in large parts relatively different from traditional *self-promotion*, it does not mean that was non-existent. In fact, Palin promoted herself and her actions 12 times in the data. I categorized these tweets as *self-promotion* although they were not promoting one's professional abilities in the traditional sense, but rather in a more modern sense of combining impression management with traditional branding techniques. For instance, in

(47) *Here's the promo for the "Paying at the Pump" special on Fox News this Friday, April 13th at 10pm ET. <http://fb.me/1ziGTKJF1>*
(12 Apr, 2012)

Palin advertises her actions in a straightforward manner by linking a promotional video of her show to the tweet. Also in

(33) *The documentary "The Undefeated" is on sale at Walmart in a special package deal with "Going Rogue." <http://fb.me/1kD50s7Nl>*
(21 Oct, 2011) and

(36) *I'll be on Eric Bolling's "Follow the Money" show today at 10pm EST (6pm AK time).*
(7 Dec, 2011)

Palin advertises her public appearances, first a documentary made about her by Stephen Bannon, and in the same tweet also her book *Going Rogue*. The hyperlink in the first tweet leads the reader to American multinational retail corporation Walmart's web shop, where one can order both the documentary and the book for a special price. In the second tweet, Palin is advertising her appearance in the later-cancelled Fox business show *Follow the Money*, hosted by the conservative Eric Bolling. With this type of *self-presentation* Palin does not only lead the reader to believe in her professional capabilities and credibility, but also to actually buy the products in question, and watch the television shows she is attending, thus promoting herself as a product (see Hearn 2008).

However, some of the tweets included not only *self-promotion*, but a moral or a political message as well. For instance the tweet

(43) *Headed to 30 Rock to be part of NBC's "Today" crew tomorrow morning at 7am ET... <http://is.gd/lg6C3q>*
(3 Apr, 2012)

is an advertisement of her television performance in her Facebook status, but also a promotion for Autism Awareness Day, which can be seen when entering Palin's Facebook account through the hyperlink. Furthermore, Palin takes a moral stand by sharing about an autistic relative of hers with whom she had walked in Walk Now For Autism Speaks in 2009. Also, a tweet such as

(30) *Catch "The Undefeated" for Alaska and America's Story*
<http://fb.me/ZCPaZ3yB>
(7 Sep, 2011)

not only advertises a documentary made about Sarah Palin and her team, but also links the tweet back to Palin's Facebook page, where she explains how the film is really about American values, the history of Alaska and the Tea Party movement. However, as already seen in tweet (32), Palin promotes her own book that is, in reality, sold together with the documentary later on in the year. This way Palin tries to establish herself as humble, and although starring in the film, merely a one of the Alaskans. Also Jones and Pittman point out that there are strategic problems associated with straightforward competency claims (1982:245). In other words, a self-promoter cannot make competency claims that are too strong in the fear of being at least partly discounted, but in order to appear competent, they nevertheless have to be made. This paradox can be seen in Palin's partly over-confident, partly understating behavior.

The remainder of tweets coded as self-promotion, were statements about a political issue, often with no hyperlinks to elaborate the issue further. For instance,

(34) *We should eliminate it for everyone & also cut corp welfare to fight crony capitalism while letting the private sector create American jobs.*
(2 Dec, 2011) and

(49) *Everyday Americans are feeling pain at the pump. [@whitehouse](#) has no excuse for not listening to our [#PayingAtThePump](#) solutions.*
(14 Apr, 2012)

are good examples of how Palin presents these statements as "facts" in order to appear competent. In the first tweet she is referring to eliminating the corporate income tax in the US. By plainly stating how eliminating the tax along with the corporate welfare would lead to more employment, Palin conveys an image of a professional whose statements are to be considered as a fact with no further need of explanations. Similarly, in the second tweet Palin claims that gasoline is too expensive for everyday Americans and that the government should resolve these problems according to the suggestions on her aforementioned TV show *Paying at the Pump*. Moreover, she strengthens the message with the use of @whitehouse, thus making the tweet appear on the White House's Twitter page as well. Although different elements such as intimidation can also be found in the tweets listed above, as Palin's statements were political, or professional in nature and with a clear intent of presenting her competence in different issues, I coded these tweets as *self-presentation*, rather than *intimidation*, for instance. I will, however, elaborate on the possible overlapping of categories within certain tweets later in this analysis.

To sum up, Sarah Palin's *self-promotion* varied from the more traditional view of presenting one's competence through referring to one's own professional capabilities and positions held, to a modern take on *self-promotion*, almost to be considered as self-branding. With this type of all-inclusive behavior, Palin is able to present herself not only as a professional and a credible politician, but a type of celebrity, who, alongside her political career, promotes her book and public appearances, and ultimately herself. Combined with sharp comments on the American economic situation and critique on the US government, Palin's self-promotion provides an interesting viewpoint to the impression management strategies of a modern politician.

4.3 SUPPLICATION

Altogether 23 (13, 5%) of Palin's tweets were coded as *supplication*. What I found surprising was that there were multiple examples of *supplication* found in the tweets. Compared to previous studies where *supplication* was non-existent or very rare, (see Schütz 1997) Palin displayed this particular behavior rather often. Granted, she referred to her own shortcomings only once, focusing mainly on soliciting help for her fellow conservatives by appealing her followers to vote and fund for them (19 tweets, 86,4%). According to Jones & Pittman (1982)

the soliciting of help can also be achieved by inducing guilt or moral responsibility. This is what Palin also does in her tweets. In fact, up to 10 of the tweets soliciting help included a guilt or moral responsibility factor. For instance,

*(67) Vote Tomorrow: Martha Zoller for Congress (GA-9) If you agree that it's time our elected officials stopped... <http://fb.me/2bljE5xqK>
(30 Jul, 2012)*

leads to Palin's Facebook page where she endorses the Republican candidate Martha Zoller and solicits the public's help to vote Zoller in the Congress by inducing Republican moral responsibility. Palin does this by referring to Zoller as being pro-life and a firm defender of the US Constitution, including Second Amendment rights. By stating that Zoller is against abortion, and supports gun ownership, Palin is trying to appeal to right wing conservatives that share this worldview. She also expresses that if one is a true conservative, one will vote similarly with her and fellow conservatives such as New Gingrich and Sean Hannity. As both of the men are considered to be powerful figures of the US political right, their endorsement should also function as a stimulus for voting. In addition, the sentence appearing in the tweet itself and also in the second sentence of the Facebook message, alone induces moral responsibility; *if you agree that it's time our elected officials stopped talking at us and started listening to us then I hope you will join me in supporting Martha Zoller for Congress tomorrow in Georgia's 9th Congressional District primary election.* In other words, Palin is soliciting help from the public in Georgia in order to place more conservatives in the House of Representatives.

All the other tweets soliciting help in this way used similar methods of swaying the public into voting:

*(64) SARAH STEELMAN FOR U.S. SENATE As we seek to fundamentally restore our great nation to strength and prosperity... <http://fb.me/1ymYiyeEA>
(17 Jul, 2012)*

endorses Steelman again on Palin's own Facebook page, by referring to her as a commonsense conservative woman running a grassroots campaign and fighting against the permanent political class of Washington. In

(71) Ted Yoho for FL-3 Dr. Ted Yoho isn't afraid of hard work. To put himself through college and veterinary school... <http://fb.me/1ZGG6HR1q>

(23 Aug, 2012)

Palin solicits the readers' help in voting Ted Yoho by implying that *we* are tired of the current political atmosphere of Washington and *we* have had enough of government spending. In order to stop this Palin then suggests that, *we* must vote for Ted Yoho. In the endorsement that can be found through the hyperlink once again on Palin's Facebook page, she presents Yoho as an everyday American, who, despite of being titled as a doctor, has built his veterinary business through hard work, and would thus be a great commonsense conservative addition to the Congress. Also in the tweet

(58) *Mourdock For Indiana* <http://fb.me/1PdEXbKEg>
(27 Apr, 2012)

Palin asks the conservatives to vote for Richard Mourdock by referring to him as a commonsense conservative that upholds the American constitution and fights the permanent political class in D.C.

