



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Department of Business administration

FEKH49

Bachelor Degree Project in Organization

HT 2020

What Goes Around Comes Around

A qualitative document study on how CNN and Fox News portray
Donald Trump's leadership

Authors

Frida Briggner	1997-10-28
David Mirosavic	1999-03-08
Rebecca Tisén	1998-01-29
Carolina Wester	1997-02-14

Advisor

Nadja Sörgärde

Acknowledgement

This thesis has been written in order to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, majoring in Organization and Management, from the Faculty of Lund University School of Economics and Management. The conducted document study examined how two diverse mass media agencies, CNN and Fox News, portray the leadership of Donald J. Trump. Studying this has not only been challenging, but also given us an extraordinary experience we will never forget.

It has been an honor for us to further explore this well-known leadership area with the support of our extremely skillful and professional supervisor, Nadja Sörgärde. We are deeply thankful for enlightening us with your genuine interest and expertise in the subject. Without your contribution of consistent inputs, challenging questions, and cheerful attitude, the quality of our thesis would have been lesser.

Lastly, we would like to direct our appreciation to our fellow students, opponents, and other supervisors for contributing with new aspects and giving us important constructive feedback.

Sincerely,

Frida Briggner, David Mirosavic, Rebecca Tisén, and Carolina Wester

12th January 2021

Abstract

- Title:** What Goes Around Comes Around
- Seminar date:** 15th of January 2021
- Course:** FEKH49, Business Administration: Bachelor Degree Project in Organization, Undergraduate level, 15 University Credits Points
- Authors:** Frida Briggner, David Mirošavić, Rebecca Tisén, Carolina Wester
- Advisor:** Nadja Sörgärde
- Keywords:** Leadership, Donald Trump, Media, Social constructionism, and Social Contagion
- Purpose:** The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how two equally strong perceptions of the same leader are created based on the media's role in society. To examine this, we will study CNN and Fox News's portrayals of Donald Trump's leadership. More precisely, we intend to increase the understanding of how there can be such different images of the same person's leadership.
- Research question:** How do CNN and Fox News portray Donald Trump's leadership?
- Methodology:** To actualize the purpose of this thesis a qualitative document study with an abductive approach has been conducted. Further, a discourse analysis with a narrative orientation was implemented.
- Theoretical perspective:** The theoretical framework consists of an introduction to leadership. Further, a follower-centric perspective is conducted with a focus on the social construction of leadership by the media. In addition, Grint's Conceptualization, Social contagion, as the use of Stories are described.
- Result:** We found that the two news media relate to different perceptions of what constitutes leadership and used dissimilar narrations in their portrayal of Donald Trump, which enabled them to present two competing stories. In addition, contrasting to the Social Contagion model, their interaction made the portrayals distinguish even more.
- Conclusions:** To understand how the interaction between the news media enabled them to draw further apart we suggest a nuance to the Social Contagion model that separates *positive* and *negative* Social contagion.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Problematization	6
1.3 Purpose and Research Question	7
1.4 Thesis Overview	7
2. Theoretical Framework	9
2.1 Leadership	9
2.2 Follower Perspective on Leadership	10
2.3 Media	12
2.3.1 Stories in Media	12
2.3.2 Leadership in Media	13
2.4 Argumentation for Theoretical Gap	15
3. Methodology	17
3.1 Research Philosophy and Scientific Approach	17
3.2 Collection of Empirical Material	19
3.2.1 Objects of study	19
3.2.2 Sampling Process	20
3.3 Data Analysis	22
3.3.1 Discourse Analysis with a Narrative Orientation	22
3.3.2 The Tropes by Gabriel	23
3.3.3 The Analysis Process	25
3.4 Quality Assessment	26
4. Empirical Analysis	29
4.1 CNN	29
4.1.1 Unveiling his nature	29
4.1.2 Creating the Outsider	34
4.1.3 Making him a joke	39
4.1.4 Creating the Scapegoat	42
4.1.5 Summary of CNN's leadership portrayal of Donald Trump	46
4.2 Fox News	47
4.2.1 Unveiling his nature	48
4.2.2 Creating legitimacy	51
4.2.3 Creating the Courageous Leader	54
4.2.4 Creating enemies	57

4.2.5 Summary of Fox News's leadership portrayal of Donald Trump	60
5. Discussion	62
5.1 Diverging portrayals through media's attributions	62
5.2 The effects of emphasising upon different perceptions of leadership	66
6. Conclusions	68
7. References	70
Appendix A. CNN	76
Appendix B. Fox News	81

1. Introduction

In the first chapter, the foundation of the thesis is set by a background of the study with a focus on Donald Trump, CNN, and Fox News. Further, a problematization is stated to demonstrate the gap we found; how two different images of the same leadership are constructed by media. Thereby the purpose of the study is set, as well as the presentation of our research question. The chapter wraps up with a comprehensive thesis overview.

1.1 Background

This thesis focuses on how there can be such different images of the same person's leadership in society. We have chosen to study this through the news media's possibility to influence people's opinions. Therefore, we aim to pay attention to the social construction of leadership. The interest in this subject comes as we live in the time of the 45th president of the United States of America (U.S.), Donald J. Trump. Although the U.S. has had an increase in political polarization in the past 10 years, Donald Trump shows this polarization in stark colors. In 2016, he received 45,9% of the popular vote with his opponent receiving 48% (Pew Research Center, 2014; New York Times, 2017). The 2020 election further showed a divided U.S. with the highest voter turnout in history (CNN, 2020). Thompson (2020) argues that the feelings towards him are either love or hate, there is no in-between.

One actor in the emerging polarization is the media since they influence follower's perception of leadership, according to a social constructionist perspective which this thesis originates from (Chen & Meindl, 1991). Two of the most influential online news websites in the U.S. are CNN and Fox News (Feedspot, 2021). The two media houses have different political ideologies and Fox News is said to be more conservative than CNN in their news covering (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007, p. 1191). Due to their different political standpoints, the two media agencies portray the republican Donald Trump in two distinguishing ways. Since the media represent the general beliefs in society, there are two strong portrayals of the same leadership (Chen & Meindl, 1991). As a result, it is of interest to examine how the media, CNN and Fox News, create two different and apparently equal strong portrayals of Donald Trump's leadership, which can contribute to the feeling of either love or hate against him.

1.2 Problematization

The leadership phenomenon is not necessarily a new one, but a complex one that entails to be further studied. Previously, the majority of research conducted on leadership has focused on the leader. However, only in the last half-century focus has shifted to the follower. From then leadership research began to be studied as a socially constructed phenomenon, created by interactions of followers (Chen & Meindl, 1991). Accounting for the follower's role as constructors of leaders, their ability to assert leadership onto a leader was regarded (Pfeffer, 1977). Followers' abilities in regard to constructing leadership were further uncovered as they were found to romanticize leadership and overestimating them and their ability to control events (Meindl, Kuerisch, & Duderisch, 1985). By studying the followers, research thus began to divulge how followers developed and created their opinions of leadership. They were argued to create similar opinions of leaders through impersonal processes as they were shared through interactions with other followers (Meindl, 1990;1993, cited in Meindl 1995). Further, different opinions formed based on differences in what people value or hold important in leadership was also theorized (Billsberry, 2009).

From the social constructionist view, the role of media was also explored. This led to the media's ability to influence as well as their ability to represent individual's perceptions to be widely regarded and documented (Chen & Meindl, 1991). In regard to leadership, the media have been shown to disregard objectivity when reporting about leaders (Littlefield & Quenette, 2007). They are also able to construct and reconstruct leaders, enforcing follower's tendency to overestimate them (Chen & Meindl, 1991). While media can spread opinions and stories in their portrayal of leadership, this has mainly been studied in fields of organizational change and culture (Collins & Rainwater, 2005; Richardson, 1990). Additionally, the different stories that have often been studied with emphasis upon competing stories, with a dominant and a marginalized story (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007).

The field of research focused on leadership has evolved tremendously to account for the complex phenomena it is, incorporating influencing factors such as media and stories. Yet most research fixates on synonymous constructions of leadership or differing constructions of unequal weight.

However, the time we live in is one of an extremely polarizing leader in the form of Donald Trump. His leadership evokes as much love as it does hate, splitting the American nation. Simultaneously, because of the constant media coverage, it is of importance to both leaders and followers to acknowledge how media shapes and influences opinions. This formation of two equally strong, contrasting perceptions of leadership is yet to be entirely understood and fully relevant in today's society.

1.3 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate how two equally strong perceptions of the same leader are created based on the media's role in society. To examine this, we will study CNN and Fox News's portrayals of Donald Trump's leadership. More precisely, we intend to increase the understanding of how there can be such different images of the same person's leadership.

Consider the purpose, the following specific research question will be answered.

- *How do CNN and Fox News portray Donald Trump's leadership?*

1.4 Thesis Overview

The thesis is built upon six different chapters; introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, empirical analysis, discussion, and conclusions. In chapter one, an introduction is given to the thesis topic and why it is of interest to the reader. The starting point is a background to the polarized U.S, Donald Trump, and adding the media's role as an influencer of people's opinions and representative of the general beliefs in society. The background ends up questioning how there can be two equally strong images of the same person's leadership. Furthermore, the problematization gives the reader a glimpse of how leadership has developed and shows the gaps where this thesis aims to contribute with insight. Further, the purpose and research question that this thesis will investigate is presented. In chapter two, a theoretical framework is provided in the form of previous research in the field of leadership and continuous with different aspects of the area that will build upon the gap we found in theory. In chapter three, the methodology shows our scientific approach and research philosophy, our collection of empirical data, how we did the data analysis, followed by a quality assessment to show limitations and how our study is valid. In

chapter four, an empirical analysis has been constructed by a dissection of CNN and Fox News presentation of Donald Trump's leadership divided into four different categories. In chapter five, a discussion categorized into three different perspectives, to form a coherent picture to a bigger picture of the findings in this thesis. Lastly in the sixth chapter, the conclusions that could be drawn from the thesis are highlighted in a larger perspective and through various contexts for the reader.

2. Theoretical Framework

The makeup of this study is complex, with several aspects accounting for the whole. In order to fully illuminate the contributions to the “how” of this study, this section will highlight several aspects contributing to answering the research question and showing a theoretical gap. . To give an appropriate understanding of the different, contributing parts this section aims to create a map of the existing knowledge and theories within leadership and the follower perspective of leadership before moving onto media by looking into the use of stories and media’s influence of leadership. The section ends with a summation of all these aspects and an argumentation for how they together create the gap in which this study aims to shed light to.

2.1 Leadership

In order to understand the background of the theories we will use in our study, a short explanation concerning the history of leadership theories are presented. Thousands of studies have been conducted since the leadership phenomenon received the attention of researchers (Iszatt-White & Sounders, 2017). One of the pioneering studies called ‘The Great Man’ emphasized leaders being born in a particular societal class with certain qualities (Thomas Carlyle, 1846 cited in Iszatt-White & Sounders, 2017; Özbag, 2016; Spector, 2016). At this time, interest was placed on the individual leader. The leadership success was determined through specific traits that separate the leaders from the followers (Walumbwa, 2009; Iszatt-White & Sounders, 2017; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Yukl, 2010; Zaccaro, 2007; Stogdill, 1948). Studies later developed to enhance the behaviour of leaders. These theories implied that to be a leader you need to have a certain behaviour. However, in contrast to earlier studies, the right behaviour was something you could learn and would not have to be born with it (Cheramie, 2015). Leadership continued its development into focusing on the situation. Situational leadership emphasized that in order to be an effective leader you need to be flexible and adapt to the situation or context (Blanchard & Hersey, 1988). Additionally, as the field of leadership continued to develop, others implied the perception that leadership depends on multiple aspects rather than just one factor (Collinson, 2006).

2.2 Follower Perspective on Leadership

In this study, the focus will be on the theories which arise as a response to the leader-centric perspectives. Research within the leadership field developed to focus on the follower rather than the leader. There is an interplay between the leader and follower as a critical aspect to understand leadership (Gini, 1997 quoted in Ruiz, Ruiz, & Martinez, 2010). Followers choose who to follow and thus were seen as constructors of leadership (Iszatt-White & Saunders, 2017). Furthermore, through a social constructionist view of leadership researchers highlighted that leadership can be interpreted as something that is “created” rather than something that “is” (Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985; Bligh & Kohles, 2012). Social constructionism refers to how we mutually make sense of the world by constructing knowledge by social processes and social action while simultaneously being suspicious towards our own assumptions (Burr, 1995). In this critical essence, Pfeffer (1977) studied followers' tendency to overestimate a leaders' effects and hold them responsible for events and outcomes that take place. This disposition of creating simple causal links from a leader to the outcome of events can both be positive or negative as leaders either will be attributed as the reason for accomplishments or as the reason for drawbacks. Pfeffer (1977) argues that centering outcomes around one person gives followers a sense of control as they have the ability to decide who is in the seat, therefore giving the sense of ability to impact an event or outcome.

Continuing to address the overestimation of leaders' effects, Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich (1985) studied what they called The Romance of Leadership. The theory highlights the belief in society, in which leaders not only have the ability to control and influence courses of events but are the main driving force of them. This results in the tendency to overestimate the amount of power a leader possesses. The consequence of overestimating a leader's ability to affect outcomes appears by leaders receiving a near-heroic status when organizations have success. However, when organizations are struggling the leader receives the blame and is presented as the scapegoat (Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985). A notable contributor to the romanization and over-attribution to leaders was the popular press. Further, in the light of romancing leadership, Shamir (1995) stressed the difference in the ability to influence between close and distant relationships with the followers. In which extraordinary qualities and charisma were more likely

to be attributed to distant leaders (Shamir, 1995; Meindl et al. 2005). Since close followers can attain more varied information their perceptions shall rather be perceived as observations of actual qualities and behavior rather than romanticization. Due to the press's affiliation with the theory of romanticising leadership, it will be used in this thesis to discuss the different portrayals achieved by the two news agencies, CNN and Fox News.

Moreover, Meindl (1990;1993, cited in Meindl 1995) continued the research of the Romance of Leadership and introduced the Social contagion concept into leadership studies. The Social contagion concept aims to explain how the same opinion is widely regarded in a community. It was compared to the spread of a virus. To spread from person to person in communities until everyone has caught it (Liou & Lee, 2020). However, the lack of an official definition of the phenomena spurred Levy and Nail (1993) to compile multiple existing definitions of Social contagion to construct the following: “the spread of affect, attitude, or behavior from Person A (the "initiator") to Person B (the "recipient"), where the recipient does not perceive an intentional influence attempt on the part of the initiator.” (Levy & Nail, 1993, n.p.). Meindl (1993, quoted in Jackson & Parry, 2011) combined this theory with leadership studies saying that followers' opinions about a leader are not necessarily based on a personal reflection but through an impersonal process spurred on through group dynamics. However, the Social Contagion process only takes into account how interactions spread the same opinion of a leader and seemingly disregards the spread of opposing ones. Due to its heed to opposing perceptions of a leader, this theory has a gap this study aims to give insight to.

To give insight into how people can have differing opinions, Keith Grint developed his conceptualization of leadership. Grint's conceptualization included a four-fold explanation of where leadership is derived from, arguing that what leadership is depends on what people deem to be the most important aspect of what leadership is (Billsberry, 2009). The four approaches he suggested were leadership as person, leadership as result, leadership as position, and leadership as process. The first approach, leadership as a person, places emphasis on the ‘who’. In other words, it is the person, their individual characteristics, and exceptional qualities that determine the effectiveness of the leader. The second approach, leadership as result, highlights ‘what’ the leader achieves and the outcome of their actions as what drives leadership. The third approach,

leadership as position, emphasizes the ‘where’ of leadership or the formal position they hold to make them a leader. The fourth approach, leadership as position, highlights ‘how’ things are done as what is of importance (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Hence, this study will use Grint’s conceptualization to aid in giving insight into how CNN and Fox News achieve their different portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership.

