FAHA – Assignment 04

Word count: 477

(1) Qualitative research question

"How do Twitter accounts influence each other regarding issues to talk about?"

Definition: *Issue* is public problem publicly recognized as publicly important.

(2) Research question about patterns

"How do Twitter accounts of politicians, media and regular users influence each other in writing tweets about same issue?"

(3) Dataset and operationalization

(3.1) *Dream* dataset

We use tweets posted on Twitter in year 2020. We identify tweets mentioning some issue and sort these tweets according the main issue. We also sort the tweeting accounts into categories: *politician, medium, user*. For **each tweet** we record: authoring account, category of account, time of tweeting, main issue (or '*no issue*'), main issue of **the last tweet** of **each followed account**, names and categories of these accounts and times of tweeting of these tweets.

We then compute: how account *imitates* issues from other accounts, what *pressure* the followed accounts cast on the account in focus, how *unique* is the coverage of an account, and how successfully an account *persuades* its followers to cover the same issues. We compute how many times the account covers the same issue as each of the followed accounts – i.e. *imitation*. Then we compute what percentage of these accounts mention the same issue – i.e. *pressure*. We also compute for each account the percentages of covered issues over time and how much do these percentages differ from percentages of issues covered by followed accounts – i.e. *uniqueness*. We compute how many times the following accounts also cover the same issue as the account in focus – i.e. *persuasiveness*.

(3.2) Operationalization and its output

We use *imitation*, *pressure*, *uniqueness* and *persuasiveness* for definition of types of accounts according following table:

Type of account	Imitation	Pressure	Uniqueness	Persuasiveness
Builders	low	low	high	moderate/high
Transmitters	high	low	moderate	high
Receivers	high	high	low	moderate/low
Outcasts	low	low	high	low

Patterns of relations:

We find how many **builders** are *politicians*, *media* and *users*, same for **transmitters**, **receivers** and **outcasts**. We also look how many *media* are **builders**, **transmitters**, **receivers** and **outcasts**, same for *politicians* and *users*.

Hypothetical result:

We find that few *media* and *politicians* accounts are **builders**; majority of *media*, half of *politicians* and minority of *users* are **transmitters**; minority of *media*, half of *politicians* and majority of *users* are **receivers**; and very small fraction of *media*, *politicians* and *users* are **outcasts**.

(4) Payoff

Our hypothetical result means that few *media* and *politicians* accounts build public sphere around important issues, their interplay and dialogue sets tone of public debate, they build the agenda of public sphere. Their accent on certain issues is then transmitted via persuasive *media*, *politicians* and minority of regular *users* accounts to the majority of regular Twitter *users*, rest of *media* and *politicians*. The very small fraction of **outcasts** means that public sphere is synchronized and issues resonate through almost whole public.