In conclusion, most of the tweets defined as *supplication*, are in fact, ways of soliciting help for the benefit of the Conservative Party and the Tea Party movement in particular. By implying that she needs the help of her audience, Palin transformed what could also be seen as *exemplification*, or even *intimidation*, as well as *promotion of party* as *supplication* by using the rhetoric of asking for help and support. This category was thus one in which a great deal of overlapping also happened. In fact, almost all of the tweets could have been coded into different categories on the basis of the tone of the tweets which varied from moral *exemplification*, to almost intimidating statements. However, I categorized these tweets as *supplication*, because of their obvious appeals to the public. This could be seen in the tweets such as

(61) *Dear Texans, please remember to vote today for Ted Cruz for U.S. Senate!*
<http://fb.me/KpyB3ek3>
(29 May, 2012)

where already the word choices in the tweet itself show Palin as the supplicant. As stated before, *supplication* is often used to make salient a norm of obligation or social responsibility (Jones and Pittman 1982:247), and thus these tweets were coded in its respective category, despite of their obvious overlapping. This aspect of impression management is also crucial for

the public's perception of Palin as a part of the conservative community, a voice of the underdogs in the American political battle.

4.4. EXEMPLIFICATION

Exemplification was, as also proved by previous studies (Schütz, 1997, Lawless 2012), one of the most prominent behaviors seen in the impression management of public figures. Similarly, it was one of the most prominent categories arisen from the collection of Sarah Palin's tweets. As often seen in American political language use and conservative language use in particular, several of the tweets circled around moral and religious values. So did also several of the 29 tweets (17, 0%) coded in this category. Since Palin has publicly announced herself as member of the Tea Party movement, which accentuates the moral values alongside the political, it was no surprise that these values were also present in Palin's Twitter behavior. Among the tweets coded as *exemplification*, three categories emerged as prominent; the political exemplification (5 tweets), the moral/religious exemplification (10 tweets) and the patriotic/militaristic exemplification (7 tweets).

Table 3: Types of Exemplification in Sarah Palin's tweets

Type of Exemplification	Features	No. of tweets/ %
Political	Moral incomparability over the left	5 /17,2%
Moral/ Religious	Emphasizing Christian values, moral guidelines	10/ 34,5%
Patriotic/ Militaristic	Integrity & social responsibility	7/24,1%
Other	Gender & racial equality	7/24,1%

The political tweets included in exemplification were as follows:

(83) *The new ShePAC video calls out the hypocrisy.* <http://fb.me/1NyARJwtO>
(12 Mar, 2012)

(84) *Bristol has a new blog at Patheos. Her recent post asks some excellent questions of our President. Please click... <http://fb.me/1CSEysvGi>*
(19 Mar, 2012)

(95) *"I Built This, Mr. President" <http://fb.me/1WQEVkF61>*
(19 Jul, 2012)

(97) *I Built This: The Video <http://fb.me/1ddRjp3dx>*
(23 Jul, 2012) and

(102) *Sometimes we're actually right when we go with our gut and stand on principle in supporting underdog candidates.*
(20 Aug, 2012).

All of the tweets set an example of Palin being in favor of the underdogs and the working classes and against the political elite and the tactics they use in their rhetoric. For instance the YouTube- video Palin linked to her tweet (82), calling out the hypocrisy, addresses the issue of conservative women being commented on in a derogatory manner by democratic men, among others comedian Bill Maher. Furthermore, the video suggests that Obama's administration, in accepting funds from people such as Maher, is hypocritical in their attempts in gender equality. While this could also be coded as *intimidation*, the tweet however contains an element of moral superiority presented by the conservative women, among others Sarah Palin. The other tweets coded as *political exemplification* contain an element of critiquing the Obama administration as well. In her blog (tweet (94), Sarah Palin's daughter Bristol Palin addresses Barack Obama's statement on people not building their own businesses by calling everyone out to send photographs of their self-built small businesses. Later Sarah Palin also tweets Bristol Palin's video (tweet (95) on the subject, showing the pictures people have sent in front of their own businesses. Furthermore, in tweet (74) Bristol Palin addresses the issue of Democratic attacks on conservative women. In her blog, the young Palin criticizes Obama on his inconsistency in defending only some women, while conservative women, among others her mother and Bristol herself are attacked by the Democrats such as Bill Maher. This impression management category, that I call political exemplification, relies on the integrity and moral worthiness of Sarah Palin, and to some extent also her family, through defamation of the political left. Although being politically loaded against the democratic administration, these tweets can also be seen as exemplification, since the Palins want to set an example of conservative women being above the male chauvinist Democrats as well as accentuate the hard working, entrepreneurial spirit that their family has learned in Alaska.

Another sub-category in appearing to be exemplary and worthy was *moral/religious exemplification*. Tweets such as

(88) *God, Guns, the Constitution – Still Clinging* <http://fb.me/Uc8QAOcH>
(29 Mar, 2012) and

(89) *Good Friday: It's About What's Been Done For Us* <http://fb.me/1itL3u45Z>
(6 Apr, 2012)

with both hyperlinks leading to the longer story on Palin's own Facebook page, are excellent examples of claiming religious attributes as a basis for exemplary behavior. In fact, also Jones and Pittman (1982) have found that religious attributes are commonly employed in order to appear exemplary. In the first tweet, Palin criticizes the Obama administration and its war on religious liberty by recommending Todd Starnes' book on the subject. Once again using the pronoun *we*, Palin suggests that despite being under siege from the democratic majority, the people of faith are united in clinging to God, Guns and the Constitution thus adhering to the moral and religious values of the reader. The second tweet of this category is in a form of an Easter greeting, reminding the reader of how Christ suffered and overcame for *us* and set an example for everyone to follow. Similarly, in

(86) *Concerned citizens recognized the 2-year anniversary of Obamacare by protesting its attack on religious liberty.* <http://is.gd/5iG3QP>
(23 Mar, 2012)

the Christian values are in the center of a tweet both mocking the health reform put forward by president Obama, as well as blaming the liberals for attacking the religious liberty of the right. As can be seen from all of the tweets above, Christian values are highly endorsed as the morally exemplary and worthy attributes by Palin. While the Tea Party movement, in particular, identifies with Christian values, the important issue here is religion's role in political identification. Since 9/11, the motivating power of religion has taken center stage in American political rhetoric. Although the US in principle is open to all cultures and religions, Christian values are surprisingly often used in the political debate arena, in order to sway the public into voting. This can also be seen Palin's tweets.

In addition to the Christian values, *moral exemplification* was one of the most prominent of the behaviors of *exemplification* found in the tweets. As Palin has a son with Down syndrome,

several of the tweets that displayed moral values were connected with disability and how everyone is entitled to life regardless of their disabilities. For instance in the tweets

(87) *World Down Syndrome Day* <http://fb.me/1fcMevmws>
(23 Mar, 2012) and

(103) *Thank you, Wayne Brady. Trig truly is a blessing. I swear, to his family anyway, that extra chromosome he's got...* <http://fb.me/1QIzN91UX>
(21 Aug, 2012)

Palin displays her own personal experiences with Down syndrome by linking photographs taken from her son Trig in celebration of the World Syndrome Day. She also links his picture on a Facebook status update commenting on comedian Wayne Brady's apology for making fun of Trig. In addition, Palin shows exemplary behavior in sympathizing with Republican Party politician Rick Santorum's daughter Bella being hospitalized for a chromosomal condition called Trisomy 18. In

(79) *Beautiful Bella Santorum* <http://fb.me/15cOODUW>
(29 Jan, 2012) and

(90) *Our prayers are with Bella Santorum and the entire Santorum family. God bless them.* <http://is.gd/Zqgm1m>
(6 Apr, 2012)

Palin underlines how the life of an innocent child is the most important thing in the world and encourages the Santorum family in their time of trouble. What is noteworthy, however is the fact that the hyperlink in the second tweets leads to a pro-life website where the reader can find the news on Bella Santorum. In other words, by displaying exemplary behavior in terms of supporting the Santorum family, Palin also takes a moral stand as a pro-lifer, against abortions. This is verified also in the tweet

(78) *Our thoughts & prayers are with everyone taking part in today's March for Life.* [#marchforlife](http://marchforlife) <http://twitpic.com/8ausu5>
(23 Jan, 2012)

where Palin directly takes a stand against abortions by supporting the annual pro-life event March for Life.

References to patriotism and the military were once again abundant in the tweets considered as *exemplification*. These types of tweets included among others

(75) *Ten Years Ago* <http://fb.me/1bEGPIofd>
(11 Sep, 2011)

(76) *If You Love Freedom, Thank a Vet!* <http://fb.me/14C6FKdkf>
(11 Nov, 2011),

(91) *God bless those who sacrificed to liberate a continent. We, their children & grandchildren, honor them by remaining strong & free. #DDay*
(6 Jun, 2012) and

(99) *"Stars Earns Stripes" is honoring our veterans and first responders who are fighting to protect the good guys...* <http://fb.me/1Qs0ZU31D>
(26 Jul, 2012).