2.3 Media

To contribute to the desired insight into leadership, this study also has a focus on media. To fully appreciate the role media has in regards to shape and establish general opinions and opinions about leadership, a review of the existing field is necessary. As some of the first to study the effects of media, McCombs and Shaw (1972) showed the media's ability to set agendas and influence how important the public considers a matter. Furthering this notion, Gamson et. al (1992) established that the media are not only influencers but active members of the social construction process by listening to the followers as well.

2.3.1 Stories in Media

A prominent aspect of the media's portrayal is how they emphasise stories and contribute to differing narratives. Gabriel (1998, cited in Buchanan and Dawson, 2007) emphasised that a story always has a purpose. It is not a narrative that is being told for fun, but rather a tool to influence the perception of the audience. Regarding the use of stories, Richardson (1990) studied the use of different stories to create different narratives in society, such as the connection to culture. Richardson (1990) explains that when being a part of a culture you consequently are a part of the narrative of that culture. The cultural narratives relate to the prevailing norms of the context where it takes place. Additionally, to the cultural narratives, Richardson (1990) describes a contrasting narrative that emphasizes the neglected and marginalized voices in the cultural narrative. These stories exist alongside the more dominant narrative and present another perspective than the more normative (Richardson, 1990).

Additionally, an amount of the literature has focused on the construction of stories within organizational change. In one study, Collins and Rainwater (2005) examined how two alternative

stories could have been told to describe the events in an organization. The media had presented an official story that described the performance of excellent leadership in which the leader became the hero who guided the company. In addition, the authors presented two alternative stories with different narration as other perceptions were taken into account. Firstly, as a tragic story, in which the leader of the company could have been described as a villain who controlled his employees and made them suffer from his directives. Secondly as a comic story, where the leader is presented as a fool. Further, Buchanan and Dawson (2007) emphasises a critical perspective in which they describe that there are often two stories with asymmetrical emphasis. One dominant, normative story and one competing story told by those whose perceptions differ from the norm.

The research presented by Collins and Rainwater (2005) will be used to study how CNN and Fox News create different narratives regarding Trump's leadership. This aims to further aid the understanding of how the two news agencies create their differing portrayals. Moreover, literature around differing stories has centered around dominant and marginalized stories. As our study aims to study two equally strong ones this also argues for the existing gap the study fills.

2.3.2 Leadership in Media

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the media's role in the creation of leadership, more recent studies will be presented. Recent scholars have argued that leadership should be perceived as contingent, dependent on the things that happen between and around the leader-follower relation, in which the media engage in. These interactions are argued to be powerful as the followers' perception and emotional experience will determine the endorsement of a leader (Ladkin, 2017). While the public demands information, the media can choose what to share and highlight (Luo, Lin & Chien, 2020). The media's ability to share information also makes them important contributors to the phenomena of Social contagion as mentioned earlier. In regards to media and Social contagion, Pastor, Mayo, and Shamir (2007) highlighted that as social actors tend to provide information about the leader's personality, style, and actions, it can affect the individual interpretation of leadership. Since followers tend to turn to society for explanations when making sense in their state of romanticizing.

Additionally, Lau, Bligh, and Kohles (2020) found that if the media report negatively about a leader, supporters also consider the leadership performance as negative. However, others found that contradictory information about one's beliefs may lead to skepticism towards the source credibility (Taber & Lodge, 2006), whereas media exposure rather works as an affirmation of existing beliefs about the leader (Lau, Bligh & Kohles, 2020).

A prominent study of the media's and leadership is Chen and Meindl's (1991) of the news media The People Express's portrayal of Donald Burr. In their study, it is clear that the news media portrayal of Burr changed as the fortunes of the company changed. When the company was doing well, Burr was portrayed as charismatic and dependable. However, as the company suffered the portrayal shifted to portray him as a fighter who persisted when faced with an adversary. It showed how the media adheres to views of the Romance of Leadership. However, while their portrayal changed to account for the change in events, certain values remained allowing the newspaper to keep their portrayal consistent. Chen and Meindl (1991) explained this positive narrative of Burr by the People Express to be motivated by their values. Moreover, Chen and Meindl had 75 undergraduate students read the articles about Donald Burr and then had them write down a description of him based on what was read. Through this, they found that the portrayal of the articles created through metaphors was coherent with the portrayal presented by the students. The study not only showed how the media portrays leadership but also had proof of the media's ability to construct leaders (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019).

Furthermore, Littlefield and Quenette (2007) examined how the media creates images of and evaluated authority figures' responses in crisis, in order to understand how media can rhetorically construct them. By studying articles from two newspapers, they detected a strong association with the authority figures and positively and negatively charged words. Thus, suggesting that instead of being objective, the media assumed a role of blaming and crediting the various authority figures. Moreover, Lau, Bligh, and Kohler (2020) studied how the mass media impact the public's opinion on political candidates. Their study demonstrated that different political news media agencies report different images of a leader (Lau, Bligh & Kohler, 2020).

Nevertheless, previous studies seem to underestimate the leader-follower relationship (Collinson, 2005) and simultaneously leadership theorists seem to diminish the role mass media possess in shaping public opinion of that relation (Ladkin, 2017). However, studies regarding the news media's portrayal of leadership have their major focus on understanding coinciding portrayals, not differing ones.

2.4 Argumentation for Theoretical Gap

There are multiple gaps that show and legitimise this study which we aim to combine to show as a whole in the following section. The theoretical framework we presented has examined previous leadership theories and related studies in order to answer the apparent research questions. From its origin, leadership research has developed greatly as it has gone from being dominated by a leader-centric view to a follower perspective, increasing its focus on leadership as socially constructed. Taking a stance in how media portray leadership, the conceptual framework we adopt derives from a combination of Romance of Leadership and Grint's Conceptualization underpinned by how stories are used in media narratives.

From the Romance of Leadership, we intend to examine how leadership is perceived and thereby attributed in the portrayal of Donald Trump. As Meindl (1995) suggests Social contagion in order to explain how the same opinion comes about and is spread, we have identified a gap in how the model dissolves the occurrence of two media portrayals. In order to answer that question, we adopt Grint's conceptualization to examine if there are some underlying differences in their perceptions that may affect the actual portrayals by CNN and Fox News.

Since the usage of how stories can help to uphold certain images, we aim to use this to further see how the two portrayals co-exist. In order to understand how different portrayals are created, we aim to use a similar standpoint to previous literature that emphasised how narratives can be changed. However, the focus has mostly been on dominant and marginalized stories, which are showing signs of a gap in this area. Looking into how the media portrays leadership we can see that there are studies on their influence, however, they focus on the media having the same

portrayal of a leader. Therefore, we aim to give an insight into existing theory by examining the media's role in the creation of two dominant narratives of the same person's leadership.

3. Methodology

In this section, the approach to this study is explained and its suitability in order to answer the research question is argued for. In addition, a transparent description of the process is presented which enables the reader to independently decide upon the credibility of the study. The chapter begins with a description of our scientific approach. Following, we describe how we collected our empirical material. After that, we explain our process when analysing the data, and lastly, a quality assessment is presented for the trustworthiness of our study.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Scientific Approach

The research philosophy of social science aims to acknowledge the best way to do research. It influences the research question and ascribes the research practice as a whole. From how data shall be collected, analyzed, and interpreted to theoretical conclusions. Given that certain implicit and explicit assumptions, based upon the researcher's understanding are made of what reality is and how we can know reality (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Therefore, we will address the underpinned assumptions by explaining our ontological and epistemological position. The first concerns our understanding of reality while the latter examines what is regarded as accurate knowledge (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

We believe that the media plays an important role in how two contradictory images of Donald Trump's leadership can occur simultaneously. Thus, the ontological and epistemological position of our study is a social constructionist and an interpretive approach. This implies that we aim to understand how the media's role as influencing actors actively shapes understanding about leadership through an interpretation of the written text. More precisely, we conducted interpretations of the reporter's articles in order to understand how the two contradictory portrayals of Trump's leadership come about. In particular, the social constructionist perspective underlines that interactions between various social actors in society generate a common reality (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Since social actors frequently create and change the environment they exist in, the reality we perceive is constantly being shaped by those actors (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Furthermore, we attained an interpretive position when studying

the reporters' written articles. This enabled us to divulge how CNN and Fox News create certain images of Donald Trump's leadership. Such an approach entails a focus on understanding social actors with a strong emphasis on the understanding placed on the how and why of social actions (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how the two news agencies, CNN and Fox News, portray Donald Trump's leadership the best way to study this is through a qualitative document study. Adopting a qualitative research design entails focusing on the interpretation of words within the empirical data (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Therefore, as we aim to achieve insight into the news media's perceptions through the analysis of articles, a qualitative research design is appropriate. Further, the openness of such research strategy allows for a more in-depth understanding of the portrayal of Donald Trump by CNN and Fox News, since we are allowed to do interpretations of the material. A significant feature of document studies is that the collected empirical material was originally created for another purpose (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Thereby, our objects of study are not affected by writing this thesis which can make our study more valid.

The interest of our study was derived from the constant news media reporting of Donald Trump in addition to an interest in the social construction of leadership derived from a previous course in Leadership and Change Management. The merger of those two interests inspired us to start an initial investigation of the two phenomena, that explicitly drove our interests to the two contrasting portrayals CNN and Fox News present. Consequently, we are applying an abductive approach. This enables us to be surprised by our empirical findings along with comparing and adjusting the used theory accordingly in order to explain it (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). The authors, Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) further explains that an abductive study consists of working with the empirical findings and the theoretical framework simultaneously throughout the study in an iterative process. In our study, this process enables us to first research how the two news agencies, CNN and Fox News, portrayed Trump and then search for explanations in the already existing theory and go back and forth. In this way, the used theory can be further developed and changed in order to better explain our empirical findings. Consequently, this

abductive approach enables us to keep our minds open and let our empirical findings guide the process.

3.2 Collection of Empirical Material

The aim of this thesis is to study how the news media construct two competing portrayals of the same leader's leadership. To be able to answer this question we picked two news media sites that most likely would portray a leader differently as it is the foundation of our thesis. Therefore, we chose to study Donald J. Trump by the portrayal of CNN and Fox News, as he is perceived differently when looking at these two news agencies. In this study, the word 'media' will be used interchangeably with 'news media'. However, CNN and Fox News will not act as representatives for all news media, they will rather function as two selected actors in the portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership. Furthermore, when referring to CNN or Fox News we will talk about them as 'they' since we make the conclusion that the agencies consist of their reporters who answer to the same values.

3.2.1 Objects of study

Donald J. Trump is the 45th President of the United States of America. On November 8, 2016, he won the election as representing the Republican party. More than 62 million Americans voted for Trump, which was a new record for the Republican party. Before he entered politics, he was a businessman who worked in the fields such as real estate, entertainment, and sports. According to the White House official website he "defines the American success story" (The White House, n.d.). However, not everyone agrees upon Trump's success, since he has been categorized as the most polarized U.S. President (Eady, Vaughn & Rottinghaus, 2018). Therefore, we found it interesting to study the portrayal of his leadership in the two media sites, CNN and Fox News.

One news agency avid in the reporting of Trump is CNN. The online website is called CNN Digital who provides news and information. It is ranked number one among the 100 most influential online news websites in the U.S. (Feedspot, 2021). According to their own webpage, they "seek to inform, engage and empower the world" (CNN, n.d.). They are generally seen to have a more liberal standpoint and positions close to the democratic values, which are explained

to be common knowledge according to many articles (Mutsvairo, Rønning, van der Linden, Panagopoulos & Roozenbeek, 2020; Vogt, 2020). In addition, Ghasemi Tari and Emamzadeh (2018) researched CNN's news coverage regarding Trump and his responses on Twitter. In the research, it is mentioned that CNN has received criticism, being accused of focusing more on problems related to Trump than his opponents during the 2016 election. This is of interest for our study, since we want to have two different portrayals of Donald Trump, and CNN seems to have one existing opinion of him.

Fox News is also an avid reporter of Donald Trump that competes in the same arena as CNN. The website of Fox News provides daily online news and information and is ranked number four among the 100 most influential online news websites in the U.S. (Feedspot, 2021). On Fox News's official webpage, they describe their offer to include breaking news in addition to business and political news (Fox News, n.d.). They refer, on their webpage, to several reports claiming to be highly trusted and popular by the American people (Fox News, n.d.). Furthermore, Fox News is seen to have a more conservative coverage than CNN, and they are more associated with the Republican values (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007, p. 1191). The reason why the most influential online news websites ranked number two or three was not chosen together with CNN is due to the fact that they are considered to report from the same political side as CNN (Allsides, 2021). Two similar news agencies were not of interest in our study, since our aim was to examine two contrasting images of Donald Trump.

3.2.2 Sampling Process

Since our aim was to study two different portrayals it was a purposive sampling to choose CNN and Fox News (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). The purposive sampling then continued by searching their article archives to find articles that described the leadership of Trump. We chose to only study the online news websites from CNN and Fox News and not their TV networks to be able to search in the archive and revisit articles. As well as we wanted to do interpretations of the reporters' written articles. During this process, we discovered the immense amount of articles dedicated to reporting about Donald Trump. Due to this, we decided to delimit our study to the portrayal of Trump and his leadership amidst the coronavirus crisis. The selection of limiting the

empirical material to this period is motivated by our interest to study the portrayal of leadership, which is often put under the microscope during times of crisis. Since a leader must show the ability to make decisions and his leadership is being judged during a crisis (Grint, 2005). Consequently, Trump would be in the spotlight and receive a lot of attention. To further delimit this, we decided to look at articles regarding this from March 1st until June 30th of the year 2020. March marked the start of the spread of coronavirus in the U.S. and the articles in the media continued to escalate through to May (CNN, n.d.; Fox News, n.d.). Thus, we felt that these months were appropriate for our study as they ensured a steady coverage of Donald Trump and his leadership as the nation was facing the virus. However, the reports in the last month mainly focused upon how Donald Trump handled the evolvement of the Black Lives Matter movement and was thereby opted-out in a discussion of our findings.

To find the articles on CNN we went to their website and searched for “Donald Trump coronavirus”, which generated about 6300 articles. To navigate through this we adjusted the link to get to the pages relevant to our months. In the end, there were about 3000 articles written about Donald Trump in reference to the coronavirus from the timeframe we set. We allocated one month to each person to analyze, and then present the interesting part we found to each other. While going through these articles we saw clear patterns in the portrayals that gave us a saturation from the empirical data. Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) explained saturation as a process when no new findings or themes are located in the empirical data. In the empirical analysis from the articles written in March, April and May we ensured a saturation. Thereby, we decided to adhere to these months to be able to present a thorough and well-put analysis with clear identified patterns in the material.

To find articles in Fox News we had a similar approach, we entered the Fox News website and searched for ‘Donald Trump coronavirus’. However, on their website, they have a continuous load button instead of separate pages to showcase the articles, making us unable to navigate to our desired months. Therefore, we added the month we were searching for to our initial search of ‘Donald Trump coronavirus’. Due to the continuous load button, there was no possibility to address the number of articles we went through on the Fox News website. However, we had divided the different months in the same way as with CNN and all of us continued our search in

our month until we received the same data saturation as we did with CNN. Here again, we were able to reach empirical saturation by only adhering to the data from the months: March, April, and May (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

3.3 Data Analysis

We aim to study the written articles by reporters from CNN and Fox News, thereby it is interesting for us to do interpretations of the choice of words. Therefore, a discourse analysis with a narrative orientation enabled us to understand the whole story rather than single quotes from the articles to get a bigger picture of CNN and Fox News's contradictory portrayals of Donald Trump's leadership. The tropes helped us to further understand and highlight identified patterns in the material. Lastly, our analysis process consisted of five stages in order to conceptualize our findings (Svensson, 2019).

3.3.1 Discourse Analysis with a Narrative Orientation

In order to scrutinize the empirical material, we did a discourse analysis. According to Svensson (2019), this method of analysis aims to understand how the usage of language contributes to create, maintain, challenge, and reproduce a certain phenomenon or social context. Furthermore, a discourse analysis emphasizes that dependent on the applied perspective different worldviews are created and it is, therefore, a way to understand how society is created through the usage of language (Svensson, 2019). This tool of analysing helped us to identify how the use of language and choice of words of the reporters had a big impact in the creation of the different portrayals of Trump's leadership, which in turn contributes to the existence of two contradictory stories about Trump.

