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SOC 215 w1
Artifact for Integrative Reflection
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The assignment I've included for this class is the first article assignment we did. I'd already gotten a pleasant sense that this class wasn't going to be the all math, all the time session I'd expected, but once I dove into this assignment I knew this was going to be a class I could really enjoy. The subject of world leaders using Twitter during the COVID 19 pandemic hit a sweet spot that I'd been exploring in my other AODC class this semester, which hit home even harder how useful statistics were in real life.

I wrote in one of my papers for my other class that I'm "terminally online" and, until recently, that meant I spent a lot of time on Twitter. So I saw a lot of the tweets that were covered in the article in real time, so it was cool to see it all collected into a data set and then look at it with the luxury of some time having passed so I could see it more objectively. I've been surprised time and again to see my own biases creeping into everything I do for these classes, and it was the same with the Donald Trump tweets. In real time it seemed like he wasn't doing any good and was just a firehose of hate. So with the benefit of objectivity and seeing the data instead of the tweets, it was very interesting to see how similar he was to other leaders in the number of tweets used for good reasons, and in many cases he was the world leader with the most tweets in some of the most useful categories. That was heartening to see.

The other great part of this assignment was that it was just a reading assignment, we were also put to work analyzing and documenting our own findings regarding research objectives, research questions, and research methods as well as reading tables and interpreting them. This is a skill that is so useful in this day and age when sources and the very idea of truth are under assault. To be able to analyze data and research like this will keep us one step ahead of those who wish to brainwash us through propaganda and lies.

The interpretation section of this paper was the key element for me though, because it not only had me applying knowledge from this class and from my other class, it got me thinking about how I use social media in general and how I vet sources and what I might need to change about my social media habits. All of that became much more relevant in the last few months as Elon Musk has broken Twitter and turned it into something unrecognizable. Because I'd already started thinking about what I needed to do to keep my critical thinking skills sharp while still participating in social media, I was already a step ahead of folks who had grown addicted to Twitter as their main news and weather and social aggregator.