Almost of the tweets coded as *patriotic/militaristic exemplification* were appraisals of the US military or recognitions of different military memorial days. Palin shows her patriotism through a series of statements of gratefulness to the American military forces, as well as ordinary individuals who died in the 2nd World War or 9/11. With this type of behavior, Palin represents herself as a person of integrity and moral worthiness, by remembering to respect the people who have given the US its freedom. In addition to playing into the classical American conservative rhetoric, Palin underlines her own affiliation with the US army by linking a photograph (<http://fb.me/14C6FKdkf>) of her relatives serving in the Air Force as an example of her family's decisions to choose military service. Besides establishing herself as strong supporter of the US army, Palin enforces the core American values of freedom and patriotism in order to present herself as an exemplary American. What is noteworthy about this *patriotic exemplification*, however, is that although most of the tweets circled around patriotic values and praising the veterans, in the last tweet (98), Palin is actually linking the military to a reality TV show *Stars Earn Stripes* which, in her opinion, is honoring the military, who are fighting to *protect the good guys*. According to Jones and Pittman (1982:246) the variant of exemplification is eliciting an attribution of moral worth, providing the conditions for potential guilt in a target person, who in turn is motivated to model the exemplifier. This is what happens in Palin's tweets as well. By referring to the military as protecting the Americans and the western cultural ideals, Palin is, in a way, making her readers feel guilty enough to watch the TV show in question.

The rest of the tweets displaying *exemplification* were miscellaneous in nature. However, a few of the tweets once again returned to the issue of gender equality. This can be seen in tweets such as

(87) *Last Frontier Women Don't Tolerate Misogynists* <http://fb.me/tdA0Q6AE>
(24 Mar, 2012)

with the hyperlink leading to Palin's own Facebook page where she addresses the issue of sexist attacks on women in public life by referring to herself as an example of Alaskan women that are equal to men because of the hard work and sports activities exercised in Alaska. In addition in

(82) *Fellow Alaskan @kirstenpowers10 names the hypocrisy:*
<http://is.gd/OvSmcB> 'Nuff said.
(5 Mar, 2012)

Palin links an article written by Democrat Kirsten Powers to her tweet. In the article, written for the online newspaper The Daily Beast, Powers also criticizes the misogynistic attitudes of the left and moves on to describing several of the misogynistic outbursts of the Democratic men, including demeaning Mrs. Palin. The so called "war on women" in the American press, both from the left and the right (the beginning of Powers' article concerns Conservative Rush Limbaugh calling a student a slut, because she testified about contraception), seems to be a matter Sarah Palin is concerned about, since the issue was referred to altogether 6 times in whole data (3,5%). In these tweets Palin does present *exemplification* in the sense that she takes a moral high ground on the denigration of women, but at the same time is participating in the political finger pointing through spreading the message on Twitter.

The remainder of the tweets categorized as other, were general greetings and well-wishing in order to present Palin as a sympathetic and socially responsible. A good example of this is among others

(93) *Let's keep Robin Roberts in our prayers as she undergoes treatment for a rare blood and bone marrow disorder....*<fb.me/1tKQ1X4M2>
(13, Jun, 2012).

As already pointed out earlier in this study, some overlapping within impression management categories is unavoidable, and this type of tweet could thus be seen as also *ingratiation*. However, the tweets coded into *exemplification* differ from *ingratiation* in the sense that through sympathizing with other people's plight; Palin presents herself as specifically socially responsible. This can also be seen in

(77) *Happy MLK Jr Day! May his dream of a nation where we aren't judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character be reality.*
(17 Jan, 2012)

where Palin shows moral worthiness by also addressing the issue of racial equality.

In conclusion, the tweets displaying *exemplification* were the most varied. Not only did Sarah Palin present herself as an exemplary and honest politician, whom she displayed through the self-presentation of a hard worker and a supporter of underdogs and Washington outsiders, she also presented herself as a religious and morally righteous person by adhering to Christian and Evangelical Christian values in particular. Furthermore, she presented herself as a patriot, a feminist and a tolerant person, thus covering all the bases for successful *exemplification*.

4.5 INTIMIDATION

Also *intimidation*, which was rare or non-existent in previous studies on the subject (see for instance Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Schütz 1997), was a large part of Palin's online behavior. Altogether 26 tweets (15,2%) were coded as *intimidation*. Rather than expressing her own power, however, Palin suggested punitive actions towards President Barack Obama and the liberal government. Also threatening behavior in terms of attacking her opponents, whether it was Obama, the democrats, the media, or even the GOP establishment was recurrent. The possible reason for low numbers of intimidation within previous studies could stem from the fact that *intimidation* is most often seen in interpersonal relationships, rather than in connections to unknown people (Jones and Pittman 1982). In these instances, however, Palin attacks President Obama and his policies in such a personal manner, that the tweets in question could be categorized as *intimidation*. Furthermore, Jones and Pittman also point out (1982:240) that interpersonal power may be exerted by credible threats that create fears of negative consequences for a target person. In this case Obama and his supporters being the target persons, and Palin wanting to oust Obama from the office, *intimidation* is the only behavior that comes to mind, when looking at Palin's tweets.

For instance in her tweet,

(107) Fire Eric Holder <http://fb.me/1nN99NS90>
(10 Nov, 2011)

Palin suggests the termination of employment of Obama's Attorney General Eric Holder for knowing about the organization of a sting operation on Mexican drug cartels that failed and later lying about his knowledge of the events. Palin's opinion on the matter can be found in the hyperlink connected to the tweet that leads to her Facebook page. Also in

(126) *I challenge @whitehouse to listen to the energy solutions we provided & DO SOMETHING with a true "all of the above" approach #PayingAtThePump*
(14 Apr, 2012)

Palin demands for immediate action from Obama's government in the matters concerning the price of oil and whether or not it should be drilled off the coast of the United States. Yet again, Palin also refers to her TV show on the subject, as well as challenges The White House directly, by linking the tweet to their profile.

In tweets such as:

(112) *House passes energy bill. Will Pres. Obama & Senate Democrat leadership ignore it while Americans face \$4 a gallon gas? <http://is.gd/H7XNJG>*
(17 Feb, 2012) and

(116) *Pres. Obama, where does personal responsibility come into play? And how much will this new, unauthorized mortgage bailout cost taxpayers?*
(6 Mar, 2012)

Palin challenges Obama and his administration directly. Altogether 16 (64%) of tweets considered as *intimidation* were targeted towards Barack Obama and his administration. The tweets varied from Obama's personal traits

(121) *Obama's Empty Recycled Rhetoric Exposed, Again <http://fb.me/Ui63Hfyp>*
(26 Mar, 2012)

with the hyperlink leading to a Danish YouTube video about Obama's tendency to use similar rhetoric every time he meets with different heads of states, to his actions in politics

(122) *The Audacity of Obama's Intentions Revealed <http://fb.me/1Hx6Qqmpa>*
(26 Mar, 2012)

with the hyperlink leading to Palin's Facebook page, where she critiques Obama's visit to Russia and blames him for conspiring with the Russians in order to maintain his presidency.

Since most of the tweets of intimidation were targeted to reveal Obama's government as incompetent and destructive to the American economy, Palin wants to emphasize her position as a fighter for the conservative values. Moreover, Palin's threatening behavior is targeted towards the liberal government and media. In fact, all of the tweets coded as *intimidation*

included aspects of critique towards if not Obama directly, the congress, the government or the *crony capitalism* that Obama is running in Palin's opinion. In tweets such as

(104) *American Crony Capitalism Brings Jobs to Finland*
<http://fb.me/183a3dCnm>
 (21 Oct, 2011)

Palin does exactly this by criticizing the government's decision to fund an electric car company that manufactures its cars in Finland, while taking away the American jobs that were promised by the Obama administration. Also, in

(113) *No one can say they weren't warned that this is what happens when government takes over health care...* <http://is.gd/Lhp0kf>
 (21 Feb, 2012)

Palin uses the hyperlink to attach a blog post to her tweet commenting on the health care reform in the US and its negative effects. According to Jackson and Lilleker (2011:98), partisan promotion of their own party, including attacks on opponents, was the least common feature in politicians' microblogging behavior. Based on the MPs' usage (Jackson and Lilleker 2011), it seems that Twitter was viewed as a tool that can promote the individual not the party. This is clearly not the case in Sarah Palin's Twitter behavior in terms of *intimidation*. On the contrary, Palin attacks Obama on all levels, from his personality, to his politics and even the people who work for him. In several instances Obama seems to be even an enemy to Sarah Palin. By targeting Obama in this intimidating manner, Palin's behavior seems to be largely striving for the end of the democrat era in The White House. As Palin states in one of her tweets:

(120) *Oral arguments on Obamacare start next Monday, March 26, before the Supreme Court. Voting out Obama starts on Nov. 6.*
 (Mar, 2012).