Additionally, a discourse analysis can increase knowledge and understanding about Donald Trump's leadership by access to the unspoken or implied thoughts without writing them (Svensson, 2019). Therefore, a discourse analysis is suitable for us to be able to do various interpretations and increase the understanding of how CNN and Fox News reporters choose to portray differently. Since the study has a social constructionist approach, the reporter's words create thoughts about Donald Trump in society. News media's role is to spread information that

will have an influence on how people will perceive the leadership of Donald Trump. Therefore, this method can help our analysis to take one step further in the understanding of how CNN and Fox News portray the same person in contrasting ways and hence create different perceptions about Trump.

One of the many orientations within discourse analysis is narrative analysis. According to Hansen (2006, cited in Svensson, 2019), it shares the same usage of language in sensemaking and performative activities as other discourse analysis. However, this specific analysis focuses on the stories and the narration of it. It, therefore, identifies the knowledge, values, and culture that are formed in the stories. The importance is not whether or not the stories are true, but rather something that could unite the people. Since the stories that are told creates belonging and identity (Hansen, 2006 cited in Svensson, 2019). Therefore, in our study, the use of a narrative analysis helped us to understand the bigger context to which every quote contributes to. This enabled us to focus on the whole story created by the reporters and not just study every quote on its own. The method of discourse analysis with a narrative orientation contributed to an in-depth study in order to increase the understanding of what interpretations could be made in the articles.

3.3.2 The Tropes by Gabriel

In order to sort the discourse present in the articles in CNN and Fox News, we have chosen to utilize Gabriel's eight poetic tropes. These tropes are attributed to a subject by the storyteller in order to create meaning and understanding for the reader (Gabriel, 2000). In our study, the tropes helped us to find a deeper meaning behind the words in the reporter's quotes.

The first trope, *attribution of motive*, aims to determine whether an action or incident was intentional or not. This trope is central to determining whether or not a person deserves to be facing the scenario they are in or not, which in turn establishes them to be either heroes, villains, scapegoats, etc. The second trope, *attribution of causal connections*, is linked to motive and is the identification of a relationship between a cause and effect creating an orderly sequence of events. This simplified chain of events causes them to automatically be linked together. The third trope, *attribution of blame and credit*, is correlated with causal connection and is the attribution

of moral responsibility. Through this trope, the storyteller is able to determine right and wrong thus deciding what kind of agent the actor is; whether they are a hero, villain, or victim. The fourth trope, *attribution of unity*, aims to give a group or category of people a quality of sameness. Through this trope, a single person can stand for an entire class of people and thus made indistinguishable.

The fifth trope, *attribution of fixed qualities*, is the sensemaking tool in which people attribute qualities to people and events which become set. Through this trope, an interpreted quality of another person is established as ever-present and is attributed to all their future actions. Thus, a person who has done bad once will always do bad and a person who has done good will always do good. The sixth trope, *attribution of emotion*, endows people with emotional tones and justifications. The attribution of emotion can change how people interpret a person and their actions thus impact the picture built through storytelling. The seventh trope, *attribution of agency*, gives someone or something the ability to affect others and events. This trope turns someone who is passive into someone who is active in a chain of events. This can be seen as related to motive, however, it goes one step further. It gives someone the ability to have a motive. The eighth trope, *attribution of providential significance*, is a specific form of agency that gives agency to a supernatural or divine power. It seeks to explain events as being arranged by a superior power to achieve a specific result. Thus, a person or event is unable to control their fate, they are susceptible to the will of the higher power.

In other words, they enabled us to pinpoint the various methods the reporters used to tell their story about Trump's leadership. Therefore, we used them to summarize the main points in every category through the empirical analysis. We did this to further highlight our empirical findings by the used attributions about Trump, in order to understand how the images were constructed by the reporters of CNN and Fox News. However, in our empirical analysis, the tropes *attribution of unity* and *attribution of providential significance* did not prevail, thus they are not brought up in the analysis. However, these tropes were not excluded from the beginning, it was rather a decision made after we studied our empirical findings. We concluded that these two tropes would not contribute to the understanding of how the different images were constructed.

3.3.3 The Analysis Process

In order to analyse the material, we broke down the empirical material into pieces; analyzing and merging them. This has been done with the ambition to increase and deepen our knowledge. In order to answer the research question, Svensson (2019) suggests that you should research, re-view, and re-vise the material several times. In which he suggests a five-step process of how to execute a discourse analysis (Svensson, 2019).

The first step entails familiarizing with the material (Svensson, 2019). This was done by reading and skimming through the articles relating to Donald Trump on CNN and Fox News followed by collecting the chosen data and citations of the material. This gave us the possibility to introduce ourselves to the material and worked as eye-openers to remain open for possible findings that could be missed. We took notes continuously in order to facilitate what caught our initial attention and interests. This process allowed us to see nuances in the material.

The second step necessitates sorting the material in order to be able to analyse the material (Svensson, 2019). To aid our sorting process we used Gabriels eight troops (2000). The tropes helped us to categorize the different methods the reporters used in their portrayal of Trump. The sorting of the material by the different attributions seen as prominent in the articles enabled an increased understanding of the varying components of the articles and how they are linked together. Through this understanding, we were able to establish our initial findings and a preliminary analysis of the two news media sites.

In the third step Svensson (2019) emphasizes dutiful reading of the empirical material to further interpret the written text. He proposes to repeatedly ask oneself “what happens here?” after each sentence. This aims to allow us to maintain the discourse analysis approach and be observant towards the used language and social context. Through our employment of dutiful reading, we were able to identify more subtle details that were not explicit at first sight, allowing us to not only describe, but fully interpret the articles.

The fourth step consists of creating themes that help to explain the findings (Svensson, 2019). This was done by categorizing and labeling the patterns which we identified. We began the thematization by categorizing and distinguishing how the two news media sites converge and diverge in their narration of Donald Trump. After we labeled the identified categories, we set them aside in order to later go back and revise them (Svensson, 2019).

In the fifth and last step Svensson (2019) suggests a contextualization, which entails putting the empirical material back in its original social and political context. This enabled us to understand how the language had been used and analyse the underlying interests in regard to the context. Especially, in the political and societal context in which our empirical material is derived from, which consists of a global pandemic and a highly polarized US.

3.4 Quality Assessment

In order to attain a high quality of this thesis, we have conducted a quality assessment to discuss limitations and dependency in our study. Lincoln and Guba (1985; 1994, cited in Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019) proposed four categories of *trustworthiness*, called *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* that will be examined below. Since we have a qualitative study it is relevant to use these four categories (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

Firstly, credibility concerns how reliable the study and its findings are. In order to conduct a credible study, we have attempted to be completely transparent in the portrayal of our material, methods, and results (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). The four of us were all part of collecting and analysing our data. We first collected data in a feasible manner in which we all took notes of our own findings and what each individual thought was interesting. This individual research helped us to decrease group thinking by enabling us to independently analyze our data. Thereafter we discussed our findings together and established the common patterns which we all identified, to later go further and collect more empirical data. This was done about six times before we thought our empirical analysis was thorough enough.

The second category is transferability which refers to the possibility of generalizing the findings of the study (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Due to the design of the study entailing the examination of the purposive sampling of two specific different news agencies in their portrayal of a specific leader, the ability to draw generalized conclusions in regard to other news agencies is limited. Therefore, with our study, we aim rather to contribute with insight into how contradictory images of the same person's leadership can be created. In addition, we studied the coverage of Trump in a pandemic which contributes to the narrowing of the study even more. However, by using a discourse analysis and applying Gabriel's (2000) poetic tropes we were able to identify patterns which we then placed in a social context. By describing in detail how this process was performed we aim to increase transferability and to enable our study to be applied and give insight into other contexts.

The third category is dependability which concerns the probability of whether the findings would be similar if the study was implemented at another time (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Bell, Bryman & Harley (2019) emphasizes the importance of detailed records of the process in order to achieve dependability. In our research, this was done by making sure that all of our empirical data was saved sorted by the months they originated from. Further, all the different versions of our labeling and discussions are written down and saved. In addition, as this is a document study, we were able to examine the study objects without affecting them. In other words, the behaviour of the researchers has not affected the empirical data which can be compared to an interview study where the interviewees may act differently depending on the interviewer. This increases the possibility of performing the same study with similar results at another time.

The final category is confirmability which addresses the potential issue of the findings being influenced by the biases of the researcher (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). Similar to how Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) state, we recognize that complete objectivity is impossible to achieve. However, we have frequently discussed our biases, interests, and perspectives that may reflect our analysis (Guba, 1981:80). This constant reflection about our opinions helped us to be more aware of our preconceptions and to put them aside when analyzing our data. Initiating our study we all had certain opinions and biases towards Trump. However, after reading Fox News's portrayal of Trump we all could conclude that we had been influenced by their contrasting

portrayal of the leader and created a more humanized image of him. This discovery made us even more aware of our biases towards Trump and enabled us to easier understand how the more positive portrayal of Trump could be constructed.

4. Empirical Analysis

In the fourth chapter, we will analyse excerpts from CNN and Fox News to divulge how they create two different images of President Donald Trump's leadership. First, we present the portrayal by CNN followed by the portrayal by Fox News. Each presentation of the respective portrayals consists of four categories where the headlines act as guidelines for the empirical findings in the study. Each category ends up with a summary of the Tropes by Gabriel (2000) in order to highlight our empirical findings in the discourse and narrative analysis in the specific ordered categories. Furthermore, CNN's part and Fox News's part ends up in a final summary of the headlines where a perspicuous paragraph combines the findings together to give a highlighted overview of CNN and Fox News's portrayal of Trump's leadership.

4.1 CNN

This section is dedicated to analyzing CNN's image of President Donald Trump's leadership, it is divided into four categories based upon the empirical findings. From Unveiling his nature, to Creating the Outsider, to Making him a joke, and lastly Creating the Scapegoat.

4.1.1 Unveiling his nature

When reporting, CNN often writes about Donald Trump in absolute terms, that is with simplified explanations of him as a person, of his behavior, or of his mental state. An example of this is an article writing about Trump after he had claimed full control of the country with the reporter stating, "*the President is ignorant and unintelligent*" (Filipovic, CNN, 17-04-2020a). The reporter bluntly states that Trump is ignorant and unintelligent without any motivation or explanation. It is described matter-of-factly that the President has these qualities, which presents it as a fact rather than an interpretation by the reporter. Furthering this notion of seemingly factual statements, the reporter states "*Trump is just wrong*" (Dale, CNN, 16-03-2020). By emphasizing that 'he is' it could be interpreted as an effort to show certain traits and qualities that are related to him as a person. CNN continues their focus on delivering a clear understanding of Trump as a person in the excerpt below.

Donald Trump is a reflection of our culture. He is a symbol of self-interest ... His narcissistic self-promotional instincts have been the key to his success but they come at the expense of any fidelity to the truth or confronting hard facts. (Avlon, CNN, 12-03-2020)

By referring to Trump as a *symbol of self-interest*, the reporter is able to not only infer one quality but a plethora of qualities that self-interest is correlated with. Further, by referring to him as a symbol he both owns these negative qualities and is a complete embodiment of them. The reporter adds to this by explaining his narcissism to be a part of his instincts, thus it is a part of his being. Lastly, through the article CNN is able to infer that he is a liar and a coward by stating how his instincts rob all elements of the truth and lead him to not confront *hard facts*. CNN again infers these qualities in a matter-of-factly way without any evidence for their statements. Presenting Trump with qualities without evidence of what made the reporters draw these conclusions leaves little room for the forming of other opinions. This, as the reader is not in contact with Trump's actual actions to be able to make their own interpretations, but instead rely on the reporter's word as facts. This approach is developed further in the extract below.

Look. It is not a new observation that Trump lacks any of the traditional traits we associate with good leaders. He seemingly always takes the low road. He villainizes opponents as evil. He doesn't tell the truth -- a lot. And he is forever looking to hog credit and deflect blame. In Trump's world, the buck stops anywhere but with him. (Cillizza, CNN, 13-03-2020a)

Here the reporter makes it clear that the qualities Trump holds are not desired ones, especially for a leader. Further, when referring to Trump's qualities or actions, the reporter does not refer to them in moderation. Trump does not sometimes take the low road but he *always* takes the low road. This can be interpreted as CNN creating a pattern of habit by creating a notion that certain actions do not occur on occasion, but rather are so frequent they become part of his qualities and nature. Thus, when thinking of how Trump will act, the readers will naturally think he will take the low road, lie, take undeserved credit, and shift the blame he deserves. This tendency to

establish Trump's actions as a regularly occurring phenomenon is furthered through the use of adverbs of frequency, which is seen in the following quotes.

Related to Trump's first failing is his second: He always believes he knows more than the experts about any given subject. (Bergen, CNN, 02-03-2020)

A leader who is so insecure that he can't accept ANY responsibility for decisions that have been made and are being made on his watch isn't a leader at all. And, unfortunately, that's what Trump's news conference revealed about him. Again. (Cillizza, CNN, 13-03-2020a)

CNN regularly uses adverbs of frequency such as *always* and *again* seen above. The adverb *always* has an entailed frequency of 100 %, thus they establish that Trump in all instances, 100 % of the time, will believe he knows more than experts. In the second quote, the reporter is able to establish that the qualities Trump has are those not fit for a leader and he has not shown it just once, Trump has proven this repeatedly. Again, CNN builds up the case that these negative qualities and poor actions are to be expected and become naturally connected to Trump and further the notion that he has a set of nature. They even use capital letters to emphasize their points. To take Trump's habitual behavior one step further, CNN refers to his behavior with metaphors of a game or Trump's playbook.

In a crisis that for once he didn't make, the president is relying on a classic Trump playbook. Deny the facts, shift the blame, distract. (Romans, CNN, 10-03-2020)

Yet again they use frequency adverbs to signal a pattern of Trump's behavior, however, here it is used in a contrasting effect. Trump *for once* not being the cause of a crisis implies that in most cases he is. Moreover, they add the metaphor of a playbook to represent Trump's inattentiveness to *deny the facts, shift the blame, distract*. By referencing this behavior as part of a playbook it can be interpreted as being intentional from Trump's side and actions deployed with menacing intent to benefit him since *he shifts the blame and distracts*. This again signals that he is not a fit leader.

The behavior, which is implied from Trump's playbook, is expanded upon as CNN report on his "game" which he has been playing since the 90s.

But Trump was playing the same game he has always played. Back in the early '90s, when authorities shut down a third of his slot machines in Atlantic City on the opening night of his new casino, he later told Larry King they melted down from overuse. He couldn't face the truth, much less admit it publicly. ... Now Trump has no choice. (Borger, CNN, 01-04-2020)

By mentioning the 90's, the reporter indicates that the behavior is part of Trump's usual behavior and is rooted in his character, as he has done it for decades. This is further developed by the use of the frequency adverb *always*, inferring that this game of denying facts, shifting blame, and distracting is used all the time. Moreover, they refer to this as being the *same game*, thus furthering the notion that this behavior is a given and natural to Trump. By establishing such a clear sense of Trump's nature, CNN is able to draw conclusions about Trump's actions from these facts of him as a leader. This is seen below as CNN explains Trump's motive for his handling of the coronavirus.

Trump's dangerous rhetoric seems more about keeping stock market prices up to help his reelection campaign than protecting Americans. (Obeidallah, CNN, 09-03-2020)

In the quote above the reporter emphasizes Trump's history of being a businessman and that he cares about the stock market. Nevertheless, the reporter weighs upon the negative perspective in which he states that Trump took action in the crisis now that the stock market has affected his assets. In this way, the author diminishes his actions and creates an image of a selfish person, that only cares and acts when he is affected and does not see to the interest of the American people. These impressions are developed in the following excerpt from CNN.

There are also signs that the White House is more concerned with its political plight than the burgeoning crisis. ... raised the question of whether Trump will prioritize science as

the threat from coronavirus rises or his own political standing. (Collinson, CNN, 28-02-2020a)

In this article, CNN continues to stress that Trump prioritizes his political standing, vis-à-vis himself, rather than the wellbeing of the American people he leads. By leaving it as an open question the reporter leaves the reader left to scrutinize Trump's behavior to see if he will prioritize science or himself. This approach of including questions, which still convey a desired thought to the reader, is seen throughout CNN's articles and in the following excerpt.

Compounding the problem is his apparent emphasis -- too often -- on the economy and the stock market instead of the public health issues. Is there anyone who really doubts by now that for Trump his own political fortunes, which are tied to economic and market performance, take precedence over protecting the health of all Americans? (Lockhart, CNN, 01-03-2020)

Here the reporter builds up a strong narrative and case for how Trump puts himself before the American people. By ending their strong case with a question, it leaves the reader little room to have an answer other than the desired one from the reporter. Through this, CNN is able to go beyond stating their opinion, to the reader actively inferring the concluding thought. Thus, the reporter is able to create a strong case for the reader about Trump's true nature of leadership.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

This section has analysed how CNN unveils Trump's nature. They employ a threefold approach, starting with writing about Trump in absolute terms. Here they attribute fixed qualities to Trump through simple, seemingly factual statements about Trump and his person which are easy for the reader to buy. Qualities are further attributed to Trump as CNN creates a pattern of his behavior. In addition, they attribute blame to his actions which further highlight his fixed qualities as negative ones. By building up Trump's behavior as always occurring, reporters are able to create a behavior that the readers can expect and can deem as part of his nature. Lastly, CNN reporters use their strong foundation of Trump's person to attribute motive. They continuously demonstrate Trump's actions in regard to handling the coronavirus are to benefit him as he only

acts in accordance with what is beneficial for his reelection. However, their attribution of motive also serves to facilitate Trump's fixed qualities. By inferring that Trump cares more about his political career than the wellbeing of the American people they build the aura of a selfish man. Through their threefold approach, CNN is able to construct a leader who is a liar, incompetent, with high self-interest, and a list of negative qualities continuously. One can even argue that they construct a non-leader, by solely presenting parts of Trump's nature that can be interpreted as negative.

4.1.2 Creating the Outsider

When reading articles from CNN, they recurrently display what is needed in a time of crisis as the U.S. faces the coronavirus. This is then followed up with a comparison of Trump's actions, creating a strong image of how he measures up. This is illustrated in the following excerpt.

This moment of extraordinary pain and crisis calls for steadiness and sobriety; empathy for the widespread pain and suffering of others; absolute transparency; a willingness to listen and learn; and rigorous, disciplined attention to detail. None of these qualities are within his [Trump's] nature. (Axelrod, CNN, 27-04-2020)

In this article, the reporter uses multiple strong words when describing the situation and what is needed. It is not just pain but *extraordinary pain*, it does not just require attention to detail but a *rigorous, disciplined attention to detail*. Speaking in hyperboles stresses the graveness of the situation and the needs and evokes emotion in the reader. This strong, emotionally charged section is followed by a plain, to the point contrast to Donald Trump as they state *none of these qualities are in his nature*. Creating such a strong image and matching that with an emotionless portrayal of the President can be interpreted as a lackluster presentation to represent Trump's handling of the coronavirus. Their comparison of Trump with what they state as required creates an understanding of his handling of the virus as not living up to the needs of the country. Again, it can be seen as a conclusion that is able to be drawn without CNN necessarily having to explain why, it is just inferred as common knowledge. Thus, it can be interpreted as an expected thought everyone should know, that Trump does not have what it takes. This trend is continued as CNN

emphasizes the behaviour of followers in times of crisis; what they tend to look for and what kind of leadership is required. This is coupled with the image of a strong leader figure, in which one should live up to certain responsibilities.

Ranking high among the President's powers and responsibilities is the job of communicator in chief. In times of triumph and clear and present dangers, the public looks to the President for cues on how to act, what they should feel and what they should do. (Lockhart, CNN, 01-03-2020)

President Donald Trump faces one of those moments right now with the spread of the coronavirus. To date, he's done almost everything wrong. (Lockhart, CNN, 01-03-2020)

In the quotes above, it is evident that the reporter puts Trump in comparison to certain important requirements of a leader, nevertheless a President. He emphasises upon the followers 'wishes' of clear, concise, and consistent communication from the President that will help them to navigate through a crisis. The reporter is focusing on both that he is not taking responsibility, as well as several behavioral components that the follower looks for. By stating this as something Trump does not have and lastly puts it in a perspective where his previous actions also illustrate that he cannot do right, as *he's done almost everything wrong*. The usage of *everything* and simply put the word wrong in comparison to what is demanded from the follower perspective, create an image of a presidential misfit. In which his behavior is not in favor of the American people and their wishes, according to CNN. This is done several times, such as the following.

In a public health crisis that demands facts, leadership and gravitas, President Donald Trump riffs -- and he tweets. (Romans, CNN, 10-03-2020)

In the article, what followers demand is contrasted with what the President does. The used words show rational legitimacy in which it relies on facts and turns it against Trump. Its emphasis upon explicit behavior that is perceived as leadership and lastly the reporter contrast gravitas which relates to seriousness, dignity, and moral values that mediate responsibility. All of these three factors add up to a demand for someone that takes things seriously. This statement is then put in contrast to two simple words, riff and tweets. A *riff* is usually used in a music context, or it can

represent someone that humorously talks about a specific subject for a long period of time, or something quite different from the norm. In this way, by adding *tweets* the reporter emphasises someone that spends time on social media, a leisured platform. Putting these contrasting sentences in relation implies that Trump focuses on other subjects than the most critical. It can be interpreted as an indirect expression of how unsuitable it is for a leader that does not take a *crisis* seriously. Furthering the notion that Trump is a misfit as a president, CNN adds emotions to his behavior. This highlights their inappropriateness, especially in terms of a leader. An example of this is the portrayal of Donald Trump's instability in which he can not control himself which is a common examination in the articles.

Trump was short-tempered and rude during much of his daily briefing on Monday as he refused to even listen to questions about shortcomings in the federal government effort. (Collinson, CNN, 07-04-2020b)

In the article, there is an emphasis on Trump's emotions and uses words like *short-tempered*, *angry*, and *fury*. By doing so it could be interpreted that Trump is seen as unstable and that the reporter perceives his emotions to be unreasonable in relation to the situation. Furthermore, the quote indicates criticism towards his unwillingness to take responsibility Trump *refused to even listen to questions*. It could thereby be interpreted that the reporter does not think Trump lives up to the expectations by reporting only negative sides. Further emphasising upon certain qualities of Trump behavior 'dependent' on his emotions is seen in the following quote.

President Trump acted like he is at war with the media instead of Covid-19. His instability was on full display. He attempted to argue against The New York Times' damning examination of his delayed response to the virus. He threw up smokescreens and tried to point the finger back at the media. He tossed to an anti-media propaganda video, which was partly ripped off from Sean Hannity's show, and which caused CNN and MSNBC to cut away from the briefing. (Stelter, CNN, 14-04-2020)

The reporter describes several actions in which Trump acted inappropriately, such as pointing *the finger*. As previously stated, it could be interpreted as a portrait of Trump being out of control

and that he has an unstable mental health. Additionally, the reporter refers to the metaphor of war. This could work in order to justify certain behavior since war requires unusual behavior and actions. However, the reporter rather uses this as a tool to diminish the legitimacy of his behavior, since he actually is not at war. In which his behavior is perceived as excessive and inappropriate. As a result, CNN constantly states that behavior is not typically related to presidents. Another feature of the reporting of Donald Trump is not only to imply his incapability of controlling his emotions but also the statements as the following.

Some officials have blamed the cursory briefings for a breakdown in communication that has led to bursts of outrage by the President, who has complained he's been kept out of the loop on key decisions regarding potentially infected Americans returning to the US. (Diamond et al., CNN, 19-03-2020)

In this quotation the reporter further highlights Trump being incapable of controlling his emotions and thereby his actions. They also emphasise upon a President that does not have control over the situation. Trump is portrayed as a complaining person and gives the sense that he is an outsider within his own administration. Both of these factors could be interpreted as an emphasis upon a weak leader unable to handle his temper. Another way that CNN highlight this internal discourse dispute about Trump's irrational behavior is done several times.

/.../ members of the team are biting their tongues on certain information with the opinion that it's better to work the problem from the inside rather than say something Trump doesn't like and end up being iced out altogether. ... some of Fauci's statements about the severity of the outbreak have concerned some White House officials, who felt they could anger Trump. (Liptak, Collins & Acosta, CNN, 06-03-2020)

This further emphasis upon Trump being unable to control his emotions and that people around him need to even tip on their toes in order not to get yelled at. By emphasising his actions, the reporters of CNN's articles create an unstable President that even makes his own people scared of what he is capable of. Aligning the comparisons and contrasts of what the followers demand from a leader and the norms of presidential behavior and simultaneously attributing irrational

emotions to his behavior he is not the leader CNN wants. Trump is known to break away from the standard make-up and behavior of a politician, something he proclaims as something favorable. However, through their reporting, CNN is able to communicate something which can be in a positive matter, into something negative. Their adverse approach to Trump's deviation from the norm is apparent in the following quote.

Trump is again placing himself as the rabble-rouser, the rebel against the system, even though he now is the system. He's reprising his 2016 role as the defiant, anti-establishment, politically incorrect figure. This time, however, he's working against his own interests. (Ghitis, CNN, 29-05-2020)

By describing Trump's deviance from the norm of a president with negative terms they communicate out to the readers that these traits are undesirable. The description as *defiant* describes Trump's actions and has a negative connotation, thus they cast his behavior in a bad light. The use of *incorrect* is also a negatively charged word and signals that his leadership behavior is wrong. These descriptions attribute the President qualities that are undesirable as they go against what is desired in society, according to CNN. Thus, CNN creates an image of Trump and his behavior as something which is reckless and inappropriate, which makes him unfit to be President. This point is furthered in other articles such as the following.

Trump's response to a former president's call for empathy is a reminder of just how little he has in common with his predecessors and how poorly he will fit in the Presidents Club. Trump is the outlier and he is proud of it. "I don't think I'll fit in very well," he told me in our interview with a sly smile. (Brower, CNN, 05-05-2020)

Here the reporter presses the President's undesirability in society by highlighting how badly he will fit into the elite group which is the President of The United States. They further the negative connotation of him being an outlier by explaining the President as being *sly* when talking about not fitting in. Being sly adds to the notion that the President's deviance makes him undesirable.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

In order to create the outsider as he portrays, the reporters of CNN's articles highlight his negative qualities by emphasising various tropes. The three main tropes that are used are the attribution of causal connection, attribution of fixed qualities, and attribution of emotions. When they compare and contrast his actions and qualities with the followers' demands of how a leader should act or be, they aim to link his actions to the societal crisis in which if he would have acted according to their ideal leader, times would have been better. These contrasts create extreme poles in which his unserious, unreliable and weak leadership behavior affects the circumstances. Furthermore, throughout the articles, an emphasis is laid upon his fixed qualities. He simply does not have those characteristics to be president. This is their way of making sense of him and his actions and the reason why he can not be legitimised as a president. Lastly, the attribution of emotions creates the strongest argument of why he is a misfit. By highlighting anger and outburst they create a portrayal of a mentally unstable President that certainly should not lead the country. In this way, the readers are invited to get scared of what he is capable of, since he can not control himself. By CNN further emphasizing upon the dispute within Trump's own administration this image gets stronger and not just an outsider is created, but an outsider not even appreciated by his own people.

4.1.3 Making him a joke

In CNN's articles, they often break formality, using more casual terms when referring to Donald Trump. They seem to make light of the President, in turn undermining him and highlighting his incompetence. This can be seen in the following outtake from a CNN article reporting about Trump's suggestion to cure coronavirus with internal exposure to UV rays or by ingesting disinfectant.

This would all be sorts of funny -- in a who-would-ever-take-this-guy-seriously sort of way -- if Donald Trump wasn't the President of the United States, we weren't in the midst of a pandemic where people have already shown a willingness to do all sorts of crazy things to "cure" themselves and Donald Trump wasn't the President of the United States. (Yes, I said it twice. It's that important.) (Cillizza, CNN, 24-04-2020b)

The CNN reporters' informality when referring to Trump's dialogue as something that would be funny *in a who-would-ever-take-this-guy-seriously sort of way* sets the tone for the President. It stresses that even as an everyday man Trump could not be taken seriously which can be interpreted as in his position as President he is so outlandish it becomes a little bizarre. Being labeled as bizarrely outlandish adds to the notion that Trump is not fit to be President. This opinion is further signaled by another CNN reporter who wrote the following.

Injection of disinfectant into the human body, it's the kind of musing that is so nonsensical children laugh about it. It's also the word of the President of the United States of America, a man so beloved and trusted in some circles. (Tapper, CNN, 26-04-2020)

Here the reporter set the President's comments to be on par with a child's. The comparison signals the President's misfit to his position as he has the capabilities of a child. They further this feeling of incompetence as a sense of betrayal as the reporter explains that he is *so beloved and trusted in some circles*. Being beloved and trusted comes with responsibility and him professing the "nonsense" of a child, he can be seen as breaking that trust. CNN continues to ridicule Trump and erase the reader's ability to take him seriously, an example of this is seen in the following excerpt.

Trump is a guy who never went to class. Never got the syllabus. Never bought a book. Never took a note. He basically comes in the night before the final exams after partying all night, puts on a pot of coffee, takes your notes, memorizes what he's got to memorize. (Bergen, CNN, 02-03-2020)

Here the reporter employs causal vocabulary and likens Trump to a scenario most people can relate to, the school. By creating a narrative around Trump, the reporter is able to create a strong visual for the reader. This strong visual, which is painted, is one which most readers will not associate with a leader that has something positive. Thus they are able to further instill Trump as an incompetent leader by painting a picture of him as someone who does not take responsibility or takes the duties of a President seriously. Additionally, to use an informal or comic tone when

writing about Trump, CNN continues to ridicule the President through constant fact checks on his statements and actions.

The effort follows Trump's repeated early denials that the virus would be a problem for the United States and claims that his administration had it under control months ago... The United States accounts for about 4.25% of the world's population, but currently has about 29% of the confirmed deaths from the disease. (Collinson, CNN, 18-05-2020d)

By scrutinizing the President's statement and following up seemingly loose statements of *early denials* with hard facts of the U.S. accounting for *29% of the confirmed deaths*, CNN plainly lays out the evidence for Trump's missteps. They structure their article with the President's action first and then match it up with their facts control. This presentation creates a hard difference creating a sense of doubt and communicating the belief that the President is not trustworthy. They continue to communicate this belief by relentlessly using this structuring of presenting the President's actions contrasted with the “truth” which can be witnessed in the following excerpt.

After complaining at times that he has not left the White House in months, when in reality it has been more like weeks, a restless President Donald Trump traveled to Arizona on Tuesday. (Acosta, CNN, 06-05-2020)

By structuring their reporting to include punchy comments such as “when in reality it has been more like weeks”, CNN is able to continuously reaffirm the doubt they have instilled in Trump. These fact checks appear so often that CNN dedicates whole articles to it with headlines such as *Fact check: Trump's Saturday coronavirus briefing was littered with false claims, old and new* (Dale, Cohen, Wright, Stark, CNN, 19-04-2020) and *Fact check: from coronavirus to Kim Jong Un, Trump makes at least 14 false claims in Fox News town hall* (Dale & Subramaniam, CNN, 06-03-2020a), as well as *Fact check: A list of 28 ways Trump and his team have been dishonest about the coronavirus* (Dale & Subramaniam, CNN, 11-03-2020b). This recurrent fact-checking, appearing constantly in multiple forms, can be interpreted as ridiculing and undermining the President. It also signals to the reader that Trump is a liar who constantly needs to be checked, thus, is not trustworthy, which can be argued as an important quality for a president to have.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

This section investigated how CNN portrays Trump by making him a joke. They are able to create an almost comic feeling around his absurdity by using informal vocabulary, punchy grammatical structure, and continuous fact checks. This comic aura in turn reinforces the fixed qualities previously attributed to the President. The constant fact checks show Trump is not trustworthy and an innate liar. The comic tone of comparing him to children and other unifying phenomena for a president shows his incompetence. To conclude, CNN continues to drive the notion of Trump as a non-leader and therefore, makes him a joke.