4.6 PRESENTATION OF SELF

As mentioned in the beginning of the analysis, all of the categories of presentation of self were found in the tweets (32 tweets, 18,7%). However, the most frequent category to arise from the data was *promotion of party* (15 tweets, 8, 8%). This also shows great differences in the results compared to, for instance, Jackson and Lillerker's 2011 research on the UK MPs. Their findings showed that the MPs used Twitter rather to their own personal advantage, than promoting their parties. While Palin's tweets concentrated largely on promoting herself as well, the topics concerning the GOP party issues were surprisingly multiple. In addition to the 16 tweets that could be coded as only *promotion of party*, for example

(134) Rick Perry reflects the character of his great state: strong, tenacious, big heart. Good job, Governor. You are a true American patriot.

(19 Jan, 2012) or

(144) Congratulations to Todd Akin on his win. And thank you, Sarah Steelman, for running an inspiring grassroots... <http://fb.me/2kAwvcBED>

(8 Aug, 2012)

The hyperlink on the second tweet leads to Palin's Facebook page, where she praises her fellow conservatives in her status update. Palin also promises to continue to support the Conservative candidates in different congressional elections across the country, thus promoting her party personally. In tweets such as

(145) Congratulations to Mitt Romney on his choice of Congressman Paul Ryan as his running mate. President Obama has... <http://fb.me/1wu4EKVBe>

(12 Aug, 2012)

Palin also promotes the members of her party, but with the addition of again blaming Obama's government on her Facebook page. This example can also be seen as overlapping *intimidation* in the sense that in addition to the apparent appraisal and promotion of the Conservative party, Palin also gets carried away with a lengthy critique towards Obama. However, as the main tweet still consisted of *promotion of party* and celebrating its members, these types of tweets were also coded as *promotion of party*.

There are also tweets in the other categories that could be included as *promotion of party*, such as supplicant requests to vote:

(66) *Looking forward to seeing some great patriots in Texas today and helping get out the vote for Ted Cruz!* <http://fb.me/23FQY6KLN>
(27 Jul, 2012).

Although all of these tweets could have been coded as promoting the party, I decided to code them in their respective categories because of the fact that in order to find out what categories emerge to form a branded image of Sarah Palin, the supplicant tweets were still about Palin *herself* asking for help and actively presenting herself as a part of the background forces of the candidates, rather than stating something about a fellow conservative, and their qualities, for instance.

Other categories of Jackson and Lilleker's *presentation of self* were less dominant. There were 9 tweets (5, 3%) about Palin's family and personal life, mostly about her husband's activities

(150) *Now bundling up family in America's northernmost metro city where I get to greet my husband crossing the 2000-mile Iron Dog finish line! :)*
(25 Feb, 2012)

and her extended family's activities in the media:

(146) *Here's an interview my brother Chuck did with Steve Bannon.*
<http://fb.me/wEpMCBNm>
(28 Sep, 2012).

Noticeable here is the fact, that although a few of the tweets were just about reporting her family life and activities, several of the tweets concerning Palin's family, were still political in nature. For instance, all the tweets referring to her daughter Bristol were about advertising her blog or her TV show, which in turn, are very conservative. The tweets concerning Palin's personal interest seemed to be rather political as well. All the three tweets classified as personal interest (1,6%) were about an American TV show called "Stars earn Stripes" where American celebrities get to know the American military system by going through different types of military activities while being filmed. As a known supporter of the American military and a supporter of less gun control in the US, the choice of enclosing only these types of personal interests can be seen as quite provocative. In fact,

(157) *Looking forward to watching "Stars Earn Stripes" again tonight at 8pm/9c on NBC. Sometimes Americans too easily...* <http://fb.me/KykBwJ9J>
(20 Aug, 2012)

is not only a tweet advertising Palin's personal interests, but a statement on American military action, since the hyperlink leads the reader to Palin's Facebook status, where the reader can read the rest of the statement: *Sometimes Americans too easily forget that our troops are still in harm's way in war zones today. SES is a great pop cultural reminder of the efforts of our men and women in uniform.*

Displaying humor was also one of the least prominent categories in the typology of *presentation of self*. Whereas Jackson and Lilleker (2011) found clear evidence of humor being used within the British MP's tweets, in my sample there were only a few cases of humorist tweets:

(161) *Here's Obama's nearly trillion dollar "shovel ready" stimulus in action...*

<http://fb.me/1drqLwBoX>

(18 Jul, 2012). and

(162) *Some common sense... <http://fb.me/1Nk7avr69>*

(19 Jul, 2012)

The first two of the tweets were hyperlinks to other websites, (namely Facebook and YouTube) which was where the humor could be found. The link to the Facebook site showed a photo making fun of the people demanding gun restrictions in the US and the other link was a YouTube-video mocking Obama's stimulus to increase jobs in the country. Although both tweets were thus classified as humor, there still is an undertone of political polarization in both of the tweets. Furthermore, in

(160) *Happy Earth Day, America! Here's my suggestion for how to celebrate it.*

<http://fb.me/1ryKCfdns>

(22 Apr, 2012)

Palin even deploys sarcasm, in order to convey her message. What seems to be a well-intended tweet celebrating Earth Day (a global event demonstrating support for environmental protection), is in reality a statement on drilling more oil on the coast of the United States. Also the tweet

(158) *Good work, media. My '07 "divorce" email was a joke mocking you for making up divorce rumors. Keep up the, er, credibility-building efforts!*

(25 Feb, 2012)

can clearly be defined as sarcastic humor towards the liberal media. In this case it can also be seen that whereas the British MPs used humor in their tweets, Palin's humor is rare and sarcastically loaded. Among the often rather humorous messages of Twitter, and social media

in general, the sparse use of humor might also play into Palin's strategic presentation of self as a serious politician.

All in all, Sarah Palin's *presentation of self*, differed a great deal from what has been proved by previous studies (Jackson and Lilleker 2011, Lawless 2012). Whereas earlier politicians' *presentation of self* on Twitter has aimed to present oneself in a favorable way, rather disclosing facts about their personal life than extensively promoting one's party, Palin does the opposite. In fact, most of Palin's presentation of self, consisted of partisan promotion. Moreover, the values and personal facts she chooses to disclose all relate to the topics found already in the *impression management* categories, such as living in Alaska, family, patriotism, religion and conservatism. In addition, Palin continues the attacks on the Obama administration and the liberal media through the use of apparent humor. In other words, Palin uses the strategies of self-presentation and the disclosures of private life to promote the same messages that she does through her impression management.

4.7 UNCATEGORIZABLE

After full categorization of the data, there were, however, some tweets that did not match any of the categories presented by Jones and Pittman (1982) or Jackson and Lilleker (2011). There were altogether 10 tweets that were coded as uncategorizable. Majority of the tweets in this category were opinionated tweets that promoted the worldview of Sarah Palin, but did not fill the requirements of *impression management*, neither the *presentation of self*. Tweets such as

(165) *Alaska Airlines' Prayer Cards; It's Hip to be offended?*
<http://fb.me/140EJCN67>
 (26 Jan, 2012)

touched on similar subjects as the categories of *intimidation* or *exemplification*, for instance, but the content lacked the features of actually threatening with action, or presenting oneself as exemplary, in other words the presentation of self. In the tweet in question, for instance, Palin writes how she finds canceling the Alaska airlines' prayer cards based on the complaints from nonreligious customers' offensive, since in her opinion the prayer cards are more of a nice

gesture, than pushing religion. Although she touches the subject of religion once again, Palin is not representing herself in any particular manner. Similarly, in

(168) John Stossel found it takes 65 days to legally open a lemonade stand! America has too many dumb rules. Watch his... <http://fb.me/wZxIhBYR>
(24 Feb, 2012)

Palin agrees with reporter John Stossel about how it is difficult to start a business in the United States, and at the same time advertises Stossel's show on Fox News Channel. Although otherwise this type of tweet could be coded into the category of *self-promotion*, Palin does not, in fact, promote herself or even her family or the Conservative Party. As a part of Palin's communication through Twitter, these tweets could be useful and interesting, but since this study concentrates on Sarah Palin and her self-presentation, the tweets in question are outside of the scope of this study.