4.1.4 Creating the Scapegoat

A popular subject amongst CNN's reporting of Donald Trump is to blame, both in the form of the President trying to pass it on to others as well as the reporters pinning the blame on him. Nevertheless, it is an ever-present cycle in their articles, such as the following.

President Donald Trump has royally screwed up the federal government's coronavirus response, and he knows it. And he's doing what he always does: Instead of fixing any of the many problems he's caused, he's trying to weasel his way out of blame and doing all he can to dodge oversight and responsibility. (Filipovic, CNN, 08-04-2020b)

Here the reporter of the article expresses it bluntly, the President has *screwed up* and worse yet, *he knows it*. Not only does the reporter put the blame on the government's poor response to the global pandemic on Donald Trump but makes it intentional by implying he knew what he was doing. To further this negative image, the reporter applies negative connotations by using words such as *weasel* and that he does it to avoid blame. You can interpret that he does not take responsibility, which makes it possible to attribute him blame. This harsh tone is applied continuously by CNN, such as in the following excerpt.

Donald Trump ... made it clear that if you think otherwise, it's all the fault of the "Fake News Media" which he claims "is doing everything possible to make us look bad." ... In reality, Trump looking "bad" over his handling of the deadly coronavirus outbreak is not

the fault of the media. It's the fault of one person: Donald J. Trump. (Obeidallah, CNN, 09-03-2020)

The reporter uses his vocabulary to shape the reader's understanding of the President's actions and attempt to explain the negative side by media. When it is stated that *in reality*, the explanation Trump is giving is not true can imply that Trump is living in delusion and only those who are not living in reality, would believe his rhetoric. In contrast, those who follow CNN's explanation that it *is not the fault of the media* but the fault of the President are in line with the reality set-up by the reporter. By shaping the rhetoric that the President has to be delusional, they contribute to the image of a man who does not fit to be a leader. Moreover, Trump is blamed for passing on the blame to others as well, which is presented in the following excerpt.

But the daily press conferences are meant for one purpose at this point -- for President Trump to pass the blame for the mounting death toll and the coming economic crisis on to someone else. (Psaki, CNN, 28-04-2020)

In this quote, the reporter presents Trump's efforts to pass on the blame. By doing this, he emphasizes upon someone that is not taking responsibility for his own action, nor the role of the presidency. In which they imply that a president shall acknowledge the upcoming economical challenges within the crisis. What is most explicit in this quote is that Trump is 'trying' to pass it on, it could be interpreted as if they indirectly say that he has it in the first place in order to give it to someone else. Thereby, this implies that CNN believes Trump is the one to blame in the first place. Furthermore, this is emphasized in other articles, in which CNN legitimises the criticism and the blame he gets.

His lies, undermining of experts and overall incompetence in handling this health crisis are the real reasons Trump has well earned this criticism in the press... Trump's response to this health crisis has been awful. He deserves every word of criticism he has received for his lies and incompetence. And we as a nation deserve far better than Trump. (Obeidallah, CNN, 09-03-2020)

The reporter addresses that Trump *deserves every word of criticism* after lining up the first three arguments and his action of handling the crisis. By acknowledging that he deserves what he gets could be interpreted as they justify what they blame him for. Additionally, there is an emphasis upon the administration's efforts to provide information based on facts in which Trump refuses to obey, which can be seen in the following quotation.

While administration officials scramble to share science-based information, updates on safety measures and more, the President is undercutting their efforts at every turn. (Vinograd, CNN, 09-03-2020)

It is evident that the CNN reporter emphasizes Trump's unwillingness to obey and provide legitimate facts, as something that *science* can prove. In this way, they highlight a President that does not take responsibility for *safety measures*, and they blame him for it. CNN is creating an image of Trump in which this is perceived to be legitimate blame since he deserves it, as previously stated. Furthermore, Trump's careless and nonchalant approach calls for more comments.

Trump is shrugging off warnings by scientists that the easing restrictions taking place across the country could cause tens of thousands of deaths. (Collinson, CNN, 06-05-2020c)

Instead of implying an optimistic President that tries to highlight a positive future and hold up a positive image of the outcome to return back to how it was before, the reporter states in his article the negative aspect that more people could die. The reporter creates a person that ignores highly important warnings, even from scientists. He should therefore be the one to blame. It can also be interpreted in a way where CNN stresses that Trump needs to take advice from other people, in order to not fall into an even horrible trap leading the people in a 'wrong direction'. They continue these types of exhortations to Trump, as presented below.

It's time, Mr. President, to take the coronavirus seriously before even more American lives are sacrificed to the delusion that this will just go away. (Rowe-Finkbeiner, CNN, 06-03-2020)

The reporter simply relates to actions that call for him to be held accountable and take on the responsibility that a president has. Trump has to step up and take it *seriously*. A situation of urgency is created where actions are needed to be taken now. This exhortation calls for an irresponsible President that needs to listen to the advice of the people since he is not capable of connecting the spots himself. To further the notion that Donald Trump is unfit to be the leader of the American people, CNN continuously provides advice on how the President should improve. They point out areas where the President needs to reevaluate and explain why it needs to change. By presenting such an easily followed analysis it quickly undermines the President. This form of reporting is seen in the following excerpt from one of the articles.

First, he must stop speaking off the cuff. His comments have ranged from uninformed to the ridiculous. Saying things like, "A lot of people think that (the virus) goes away in April ... as the heat comes in," undermines his ability to be the communicator in chief ... Third, Trump should suspend or scale back the political activities of the administration. It was a terrible look this week as the President simultaneously sought to calm the country and markets while meeting with social media personalities. (Lockhart, CNN, 01-03-2020)

They begin their critique by stating in detail what needs to change. By pointing out what needs to change they effectively highlight what Trump is doing wrong. They follow up their advice by describing the action in question. By adding descriptions such as *uninformed*, *ridiculous*, or *terrible*, CNN signal values to the reader in regard to Trump's actions. After signaling the values to coincide with that Trump's actions are *terrible*, they exemplify it and show the readers what it is they are opposed to. This step-by-step presentation of the President's failings may aim to create a concrete opinion from CNN where they know what is wrong, why it is wrong, and evidence of it. Their advice is simple, which makes the issues seem simple as well, thus it seems more incomprehensible that Trump is continuing to fault. The simplicity of their advice also comes from the fact that they draw simple conclusions or cause-and-effects of Trump's actions.

Not only does that switch over the responsibility for the outcome of a pandemic to one person but it also gives the President a lot of control as his actions directly correlate to the nation's outcomes. This use of language has a two-fold effect, on one hand, it builds trust towards CNN since the reader is given what seems a full picture and on another hand creates doubt towards Trump.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

In this section, CNN can be seen to use several of Gabriel's (2000) tropes in order to create the Scapegoat. First, they attribute blame to Trump in the pandemic crisis by highlighting that he is not taking responsibility for what happens, he screws up and is delusional about the arising issues. Then, the irresponsible Trump tries to pass on the blame to others, which are thereby further attributed with attribution of blame, as well as attribution of agency. Since he does not accept the responsibility CNN is there to show that there is an evident misfit, he is not presidential material. By blaming him for certain circumstances in the current situation, they also highlight that he tries to pass on the blame to others. In this way, it can be interpreted as if they indirectly attribute agency towards him in which he should be held accountable for those actions. Actions as communicating to the American people without any science back up, which led to more people dying. They even give him exhortations and advice to expose the scapegoat he really is. Further, this sums up to not only attribution of fixed qualities, but of negative ones of being a liar and being incompetent. He is a misfit and does not take the responsibility that is required for a president. By attributing his fixed qualities, they create a strong image that he always will behave in this manner and will not be changed.

4.1.5 Summary of CNN's leadership portrayal of Donald Trump

Through this analysis of how CNN creates an image of Donald Trump, multiple aspects have been identified. By speaking in absolute terms, they attribute fixed qualities such as being unintelligent and self-centered. From their strong narrative about Trump's person, CNN is able to attribute motives of self-interest. The attribution of motive further attributes fixed qualities of a selfish and egotistical leader.

Moreover, by comparing and contrasting the President with how he is acting and how a leader should act CNN attributes causal connections. They are doing this by implying that if Trump had the desired qualities, the country would be in a better state. Furthermore, this leads to a removal of Trump's fixed qualities as they exemplify how Trump does not have the qualities a good leader has according to CNN, such as reliability or empathy. Furthering the notion that Trump is not what a leader should be CNN attributes emotions of being rude and short-tempered thus exemplifying the unfit behavior of a President. Together they sum up to create the leadership of Trump, who is a misfit in the role of a President with negative fixed qualities.

Furthermore, CNN uses specific vocabularies and informalities as well as continuous fact checks to ridicule Trump's leadership. CNN attributes blame, agency, and casual connection to Trump as they hold his actions accountable for the state of the country. He should be blamed because he does not take responsibility as well as he passes on the blame. They further this by giving Trump advice on what to do and what to stop doing, in order to not only help the country but to stop making matters worse. By using his person as a major cause for the poor state in the country, CNN is able to turn Trump into a scapegoat. Lastly, these further attributes fixed qualities to the president as their absurdity of speech drives the notion that Trump is a liar, untrustworthy, and incompetent. Together, all of these elements build to the fact that Donald Trump is not fit to be a leader with negative fixed qualities. Because, once you view his leadership as bad you will always see it as bad (Gabriel, 2000).

4.2 Fox News

In this section of the empirical analysis, the focus will be on the empirical data in Fox News articles. An analysis of the material to create how Fox News portrays the image of President Donald Trump's leadership. The section has been categorized with different labels dependent on empirical findings. From unveiling his nature, to creating legitimacy, to creating the courageous leader, and lastly creating enemies of Trump.

4.2.1 Unveiling his nature

An element that is frequently used in Fox News articles is a way of speaking about President Donald Trump's leadership, how his nature is. Fox News often highlights the genuine and gentle side of the President's behaviour. They present a caring man to the American people when they point out his emotional statements, as well as his thoughtful actions. This is illustrated in the following article.

President Trump marked a “sad milestone” on Thursday, after the United States reported more than 100,000 deaths due to the novel coronavirus, sending “sympathy & love” to those who have lost friends and family members. (Singman, Fox News, 28-05-2020)

The reporter explained that more than 100 000 people have died due to the coronavirus in the United States. At a first glance, this can be interpreted as a negative picture of Trump, that so many people have lost their lives while he was the man in charge. However, by giving emphasis to the fact that the President was *sending love* to the ones who lost someone, you as a reader could associate this tragic moment with love and compassion instead of anger and blame to the leader. In a similar way, Trump is presented as a sympathetic person in the following citations which Fox News chose to publish.

We're all in this together -- all us of us," Trump said at the conclusion of the briefing. "I've never seen anything like it. It's a beautiful thing to watch ... the level of competence, the level of caring, the level of love -- I just think it's brilliant. ... I'm very proud to be your president. (Re, Fox News, 29-03-2020)

The citation includes Trump's words at the end of a coronavirus press briefing. The President seems to be touched by the efforts made by the people to fight the spread of the virus. He said that he is *proud to be their President* and he acknowledges the love and competence among the people. By choosing to publish these, rather irrelevant, citations at the end of the summary of the briefing, as a reader you can feel more of an emotional spirit. When hearing that the President acknowledges our efforts and that he is proud of us, you consequently may think of him as a loving man as well. In addition, the President underlined that *we are all in this together*, which

may create a feeling of more closeness to the President. Wherefore, one can interpret that he is more than a President because he is with us. In the following quote, Trump's caring personality is shown by his actions instead of his words.

The president has pledged his quarterly salary away to various government agencies. Last quarter, he donated the \$100,000 to fight the opioid crisis and before that, to Homeland Security, Transportation and Veterans Affairs. (Phillips, Fox News, 03-03-2020)

In the quote, it is explained that Trump *donated his quarterly salary*, and this information contributes to the picture of a man who cares about the people. However, if someone would not have been convinced of his loving personality by this fact, Fox News continues by *enumerating* previous times when similar donations were made by him. By telling all of the times the President did this noble action the image of a kind and caring man is strengthened. As a reader, you reach the assumption that these fine gestures are a part of Trump's identity since it is done multiple times. This is not a one time happening with the motive of looking good in the media. This is a defining characteristic of the leader, Donald Trump. In another article, Fox News choose to mention the donation once again.

President Trump donated his \$100,000 quarterly salary ... Is this the behavior of a man who doesn't care about the public? (Murdock, Fox News, 21-03-2020a)

The quote, once again, explains that Trump donated his salary for the quarter. The statement in itself can generate a picture of the President as a caring man. But, with that said, it is the following part of the quote that really convinces the reader. When the reporter asks the rhetorical question, if this really *is the behaviour of someone who doesn't care about the public*, it is hard to argue that the President is a heartless leader. One can interpret that it is an action that cannot be questioned since it is his salary he receives from the White House and gives it back to America. Further, whether someone actually claimed that he did not care is irrelevant. By simply stating that someone argued that he does not care and that they are wrong will increase the positive feelings towards Trump. The presentation of the sympathetic leader Donald Trump is further

strengthened when Fox News shows that all his actions in regard to the coronavirus are for the best sake of the people.

Trump has said that the health of Americans is always at the center of his policy decisions. (DeMarche, Fox News, 14-04-2020)

Trump made a point Friday of saying that he would continue to listen to health experts like Drs. Anthony Fauci and Deborah Birx while considering when to relax the federal guidance. ... “I listen to them about everything,” the president said, adding: “We’re not doing anything until we know that this country is going be healthy. We don’t want to go back and start doing it over again.” (Ruiz & Chamberlain, Fox News, 10-04-2020)

He said that he has been holding discussions with senior aides on how to roll back federal social distancing recommendations that are set to expire at the end of the month. He stressed that he wants Americans to be “very, very safe.” (DeMarche, Fox News, 14-04-2020)

In the three quotations, one may imply that Trump will only do what is best for the people. First, the reporters highlight Trump's previous announcements where his decisions always will be made in order to keep the *health of the American people as a top priority*. He will also *listen to experts'* thoughts and consider their information to make sure that the country will be healthy before making decisions. One can interpret that he takes the responsibility as a President and takes the crisis seriously. Furthermore, the reporter emphasises that Americans need to be *very, very safe* according to Trump, which shows an image of the President as their health is the most important aspect for him in these times of crisis. As he takes actions to discuss with other legitimate people for the Americans. In the next quote, his caring personality is pointed out once again.

The president maintained distance from other speakers at the briefing, and referenced social-distancing guidelines as soon as he took to the podium. (Re, Fox News, 29-03-2020)

This citation can be viewed as rather irrelevant information at the first view. Although, at a deeper look the President maintained distance, and it can be interpreted as a valid but simple action when he had distance at a briefing. It also gives a thought of a role model in how to behave in these times of crisis. The fact that Fox News wants to highlight that the President was considerate and cautious is a small but important detail in how they constantly unveil his true nature as a caring man.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

In the first section, Fox News attributes various tropes towards Trump. At the beginning of this section, they attribute emotions to make him be interpreted as a leader who is caring, who sends love to the people and has a big heart. The emphasis on how he handles the current coronavirus crisis makes him feel present and the attribution of motive becomes clear. Trump's leadership shows that he always thinks of the American people before making his decisions for the country, as well as he protects the people. The motive then becomes to save the people from the crisis as he, himself, is shown as a role model who keeps his distance. They portray the caring leadership as he is doing it repeatedly, that it is in his nature which can be seen as an attribution of fixed qualities. This is further added by Fox News by mentioning the caring man repeatedly, as a result, it strengthens the image of the caring leadership Donald Trump has.

4.2.2 Creating legitimacy

Fox News usually do not present their own opinion in their articles in a direct and distinct way. However, something they continuously are doing is presenting the opinions of other famous or important people who already have their legitimacy by their positions. In that way, they choose what type of messages they want to send out and what statements or people they are aligned with. When Fox News writes about President Donald Trump, they refer to popular actors or high-ranked people's positive opinions about the President, which consequently creates legitimacy for Trump's leadership. If other people admire him, you should as well.

Dennis Quaid praised President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic and broke with many in Hollywood by calling on the country to rally behind the government during this historically difficult time. (McCarthy, Fox News, 08-04-2020)

In this citation, Fox News wrote that *Dennis Quaid*, a famous and popular American actor, *praised* Trump. Consequently, if you like this actor, you may, most likely, be affected and may even change your opinion about Trump as a leader. Since Trump does a great job in the pandemic which is confirmed by Dennis Quaid in this case. Another similar example of using the opinion of someone else is presented in the following quote.

The head of the World Health Organization on Wednesday praised President Trump for his leadership in handling the novel coronavirus outbreak and said the President is "taking responsibility" for leading the United States' response to the global pandemic....WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the United Nations health agency has repeatedly called for the heads of state to lead a "whole of government" response to COVID-19 and said Trump was leading by example...."That's exactly what he's doing, which we appreciate because fighting this pandemic needs political commitment," Tedros said during an afternoon press briefing in Geneva. (Chakraborty, Fox News, 25-03-2020)

In this quotation, it is the *head of the World Health Organization* who is *praising* Trump for his leadership for the United States in times of crisis. The *WHO director* says that the President is a role model for other countries in his response to the coronavirus. By using such an important person, who has a lot of legitimacy associated with him, and saying that he approves Trump, automatically gives legitimacy to Trump himself. It gives an interpretation of that no one could argue with Trump if the head of the World Health Organization has his back. Fox News do it similarly, but with another person, in the following quote.

Praising President Trump's handling of the outbreak, Craft said a diplomatic response would begin with "incredible leadership" and credited the United States for setting "an example for the world in how to mitigate not only this pandemic, but future ones."...She continued, "It all started with President Trump and the team that he has assembled, led by our Vice President Mike Pence." (Halon, Fox News, 29-03-2020)

Once again, an important person is *praising* Trump. This time, it is the United States UN ambassador who contributes with bringing legitimacy to the actions taken by the President. As presented, this is a continuous habit by Fox News, to show that people are *praising* Trump. Not only are they confirming his actions, but also that he takes responsibility in this pandemic. Further, this implies that Trump is the *role model* for future leadership, an image that Trump is doing the right actions. In the following quote, Fox News uses more of a religious manner.

The Archbishop of New York praised President Trump's leadership efforts to help the religious community amid the coronavirus pandemic. (Parke, Fox News, 27-04-2020)

Besides celebrities and politicians, someone else who is *praising* Trump is the *Archbishop of New York*. By presenting a religious leader's opinions about Trump, in addition to the others, Fox News coverage almost all different sections of people with *influence* that gives a clear portrayal of Donald Trump Fox News. However, to really convince the readers that Trump is someone with legitimacy who you should like, Fox News illustrates his rising popularity in various political sections with numbers as well.

President Trump's approval numbers are as high as they've ever been throughout his presidency as he deals with the coronavirus outbreak, according to the latest Gallup poll. ... The poll shows 60 percent of Americans approve of the president's handling of his actions to combat the virus. That includes 94 percent of Republicans and 60 percent of Independents, while just 27 percent of Democrats approve of the president's handling of the outbreak. ... Meanwhile, his overall job approval is at 49 percent, which is tied for the highest he has ever been when polled by Gallup. Trump jumped 5 points in the tracking poll from earlier this month. (Wulfsohn, Fox News, 24-03-2020a)

Two new national polls show the same thing: a majority of Americans approve of the job President Trump's doing steering the federal government's response to the coronavirus pandemic. (Steinhauser, Fox News, 27-03-2020)

These quotations are examples of the statistics demonstrated by Fox News. The statistics show that the support for Trump is high and that it is raising. Consequently, he must be doing something considered good, and as a reader, you start to consider if all these famous and important people approve of him, and the people in my country like him, which numbers show, then maybe I should do it as well.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

In the second part of Fox News's portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership, they want to create legitimacy for him in various ways. One way to make this happen is to attribute credit to Donald Trump by using different famous and important people's positive opinions about Trump. These people already have legitimacy by other people. In this way, Trump also receives credit and legitimacy. Furthermore, another way to make it happen is by illustrating raising numbers and polls in Trump's favor, he receives added credit and as a reader, it gets hard to question his great job portrayed by Fox News.

4.2.3 Creating the Courageous Leader

In addition to presenting Trump's soft qualities and giving him legitimacy, Fox News paints the picture of a brave and courageous leader. He stands out from the ordinary and actually takes action and responsibility as a leader of the United States in comparison to other politicians. In the following quote, an example of his braveness and how he sacrifices himself for the people is illustrated.

President Trump revealed to reporters on Monday he's taking the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine in an effort to prevent getting coronavirus, saying he's been taking a pill every day for about a week and a half. ... Hydroxychloroquine is a widely used anti-malarial drug that the president has touted as a possible treatment for COVID-19. (O'Reilly, Fox News, 18-05-2020)

The quote states that Trump is trying out a possible way to prevent getting the coronavirus. This is a rather unusual action for a president, to act as a guinea pig and sacrifice himself to be the

first to try the drug in order to fight the virus. As a reader, you get the impression that this is a man who is willing to do whatever it takes to beat the virus and protect the people. He is not like the common image of a politician where there is a lot of talk and no action. His action is even confirmed by Fox News when adding that *the drug is widely used*. Further examples of how he is presented as the savior for the country can be seen in the next citation.

The American people know genuine leadership when we see it, and the leadership President Trump is demonstrating right now instills confidence that he has what it takes to guide us through this storm and revive our economy when it ends – and it will end. (Puzder, Fox News, 05-04-2020)

The reporter uses big words when stating that the President *has what it takes to guide us through this storm*. The image of the courageous leader who stands safe and strong through the crisis is highlighted. In addition, by adding that the American people know *what genuine leadership looks like* it is hard to argue the opposite since it is a group feeling they refer to. Because if you claim that the President does not present genuine leadership you clearly do not know what genuine leadership is, and you do not belong to the American people. Fox News continues on emphasizing his courageous leadership by writing about every action he takes.

President Trump released a blistering letter late Monday to the head of the World Health Organization, stating that his administration conducted an investigation that confirmed the health body's multiple failures in the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak, and warned that his current funding freeze will become permanent if the organization does not make "substantive" improvements within 30 days. (Robinson, Fox News, 19-05-2020)

In the citation, the reporter describes how Trump sent a *blistering* letter to the head of the World Health Organization. Clearly, this was not like any other letter because this was a *blistering* letter which increases the importance of it. In the letter, the President states that his administration has come to the conclusion that the WHO have failed in their work regarding the coronavirus. He demands that they will improve their work within a timeframe of 30 days, otherwise he will

permanently stop their funding. This shows that the President is a man who dares to stand up against the powerful WHO and makes the necessary demands in order to fight this virus that is killing the people. More examples showing that the President, himself, takes actions are visible in the following quotation.

“I have directed the FDA to eliminate rules and bureaucracy so work can proceed rapidly, quickly and fast,” Trump said. “We have to remove every barrier.” ... Trump also said Thursday the government should take an equity stake in companies that need bailouts because of the devastating effects of the coronavirus on the U.S. economy, saying he has executive authority to curb the impact on businesses. (Shaw, Fox News, 19-03-2020)

In this article, the reporter presents statements from the President where he shares his actions and the power he possesses. He, himself, is the one who directed the FDA and he has the *executive authority* to take actions in favor of the economy in the United States. This information helps to strengthen the picture of the strong leader who takes action and responsibility for the country and the people. Further, Trump said that they need to *remove every barrier* which adds to the story of the courageous leader who sacrifices himself, takes action, and will do whatever it takes to save the country from the ongoing crisis. However, not everyone agrees with this image of Trump.

According to President Trump’s enemies, his response to the coronavirus lies somewhere between reckless indifference and negligent homicide. Nothing could be further from the truth. ... Team Trump has battled the virus that causes the respiratory disease COVID-19 with vigor and ingenuity since before this unprecedented global crisis suddenly exploded without warning. (Murdock, Fox News, 21-03-2020a)

The citation explains that the President has *enemies* who believe that his response to the coronavirus is a catastrophe. Fox News is fast to contradict this allegation, saying that he has handled and battled it with *vigor and ingenuity*. This element of talking about his enemies is a reoccurring happening which will be analysed closer in the following section.

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

Firstly, Trump is attributed motive of wanting to fight for the people. He wants to save the country and he will do whatever it takes, he will even be the first one to try possible medications. Secondly, Trump is attributed credit for the actions he is taking. He is the one who will guide the American people through this storm and save the country. Further, the fact that it is the president himself who is able to take all of these actions shows that he is attributed agency as well. He is able to put a demand on the powerful WHO, he can direct the FDA to eliminate rules and he has executive authority to curb the economy. Referring to him as trying, the one that will save America from the current crisis, as well as the one who takes responsibility generates an attribution of fixed quality. A portrayal of a man who is frequently courageous and fights.

4.2.4 Creating enemies

In this section, Fox News constructs a story where they create enemies to Trump, which leads to him being a villain as well as a victim of the blame that the enemies throw at him. It is a story where the protagonist, Trump, fights against the enemies that are attacking him and wants to destroy the picture of him although he is trying. This results in the creation of Trump as a victim. A victim who does not deserve the attacks he is receiving and as a consequence, you feel sympathy for him which the following quotes illustrate.

CNN's most prominent anchors and reporters have ratcheted up their attacks against President Trump during the coronavirus outbreak as the liberal network continues to blur the lines between straight news and opinion journalism.... Houck suggested that the combative media should keep its focus on the safety of the public and on praising those on the front lines instead of making its feud with the president so dominant in its coverage. (Wulfsohn, Fox News, 09-04-2020b)

it's simply the liberal network's latest attempt to weaponize coronavirus against President Trump ... Jim Acosta hates Trump. But this is even stupid for one of the most ridiculous figures in the history of journalism. What's amazing is Acosta isn't even good at trolling Trump ... CNN is trying to hurt Trump and divide our country in a time of national crisis. ... That CNN and it's White House correspondent want to make a big deal out of a

normal concern is just more indication of their wide-ranging agenda to pester the Trump administration. (Flood, Fox News, 13-03-2020a)

In these quotes, a story of President Donald Trump against his enemies CNN is constructed. CNN is showing a motive of wanting to *attack* and fight the President instead of caring for the safety of the American people. They try to *hurt* Trump and divide the United States while a current crisis is occurring, they have their focus on the wrong matters. The result is that the opponents of Trump are losing their legitimacy and consequently the positive image of Trump increased by eliminating the ones who are giving him criticism. In a similar way, the enemies of Trump are presented in the following quotes. But this time, it is the Democrats who stand on the other side of the frontline.

But Crenshaw responded to Clinton, noting President Trump “restricted travel in January & saved lives” while Clinton and the Democrats “celebrated his impeachment.” (Calicchio, Fox News, 08-04-2020)

This worldwide pandemic should be free of partisan sniping. Alas, too many Democrats are more focused on attacking the president than the pathogen. (Murdock, Fox News, 21-03-2020)

Could Trump have done more, sooner? Yes. By definition, every evening that he did not moonlight at the Vaccine Research Center, unpack test tubes and rinse Pyrex flasks was an evening he could have done more. ... But while Trump did plenty to fight this plague early, Democrats largely toyed with impeachment and then dozed off once their magic wand failed to make him disappear. (Murdock, Fox News, 21-04-2020b)

In these quotes, the Democrats are presented as focusing on attacking Trump instead of saving the nation. Trump becomes the victim of these attackers and nothing he does seems to be enough. However, the reporter says that of course Trump could have done more, but it is a ridiculous example since they imply that he has done more than what others have. Once again, a story of two enemies is told where Trump's opponents are the bad guys and shouldn't be listened

to. As a result, the positive image of Trump has increased, or at least the negative picture is decreased. Further, when the reporters are portraying the enemies attacking Trump, Fox News uses a lot of loaded words which is exemplified in the following quotes about the media.

"I'm well aware that Trump has made plenty of mistakes handling this crisis ... I'd just like to know how the media baiting him and alternating between throwing themselves pity parties and patting each other on the back improves that situation. These Gallup numbers [showing declining media popularity] are not a fluke." (Re, Fox News, 29-03-2020)

After repeatedly mocking President Trump for suggesting on March 19 that hydroxychloroquine could be an effective treatment for coronavirus, media organizations have begun acknowledging that the drug -- now approved for emergency use to treat coronavirus by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) -- may be useful after all. (Re, Fox News, 02-04-2020)

"It turns out that journalists lied. They don't really want press briefings. They want a daily opportunity to push their agenda and beat up President Donald Trump ... When it turned out Trump was benefiting from the daily briefings and the media looked bad as a result, then they wanted to cancel them." (Flood, Fox News, 27-03-2020b)

In these three articles, we found different loaded words such as *baiting*, *mocking*, and *beat up* used by Fox News when describing what the enemies of Trump do to him. These types of expressions make a basis in the creation of how the enemies are created against Trump. The usage of these strong and harsh words emphasizes the fight between Trump and his enemies. In addition, the words contribute to the portrayal of the image of Trump as an attacked victim with a mob of enemies trying to destroy him, while he is trying the best he can. Fox News presents Trump as a human when they are referring to the fact that they know that he is not perfect and can make mistakes, as everyone can, but that he is a victim of the enemies who want to put down the President. The common picture of the enemy's motive towards Trump can be summarized in this final quote.

At the end of the day, almost every single decision the mainstream media makes is guided by whether it helps or hurts Trump. (Flood, Fox News, 27-03-2020b)

Summation of empirical findings through tropes

In this final section, the trope of motive can once again be found and frequently used by the reporters. Fox News creates a story about Trump and his enemies, who only want to destroy Trump instead of focusing on saving the country in the current crisis. In this case, the enemies are attributed motive of wanting to wreck President Donald Trump. The result is that the enemies of Trump are viewed as the bad guys, they are the villains in the story. Consequently, Trump is presented as the protagonist who wants to do good while the antagonists only have the agenda of diminishing him. Fox News shows more factors in the portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership than just him.

4.2.5 Summary of Fox News's leadership portrayal of Donald Trump

During the analysis of Fox News's portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership, a number of patterns have been identified. Fox News reveals the true nature of the man Donald Trump. In contrast to what some people may say, he is a man with a good heart. By attributing emotions to his words and actions, the picture of a loving and caring man is presented, which makes him more of a human and someone that is easier to relate to. Fox News is repeatedly explaining how the President always thinks about what is best for the people when making decisions. This contributes to disclosing his true motive behind his actions and reveals his true nature.

If all of the above is not enough to convince the reader how great of a leader Trump is, Fox News takes help from famous people as well. When constantly presenting the positive opinions of politicians and celebrities towards Trump, his legitimacy continues to rise. A man with that many supporters as well as rising numbers in popularity surveys simply must do something right. Thereby, when presenting this information Fox News attributes credit to Trump for his great success of leadership.

However, Trump is not just a kind man with many supporters, he is a brave and courageous leader as well according to Fox News. He will do whatever it takes to save the people from the coronavirus, he will even be the first one to try a possible medication. This clearly demonstrates that this is a man with the motive of saving the people of the U.S. Further, he is attributed agency because he is the one who possesses the power to actually do something to stop this crisis. But, Donald Trump does not only possess the power, in contrast to the common picture of politicians who never really do anything, he actually takes action. He is attributed credit for taking the actions necessary to fight the virus and save the country since it is an ongoing pandemic that needs to stop.