5 DISCUSSION

Through a detailed analysis of the different behaviors of impression management, I found the most prominent behaviors to be *ingratiation*, *intimidation* and *exemplification*. However all of the five behaviors of Jones and Pittman's (1982) impression management typology can be found in Palin's tweets, and thus also self-promotion and supplication need to be taken into account when discussing the impression management that Palin wants to put forward. Palin's tweets of *ingratiation* consisted of her personal beliefs and values through which she simultaneously tries to create a likeable image of herself. As a tool for likeability, she uses common interests such as other enhancement, public holidays, Americanism, family and Christianity in order to affirm her politically conservative, patriotic and religious beliefs.

In Palin's *self-promotion*, her competence is conveyed through strong framing from her fellow conservatives, as well as a vast array of mediums of showing one's competence, such as TV, articles, interviews and videos. In addition, a series of competence claims through statements on different issues is one of Palin's ways of convincing the reader of her professional competence. Also in this behavior, the strong emphasis on conservative economic thought and critique towards Obama's government was emphatic.

Supplication, which was the least prominent of Palin's behaviors, centered on the entreaties for help to support the Conservative Party, and Tea Party candidates in particular. Through asking for the public's help, and at the same time promoting "commonsense conservatism", Palin represents herself as the voice of the underdogs in the American political battle. On the contrary, *exemplification* was one of the most prominent behaviors to rise from the impression management typology. Palin represents herself as a person of high a moral compass, by referring to multiple issues, where she has the chance to showcase exemplary behavior. These topics included among others religion, gender, patriotism and politics. Also *intimidation* was central to Sarah Palin impression management, even more so than what previous studies have come to conclude. Palin's intimidation was targeted, however, almost solely towards Barack Obama and his government, thus turning Palin's representation also into one of enforcing political power.

Jackson and Lilleker's (2011) strategies of self-presentation were also analyzed within this context. On the contrary to previous studies, promotion of party emerged as the most prominent strategy, with surprisingly little emphasis on humor, or personal details of non-political nature. This would point to Palin's self-presentational strategies being politically loaded and carefully selected. I will discuss my findings further in the next section while also examining how the impression management and self-presentational strategies found in the tweets combine to form a branded image of Sarah Palin.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out Sarah Palin represents herself through social media. First, what types of impression management behaviors and self-promotional strategies can be found in her tweets. The second focus of this study was, how these behaviors and strategies combine to form a branded image of Sarah Palin.

By categorizing the tweets I found behaviors that promote the different agendas of Sarah Palin. For instance the greetings that she tweets promote generally the conservative and religious values that she wants to put forward. She also blatantly advertises herself, her family and her achievements through social media, thus using various branding techniques as well as presenting the different behaviors on impression management. What clearly stands out in the study, and is also in contrast to previous studies made on the subject (Jackson and Lilleker 2011, Lawless 2012) are the clearly political and partisan (i.e. promoting one's party or its functions) agendas that Palin deploys in her tweets. She uses Twitter as a place for "status updates" i.e. short statements about current affairs (mostly about Obama's administration) and the reader can read the rest about it on her Facebook page or through other sources of information such as new websites and blogs. Through Twitter she also seems to try to keep in touch with her fellow GOP politicians (i.e. supporting presidential candidates and other politicians, commenting on the inner struggle of the GOP itself and so on.) Palin also addresses her audience in several different ways from advising and praising to inducing guilt and blame. It would seem that Palin is aware of her followers on Twitter, since the messages are targeted to friends and foes, to Barack Obama as well as her fellow politicians and voters alike.

In other words, the branded image of Sarah Palin that results from her the strategic self-presentation is rather multifaceted. In accordance to the branding literature presented in the theoretical framework of this study (see for instance DeLandtsheer et al. 2008; Gulati 2004; Warner 2013) Palin covers several areas of interest, in order to gain popularity and create a stronger bond with her followers. This type of example speaks for promotionalism of social media and politics in the US. In order to establish a presence online, and profit from it, one

has to be able to offer the reader a carefully packaged consumer experience (Hearn 2008; Moore 2003).

On the other hand, Palin does not avoid touching on sensitive subjects, such as religion, gender, gun ownership or government spending, thus also branding herself strongly with the values and belief systems of the Christian political right. This is further emphasized through the critique of the Obama administration. This might, in turn, be a sign of the polarization of the American media showing also the social media sphere. Whereas before, as also proven by previous studies, presenting a politician's 'hinterland' was a predominant factor in politicians' social media behavior, and the partisan promotion was close to none, in the light of the behavioral strategies of Sarah Palin, it can be deducted that at least some politicians have turned social media into a means of gaining political power. In order to be seen and heard despite being a 'Washington outsider' (Gulati 2004), one needs to resort to provocative values and commentary in order to compete for social media attention today. This is where my study proves its relevance.

Since social media services, such as Twitter promote different discourses and self-presentations of its different users, it is increasingly important to look at these phenomena at an individual level, in order to understand the agendas behind the construction and presentation of a social media profile. As pointed out in the introduction of this thesis, language use is never unbiased (Fairclough 2001; Wodak 1989). Moreover, as Ouellette (2012:190) points out, Palin's mastery of branded politainment (i.e. the blending of politics and entertainment in communication) also speaks to a broader integration of marketing, technology, and media culture in Western capitalist democracies. As the branded, or strategic self becomes a necessity for politicians to grasp political power and affect audiences, critical reflection on new media and social media contents in particular, becomes increasingly important for everyone from individuals using the services, to academic communities studying the subject matter.

Although the present study succeeded in answering the research questions posed in section 3 and managed to introduce and analyze an array of behaviors that form the strategic self-presentation of Sarah Palin, this study included problematic features as well. Firstly, the uncategorizable material left outside the impression management typology and self-presentation strategies nevertheless provided interesting material that could have also

contributed to Sarah Palin's branded self. With a larger amount of data from a longer period of time, the uncategorizable tweets could have formed new categories, which, with the current sample of tweets were impossible to detect. Secondly, the overlapping of categories on several of the tweets could have resulted to a different result, depending on the researcher. This, however, is stated in the depiction of impression management typology (Jones and Pittman 1982) already, and could thus be expected during the course of the study. A related topic for further research could be, however, taking into account the comments Sarah Palin received to her tweets, in order to find out the actual reactions of her followers and whether or not these impression management and self-presentational strategies were successful. In addition, using the same methodology on several tweeting politicians might reveal more consistent patterns of behavior.

All in all Sarah Palin's presentation of self and personal branding on the social media platform Twitter was driven by the values and rhetoric of the GOP, as well as her personal affiliation with the Tea Party politics. Only time will tell if her 'God, guns and the constitution' –rhetoric will take Sarah Palin into the White House.

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APPENDIX 1:

THE CLASSIFICATION OF SARAH PALIN'S TWEETS ACCORDING TO THE IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT TYPOLOGY BY JONES AND PITTMAN (1982) AND JACKSON & LILLEKER (2011) 1st of September 2011-1st September 2012

Ingratiation (to appear likeable):