In addition, the trust and sympathy for Trump are further increased when Fox News constantly is telling the story of Trump and his enemies. The enemies of Trump are attributed with the motive of only wanting to destroy the President's success. Sometimes the enemies are the Democrats, sometimes it is the CNN and sometimes it is the media in general. Regardless of which, it is the fact that everyone just wants to destroy for Trump that is the key insight.

These different methods of portraying the President all sum up to the creation of a seemingly complete image of Donald Trump's leadership. He is a kind-hearted person who is liked by various people, and he is fighting this virus with everything he has. Consequently, he definitely does not deserve all of the attacks of his enemies.

5. Discussion

The fifth chapter contains a discussion regarding the findings in the empirical analysis. In the first section, a discussion of the different portrayals by CNN and Fox News are conducted to present a coherent picture of the findings. These portrayals will be discussed in the terms of Grint's conceptualization, showing how the two news media's focus on contradictory areas and thereby created their different portrayals of Donald Trump's leadership. In the second section, a discussion about the effects of the emphasis on different perceptions of leadership, a major focus on stories as well as our own finding negative Social contagion.

5.1 Diverging portrayals through media's attributions

Through the empirical analysis, the different approaches to the portrayal of Donald Trump's leadership are made apparent. Starting off with CNN, who employed a plethora of tactics to create their image of him. A strong focus point for them was on the attribution of fixed qualities, specifically negative ones. They were able to attribute these qualities without an explanation, they could either state them in a way that implied the qualities as a fact or create a pattern of them. However, they were also able to attribute these negative qualities to Trump through the attribution of selfish motives as well as through attribution of blame and agency as these attributions also acted to highlight his incompetence. From their establishment of Trump's negative qualities, they are able to depict him as an outsider and misfit in his role of President. Furthering the notion of Trump as a misfit, CNN uses absurdities to ridicule him and make a joke out of him. Common to all of the tactics used is CNN's use of hard vocabulary and grammatical structure. This drives a harsh narrative and limits the room for misaligning interpretations. This harsh narrative is furthered by their tendency to talk about Trump in a kind of vacuum as they rarely give information about the broader set of their attributions. This can be argued as a single-sided representation of Trump, enabling them to focus and create a potent image of Trump as an unfit leader - the villain.

Through CNN's explicit focus on the attribution of fixed qualities, we found that CNN placed an overwhelming emphasis upon the leader as a *person*, in regard to Trump and Grint's

conceptualization of leadership. They continuously highlight negative aspects of Trump's characteristics and regularly tie them in with poor leadership. Further, CNN drives their narrative around Trump's leadership through his *results*. They make a point to identify what they regard as Trump's lack of achievements in his handling of the coronavirus. In their portrayal, he does not achieve what they expect a leader to accomplish and thereby address him as unsuitable. In order to further argue for their opinion, CNN draws upon casual links that the poor result may be due to a focus on the wrong things. Nevertheless, they do not emphasize that leadership emerges from 'how' you accomplish things but rather 'what' you deliver. Thus, they seemingly place no weight at all into Trump's *process* as they most commonly do not give loads of contextual information in their reporting. Further, they do point out the weight in his *position* as the president of the United States, however, this aspect is not as pressed upon in their perception of leadership. Thus, it can be regarded as that CNN perceives Trump's leadership as good or bad leadership based on his person and results. Which in this case leads to their assessment and portrayal of Trump as a poor leader.

Similarly to CNN, Fox News was able to attribute fixed qualities through other attributions. By attributing emotion to Trump's actions, they attributed positive qualities to the President such as being caring and thoughtful. The attribution of these positive qualities was furthered as Fox News enlightened that his handling of the coronavirus stems from his concern for the American people. Thus, Fox News attributes motives that drive positive qualities as they also depict him as a fighter and a courageous leader, who will do whatever he can for his people. To further the narrative of Trump as a courageous leader and a fighter, Fox News goes beyond just portraying Trump. They also portray CNN and democrats as the enemies of Trump, who would do anything to tear him down. This can be seen as a stark comparison to CNN who portrays a single-sided story, a representation of Trump and his actions in a vacuum. Instead, Fox News created a full story with both a protagonist in the form of Trump and antagonists in the form of CNN, the Democrats, and the media. Although, there are more social actors, such as famous people, who praise Trump for what he is accomplishing and creates legitimacy for Trump. This more complex narrative creates a more human portrayal of Trump, as he at least is trying, and as someone who is up against it yet has a persevering spirit.

Whilst Fox News's portrayal of Trump's leadership emphasizes several attributions in order to conduct their image, it is evident that they also place a lot of weight on leadership as a *person*, when taking Grint's conceptualization into account. They make a point of Trump's caring nature and how brave he is in his quest to do the best for the people. Additionally, Fox News underlines Trump's *process* as they highlight that he is doing his best to achieve his objectives. They address the president's actions and how he has gone about handling the coronavirus, an incredibly difficult situation. In this regard, it can also be seen that they do not place too much interest in Trump's results as they emphasize his leadership from how he has been going about things, not necessarily what he has or hasn't achieved. Fox News also did not make a big point of Trump's position. Thus, it can be noted that Fox News distinguishes leadership as positive or negative through the basis of person and process.

Although, the portrayals of CNN and Fox News differ, their emphasis on drivers of leadership share similarities. Both CNN and Fox News place a great deal of weight on Trump's leadership on his qualities. Having a similar focus on what aspects drive and what defines good and bad leadership, yet still having different portrayals of the same leader seems problematic. This seems to go against Grint's conceptualization theory that explains that different perceptions of leadership originate from the different opinions of what is important to consider. Yet in this case, we have the same situation with two different actors portraying two different depictions of Trump's leadership whilst upholding importance to the same aspect, the person. However, beyond the person each news agency seems to place the weight in a further aspect. While Fox News also uses the process to endorse leadership, CNN focuses on the results.

Focusing on the results of a leader in order to determine the legitimacy of their leadership places a great deal of agency onto the leader. By doing this, CNN makes the assumption that Trump has the ability to impact events in society, romanticizing Trump's individual capabilities. By holding Trump as the main driving force of the events that occur in relation to the coronavirus crisis, which can be interpreted as CNN establishing Trump as a scapegoat. Thus, CNN adheres to the perceptions and expectations that can be resembled with the Romance of Leadership (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985). In contrast, Fox News disregards the results and instead emphasises Trump's actions. They perceive his leadership to be positive as the way he goes about things is

admirable as he as well as the rest of the country are facing a tough situation. However, despite the dire situation Trump is facing, Fox News noted his adversary and persistence. Thus, they seem to deviate from the tendency of society to romanticize leadership. Instead, they shed an aura of understanding to the unprecedented situation of a global pandemic and the difficulty this unknown situation brings for a leader to control. They motivate this by continuously focusing on the process and Trump's continuous attempts to do the best for the people. This aversion to the notion of the romance of leadership instead brings about a more human and sympathetic view of a leader.

The difference in focus as to what aspects CNN and Fox News highlight in regard to Donald Trump's leadership can be argued to shed some light on how they achieve their different portrayals. Even though there is a similar focus on the person, the person that is portrayed is different. This would argue that the person is not the base factor for the differing portrayals, but rather a byproduct from other aspects. By focusing on Trump's results, CNN is able to infer agency to the leader and hold him responsible for the difficult situation the country is facing. As they deem leadership from the results, it would seem natural to draw the conclusion that Trump is unfit as a person, since he is not achieving the presidential objectives they expect. Together, these two focuses work in symbiosis to portray Trump and his leadership as unworthy. However, Fox News takes the opposite course of action. They uphold Trump's leadership as good or bad based on his process. They highlight Trump's persistence and how he continues to fight for the people no matter what comes his way. From their focus on his noteworthy process, it seems natural that their perception of his person also entails admirable qualities. Thus, it can seem that the focus on process versus results is part of how CNN and Fox News achieve their different portrayals of Donald Trump. That later affects the different standpoints they apply when attribution of fixed qualities as well as leadership as a *person* is emphasized.

5.2 The effects of emphasising upon different perceptions of leadership

One thing striking in our analysis of the separate portrayals of Donald Trump was that they were intertwined. CNN's portrayal of Trump was tenacious and potent, standing as a strong single strobe. They mercilessly stated the negative qualities of Trump and his fiasco of coronavirus response. They even made a joke out of him and laid all blame at his feet. Seemingly no stone was left unturned to ensure he was made out to be devoid of any leadership skills or qualities. CNN had a clear message and worked relentlessly to get it across. Together these aspects led to CNN's narrative of a villain. Sensibly, one could assume such adamant rhetoric would leave little room for deviating opinions. However, Fox News's portrayal of Trump is a kin one of a hero and a fighter, a courageous leader battling for his people. This portrayal was furthered as Fox News turned this characterization of Trump as a hero into a full narrative by bringing in CNN as an antagonist to Trump. This can be done as CNN's harsh rhetoric around Trump can make them interpreted as a bully when put into a different narrative. As Collins and Rainwater (2005) found in their research, the incorporation of CNN as a bully to Trump the fighter turns Fox News portrayal into a tragic story, evoking sympathy. Thus, it can be argued that CNN's harsh portrayal of Donald Trump enabled Fox News sympathetic, more humane portrayal.

This ability of one portrayal to give life to another further can explain how the two news agencies achieve such differing portrayals. By incorporating another portrayal, you can change the narrative surrounding it thus creating a new perception of the other portrayal whilst furthering your own. They can not only create a joint image but can create several images of the same person.

Furthermore, dissecting CNN and Fox News play off one another, it seems that they use each other to strengthen the message they desire to communicate. Hence, through their interplay, their contrasting stories and portrayals become respectively more dominant. This can be seen as the articles written by a magnitude of different journalists all adhere to the news agencies' respective perceptions of Trump. Further, each news agency has an established audience who seems to uphold the same view as their demographics are more democratic versus more republican. In regard to Social contagion, which states that through interaction people attain the same opinion of leaders within communities (Meindl, 1990;1993 cited in Meindl, 1995), CNN and Fox News

seem to somewhat adhere to this theory. However, looking beyond the scope of what spread within CNN and Fox News illuminate a more complex phenomenon. The interaction between the two news agencies strengthens the message they desire to communicate. It can be seen when Fox News uses interactions with CNN and their negative narrative of Trump to create their own positive one. Hence, through their interplay, their contrasting stories and portrayals become respectively more dominant in the opposing direction. This can be understood as going against the Social contagion theory as instead of forming one opinion through interactions, CNN and Fox News's interaction creates two opposing poles, drawing further away from one another. Thus, while within the news agencies the Social contagion theory is upheld, however interactions between the news agencies have the seemingly opposite effect.

As the Social Contagion model focuses on the effects of interactions within communities, it lacks the ability to account for the interactions between communities. To easier understand these findings, we suggest a development of the theory to using two terms; *positive* and *negative Social contagion*. In our study, negative Social contagion refers to the phenomena of when the interaction between the media sites caused the other to pull further away, while interaction within the media site caused positive Social contagion. Thus, by developing the theory to include positive and negative Social contagion we add the ability to account for both the synergy of opinions from interactions as well as the riff of opinions from interactions.

6. Conclusions

In this thesis, we have aimed to investigate how two equally strong perceptions of the same leader are created based on the media's role in society. We wanted to develop an understanding of how there can be such different images of the same leadership and how the two dominant perceptions exist simultaneously. In the study, we have shown that how the media create different portrayals of leadership depends on several factors. They achieve them through highlighting different aspects of leadership as important in the light of Grint's conceptualization as well using different forms of narratives to enhance their different portrayals. Thus, the different portrayals did not exist independently but rather could give fuel to one another. Hence, these two distinctive, dominant portrayals of leadership can partly be explained due to the effect of what we identify as negative Social contagion. The spread of opinions not only strengthen pre-existing opinions within a certain group but can strengthen the opponent's opinion and thereby lead to an even more polarized leadership perception. What goes around comes around.

In order to study the desired phenomena and give insight to it, this study became a very focused one. We study the leadership of Donald J. Trump, a leader known to either be loved or hated and an embodiment of the increase in polarization the U.S. has experienced in the past 10 years. To study the different portrayals of him we chose two news agencies who are widely regarded but also have known value-orientations. Further specifying this study, we chose to study their portrayal of the president during a pandemic. All these factors were aimed at exposing how such strong perceptions of a leader can be. However, it does mean our research is based on an extreme case, and how the news agencies portrayed the leader in this circumstance cannot be held as representative for all or less extreme instances. Instead, the insight achieved from this study aims to aid the research where such actions might be harder identified and give insight to a more nuanced world.

Suggestions for future research

While we conducted this study, we identified multiple interesting areas that unfortunately were off-topic in this thesis. Firstly, to study if and how media agencies with the same political values could generate different portrayals of the same person, in terms of leadership. Further, it would

be interesting to study how the media in other countries portray leadership since the perception about Trump and reporting of information is different in the world. Lastly, it would be of interest to examine the phenomena of negative Social contagion in a less extreme situation, such as in an organizational setting or through the followers instead of media.

7. References

AllSides. (2021). Media Bias Rating, Available online:

<https://www.allsides.com/media-bias/media-bias-ratings> [Accessed January 8, 2021]

Bell, E., Bryman, A. & Harley, B. (2019). *Business Research Methods*, Fifth edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Billsberry, J. (2009). The Social Construction of Leadership Education, *The Journal of Leadership Education*, 8:2, pp. 1-9.

Blanchard, K., H., Hersey, P. (1988). *Management of organizational behaviour: utilizing human resources*, (5th Ed.), pp. 169-201. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bligh, M. C. & Kohles, J. C. (2012). From radical to mainstream? How follower centric approaches inform leadership, *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, pp. 205-209.

Bligh, M. C., Kohles, J. C., & Meindl, J. R. (2004). Charisma under crisis: Presidential leadership, rhetoric, and media responses before and after the September 11th terrorist attacks, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(2), pp. 211–239.

Buchanan, D., Dawson, P. (2007). Discourse and Audience: Organizational Change as Multi-Story Process, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 44 Issue 5, pp. 669-686.

Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*, [e-book] London: Routledge, Available through: LUSEM University Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed January 6th, 2020]

Chen, C. C. & Meindl, J. R. (1991). The Construction of Leadership Images in the Popular Press: The Case of Donald Burr and People Express, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, p. 521.

Cheremie, R., A. (2005). Understanding Leadership Theory: The Documentary of Sir Ernest Shackleton, *Journal of Learning in Higher Education*, Vol. 11. No.2. pp. 69-74.

CNN. (n.d.). About CNN Digital, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/about> [Accessed November 10, 2020]

Collinson, D. (2006). Rethinking followership: A post-structuralist analysis of follower identities, *The Leadership Quarterly*, pp. 179–189.

Collins, D. & Rainwater, K. (2005). Managing change at Sears: a sideways look at a tale of corporate transformation, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 18 Issue 1, pp. 16-30.

DellaVigna, S. & Kaplan, E. (2007). The Fox News effect: media bias and voting, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 122: pp. 1187-1234.

Eady, G., Vaughn, S. J. & Rottinghaus, B. (2018). Comparing Trump to the greatest-and the most polarizing-presidents in US history, Brookings, Available online: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/03/20/comparing-trump-to-the-greatest-and-the-most-polarizing-presidents-in-u-s-history/> [Accessed November 03, 2020]

Feedspot. (2021). Top 100 USA News Websites on the Web, Available online: https://blog.feedspot.com/usa_news_websites/ [Accessed January 03, 2021]

Fox News. (n.d.). Corporate Information, About Fox News, Media Relations, Available online: <http://press.foxnews.com/> [Accessed December 13, 2020]

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in organizations: Facts, fictions, and fantasies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gamson, A. W., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W. & Sasson, T. (1992). Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 18, pp. 373-393.

Ghasemi Tari, Z. & Emamzadeh, Z. (2018). An Analysis of the Media Messages during the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election: A Thematic Comparison between CNN News and Donald Trump's Tweets, *Journal of Politics and Law*; Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 78-87.

Grint, K. (2005). Problems, problems, problems: The social construction of 'leadership', *Human Relations*, Nov2005, Vol. 58 Issue 11, pp. 1467-1494. London: SAGE Publications.

Guba, E. G., and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research', in N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Iszatt-White, M. & Saunders, C. (2017). *Leadership*. Second edition, Oxford University Press.

Jackson, B. & Parry, K. (2011). A very short fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership, Second edition, Sage.

Kirkpatrick, A. S. & Locke, A. E. (1991). Leadership: Do Traits Matter? *Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 5, No 2, pp. 48-60.

Ladkin, D. (2017). How did that happen? Making sense of the 2016 US presidential election result through the lens of the 'leadership moment', *Leadership*, 13(4), pp. 393-412.

Lau, V. W., Bligh, M. C. & Kohles, J. C. (2020). Leadership as a Reflection of Who We Are: Social Identity, Media Portrayal, and Evaluations of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election, *Sex Roles*, 82(7/8), pp. 422-437.

Levy, D. A. & Nail, P. R. (1993). 'Contagion: A theoretical and empirical review and reconceptualization', *Genetic, Social & General Psychology Monographs*, 119(2), p. 235.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Liou, H-C. & Lee, H-W. (2020). Social Contagion and Associative Diffusion in Multilayer Network, *Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica*.

Littlefield, R. S. & Quenette, A. M. (2007). Crisis Leadership and Hurricane Katrina: The Portrayal of Authority by the Media in Natural Disasters, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 35(1), pp. 26-47.

Luo, T-J., Lin, L-Y. & Chien, Y-S. (2020). Exploring the role of media richness to information disclosure. *IEEE International Conference on Human-Machine Systems*. pp. 1-6.

McCombs, E. M. & Shaw, L. D. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:2, pp. 176-187.

Meindl, J. R. (1993). 'Reinventing leadership: A radical social psychological approach', *Social Psychology in Organizations*, Englewood Cliff, pp. 89-118.

Meindl, J. R., Ehrlich, S. B., & Dukerich, J. M. (1985). The romance of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, pp. 78–102.

Mutsvairo, B., Rønning, H., van der Linden, S., Panagopoulos, C. & Roozenbeek, J. (2020). You are fake news: political bias in perceptions of fake news, *Media, Culture & Society*, Vol. 42 Issue 3, pp. 460-470.

New York Times. (2017). 2016 Presidential Election Results, Available online: <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/president> [Accessed January 10, 2021]

Pastor, J. C., Mayo, M., & Shamir, B. (2007). Adding fuel to fire: The impact of followers' arousal on ratings of charisma. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92(6). pp. 1584–1596.

Pew Research Center. (2014). Political Polarization in the American Public, U.S. Politics & Policy, Available online:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>
[Accessed January 3, 2021]

Richardson, L. (1990). Narrative and sociology, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 19 Issue 1, p. 116.

Ruiz, P., Ruiz, C. & Martinez, R. (2010). Improving the “Leader–Follower” Relationship: Top Manager or Supervisor? The Ethical Leadership Trickle-Down Effect on Follower Job Response, *Journal of Business Ethics*, pp. 587-608.

Shamir, B. (1995). Social Distance and Charisma: Theoretical Notes and an Exploratory Study, *Leadership Quarterly*, 6(1): 19–47.

Spector, A. B. (2016). Carlyle, Freud, and the Great Man Theory more fully considered, *Leadership*, pp. 250-260.

Stogdill, M. R. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature, *Journal of Psychology*, pp. 35–71.

Taber, C. S., & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), pp. 755– 769.

The White House. (n.d.). Donald J. Trump, Whitehouse.gov, Available online:
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/people/donald-j-trump/> [Accessed December 13, 2020]

Thompson, L. (2020). Love Him Or Hate Him, President Trump’s Defense Legacy Is Profound, Forbes, Available online:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2020/12/15/love-him-or-hate-him-president-trumps-defense-legacy-is-profound/?sh=3567d132795a> [Accessed January 7, 2021]

Vogt, D. J. (2020). Distorted realities - The discursive construction of realities in digital news media, master thesis, *Department of media studies*, Stockholm university, Available online:

<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1446356&dswid=3009> [Accessed January 7, 2021]

Walumbwa, O. F. (2009). Leader personality traits and employee voice behavior: Mediating roles of ethical leadership and work group psychological safety, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, pp. 1275-1286.

Yukl, A. G. (2010). *Leadership in Organizations*, Seventh edition, Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.

Zaccaro, J. S. (2007). Trait-based perspectives of leadership, *American Psychological Association*, pp. 6-16.

Özbağ, G. K. (2016). The Role of Personality in Leadership: Five Factor Personality Traits and Ethical Leadership, Turkey, Antalya. Procedia, *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier Ltd.

Appendix A. CNN

Acosta, J. (2020). Restless Trump escapes White House but not the pandemic, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, May 6, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/05/politics/trump-arizona-trip/index.html> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Avlon, J. (2020). In coronavirus crisis, Tom Hanks is more of a role model than Donald Trump, *CNN*, Opinion, March 12, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/12/opinions/tom-hanks-more-of-a-role-model-in-crisis-than-donald-trump-avlon/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Axelrod, D. (2020). Why Trump failed his nation, *CNN*, Opinion, April 27, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/27/opinions/scorpion-frog-trump-nature-opinion-axelrod/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Bergen, P. (2020). Coronavirus crisis underlines eight of Trump's failings as a leader, *CNN*, Opinion, March 2, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/02/opinions/trump-failings-coronavirus-opinion-bergen/index.html> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Borger, G. (2020). Trump confronts reality: You can't spin a germ, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, April 1, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/01/politics/borger-trump-coronavirus/index.html> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Brower, A. K. (2020). Trump is an outsider -- even among former presidents, *CNN*, Opinion, May 5, Available online:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/04/opinions/president-george-w-bush-donald-j-trump-brotherhood-unity-brower/index.html> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Cillizza, C. (2020a). Donald Trump's appalling, blame-shifting Rose Garden news conference, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, March 13, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/13/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus-rose-garden/index.html>

[Accessed November 12, 2020]

Cillizza, C. (2020b). Donald Trump's incredibly dangerous musings on disinfectants, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, April 24, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/24/politics/donald-trump-disinfectant-uv-light/index.html>

[Accessed November 13, 2020]

Collinson, S. (2020a). Trump seeks a 'miracle' as virus fears mount *CNN*, Politics Analysis, February 28, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/28/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus-miracle-stock-markets/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Collinson, S. (2020b). Trump turns angry and defensive as evidence contradicts his coronavirus narrative, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, April 7, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/06/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus-angry-defensive/index.html> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Collinson, S. (2020c). Trump pivots hard away from fight against unvanquished pandemic, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, May 6, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/06/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus/index.html> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Collinson, S. (2020d). Trump officials deflect blame for US death toll, escalate reopening push, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, May 18, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/18/politics/trump-us-death-toll-blame-reopen/index.html>

[Accessed November 15, 2020]

Dale, D. (2020). Analysis: Trump says the pandemic crisis was 'unforeseen' -- but lots of people foresaw it, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, March 16, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/15/politics/fact-check-trump-coronavirus-nobody-predicted/index.html> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Dale, D., Cohen, M., Wright, D. & Stark, L. (2020). Fact check: Trump's Saturday coronavirus briefing was littered with false claims, old and new, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, April 19, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/18/politics/fact-check-coronavirus-briefing-april-18/index.html> [Accessed November 16, 2020]

Dale, D., Subramaniam, T. (2020a). Fact check: from coronavirus to Kim Jong Un, Trump makes at least 14 false claims in Fox News town hall, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, March 6, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/06/politics/fact-check-trump-fox-news-town-hall-scranton/index.html> [Accessed November 16, 2020]

Dale, D. & Subramaniam, T. (2020b). Fact check: A list of 28 ways Trump and his team have been dishonest about the coronavirus, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, March 11, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/11/politics/fact-check-trump-administration-coronavirus-28-dishonest/index.html> [Accessed November 16, 2020]

Diamond, J., Collins, K., Liptak, K., Harwood, J. & Gangel, J. (2020). Trump stumbles in first efforts to control virus response as fear spread and markets fall, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, Available online: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/27/politics/trump-coronavirus-response-market-meltdown-backlash/index.html> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Filipovic, J. (2020a). A day after claiming 'total' power, Trump caves in, *CNN*, Opinion, April 17, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/14/opinions/trump-claims-total-power-and-then-caves-in-filipovic/index.html> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Filipovic, J. (2020b). Trump is desperately seeking to avoid blame, *CNN*, Opinion, April 8, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/07/opinions/trump-covid-19-stimulus-glenn-fine-filipovic/index.html> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

Ghitis, F. (2020). Trump's reluctance to wear a face mask sends a fatal message, *CNN*, Opinion, May 29, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/28/opinions/donald-trump-face-mask-covid-19-ghitis/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Liptak, K., Collins, K. & Acosta, J. (2020). Trump muddles coronavirus message as response team struggles to match 'wishful thinking', *CNN*, Politics Analysis, March 6, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/06/politics/donald-trump-coronavirus-messaging-confusion/index.html> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Lockhart, J. (2020). Trump is failing the leadership test on coronavirus, *CNN*, Opinion, March 1, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/29/opinions/trump-failing-leadership-test-coronavirus-opinion-lockhart/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Obeidallah, D. (2020). Trump serves up irresponsible and dangerous information on coronavirus, *CNN*, Opinion, March 9, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/29/opinions/trump-failing-leadership-test-coronavirus-opinion-lockhart/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Psaki, J. (2020). Trump to America: Don't blame me, *CNN*, Opinion, April 28, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/27/opinions/trump-rose-garden-dont-blame-me-psaki/index.html> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Romans, C. (2020). Trump can't tweet his way out of a bear market, *CNN*, Business Analysis, March 10, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/09/perspectives/trump-market-coronavirus/index.html>

[Accessed November 14, 2020]

Rowe-Finkbeiner, K. (2020). I live in Kirkland, epicenter of the US outbreak. We need Trump to take this seriously, *CNN*, Opinion, March 6, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/06/opinions/kirkland-epicenter-coronavirus-outbreak-opinion-rowe-finkbeiner/index.html> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Stelter, B. (2020). Propaganda on full display at Trump's latest coronavirus task force briefing, *CNN*, Business Analysis, April 14, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/13/media/propaganda-donald-trump-reliable-sources/index.html>

[Accessed November 12, 2020]

Tapper, J. (2020). Trump's 'anti-scientific musings have been dangerous,' CNN's Jake Tapper says, *CNN*, Politics Analysis, April 26, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/26/politics/jake-tapper-trump-comments-cnntv/index.html>

[Accessed November 14, 2020]

Vinograd, S. (2020). On coronavirus, Trump is a walking, talking, tweeting disaster, *CNN*, Opinion, March 9, Available online:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/08/opinions/trump-twitter-coronavirus-vinograd/index.html>

[Accessed November 14, 2020]

Appendix B. Fox News

Calicchio, D. (2020). Dan Crenshaw slams Hillary Clinton tweet, defends Trump coronavirus response, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, April 8, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/dan-crenshaw-slams-hillary-clinton-tweet-defends-trump-coronavirus-response> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Chakraborty, Ba. (2020). World Health Organization director praises Trump's leadership in response to coronavirus pandemic, *Fox News*, Health, March 25, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/world/world-health-organization-praises-trump-leadership-coronavirus-pandemic> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

DeMarche, E. (2020). Trump talks about reopening US amid coronavirus fight after virus takes toll on economy, way of life, *Fox News*, Donald Trump, April 14, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-talks-about-reopening-uss-amid-coronavirus-fight-after-virus-takes-toll-on-economy-way-of-life> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

Flood, B. (2020a). CNN's Jim Acosta blasted for 'trying to hurt Trump and divide' America with coronavirus report, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, March 13, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/cnn-jim-acosta-trump-coronavirus-report> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Flood, B. (2020b). Success of Trump's daily coronavirus briefings has media changing tune, critics say, *Fox News*, Media, March 27, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/trump-media-coronavirus-press-briefings> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Halon, Y. (2020). Amb. Kelly Craft: Trump 'set an example for the world' in mitigating coronavirus and future pandemics, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, March 29, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/kelly-craft-trump-coronavirus-ambassador-united-nations> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

McCarthy, T. (2020). Dennis Quaid praises Donald Trump's coronavirus response: 'He's involved', *Fox News*, Coronavirus, April 8, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/dennis-quaid-donald-trump-coronavirus-response> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Murdock, D. (2020a). Deroy Murdock: Trump fights coronavirus effectively – political attacks on his response should stop, *Fox News*, Opinion, March 21, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/deroy-murdock-trump-fights-coronavirus-effectively-political-attacks-on-his-response-should-stop> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Murdock, D. (2020b). Deroy Murdock: Coronavirus timeline – Trump acted early and energetically, don't buy Dems' criticisms, *Fox News*, Opinion, April 21, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/coronavirus-trump-acted-early-energetically-ignore-democrats-criticism-deroy-murdock> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

O'Reilly, A. (2020). Trump reveals he's taking hydroxychloroquine in effort to prevent coronavirus symptoms, *Fox News*, Donald Trump, May 18, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-reveals-taking-hydroxychloroquine-coronavirus> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Parke, C. (2020). Cardinal Dolan says he admires Trump's leadership on helping religious community recover from coronavirus, *Fox News*, Roman Catholic, April 27, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/media/trump-catholic-dolan-church-online> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Phillips, M. (2020). Trump donates \$100G salary for coronavirus relief, *Fox News*, Donald Trump, March 3, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-donates-100g-salary-for-coronavirus-relief> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Puzder, A. (2020). Andy Puzder In coronavirus crisis, Trump displays leadership Americans expect and want, *Fox News*, Opinion, April 5, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/trump-threatens-to-keep-who-funding-freeze-in-place-after-white-house-probe-on-early-coronavirus-failures> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Re, G. (2020). After mocking Trump for promoting hydroxychloroquine, journalists acknowledge it might treat coronavirus, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, April 2, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/after-mocking-trump-promoting-hydroxychloroquine-media-acknowledges-might-treat-coronavirus> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

Re, G. (2020). Trump says coronavirus 'peak in death rate' likely in 2 weeks, extends social-distancing guidelines through April 30, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, March 29, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-briefing-death-rate-social-distancing> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

Robinson, B. (2020). Trump threatens to keep WHO funding freeze in place after White House probe on early coronavirus failures. *Fox News*, Fox News First. May 19. Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/trump-threatens-to-keep-who-funding-freeze-in-place-after-white-house-probe-on-early-coronavirus-failures> [Accessed November 11, 2020]

Ruiz, M. & Chamberlain, S. (2020). Trump announces second task force on reopening economy as he weighs 'biggest decision', *Fox News*, Politics, April 10, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-coronavirus-reopening-economy-task-force> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Shaw, A. (2020). Trump announces FDA making anti-malaria drug available to test coronavirus treatment, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, March 19, Available online:

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-fda-experimental-drugs-coronavirus> [Accessed November 13, 2020]

Singman, B. (2020). Trump marks 'sad milestone' as coronavirus deaths reach 100,000 in US, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, May 28, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-marks-sad-milestone-as-coronavirus-deaths-reach-100000-in-us> [Accessed November 12, 2020]

Steinhauser, P. (2020). Democracy 2020 Digest: Trump faces fresh political attacks on coronavirus response, *Fox News*, Elections, March 27, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/trump-faces-fresh-political-attacks-on-coronavirus-response> [Accessed November 15, 2020]

Wulfsohn, J. (2020a). 60 percent of Americans approve of Trump's handling of coronavirus: Gallup poll, *Fox News*, Coronavirus, March 24, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/gallup-poll-trump-coronavirus> [Accessed November 14, 2020]

Wulfsohn, J. (2020b). CNN's 'straight news' anchors using coronavirus to 'flaunt their utter disdain' for Trump, critics say, *Fox News*, Media, April 9, Available online: <https://www.foxnews.com/media/cnn-anchors-coronavirus-disdain-trump> [Accessed November 14, 2020]