- (1) Thank you, Storm Lake, Iowa. You put on a great event & we loved meeting some great folks in your beautiful town today! 4 Sep, 2011
- (2) Welcome, Union Brothers and Sisters <http://fb.me/vvsTYP8Y> 6 Sep, 2011
- (3) L'shanah tovah! Happy New Year! <http://fb.me/yDq2EYTk> 29 Sep, 2011
- (4) Happy 236th Birthday, U.S. Marine Corps! Thank you for your service. [@SemperFi @USMC](http://fb.me/SemperFi) 10 Nov, 2011
- (5) Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! <http://fb.me/1gIBJhpqW> 23 Nov, 2011
- (6) Happy Hanukkah <http://fb.me/1euK4xY99> 19 Dec, 2011
- (7) Merry Christmas! <http://fb.me/1dpBvu38W> 22 Dec, 2011
- (8) Happy Birthday, President Reagan <http://fb.me/1yZlPt3Xe> 6Feb, 2012
- (9) Happy Birthday, President Lincoln <http://fb.me/1DrbouC9s> 12 Feb, 2012
- (10) Happy Presidents' Day <http://fb.me/Pfaz7t9Y> 20 Feb, 2012
- (11) Happy Passover <http://fb.me/V3tC33Nr> 6 Apr, 2012
- (12) Happy Easter! <http://fb.me/RFE2aL9v> 9 Apr, 2012
- (13) Happy Mother's Day to all the Mama Grizzlies out there! I include my own Mom in that list. I love and thank you,... <http://fb.me/1VS62uujT> 13 May, 2012
- (14) Happy Armed Forces Day to all our brave men and women in uniform! <http://fb.me/1w3l30AqB> 19 May, 2012
- (15) Memorial Day and Rolling Thunder <http://fb.me/C5N6jBNz> 26 May, 2012
- (16) Congratulations to the people of Wisconsin for standing by strong leaders who made tough decisions in dire... <http://fb.me/1k0xKLSQO> 6 Jun 2012
- (17) Happy 237th Birthday to the U.S. Army! And Happy [#FlagDay](http://fb.me/FlagDay)! 14 Jun, 2012
- (18) Happy Father's Day, Dad. Thank you for everything. Happy Father's Day, Todd. You are my rock. And Happy first... <http://fb.me/1PA4XLpGR> 17 Jun, 2012
- (19) This is the great speech by Dan Bongino I mentioned today at the Ted Cruz rally in Texas. <http://fb.me/1PeFci08V> 28 Jul, 2012
- (20) Stopped by Chick-fil-A in The Woodlands to support a great business. <http://fb.me/KM9ogGda> 28 Jul, 2012
- (21) Great to visit with the Sassy Feet dance squad at the Chick-fil-A in The Woodlands, TX. <http://fb.me/22yONSMP1> 28 Jul, 2012

- (22) Last Friday, I joined with Sen. Jim DeMint, Tea Party Leaders, and thousands of Texas patriots at a rally to get... <http://fb.me/2exfuoAM1> 30 Jul, 2012
- (23) Last Friday, I had a wonderful time meeting more Missouri voters at a great event to get out the vote for Sarah... <http://fb.me/1lh3As6SV> 7 Aug, 2012
- (24) As I mentioned on Fox this afternoon, I'm traveling to Arizona to join Kirk Adams and other commonsense... <http://fb.me/NaPRB5hm> 25 Aug, 2012
- (25) Had a great time today in Gilbert, Arizona, at a rally for Kirk Adams. It's very important to pay attention to... <http://fb.me/IK7ZdA8S> 28 Aug, 2012
- (26) I'm sorry Fox cancelled all my scheduled interviews tonight because I sure wanted to take the opportunity on the... <http://fb.me/1Db7xDurj> 29 Aug, 2012
- (27) Last night wrapped up a convention that was very encouraging; so, thank you to all who worked hard to provide... <http://fb.me/1ErypTrTe> 31 Aug, 2012

Self-promotion (to appear competent):

- (28) Governor Palin's Speech at the "Restoring America" Tea Party of America Rally in Indianola, Iowa <http://fb.me/y4HsEYfb> 4 Sep, 2011
- (29) Catch "The Undeclared" for Alaska and America's Story <http://fb.me/ZCPaZ3yB> 7 Sep, 2011
- (30) UPDATED...Crony Capitalism on Steroids from GE to Solyndra <fb.me/wExSyb8D> 17 Sep, 2011
- (31) Here's Todd's interview with Steve Bannon. DVDs for Steve's film "The Undeclared" go on sale tomorrow at Walmart. <http://fb.me/X4dyYyTF> 3 Oct, 2011
- (32) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yD9KNzgAwzI> <fb.me/OygEy2gb> – 6 Oct, 2011
- (33) The documentary "The Undeclared" is on sale at Walmart in a special package deal with "Going Rogue." <http://fb.me/1kD50s7NI> 21 Oct, 2011
- (34) We should eliminate it for everyone & also cut corp welfare to fight crony capitalism while letting the private sector create American jobs. 2 Dec, 2011
- (35) I spoke about this here: http://youtu.be/s8Pg_1i53_Y 2 Dec, 2011 (video unavailable)
- (36) I'll be on Eric Bolling's "Follow the Money" show today at 10pm EST (6pm AK time). 7 Dec, 2011
- (37) Palin: *Congress, it's time to stop lining your pockets* <http://fb.me/1g9dh0Pu1> (13 Dec,2011)
- (38) What's radical & intolerant about Santorum/Romney/Gingrich et al's position on the definition of marriage? It's the same position as Obama's 7 Jan, 2012
- (39) Looking forward to seeing everyone tomorrow at CPAC! Bristol Palin is also in DC, and she & Nancy French have a... <http://fb.me/u7Axxm8P> 10 Feb, 2012
- (40) Obama apologizes for inadvertent Koran burning; now the US trained & protected Afghan Army can apologize for killing our soldiers yesterday. 23 Feb, 2012
- (41) You can follow this link for the REELZ channel listing in your area. <http://fb.me/1C35bH7W4> 11 Mar, 2012
- (42) You can catch an encore of Steve Bannon's "The Undeclared" on the REELZ channel today at 5:30 pm ET. Check the... <http://fb.me/1lyi6Zh1C> 25 Mar, 2012
- (43) Headed to 30 Rock to be part of NBC's "Today" crew tomorrow morning at 7am ET... <http://is.gd/lg6C3q> 3 Apr, 2012
- (44) I got to talk with Sean Hannity tonight about the 2012 race thus far and about Obama's shameful judicial bullying... <http://fb.me/1BztIpdnZ> 4 Apr, 2012

- (45) Please join Eric Bolling and me as we host an energy special this Friday, April 13 at 10pm ET on FOX called "Paying at the Pump." 11 Apr, 2012
- (46) "Paying at the Pump" Solutions to Relieve Pain at the Pump <http://fb.me/1pOjEnZYu> 11 Apr, 2012
- (47) Here's the promo for the "Paying at the Pump" special on Fox News this Friday, April 13th at 10pm ET. <http://fb.me/1ziGTKJF1> 12 Apr, 2012
- (48) Here's an interview I did with Breitbart News about our energy policies. Eric Bolling and I are hosting a special... <http://fb.me/1x8oxPvto> 13 Apr, 2012
- (49) Everyday Americans are feeling pain at the pump. [@whitehouse](https://twitter.com/whitehouse) has no excuse for not listening to our [#PayingAtThePump](https://twitter.com/PayingAtThePump) solutions. 14 Apr, 2012
- (50) "Death Panel" Three Years Later <http://fb.me/1WVNvDf6L> 25 Jun, 2012
- (51) On the campaign trail four years ago I talked about Alaska's strategic location on the globe, the potential for... fb.me/1NUNu9UKM 26 Jun, 2012

Supplication (to be viewed as needy, soliciting help):

- (52) Support Ohio's Issue 2 and Kentucky's Todd P'Pool Next Tuesday <http://fb.me/MZst1Y8l> 4 Nov, 2011
- (53) Dang - spoke too rapidly on [@hannityshow](https://twitter.com/hannityshow); should have clarified I'm for eliminating "fed corporate income tax." 2 Dec, 2011
- (54) To get the true story, please watch the premiere of "The Undeclared" tonight on the REELZ channel at 8pm ET. <http://fb.me/1Lhu3VTD4> 11 Mar, 2012
- (55) As Goes Wisconsin, so Goes America; Support Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch <http://fb.me/1wD7RNYiL> 29 Mar, 2012
- (56) [@EricBolling](https://twitter.com/EricBolling) Thank you for a great special tonight. Folks, please use the hashtag [#PayingAtThePump](https://twitter.com/PayingAtThePump) to send Pres. Obama your suggestions. 14 Apr, 2012
- (57) Please check out John Stossel's new book "No, They Can't". I couldn't put it down! His special of the same title... <http://fb.me/1nWTdNQXH> 6 Apr, 2012
- (58) Mourdock For Indiana <http://fb.me/1PdEXbKEg> 27 Apr, 2012
- (59) Ted Cruz for Texas <http://fb.me/1Ii9IxXSp> 14 May, 2012
- (60) Deb Fischer for Nebraska <http://fb.me/ZNWJzLCK> 14 May, 2012
- (61) Dear Texans, please remember to vote today for Ted Cruz for U.S. Senate! <http://fb.me/KpyB3ek3> 29 May, 2012
- (62) Please remember to support Gov. Walker and Lt. Gov. Kleefisch in next Tuesday's recall election. Wisconsin is... <http://fb.me/1IFBMcUA> 1 Jun, 2012
- (63) Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch could really use our financial support as well. Her opponent is getting massive last... <http://fb.me/HGtdUGHw> 1 Jun, 2012
- (64) SARAH STEELMAN FOR U.S. SENATE As we seek to fundamentally restore our great nation to strength and prosperity,... <http://fb.me/1ymYiyeEA> 17 Jul, 2012
- (65) Support Ted Cruz <http://fb.me/1GEexLibl> 23 Jul, 2012
- (66) Looking forward to seeing some great patriots in Texas today and helping get out the vote for Ted Cruz! <http://fb.me/23FQY6KLN> 27 Jul, 2012

- (67) Vote Tomorrow: Martha Zoller for Congress (GA-9) If you agree that it's time our elected officials stopped... <http://fb.me/2bljE5xqK> 30 Jul, 2012
- (68) Kirk Adams for Arizona's 5th Congressional District If you believe strongly in the need to repeal Obamacare, I... <http://fb.me/1ejDYqdz1> 3 Aug, 2012
- (69) In 2012, we have a unique opportunity to elect more commonsense conservatives to Congress, but that alone is not... <http://fb.me/2pojMct4I> 8 Aug, 2012
- (70) DAN BONGINO FOR U.S. SENATE Though political pundits often dismiss conservative candidates running in deep blue... <http://fb.me/1Rq0uH9GH> 20 Aug, 2012
- (71) Ted Yoho for FL-3 Dr. Ted Yoho isn't afraid of hard work. To put himself through college and veterinary school... <http://fb.me/1ZGG6HR1q> 23 Aug, 2012
- (72) Paul Gosar for AZ-4 Dr. Paul Gosar is not a career politician. He's a dentist, a conservative, a small business... <http://fb.me/1fNxQC4Yv> 23 Aug, 2012
- (73) Please join me and Jim DeMint in supporting Dan Bongino for U.S. Senate. You can show your support for this great... <http://fb.me/tXFvoVJV> 30 Aug, 2012
- (74) You can support [@MiaBLove](http://www.Love4Utah.com)'s "love bomb" at <http://www.Love4Utah.com>. 31 Aug, 2012

Exemplification (actions to appear exemplary and worthy):

- (75) Ten Years Ago <http://fb.me/1bEGPIofd> 11 Sep, 2011
- (76) If You Love Freedom, Thank a Vet! <http://fb.me/14C6FKdkf> 11 Nov, 2011
- (77) Happy MLK Jr Day! May his dream of a nation where we aren't judged by the color of our skin but by the content of our character be reality. 17 Jan, 2012
- (78) Our thoughts & prayers are with everyone taking part in today's March for Life. [#marchforlife](http://marchforlife) <http://twitpic.com/8ausu5> 23 Jan, 2012
- (79) Beautiful Bella Santorum <http://fb.me/15cOODUWU> 29 Jan, 2012
- (80) Pelosi asks "Where are the women?" against the HHS mandate? Kim Daniels & Helen Alvare proudly say "Here we are"! <http://on.fb.me/w9pEar> 21 Feb, 2012
- (81) Here's a wonderful feel-good story from New Orleans about a community coming together to take a stand <http://is.gd/cFQxzY> 25 Feb, 2012
- (82) Fellow Alaskan [@kirstenpowers10](http://twitter.com/kirstenpowers10) names the hypocrisy: <http://is.gd/OvSmeB> 'Nuff said. 5 Mar, 2012
- (83) The new ShePAC video calls out the hypocrisy. <http://fb.me/1NyARJwtO> 12 Mar, 2012
- (84) Bristol has a new blog at Patheos. Her recent post asks some excellent questions of our President. Please click... <http://fb.me/1CSEysvGi> 19 Mar, 2012
- (85) World Down Syndrome Day <http://fb.me/1fcMevmws> 23 Mar, 2012
- (86) Concerned citizens recognized the 2-year anniversary of Obamacare by protesting its attack on religious liberty. <http://is.gd/5iG3QP> 23 Mar, 2012
- (87) Last Frontier Women Don't Tolerate Misogynists <http://fb.me/tdA0Q6AE> 24 Mar, 2012
- (88) God, Guns, the Constitution – Still Clinging <http://fb.me/Uc8QAOcH> 29 Mar, 2012
- (89) Good Friday: It's About What's Been Done For Us <http://fb.me/1itL3u45Z> 6 Apr, 2012
- (90) Our prayers are with Bella Santorum and the entire Santorum family. God bless them. <http://is.gd/Zqgm1m> 6 Apr, 2012

- (91) God bless those who sacrificed to liberate a continent. We, their children & grandchildren, honor them by remaining strong & free. [#DDay](#) 6 Jun, 2012
- (92) Please remember, if you love your freedom, thank a vet! [#DDay](#) 6 Jun, 2012
- (93) Let's keep Robin Roberts in our prayers as she undergoes treatment for a rare blood and bone marrow disorder...[fb.me/1tKQ1X4M2](#) 13, Jun, 2012
- (94) [http://fb.me/1tKQ1X4M2](#) 13 Jun, 2012 (Robin Roberts bone marrow video clip)
- (95) "I Built This, Mr. President" [http://fb.me/1WQEVkF61](#) 19 Jul, 2012
- (96) Todd's and my thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of the terrible tragedy in Colorado. Our family joins... [http://fb.me/1RueDVUC3](#) 20 Jul, 2012
- (97) I Built This: The Video [http://fb.me/1ddRjp3dx](#) 23 Jul, 2012
- (98) Sally Ride was an inspirational trailblazer for American women. We're all grateful for her example. She will be greatly missed. 24 Jul, 2012
- (99) "Stars Earns Stripes" is honoring our veterans and first responders who are fighting to protect the good guys... [http://fb.me/1Qs0ZU3ID](#) 26 Jul, 2012
- (100) Bristol makes such an important point in this post! Being in favor of the traditional definition of marriage... [http://fb.me/2dT8YlxZa](#) 7 Aug, 2012
- (101) Three Reasons Why Nobel Peace Prize Winners Are Wrong About "Stars Earn Stripes" [http://fb.me/BP0ehwSC](#) 15 Aug, 2012
- (102) Sometimes we're actually right when we go with our gut and stand on principle in supporting underdog candidates. 20 Aug, 2012
- (103) Thank you, Wayne Brady. Trig truly is a blessing. I swear, to his family anyway, that extra chromosome he's got... [http://fb.me/1QIzN91UX](#) 21 Aug, 2012

Intimidation (to appear dangerous or threatening):

- (104) American Crony Capitalism Brings Jobs to Finland [http://fb.me/183a3dCnm](#) 21 Oct, 2011
- (105) Now He's Blaming Europe [http://fb.me/11Z6b1djZ](#) 29 Sep, 2011
- (106) This is outrageous. Wake up, America... [http://is.gd/UyrmB3](#) 21 Oct, 2011
- (107) Fire Eric Holder [http://fb.me/1nN99NS90](#) 10 Nov, 2011
- (108) Cordray (an attorney) must know we're ruled by laws, not men. The President can't make a recess appointment... [http://fb.me/1t6NedWRx](#) 5 Jan, 2012
- (109) [@Newsweek](#): know what's truly "dumb"? Giving a cover story to the TrigTruther conspiracy kook writer who thinks I didn't give birth to my son 17 Jan, 2012
- (110) How Obama Repaid Notre Dame [http://fb.me/Ky9m0U8I](#) 31 Jan, 2012
- (111) Cannibals in GOP Establishment Employ Tactics of the Left [http://fb.me/17RqH1m80](#) 27 Jan, 2012
- (112) House passes energy bill. Will Pres. Obama & Senate Democrat leadership ignore it while Americans face \$4 a gallon gas? [http://is.gd/H7XNJG](#) 17 Feb, 2012
- (113) No one can say they weren't warned that this is what happens when government takes over health care... [http://is.gd/Lhp0kf](#) 21 Feb, 2012
- (114) Obama's Anti-American Energy Policies Invite the Next Crisis [http://fb.me/1JKPXHR4t](#) 24 Feb, 2012

- (115) Our Warriors Deserve Better <http://fb.me/1GoA74gzs> 5 Mar, 2012
- (116) Pres. Obama, where does personal responsibility come into play? And how much will this new, unauthorized mortgage bailout cost taxpayers? 6 Mar, 2012
- (117) Pres. Obama says he called Sandra Fluke because of his daughters. For the sake of everyone's daughter, why... <http://fb.me/1awldYKl0> 6 Mar, 2012
- (118) Let's Talk About the Real Issues, Mr. President <http://fb.me/Y0WZPbLI> 13 Mar, 2012
- (119) Mr. President, you're conspicuously absent from the 2-year anniversary of your "greatest accomplishment"... <http://fb.me/1hrbQpftX> 23 Mar, 2012
- (120) Oral arguments on Obamacare start next Monday, March 26, before the Supreme Court. Voting out Obama starts on Nov. 6. 23 Mar, 2012
- (121) Obama's Empty Recycled Rhetoric Exposed, Again <http://fb.me/Ui63Hfyp> 26 Mar, 2012
- (122) The Audacity of Obama's Intentions Revealed <http://fb.me/1Hx6Qqmpa> 26 Mar, 2012
- (123) My, my, my... <http://fb.me/Y0WZPbLI> 28 Mar, 2012
- (124) We Remain Determined to Defeat Crony Capitalism <http://fb.me/1s9pnNux0> 4 Apr, 2012
- (125) "Palling around with terrorists" understates my case, and if there's a "War on Women" on whose side is President Obama? <http://is.gd/PlmnSy> 6 Apr, 2012
- (126) I challenge @whitehouse to listen to the energy solutions we provided & DO SOMETHING with a true "all of the above" approach [#PayingAtThePump](http://is.gd/PayingAtThePump) 14 Apr, 2012
- (127) Good union brothers and sisters: stand up and denounce this thuggery and abuse of your union dues. <http://is.gd/vxEoTA> 23 May, 2012
- (128) Obama lied to the American people. Again. He said it wasn't a tax. Obama lies; freedom dies. 28 Jun, 2012
- (129) Thank you, SCOTUS. This Obamacare ruling fires up the troops as America's eyes are opened! Thank God. This... <http://fb.me/1qM8dwfRe> 28 Jun, 2012

Promotion of party:

- (130) Here's a great article by Jonah Goldberg at NRO. <http://fb.me/16yM5qUxw> 28 Sep, 2011
- (131) Here's a great speech by Mark Levin... <http://fb.me/1nTkkfMzO> 7 Nov, 2011
- (132) Glad Santorum wants to re-industrialize USA w/ eliminating the corp income tax on manufactures. 2 Dec, 2011
- (133) Mark Levin: 'We Have a Constitutional Crisis' | <http://CNSnews.com> <http://fb.me/ZiRzirSR> 5 Jan, 2012
- (134) Rick Perry reflects the character of his great state: strong, tenacious, big heart. Good job, Governor. You are a true American patriot. 19 Jan, 2012
- (135) Newt's message on energy development was spot-on. Drill now and stop bowing to foreign regimes begging them to do... <http://fb.me/1CI1BuZPf> 22 Feb, 2012
- (136) Andrew Breitbart <http://fb.me/1dM41WDG9> 1 Mar, 2012
- (137) Mark Levin's "Ameritopia" Explains How We Got In the Mess We're In <http://fb.me/vwPFUkpg> 15 Mar, 2012
- (138) "Breitbart Is Here"... now let the vetting begin! <http://fb.me/WgtXBK9H> 16 Mar, 2012
- (139) Congratulations to Deb Fischer <http://fb.me/1Df7EkYEO> 16 May, 2012

- (140) Congratulations to [@DebFischer2012](#) and the people of Nebraska! [#NESen](#) 16 May, 2012
- (141) Orrin Hatch is part of the one percent. No, not that one percent you've heard about. He's part of the one percent... <http://fb.me/1TNGefgtE> 23 May, 2012
- (142) Congratulations to Ted Cruz! This is a victory both for Ted and for the grassroots Tea Party movement. This... <http://fb.me/2hfzNzYdU> 1 Aug, 2012
- (143) Congratulations to Todd Akin on his win. And thank you, Sarah Steelman, for running an inspiring grassroots... <http://fb.me/2kAwvcBED> 8 Aug, 2012
- (144) Congratulations to Mitt Romney on his choice of Congressman Paul Ryan as his running mate. President Obama has... <http://fb.me/1wu4EKVBe> 12 Aug, 2012

Details of personal life (family and everyday activities of non-political nature):

- (145) Here's an interview my brother Chuck did with Steve Bannon. <http://fb.me/wEpMCBNm> 28 Sep, 2011
- (146) Statement on 2012 Decision <http://fb.me/1aRh19TDb> 6 Oct, 2011
- (147) Alaskan Grit Exercised Amidst "Global Warming"! <http://fb.me/MNiVi4Pe> 31 Jan, 2012
- (148) Iron Dog! <http://fb.me/1FB1u42kB> 20 Feb, 2012
- (149) Now bundling up family in America's northernmost metro city where I get to greet my husband crossing the 2000-mile Iron Dog finish line! :) 25 Feb, 2012
- (150) Just had a nice diversion from politics with my kids watching Mark Ballas on [#DWTS](#). I wish I had his energy! Vote for him 800-VOTE4-10. 27 Mar, 2012
- (151) Bristol's new show "Life's a Tripp" premieres tonight on the Lifetime channel at 10pm/9c! I think people viewing... <http://fb.me/17XjpKN2C> 19 Jun, 2012
- (152) Looking forward to watching "Life's a Tripp" tonight on Lifetime (10pm/9c)! Truly, it's a nice diversion from... <http://fb.me/1wAa3quxr> 26 Jun, 2012
- (153) Celebrating America, Palin Style <http://fb.me/1tGFvaIXW> 3 Jul, 2012

Personal interests (such as sports, music, film or leisure):

- (154) Looking forward to watching "Stars Earn Stripes" tonight at 8pm (7pm c) on NBC! It's a great show that celebrates... <http://fb.me/1kMEria4S> 13 Aug, 2012
- (155) 'Stars Earn Stripes': Nick Lachey and Eve Torres show their grit <http://fb.me/IeVDRo6q> 13 Aug, 2012
- (156) Looking forward to watching "Stars Earn Stripes" again tonight at 8pm/9c on NBC. Sometimes Americans too easily... <http://fb.me/KykBwJ9J> 20 Aug, 2012

Displays sense of humor:

- (157) Good work, media. My '07 "divorce" email was a joke mocking you for making up divorce rumors. Keep up the, er, credibility-building efforts! 25 Feb, 2012
- (158) If an embarrassing backside mention brings attention to an embarrassing budget mess, good. Whatever I can do to help. <http://fb.me/1fJ29P8NT> 21 Apr, 2012
- (159) Happy Earth Day, America! Here's my suggestion for how to celebrate it. <http://fb.me/1ryKCfdns>

22 Apr, 2012

(160) Here's Obama's nearly trillion dollar "shovel ready" stimulus in action... <http://fb.me/1drqLwBoX>
18 Jul, 2012

(161) Some common sense... <http://fb.me/1Nk7avr69> 19 Jul, 2012

Uncategorizable:

(162) Crony Capitalism on Steroids from GE to Solyndra 15 Sep, 2011

(163) "Smoking Gun" in Fast & Furious? <http://fb.me/1jBKjrN6Q> 7 Dec, 2011

(164) Alaska Airlines' Prayer Cards; It's Hip to be offended? <http://fb.me/140EJCN67> 26 Jan, 2012

(165) Lessons to Learn from Komen and Planned Parenthood <http://fb.me/1xrV6XNa5> 5 Feb, 2012

(166) Professor Dershowitz Is Right About Media Matters <http://fb.me/LHXraJNF> 13 Feb, 2012

(167) John Stossel found it takes 65 days to legally open a lemonade stand! America has too many dumb rules. Watch his... <http://fb.me/wZxIhBYR> 24 Feb, 2012

(168) If I Wanted America to Fail, I'd Ban Kids From Farm Work <http://fb.me/1maCBjO3I> 25 Apr, 2012

(169) <youtu.be/CZ-4gnNz0vc> <http://fb.me/1tiJqYcGF> 25 Apr, 2012

(170) This story about the South Carolina AFL-CIO President Donna DeWitt beating a piñata with Governor Nikki Haley's... <http://fb.me/Dy9LPcUG> 23 May, 2012

(171) Greta's comments in this blog post are spot on. The left has been targeting Roger Ailes and his wife increasingly... <http://fb.me> 5 Jun, 2012